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SOCIOLINGUISTIC VARIABILITY IN ORAL NARRATIVE

VOL I

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Doctor of Philosophy

THE UNIVERSITY OF ASTON IN BIRMINGHAM

July 1988

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## THESIS SUMMARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF ASTON IN BIRMINGHAM  
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Doctor of Philosophy  
1988

This thesis begins with a sociolinguistic correlational study of three phonetic variables - (*h*), (*t*) and (*ing*) - as used by four occupational groups - nurses, chefs, hairdressers and taxi-drivers. The groups were selected to incorporate three independent variables: sex (male-dominated versus female-dominated occupations); training (length and specialisation - nurses and chefs being more specialised than hairdressers and taxi-drivers) and location (the populations were selected from two cities - Liverpool and Birmingham).

Although the correlational work demonstrates intra-sex and occupation consistency in speakers' choice of linguistic variants (females (particularly nurses) being significantly closer to the prestige norm) it is essentially non-explanatory and cannot account for narrative dynamics and style shift. Therefore, an in-depth qualitative examination of the data (which draws mainly on Narrative and Discourse Analysis ) forms the major part of the analysis. The study first analyses features common to all the narratives, direct speech, expressive phonology and linguistic ambiguity emerging as characteristic of all humorous storytelling. Secondly, three major sources of inter-personal variation are investigated: narrator perspective, sex and occupational role.

Perspective is found to vary with topic and personality, greater narrator involvement coinciding with a higher proportion of internal evaluation devices. Sex differences include topic choice and bonding in the storytelling sessions. Sex differences are also evident in style shifting, where the narrator mimics the voice of a character in the narrative (adopting segmental and/or prosodic tokens to signal a change of persona). The research finds that females narrators rarely employ segmental accommodation downwards on the social scale (whereas men do), but are on the other hand adept at using prosodic effects for mimicry. Taxi-drivers emerge as the group with the most distinctive narrative flair, a fact which is related to their occupation.

The conclusion stresses a need for both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data; the importance of occupational role, as opposed to sex role per se in determining narrative conventions; the view of narrative as a negotiable entity, which is the product of relationships among participants; and the importance of considering the totality of the communicative act.

SOCIOLINGUISTICS  
ORAL NARRATIVE  
HUMOROUS LANGUAGE  
OCCUPATIONAL ROLE  
SEX ROLE

This thesis is affectionately dedicated to my parents and to David, without whose unswerving faith and support none of this would have been possible.

My dear teachers,

participate in the

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to my supervisor Catherine Johns-Lewis for her advice and support throughout the duration of this project.

Thanks are also due to the nurses, hairdressers, taxi-drivers and chefs who took time to participate in the storytelling sessions.

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<u>Side 1</u>	<u>Tape Counter Number</u>	<u>Side 2</u>	<u>Tape Counter Number</u>
"Going to Worcester"	001-076	"Brain Scan"	002-012
"Ulysses"	077-107	"Urine Test"	014-034
"Inky, the Printer"	108-125	"Souffle Vesuvius"	036-045
"Posh Clients"	127-129	"The Boots Boy"	047-063
"The Chinese Man"	131-136	"Staff Toilets"	067-082
"Highlights"	137-153	"Senility"	083-090
"The Drunk"	154-182	"Pat's Story"	092-096
"The Salon"	184-201	"The Prostitute"	097-104
"Sylvia's Knickers"	203-218	"Duran Duran"	106-121
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"Brain Scan"	039-049	"St. John's	030-035
"Urine Test"	224-250	Ambulance"	
"Senility"	283-292	"Irish Sisters"	094-104

Tape 3 - Stories told by the Birmingham Hairdressers (Side 1) and the Liverpool Hairdressers (Side 2) (i.e. all data elicited from the hairdressers).

<u>Side 1</u>	<u>Tape Counter Number</u>	<u>Side 2</u>	<u>Tape Counter Number</u>
"Highlights"	013-027	"Pat's Story"	056-059
"Duran Duran"	058-072	"The Brush Story"	115-134
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<u>Side 1</u>	<u>Tape Counter Number</u>	<u>Side 2</u>	<u>Tape Counter Number</u>
"Souffle Vesuvius"	067-077	"The Boots Boy"	272-294
		"Inky,	436-462

Tape 5 - Stories told by the Birmingham Taxi-drivers (Sides 1 & 2).

P.T.O

<u>Side 1</u>	<u>Tape Counter Number</u>	<u>Side 2</u>	<u>Tape Counter Number</u>
"Sylvia's Knickers"	033-046	"Staff Toilets"	099-115
"Alfie's Story"	102-187		
"Ulysses"	269-308		

Tape 6 - Stories told by the Liverpool Taxi-drivers

(Side 1).

