A NEW METHODOLOGY: DATA ELICITATION FOR SOCIAL AND REGIONAL LANGUAGE VARIATION STUDIES

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Abstract

This paper presents a new method of data elicitation for use in large-scale regional language variation studies, and for use in sociolinguistic studies of a given area. The methodology was devised and designed to fit the requirements of a national collaborative venture, the Survey of Regional English (SuRE).[1] It was then expanded for use in a sociolinguistic study of Teesside English currently being undertaken by the author.

1. Introduction

Many and varied methods of eliciting data for analysis of language variation exist and research is continually being undertaken in the field. Recent and ongoing projects offer detailed knowledge and insight into linguistic variation and change in Britain (e.g. the British Dialect Grammar survey by Cheshire et al. (1989), in Milton Keynes by Kerswill and Williams (1997), in Milton Keynes, Reading and Hull by Cheshire et al. (1999), in Tyneside and Derby by Docherty et al. (1997)). However, researchers wishing to compare their findings with those of another study are faced with individual projects which have different aims and employ different methodologies. This makes direct comparisons of studies potentially problematic (see Foulkes and Docherty (1999) for further discussion). Given the possible process of dialect levelling (cf. Williams and Kerswill (1999), Watt and Milroy (1999)) and the spread of current vernacular changes in certain phonological and grammatical features in British English, the availability of studies which are regionally disparate but directly comparable would be enormously advantageous.

Knowledge of current regional and social lexical variation in the British Isles is extremely sparse, with few studies being or having been undertaken. The studies which have been made generally utilise a similar method of data collection, namely the questionnaire. However, these studies, again, are not necessarily comparable, since different notion words have been used or sought.

No individual study of a given area has attempted to combine investigation of social variation in spreading and localised features found in phonology, grammar *and* lexis. This paper presents a new methodology designed to do just that. The core methodology has been created for use in the proposed new survey of variation in the spoken English of the British Isles, the Survey of Regional English (SuRE) (Kerswill, Llamas and Upton (forthcoming) and Upton and Llamas (1999)). It can, however, be used in an individual study of social variation of a given area, in its core form or in an expanded form, as demonstrated by the methodology used in the Teesside study.

This paper begins with a brief description of the background to the development of the new methodology, considering problems a multi-levelled data elicitation methodology

[1] The project being embarked upon, the Survey of Regional English (SuRE), is a joint project with funding being sought by a Leeds/Sheffield/Reading axis. Clive Upton, University of Leeds, Paul Kerswill, University of Reading and John Widdowson, University of Sheffield are co-applicants. This paper forms part of the methodology chapter from my forthcoming PhD thesis entitled *Language variation and innovation in Teesside English*. Thanks go to Dominic Watt, Paul Foulkes and Clive Upton for many helpful comments on drafts of this paper.

poses and the appropriateness, or otherwise, of established methods (section 2). The core of the new methodology is then presented in section 3, and the additional elements for use in the study of Teesside, in the north-east of England, are outlined in section 4. The current paper deals only with the method of data elicitation to be used. All sampling decisions regarding both the Teesside study and the SuRE project will be dealt with in future papers. The Teesside study is acting as a pilot for SuRE, however any suggestions for refinement of the new method of data elicitation are also invited in response to the current paper.

2. Background

The larger picture of the concept of SuRE has necessarily dictated the design of the new data elicitation methodology presented in this paper. Some understanding, therefore, of the requirements of the methodology and the ideas behind the concept of SuRE is necessary for an appreciation of the potential of the new methodology.

2.1 The proposed SuRE project: aims and difficulties

As the Survey of English Dialects (SED) (Orton and Dieth 1962-71), which was carried out in the 1950s, represents the only consistently-collected nation-wide survey of dialectal variation in England, a deficiency exists in the knowledge and awareness of current variation on a national scale. The basic intention of the SuRE project is to create a computer-held database of consistently-collected material from a planned network of British localities which will record and document the facts of linguistic variation throughout Britain, permitting detailed analyses of issues concerning the diffusion of language change and the spread of current vernacular changes in British English. The form of the survey will be guided by the necessity for the primary data to be the object of analytical work addressing current research questions concerning levelling. At the same time, its form must be sufficiently broad as not to preclude the potential for analysis which addresses other research questions arising in the future.

In order for the SuRE project to obtain as complete a picture as possible of regional language variation, data must be obtained which can be analysed on three levels of possible variation: phonological, grammatical and lexical. To discount any of these levels would be to obtain an incomplete picture of regional variation in spoken English found throughout Britain. These multi-levelled data must be comparable across the localities to be studied, permitting quantitative analyses of the different levels of regional and social variation where possible.

The primary aim of a methodology for the project would be to obtain samples of informal speech from which analyses can be made at the phonological level and, to some extent, the grammatical level. As this is a fundamental requirement of a methodology for the project, a problem lies in combining the level of comparable *lexical* variation with the necessity of obtaining natural speech, as to control the lexical items used in a conversation is to make the interaction less than natural. This control can have the effect of formalising the speech style, thus hindering the possibility of gaining access to the 'vernacular' or 'the style in which the minimum attention is given to the monitoring of speech' (Labov 1972: 208). As the vernacular 'gives us the most systematic data for our analysis of linguistic structure' (Labov 1972: 208), it can be regarded as the style required by the elicitation method of the SuRE project.

2.2 Previous studies and their applicability

As a means of eliciting data, the questionnaire has been employed in traditional dialectology since the nineteenth century and was the 'fundamental instrument' of the SED (Orton and Dieth 1962: 15). Although it proves successful in eliciting lexical and some grammatical data, it would be entirely inappropriate for a current survey whose intention is to access and collect samples of informal speech large enough to undertake phonological analyses which permit quantification.

Additionally, the methods employed by the SED, and by other studies undertaken within the traditional dialectological paradigm, give scant information on language variation associated with social factors within a given area, this not being the focus of interest of such research. Social variables, however, are central to current studies of variation. As such, many more informants are required from each location than the two or three used in the SED. Therefore, the methodology for the SuRE project must be relatively quick and easy to administer, demanding the minimum of the informant's and the fieldworker's time, unlike the lengthy SED questionnaire which contained 9 books of questions each one taking at least 2 hours to complete (Orton and Dieth 1962: 17). Thus, methods which are associated with traditional dialectological studies of language variation are quite inappropriate to the proposed SuRE project.

However, methods used to obtain data for research undertaken within a quantitative paradigm are also inappropriate. Various attempts have been made to access the vernacular, or the informant's least overtly careful speech style, for example, the interview situation in which the fieldworker asks questions to elicit personal narratives (cf. Labov 1972, Trudgill 1974), allowing informants to converse in pairs on topics of their own choosing with minimal fieldworker involvement (cf. Docherty et al. 1997). Although successful in obtaining informal speech, these methods almost completely remove the possibility of obtaining comparable information on lexical variation. The anthropological technique of participant observation, as used by Cheshire (1982) in Reading and Milroy (1987a) in Belfast, although successful in gaining quantitative and qualitative data, is also far too time-consuming for a collaborative project. The wish to access the vernacular, as in quantitative studies, and the wish to obtain stylistic variation in the speech sample, are central to the aims of SuRE, however.

Thus, because the data must be elicited quickly and easily, and because lexical variation must be included, which in turn eliminates the option of 'free' conversation, an interview of some sort must be used in the SuRE methodology. However, a completely different approach to the elicitation of lexical data than that of the traditional questionnaire is necessary, as the interview must elicit data which are analysable phonologically and also grammatically. As the data must be quantifiable (where possible), comparable, analysable on 3 levels of variation and administerable to a relatively large number of informants, a completely new method of data elicitation and collection is necessary, as no existing data elicitation technique is entirely suitable or applicable to the needs of the proposed SuRE project.

3. The new method: the SuRE core

3.1 Overall aims

The primary aims of the new methodology are to obtain informal speech from the informant (from which multi-levelled analyses of both regionally and socially comparable data are possible), and to elicit the data as quickly and easily as is possible. A methodology

which is perceived to be too complicated or lengthy to administer may result in the unwillingness of potential fieldworkers to use it.

Although the interview as a speech event is not the ideal means through which to elicit casual conversation due to the 'asymmetrical distribution of power suggested by the roles of questioner and respondent' (Milroy 1987b: 49), it proves to be the only practical way of obtaining the necessary data. It is vital therefore to lessen the formality of the interview situation as much as possible, and to make the interview an unintimidating and, if possible, enjoyable experience for the informant.

In order to obtain the required informal speech style combined with data on lexical variation in the interview, the fieldworker 'leads' a conversation around semantic fields. To lessen the formality of the interview context, the interview is undertaken with socially paired informants, permitting interaction to be more like a conversation than an interview. Discussion on local lexical items is prompted by the fieldworker, with informants encouraged to discuss their 'dialect' words, how they are used and what connotations they have. As well as producing informal conversation from which phonological and, to some extent, grammatical analyses can be made, the ensuing conversation produces a mass of information on the lexical data produced. This can include age and sex differences in usage, connotational and collocational information, knowledge and use differentiation of given items and attitudinal information on dialect.

Although the method of discussing lexical items in pairs produces the sample of informal speech for analysis, control must still be exercised over the specific lexical items elicited in order for direct comparisons of variants to be possible.

3.2 Sense Relation Network sheet

The principal tool devised and designed to allow the information on lexical items to be comparable regionally and socially, and to give a somewhat flexible structure to the interview, is the Sense Relation Network sheet (SRN). The three SRNs which form the core of the interview are shown in Figures 1, 2 and 3.

3.2.1 SRNs: visual design and content design

Both the visual design and the content design of the SRNs are inspired by the idea that there exists a 'web of words' (Aitchison 1997: 61), or a series of interconnected networks which define, delimit and store linguistic expressions in the mind. The visual design of the SRNs is also inspired by materials and aids used in language teaching, such as words trees and word field diagrams (see Gairns and Redman 1986), in which visual impact is crucial.

As can be seen in Figures 1, 2 and 3, visually, networks are designed in which the standard notion words are connected to subdivisions. The subdivisions, in turn, are connected to the semantic field of the SRN, symbolising, in a way, the interconnected network or 'web of words'. Space is then provided under the standard notion word for the insertion of a dialectal partial synonym. Each SRN is printed in a different colour (presented here in black and white), the aim being for the visual impact of the SRNs to be positive and unthreatening, and for the SRNs to engage the interest of the informant to a level at which the desire is to complete them.

In terms of content design, the SRNs are built around semantic fields (Lehrer 1974) and, as such, are akin to the grouping of questions by subject matter in the SED questionnaire. According to Johnston (1985: 83), the grouping of questions by subject

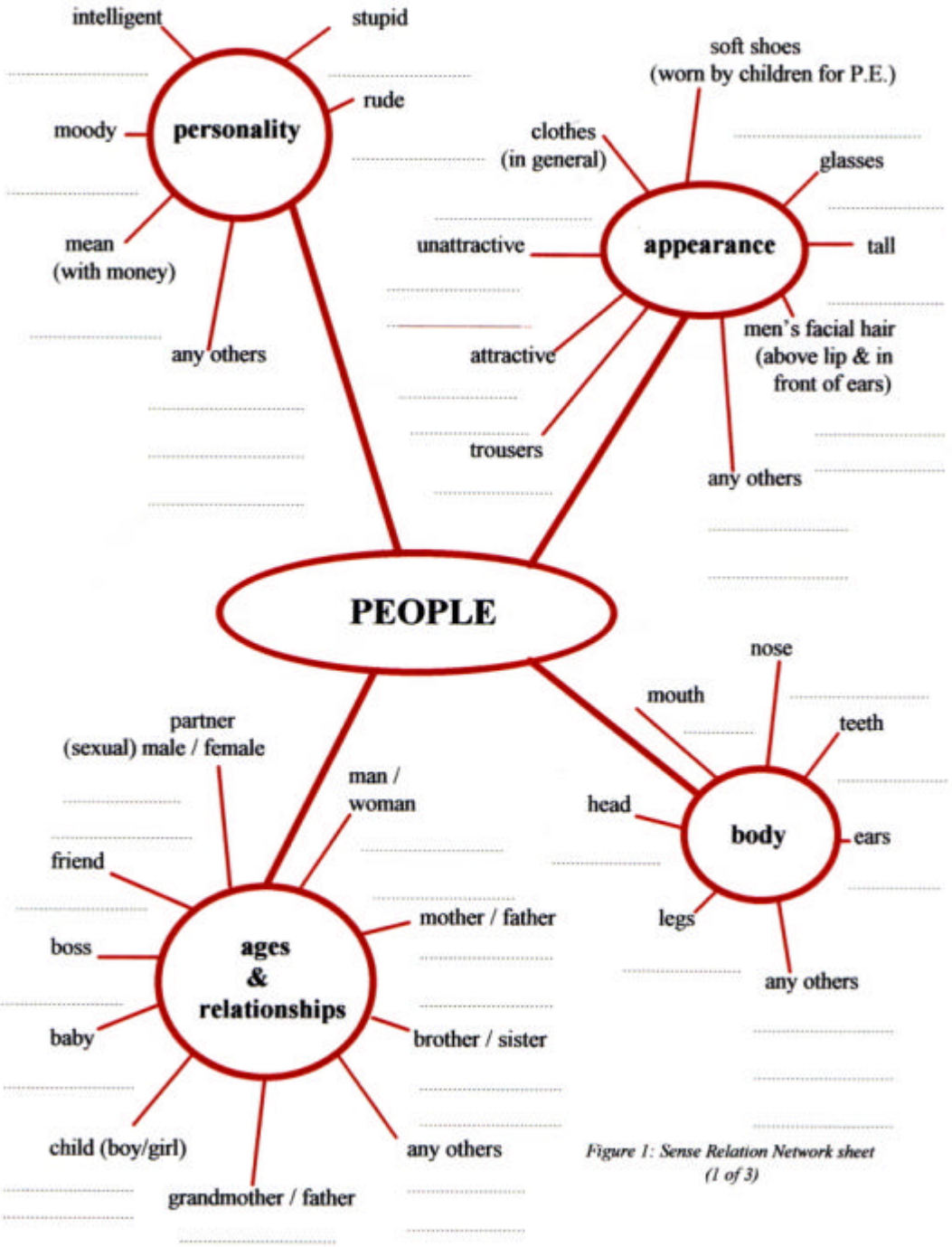

Figure 1: Sense Relation Network sheet (1 of 3)

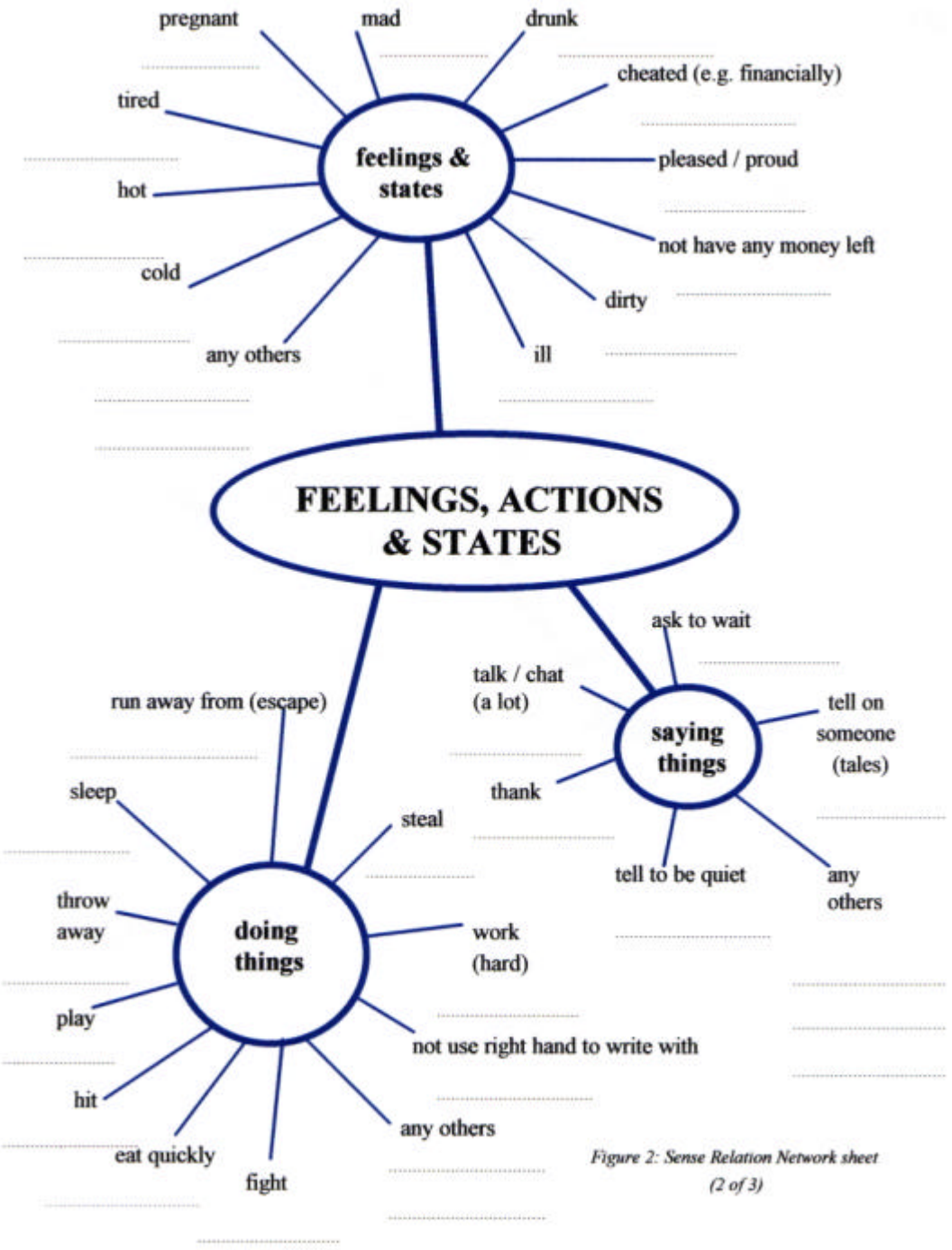

Figure 2: Sense Relation Network sheet (2 of 3)

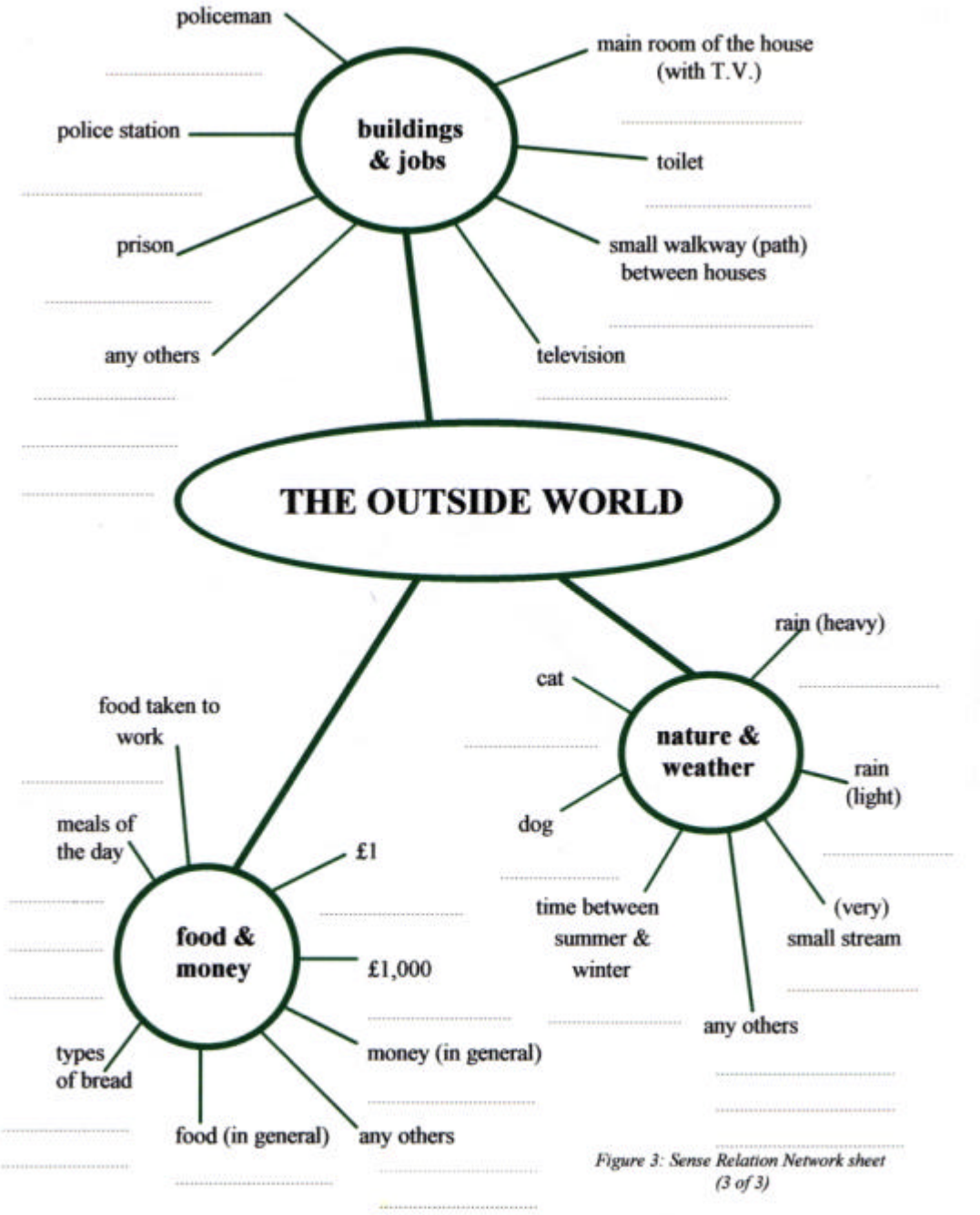

Figure 3: Sense Relation Network sheet (3 of 3)

matter, as opposed to alphabetically or randomly, allows for a level of spontaneity in the responses. On the SRNs, standard notion words are offered as prompts for the elicitation of dialectal variants, as interviews which use indirect elicitation techniques are much more time-consuming than those which use direct ones. Additionally, indirect questioning may make the interaction feel more like an interview or a test than a conversation, so skewing speech style towards the formal.

The selection of semantic fields and standard notion words in the 3 SRNs is the result of trialling and revision of the method during which 8 original SRNs have been subsumed under the present 3. The subsumption was made in the interests of reducing the time needed by informants to complete the SRNs, as well as the time necessary to conduct the interview. None of the initial semantic fields have been discarded entirely, but the fields have become broader to encompass a greater area of notion words. Standard notion words producing little or no variation in trialling have been removed. However, each sub-division carries space for dialectal variants of notion words not included on the SRN which the informant wishes to include. When selecting standard notion words, the wish to include the same standard notion word as the SED where possible and appropriate was borne in mind, as a direct comparison could reveal potential real time change. Due to the urban bias of the proposed survey and of the study of Teesside English, however, this proved inappropriate in most cases, with few SED notion words remaining.

The SRNs then, as well as being a visual network, rather than a list of questions, represent the interrelated network of paradigmatic and syntagmatic sense relations in which linguistic expressions from similar semantic fields define and delimit each others' meaning. They also represent the sense relation of partial synonymy, which the dialectal variant holds with the standard notion word. Additionally, in time they will represent a geographical sense relation network of dialectal variation of partial synonyms found throughout the British Isles.

3.2.2 SRNs: technique of administration

Coupled with their concept and design, the technique of administering the SRNs is an essential part of their success as a method of eliciting lexical data. Informants are given the SRNs some five days before the interview, with both verbal instructions from the fieldworker and written instructions as part of the interview pack (see Appendix 2 for instruction sheet[2]). The innovatory step of allowing informants to know the content of the interview prior to the event has implications for both the content of the interview and for the interview as a speech event.

Giving informants the SRNs prior to the interview allows them time to consider the lexical items they use. This has a dramatic effect upon the amount of lexical data yielded from the interview. If asked to produce a dialectal variant as an immediate response to a prompt, there is a danger of the informant's mind going blank. This results in minimal data being yielded. This may also necessitate an undesirable level of prompting from the fieldworker. More importantly, however, there could be a harmful effect on the required speech style and the willingness of informants to speak at length, due to a feeling of unease in the interview situation. Thus, the technique of administering the materials prior to the interview maximises the amount of data yielded.

[2] Note that the instruction sheet shown in Appendix 2 is part of an interview pack used by an informant from the Teesside study. As such, this carries an additional instruction about the completion of the Language Questionnaire, which is part of the extended methodology used in Teesside (see section 4.1). This, and therefore the instruction, do not form part of the core methodology.

Any feelings of unease in the interview situation may be heightened if the informant perceives the interview as a test of some sort. By having prior knowledge of the content of the interview however, it is thought that suspicion on the part of the informant is diminished considerably. This, combined with the fact of experiencing the interview in a social dyad, allows informants to settle into a relatively casual speech style in as short a time as possible. To ensure the ready recruiting of informants and to maximise the possibility of gaining access to their least overtly careful or monitored speech style, it is crucial that informants feel at ease and enjoy the interview as much as possible.

When the informants have had some days in which to complete the SRNs at their convenience, discussing responses with others should they wish (differentiating between their own and others' responses on the SRNs), the paired interview is undertaken and recorded onto minidisc. The interview consists of the written responses on the SRNs being read out by the informants with responses being discussed in terms of whether informants use the variants or only know them, situations in which they would be used, connotations and collocations associated with the variants, as well as anything else which informants might initiate. The fieldworker can use an interviewer's guide to ensure that all the notion words are covered (the informants keep their own SRNs until the end of the interview). The interviewer's guide can also contain prompt questions, e.g. the use of intensifiers, gender differences in use, age differences in use, varying degrees of a state, additional notion words or senses of the notion words given, all of which can provide additional information and extend the discussion. During the interview other known or used variants which come up are noted on the SRNs in different coloured ink by the informant. Thus the written record of the informant's responses on the SRNs (which the fieldworker collects after the interview), a recording of the informant's spoken responses for pronunciation purposes and a mass of attitudinal information on the lexical items elicited in an informal speech style are all secured by means of the recorded interview.

3.2.3 SRNs: data yielded

In terms of lexical items elicited through the SRNs, the richness of the data yielded can be seen in the 3 completed SRNs which appear as Appendix 3. The potential for the study of the differences and problematic distinctions between dialectal variants, regional slang, national slang and standard colloquialisms are clear. The study of nonstandard orthography is also promoted by the method. Additionally, the difference between items produced before and items produced during the interview may be of interest.

From the recorded discussion about the responses, more lexical data are produced.[3] Informants can use dialectal variants without necessarily being aware they are doing so. For example, one informant, when discussing the notion word 'man', claimed that she would never use *bloke* after already having done so during the interview. Additionally, informants may become aware only when they hear someone else use it that they themselves use a particular word. Also informants' insights into which variants are considered to be local, as opposed to those which are more widely used can be revealed. For example, one informant claimed not to have inserted a variant for *soft shoes worn by children for P.E.* because

[3] Although the 3 SRNs shown as Appendix 3 present 215 variants for 80 standard notion words, by including all the variants the informant mentioned but did not write on the SRNs during the interview and those she claimed knowledge of during the recorded interview, a total of 272 variants were counted from this informant.

she 'couldn't think of another word for *sandshoes*', indicating that she believed sandshoes to be a widely used or standard variant.

Once read in isolation lexical items are immediately put into context by the informant. Thus, the individual lexical item is clearly recorded for transcription purposes and can then be disregarded for the purposes of a phonological analysis of informal speech (the nature of the written response on the SRN being read aloud possibly constituting a more formal reading style of speech). It would, however, be possible and interesting to compare phonological features of the more formal and less formal styles. The context of the interaction makes it clear which particular lexical items are read aloud and which are not. Alternatively, the use of different coloured ink on the SRNs is an indicator of which variants were written before the interview (and thus read aloud), and which were noted down during the interview (written after having been spoken). (The latter variants are indicated with an asterisk in the reproduced SRNs of appendix 3.)

After having been read aloud, the lexical items are generally elaborated upon and discussed in the context of casual conversation, giving the sample of informal speech which can be analysed phonologically and grammatically. For example, after having given the responses *twoc, tax, nick, skank,* and *swipe* for the notion word 'steal', two informants went on to discuss at length precisely what each term referred to and their ideas on the origins of the words. Similarly, sex and age differences in responses to notion words are discussed at length, with, for example, two young male informants arguing that they would never use the variant *bonny* for the notion word 'attractive', it being an 'old person's' word, and they would never use *canny-looking,* it being used by girls, opting themselves to use *nectar, sweet, fit* and *lush*. Thus, the informal speech which can be analysed phonologically and grammatically also contains a mass of data on: knowledge and use of lexical items; attitudinal information on dialectal variants; ideas on word origins; changing societal attitudes to lexical items and perceptions of and actual sex and age variation in usage. In this way a multi-levelled bank of data is produced through use of the SRNs.[4]

3.3 Identification Questionnaire

Combined with the 3 SRNs, an Identification Questionnaire (IdQ) is included in the interview. The IdQ is given to the informants, with the 3 SRNs, prior to the interview, thus forming the interview pack. The questions posed in the IdQ of the core interview are listed below in Figure 4. The IdQ can be expanded for use in a given area as in the Teesside example, see Appendix 4.

[4] Since its initial concept to the development of the method to the stage where it can be used in the Teesside study, the method of data elicitation has been relatively extensively trialled. As well as being trialled and revised by myself with 12 informants from Leeds, it has been tried by other researchers in an external trialling stage of its refinement. It has also been used by students from the University of Leeds and the University of Basel. Thanks go to Ann Williams, Jason Jones, Mark Jones, Louise Mullany and Clive Upton for trying the method and giving extremely helpful comments on the effectiveness of the technique as a method of data elicitation.

Your Language

- What accent would you say you had, and do you like it?
- Can you recognise the accent of your home town (e.g. if heard on the radio or T.V.)? If so, how?
- Do you think older and younger people talk the same here (pronounce things the same and use the same words)?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you've deliberately changed the way you talk? If so, why?
- Do you think there's a difference between how males and females speak here?
- Where, geographically, would you say people stop talking the same as you and start sounding different?

Your Area

- If you were watching a regional news programme, what places would you expect to hear news from?
- What image or description of your home town would you give to someone who didn't know it?
- If you wanted a day out shopping, where would you go?
- What do you consider the local football derby to be?
- If you could, would you change where you came from? Why/why not?
- What do you consider the best and worst things are about growing up and living in your home town?
- Have you ever seen your home town on a national T.V. programme (e.g. a documentary)? If so, how was it portrayed?
- If an outsider was complaining about your home town, would you defend it even if you agreed with what s/he was saying? Why/why not?
- How many friends, relations and work/school/college mates do you have in the neighbourhood (not more than about 5 mins. away) who you see regularly?

Figure 4: Identification Questionnaire

The core IdQ comprises 15 questions whose primary aim is to act as a safety net: the questions posed elicit relatively extended responses should the informants responses to the SRNs be insufficient for an analysis of informal speech. As well as securing a sample of speech, the questions on the IdQ are designed to obtain an insight into people's attitudes towards their language and their area.

As communities and boundaries are often symbolic, it is difficult to impose a definition of speech community onto a geographical area and a group of people, even when an investigator is a native of the geographical area to be studied. The similarities and differences which define and delimit communities are often not a matter for objective assessment, but are largely subjective, existing in the minds of the members of the community (Cohen 1985: 21). There is no reason why the topical content of the interview should not be of use in this

regard, with the fieldworker tapping the natural resource of the informant for information on language, area, boundaries and attitudes found in Britain.

In the IdQ, questions are posed to elicit information about people's attitudes towards language and identity (cf. Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985), existence and awareness of age and sex differences (cf. Kerswill 1996; Kerswill and Williams 1997; Milroy, Milroy and Hartley 1994; Trudgill 1974), and rudimentary ideas on density of networks (cf. Milroy 1987a). They may also elicit information on people's perception of language areas and boundaries (cf. Preston 1988) and information on awareness of and reasons for speech accommodation (cf. Giles and Powesland 1975). In this way a mass of attitudinal information is gained from the individual through the use of the IdQ. The informants' responses are usually subjective. However awareness of language variation can be extremely illuminating. For example, one informant, when asked whether he thought there was difference between how males and females speak in the area, replied 'not really no, when you listen to some women sometimes they're more rough and more broad than some of the blokes, aren't they?', suggesting that the only difference he could conceive of would be for the men to speak in a broader or more localised accent than the women. This attitudinal information will give comparable data across regions of Britain and may reveal differing regional attitudes towards areas and dialects, as well as revealing possible sex, age and class variation in a given area.

This then is the core method of the proposed survey designed to elicit a sample of informal speech.[5] From the speech sample data are obtained for a multi-levelled analysis of phonological, grammatical and lexical variation. A word list may be included to observe stylistic variation. Because of the larger amount of data necessary for grammatical analyses, and the structural limitations of the interview which places 'pragmatic and discourse constraints on syntactic structure' (Milroy 1987b: 56), it is anticipated that a more formal grammatical element will be included in the methodology.

4. The new method: additions for the Teesside study

As noted, the core methodology can be used in a study of sociolinguistic variation of a given area. This can be either in its core form or in an expanded form. For use in the Teesside study several additions have been made.

4.1 Language Questionnaire

In order to obtain awareness of informants' perceptions of the nonstandard grammatical features found in the area, a Language Questionnaire is included in the Teesside interview pack (see Appendix 5). The responses to the questionnaire can then be compared to and correlated with the informant's actual usage of nonstandard grammatical features in informal speech. The Language Questionnaire is based on the type of questionnaire used by

[5] In order to test the level of formality which is achieved in the interview situation as opposed to recorded 'free' conversation, data have been obtained from 6 informants in both 'free' conversation style and interview style. The 'free' conversation was obtained by allowing the informants to chat in social pairs at their own convenience without the fieldworker present (Llamas 1998). The use of certain localised variants was then compared to ascertain whether a dramatic shift to a more formal speech style was indicated in the interview situation. No such shift was revealed. Additionally, all 6 informants, when asked, claimed to have preferred participating in the interview using the methodology presented in this paper rather than recording themselves in 'free' conversation.

Cheshire et al. (1989) for the Survey of British Dialect Grammar. The majority of the sentences used in the Language Questionnaire are authentic, having been taken from the recordings of 'free' conversation for the pilot study of Middlesbrough (Llamas 1998). Many grammatical features included in the questionnaire are features associated with urban varieties of British English, e.g. multiple negation, *them* as demonstrative adjective, *what* as subject relative pronoun, present participle *sat*, *never* as past tense negator. Given the geographical position of Teesside, certain sentences have been included to ascertain whether features associated with a variety from further north, namely Northumberland English, are used. Questions 35, 36 and 37 have been taken from Beal (1993). Other sentences contain features associated with Yorkshire English, e.g. questions 10, 15, 17.

Along with the Language Questionnaire, which constitutes the more formal grammatical element, a word list is included in the Teesside study to facilitate observation of stylistic variation and for control of environment in the phonological variables analysed.

4.2 Teesside Identification Questionnaire

The IdQ used in the Teesside study has 4 additional questions (these can be seen in Appendix 4, questions 7, 9, 10 and 13). Due to the Teesside study's focus on the transitional nature of the area, its changing local identity, and convergent and divergent linguistic trends, questions are asked to elicit responses about feelings towards the changes in the county boundaries and the location of the area. Also, the informants are asked their feelings on being referred to as Geordie or Yorkshire.

The responses to the IdQ will give an indication of how closely tied to their area and proud of their dialect the informant claims to feel. The informant's level of identification with the area is of importance to the study. The responses to the questions on the IdQ will give an insight into whether the informant feels positively, negatively or neutrally towards their dialect and area. Responses to certain questions can be judged to be: 'positive', in that they express positive feelings towards the area and the dialect; 'negative', in that the informant expressed a desire to live elsewhere and a dislike of the dialect; or 'neutral', in that the informants feelings seemed neither positive nor negative, or perhaps a combination of the two, much like a section of Labov's (1972: 39) work in his Martha's Vineyard study. Not all of the responses to the questions in the IdQ will lend themselves to a classification of this kind (e.g. density of social networks, perceptions of boundaries), but many will (e.g. whether or not the informants like their accent, whether they would change where they come from if they could). A subjective judgement, therefore, can be made by the researcher as to whether the informant responded positively, negatively or neutrally to their language and their area in the IdQ as a whole.

4.3 Identification Score Index

To counteract the subjectivity of this decision somewhat, a more objective and quantifiable Identification Score Index has been devised (see Appendix 6). This is an adapted and extended version of the Identity Score Index used by Underwood (1988) in his study of Texan English. This was an attempt by Underwood to use Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's (1985) theory of acts of identity to account for linguistic variation in Texas. Le Page had intended his theory of acts of identity to be 'universally applicable' (1985: 182), and it had previously been used by Trudgill (1983) to account for the variation in British pop song pronunciations. Underwood (1988: 410) constructed an 'Index of Texan Identification' with which he scored responses to three questions designed to test the level of local affiliation.

When analysed, the use of the localised variant under consideration was found to have no linear relationship with social variables, the localised variant appearing dominant in all groupings. There was, however, a clear linear relationship between scores on the index and the use of the localised variant, i.e. the closer the informant identified with the group in question, Texans, the higher the use of the localised variant.

This idea has been used in the present study of Teesside English. The Identification Score Index comprises seven questions designed to test how closely or how loosely tied to the area the informants feel. The Identification Score Index includes direct questions about how the informants feel towards other people from their home town, and questions which test in-group preference. The Identification Score Index is not designed to elicit any linguistic data, but simply comprises seven multiple choice questions. The Score Index is administered when obtaining biographical data from the informant. The questions are short and an immediate response is sought. Therefore the questions are included in the brief section of the interview in which informants note down their personal details on the biographical information sheet[6] (see Appendix 1).

Each of the multiple choice responses given in answer to the question carries a score of 1, 2, or 3. A score of 3 indicates the strongest feelings of local affiliation. The scores are added and categorised into three groups, broadly termed positive, neutral, and negative. The linguistic variables under consideration are then analysed in terms of the three groupings. Non-linguistic variables can also be correlated with the scores. Trialling so far has suggested that the speaker with the lowest scores on the Identification Score Index and the most negative responses in the IdQ are, indeed, the speakers with the lowest usages of localised variants.

5. Conclusion

This paper has presented a new methodology designed to elicit data which are comparable regionally and socially for a large-scale study of language variation found throughout Britain. The primary aim of the methodology is to obtain informal speech from informants grouped for sex, age and class. The core of this methodology consists of 3 SRNs whose design and technique of administration permits the elicitation of data which are analysable on three levels of variation: phonological, grammatical and lexical. Additionally, the core IdQ is available both to act as a safety net in eliciting a larger sample of informal speech, and to provide valuable attitudinal information about the particular variety of language spoken and the area being investigated.

The methodology is being systematically trialled in my on-going study of language variation in Teesside English. Additional methodological features have been designed for use in the Teesside study. These consist of a Language Questionnaire, acting as a more formal grammatical element, an extended IdQ, to address areas of particular interest, and an Identification Score Index, to ascertain the informant's strength of local affiliation. These additions demonstrate how the core methodology can be adapted and extended for use in an individual study to address particular areas of interest.

Raw data obtained through use of the methodology have been presented in the appendices of the paper. A Teesside informant's biographical data, completed SRNs,

[6] The biographical information sheet shown is also part of the Teesside study interview and not a part of the core SuRE interview pack.

responses to the Language Questionnaire and Identification Score Index responses are given.

It is hoped that the methodology presented will be available for use by other researchers either in its core form, or in an adapted or extended form. Thus, a bank of comparable data can grow, with the methodology from which the data are derived consistent and explicit.

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Appendix 1

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

name Jenny Braddy

sex female

age (dob) 3.6.43

place of birth Middlesbrough

birth place of mother Hartlepool

birth place of father Hartlepool

birth place of grandmothers Hartlepool Hartlepool

birth place of grandfathers Goxhill Seaton Carew

ethnic group White

occupation (current / usual) Teacher / Lecturer

assessment of social class Working Class born ?

housing Owned

education Higher

identification score index 1 A 2 A 3 A 4 B 5 B 6 C 7 A

Appendix 2

First Name Jenny

Place of birth Middlesbrough

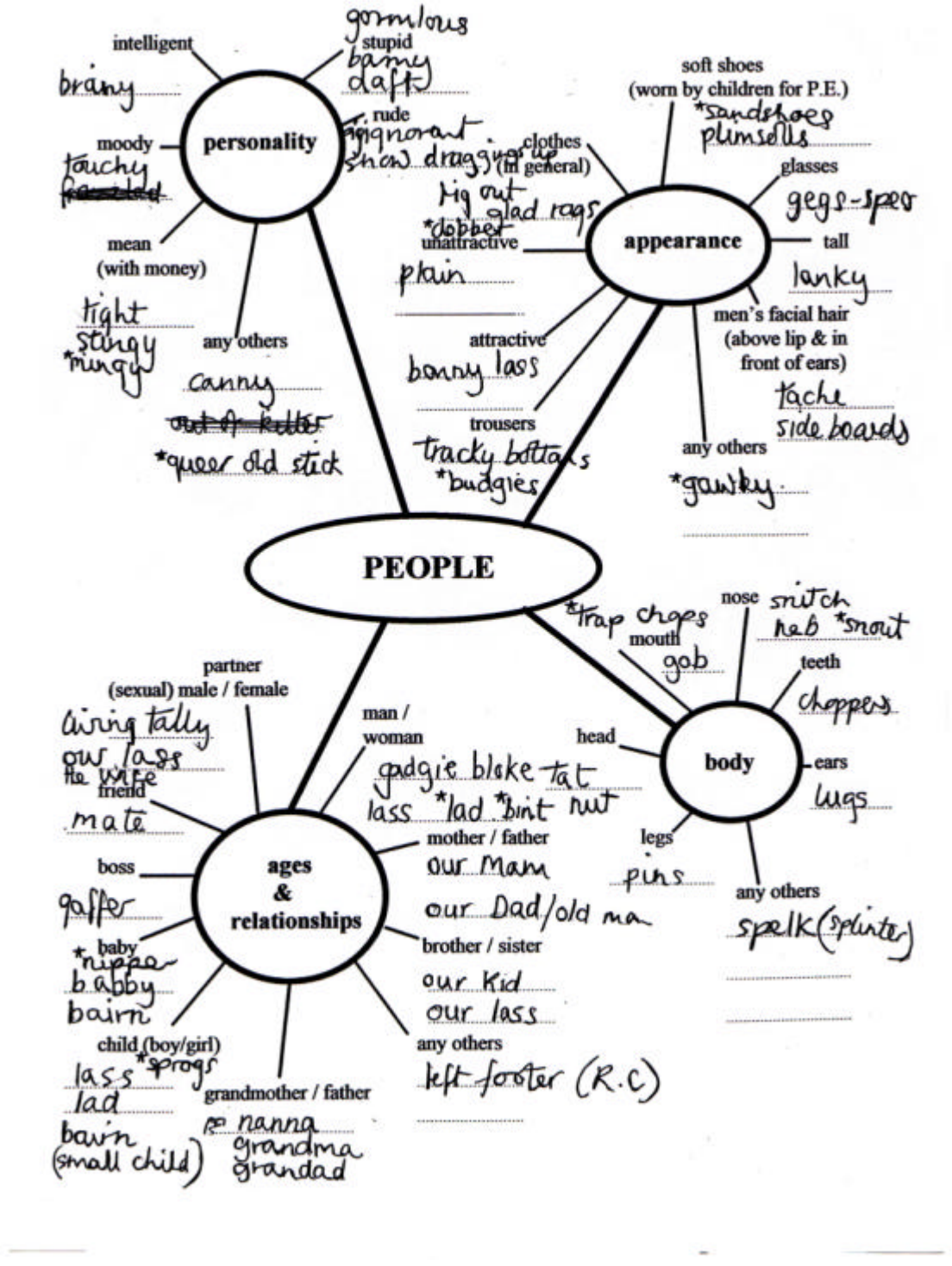
Other places you have lived and for how long

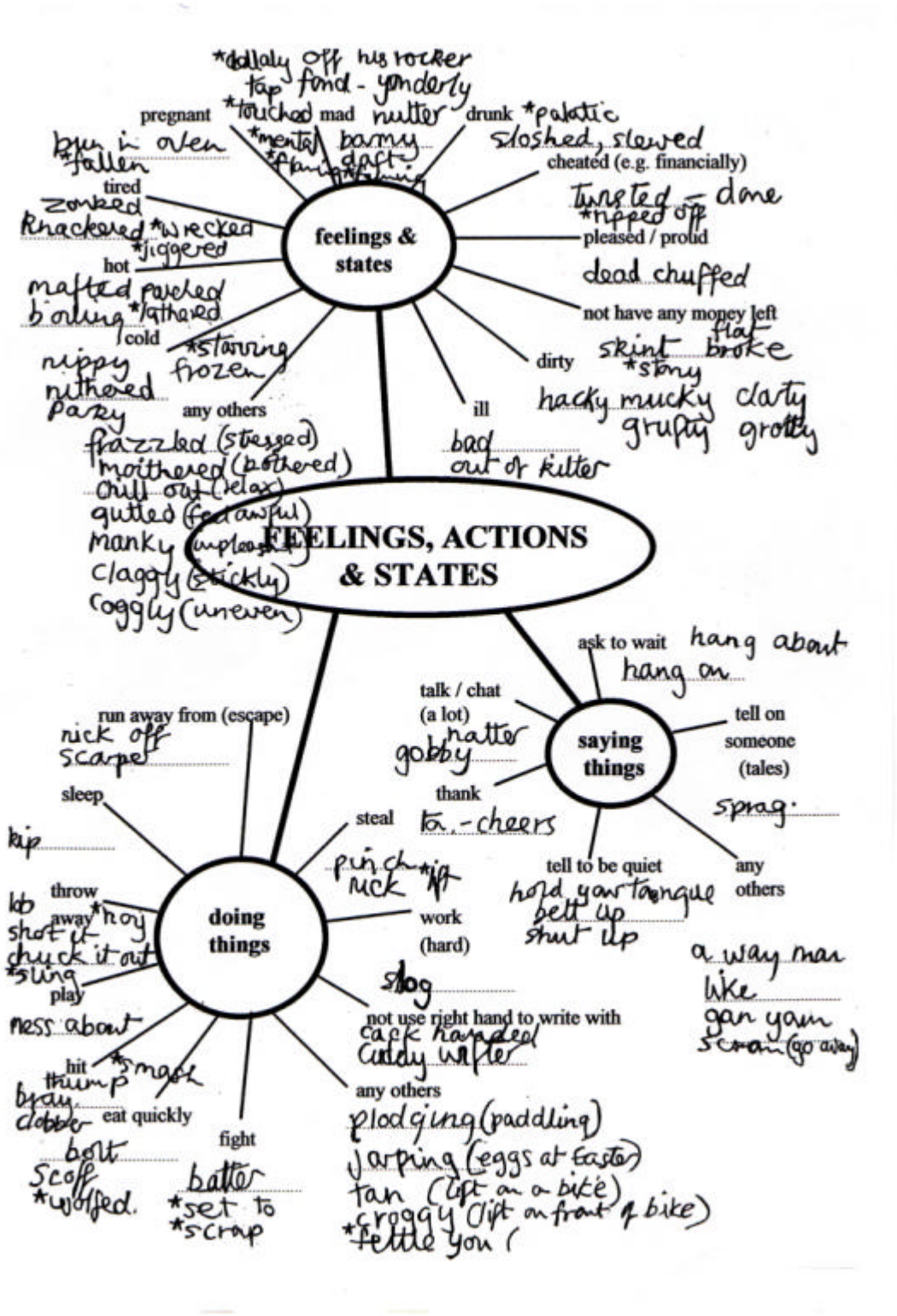
Teesdale 1 year

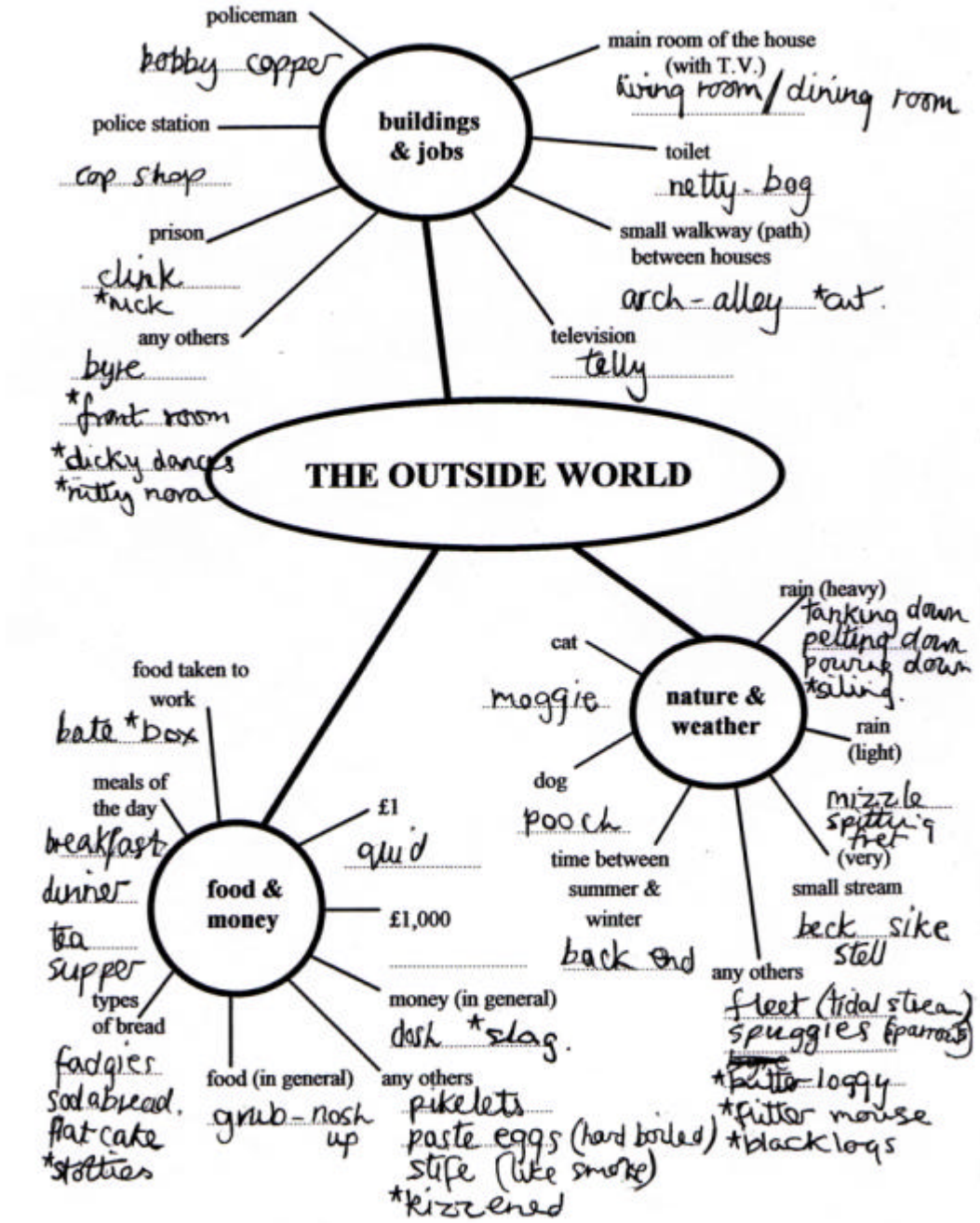
Durham 3 years (College)

- Please complete the sheets with words you think are **dialect** words or are local to the area you are from.
- Try to put down the first thing that comes to your mind, words you use every day when talking with friends, for example.
- After that, think about it for a while and note down any other examples of words local to the place you live which come to mind.
- Feel free to discuss the words with other people from the same area as you. But try to keep a note of who you discuss the words with (especially if you note down their suggestions).
- Put down more than one word, if you like. Also, feel free to use expressions as well as single words.
- Use the sections called 'any others' to note down any extra words or expressions you think of (yourself, or in discussion with others). If these are words for things not listed on the sheet, please put down what you think they mean, or what someone not necessarily from your area would understand by them.
- Have a look through the questions about your language and your area, which we'll also be talking about (there is no need to answer these questions on the sheet).
- Complete the Language Questionnaire by putting ticks in the appropriate boxes.

Appendix 3


PEOPLE
personality
intelligent
brainy
stupid
barmy
daft
gormless
rude
ignorant
moody
touchy
mean
(with money)
tight
stingy
*minging
any others
canny
*queer old stick
appearance
clothes
(in general)
dig out
glad rags
*dobber
unattractive
plain
attractive
bonny lass
trousers
tracky bottoms
*budgies
soft shoes
(worn by children for P.E.)
*sandshoes
plimsolls
glasses
gegs-specs
tall
lanky
men's facial hair
(above lip & in
front of ears)
tache
side boards
any others
*gawky
ages
&
relationships
partner
(sexual) male / female
living tally
our lass
the wife
friend
mate
boss
gaffer
baby
*nippa
babby
bairn
child (boy/girl)
lass
lad
bairn
(small child)
*progs
grandmother / father
*nanna
grandma
grandad
man /
woman
gadgie bloke tat
lass *lad *bint nut
mother / father
our Mam
our Dad/old man
brother / sister
our Kid
our lass
any others
left footer (R.C)
body
head
nose
snitch
neb *snout
mouth
*trap chops
gob
teeth
choppers
ears
lugs
legs
pins
any others
spelk (splinter)


FEELINGS, ACTIONS & STATES
feelings & states
pregnant
bun in oven
*fallen
tired
zonked
knackered
*wrecked
*jiggered
hot
mafted
parched
boiling
*fathered
cold
nippy
nithered
parky
*starving
frozen
any others
frazzled (stressed)
moithered (bothered)
chill out (relax)
gutted (feel awful)
manky (unpleasant)
claggy (sticky)
coggly (uneven)
*dallaly off his rocker
tap
fond - yonderly
*touched
mad
nutter
barmy
daft
*mental
drunk
*palatic
sloshed, slewed
cheated (e.g. financially)
*nipped off
pleased / proud
dead chuffed
not have any money left
skint
flat broke
*stony
dirty
hacky mucky clarty
gruffy grotty
ill
bad
out of kilter
saying things
ask to wait
hang about
hang on
talk / chat (a lot)
natter
gobby
thank
ta. - cheers
tell on someone (tales)
sprag.
tell to be quiet
hold your tongue
belt up
shut up
any others
a way man
like
gan yam
scran (go away)
doing things
run away from (escape)
nick off
scarper
sleep
kip
steal
pinch
nick
work (hard)
graft
not use right hand to write with
cack handed
cuddy wifter
any others
plodging (paddling)
jarping (eggs at Easter)
tan (lift on a bike)
croggy (lift on front of bike)
*kettle you (
throw away
*hoy
shot it
chuck it out
*sling
play
mess about
hit
thump
*smack
bray
dobbe
eat quickly
bolt
scoff
*wolfed.
fight
batter
*set to
*scrap


THE OUTSIDE WORLD
buildings & jobs
policeman
bobby copper
police station
cop shop
prison
clink
*nick
any others
byre
*front room
*dicky dancers
*nitty nora
main room of the house (with T.V.)
living room / dining room
toilet
netty - bog
small walkway (path) between houses
arch - alley *ant.
television
telly
food & money
food taken to work
bate *box
meals of the day
breakfast
dinner
tea
supper
types of bread
fadgies
sodabread.
flat cake
*stotties
food (in general)
grub - nosh up
any others
pikelets
paste eggs (hard boiled)
stife (like smoke)
*kizzened
£1
quid
£1,000
money (in general)
dosh *slag.
nature & weather
cat
moggie
dog
pooch
time between summer & winter
back end
rain (heavy)
tanking down
pelting down
pouring down
*siling.
rain (light)
mizzle
spitting
fret (very)
small stream
beck sike
stell
any others
fleet (tidal stream)
spuggies (sparrows)
*flitter-loggy
*flitter mouse
*blacklogs

Appendix 4

Your Language

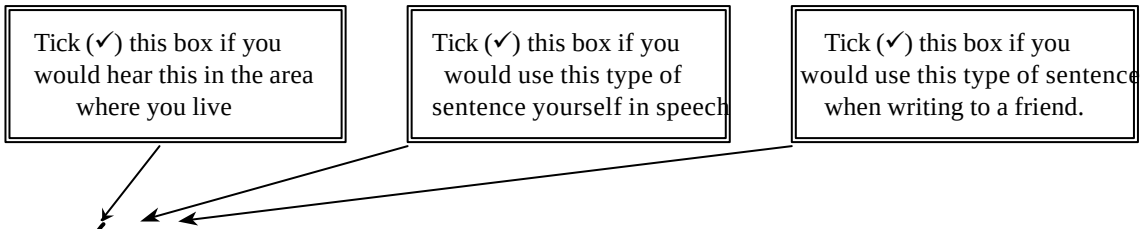
- What accent would you say you had, and do you like it?
- Can you recognise the accent of Middlesbrough (e.g. if heard on the radio or TV)? If so, how?
- Do you think older and younger people talk the same here (pronounce things the same and use the same words)?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you've deliberately changed the way you talk? If so, why?
- Do you think there's a difference between how males and females speak here?
- Where, geographically, would you say people stop talking the same as you and start sounding different?
- What would you think if your accent was referred to as Geordie or Yorkshire?

Your Area

- If you were watching a *regional* news programme, what places would you expect to hear news from?
- Do you remember when the county of Teesside was formed and Middlesbrough was no longer in Yorkshire? Do you think this change made a difference?
- Would you consider Teesside to be in a larger 'north-eastern' part of the country or a larger 'Yorkshire' part of the country? Why?
- What image or description of Middlesbrough would you give to someone who didn't know it?
- If you wanted a day out shopping, where would you go?
- Do you think Middlesbrough is a fashionable place to be?
- What do you consider the local football derby to be?
- If you could, would you change where you came from? Why/why not?
- What do you consider the best and worst things are about growing up and living in Middlesbrough?
- Have you ever seen Middlesbrough on a national T.V. programme (e.g. a documentary)? If so, how was it portrayed?
- If an outsider was complaining about Middlesbrough, would you defend it even if you agreed with what s/he was saying? Why/why not?
- How many friends, relations and work/school/college mates do you have in the neighbourhood (not more than about 5 mins. away) who you see regularly?

Appendix 5

Language Questionnaire



1.	✓		He was just sat there by himself.
2.	✓		They can't do nothing without you saying.
3.	✓		There's a job going at our place if youse two want to go for it.
4.	✓		We all talk different.
5.	✓		You weren't stood there, were you?
6.			Just say what you want, innit?
7.	✓		They said they were coming back on Monday and they never.
8.			That's the best one what she's got on.
9.	✓		You're insured on them items for 80 days.
10.			He's working 9 while 6 this week.
11.	✓		I'm going down London next week.
12.	✓		I don't fancy going up Stockton.
13.			The sharks were only two foot long.
14.	✓		I seen Sarah at work yesterday.
15.			I knew a bloke who were doing speech therapy.
16.			We was walking along the road when it happened.
17.			It were too cold to go out.
18.	✓	✓	We usually gan down the pub on Thursday's.
19.	✓	✓	I bet she was sick as.
20.	✓		They give me it the same day I opened the account.
21.	✓		I should've went to the medical really.
22.			You wasn't listening to what I said.
23.			She come in at 12 o'clock last night.
24.			She don't like that sort of thing.
25.			There's no Electron signs on any doors.
26.			I'm not cooking for them, they can do it theirselves.
27.	✓	✓	Lend us your catalogue, I want to have a flick through it.
28.	✓		There was kids there.
29.	✓		I've never heard of him like.
30.	✓		He said it wasn't scary but, mind you, he is about 45.
31.	✓		They proper hurt you when you crash.
32.			The cops ain't gonna do anything.
33.			They in't gonna pull you up.
34.	✓		It's the only like decent night out we have, isn't it?
35.			He wouldn't could've worked, even if you had asked him.
36.			Will I put the kettle on?
37.			My hair needs washed.
38.			I'm opening another account me.
39.			If you're left-handed, you're more cleverer.
40.	✓		I've forgot my money, can you buy me a pint.

Appendix 6

Identification Score Index

1. If you were on holiday and saw someone you had never seen before but thought they came from you home town (e.g. you overheard their accent and recognised it, they were wearing the local football shirt etc.), would you:
   a) feel compelled to go and ask where they were from and strike up a relationship (3)
   b) feel you had something in common but not do anything about it (2)
   c) not feel any differently than you would towards any other stranger (1)

2. Would you say you feel close to and feel you have something in common with people from your home town in general (that is people you don't know personally), or would you say you do not feel any closer to them than to people from somewhere else?
   a) feel closer to people from home town (3)
   b) don't feel any closer to people from home town than to other people (1)
   c) don't know, can't say (2)

3. If you were the manager of a company which was recruiting people and two equally qualified and experienced people applied for the position, but one had been born and educated in your home town and the other had been born and educated somewhere else, would you choose:
   a) the person from your home town (3)
   b) the person from somewhere else (1)
   c) don't know, wouldn't matter (2)

4. Would you prefer your child's school teacher to be:
   a) a local person with a local accent (3)
   b) a person who spoke 'standard' English with a 'standard' accent (1)
   c) it wouldn't matter what accent they had (2)

5. If you were voting in a local election, would the fact that a candidate was a local person persuade you to vote for them?
   a) yes it would (3)
   b) no it wouldn't (1)
   c) don't know (2)

6. If you wanted to leave something to a charitable organisation would you choose:
   a) a local one (3)
   b) a national / international one (1)
   c) don't know, depends on the cause (2)

7. If there was a programme on T.V. about your home town which clashed with your favourite programme and you couldn't record either would you:
   a) watch it and miss your favourite programme (3)
   b) watch your favourite programme and miss the other (but wish you hadn't) (2)
   c) watch your favourite programme and miss the other (but not mind) (1)