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## INTRODUCTION

Narrative analysis has a long history in the linguistic literature. Early work focussed on written narrative and attempted to describe the functional and structural components of folk stories, legends and historic sagas. Through intuitive analysis of these types of text, linguists were not only able to discern common linguistic elements, they also perceived differences in the social and moral codes of communities (although the latter were the focus of anthropology rather than linguistics). However, the relatively recent development of sociolinguistics has demonstrated the importance of studying speech as it is actually used in everyday situations and with the growing interest in spoken discourse, researchers in the field of narrative have naturally paid special attention to conversational narratives and in particular, to stories.

An early focus of debate in narrative analysis (both for psycholinguists interested in the cognitive structuring of memory processes, and for linguists attempting to produce a typology of narrative discourse) was how to define the story. Many researchers posited temporal ordering as a defining characteristic of narratives (Labov and Waletzky, 1967; Labov, 1972). However, with the advent of cross-cultural studies on narrative came the realisation that this belief reflects the social view of the Western tradition of storytelling. For example, it has been demonstrated that in certain cultures like Java, time is

cyclical rather than sequential (Becker, 1979). It has also been known for some time that narrators can embellish or exaggerate story events merely for the sake of telling a good story and that stories need have no point, except to entertain an audience (Heath, 1983).

It has become clear that some speakers tell "better" stories than others (members of certain cultures like Jews and Greeks, and particularly - though not exclusively - the working class), and that this creative ability is a consequence of their predilection for a particularly involved and vivid narrative style (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1972, 1978; Tannen, 1983, 1984). Narrative ability therefore takes very different forms in different cultures and in different social contexts.

It is only by exploring the range of variation in storytelling, that linguists can arrive at some understanding of what is universal, not only in terms of ability (which of course is crucial to the question of "competence"), but also in terms of the relation between form, meaning and context. The fact that narrative is often a means of recounting and redefining experience (Goffman, 1981) suggests that the sort of narratives one is in the habit of telling may reflect and perhaps even influence one's view of the world. Hence, the study of individual differences in storytelling should lie at the heart of narrative analysis. However, it is also necessary to delimit the social conditions which encourage narrative and

those which constrain it.

Although there are studies which have examined sub-cultural variation in narrative (Kalcik, 1975; Heath, 1983; Tannen 1984) too little is known about how narrative style varies according to the sex and the occupation of the narrator and of the story recipients. As Dell Hymes (1979) says,

"Consider further what it means to become an accepted member of a profession or any other guildlike group. Commonly it means to share the narrative tradition, what in women we call "gossip" and in men "shoptalk," the lore of one's mentors and in time, of one's own career. Would someone be accepted as a member of your profession who was ignorant of all such anecdote and took no part in its exchange?"  
(Dell Hymes, 1979: 42-43)

This suggests that the acceptability of narrative is highly constrained and that one's own particular narrative style may provide entry to some groups and preclude entry to others. The plethora of occupations which exist, and the fact that many of them are sex-typed, suggests that there is a clear need for further investigation into the form and quality of narrative interaction in different occupational groups. The images which narrators project and the characters they portray in storytelling should tell one something about what it means to be a member of a particular group.

This thesis merges quantitative and qualitative techniques of analysis to address the issue of sub-cultural variability in narrative style. The emphasis is on discerning a particular sex-related or occupation-related narrative

style. Although the narratives are also found to have a number of features in common, the thesis does not attempt to produce a typology of discourse for narrative, nor to define the "story" on the basis of these, since the observations relate to a specific sub-class of narrative - humorous stories.

A combination of analytical techniques is employed in order to provide a more thorough examination of the data base. Qualitative examination of the data provides more insight into the pragmatic conditions which are operating from one narrative performance to the next. However, an assessment of the linguistic features characterising stories is surely a necessary prerequisite for an adequate typology of narrative discourse, since it may be the proportions of such features (rather than their presence or absence) which distinguishes storytelling in different groups. Hence the incorporation of sociolinguistic techniques into narrative analysis could have a two-fold effect - making researchers more aware of the social variables influencing their results and providing a more structured qualitative investigation. In addition sociolinguistics (which for many analysts has relied on statistical analytical techniques) would gain valuable qualitative insight into the data.

A population of 34 subjects selected from four occupational groups - nurses, chefs, hairdressers, and taxi-drivers - (all from the lower status sectors of society) participated in storytelling sessions conducted at their respective

places of work. The groups were drawn from 2 cities - Liverpool and Birmingham - and were selected to incorporate the two main variables of sex (male-dominated vs. female-dominated occupations) and training (length and specialisation - nurses and chefs being more specialised than hairdressers and taxi-drivers). Subjects ranged in age from 16-55 years. The analysis is based on 143 narratives taken from about 9 hours of recorded conversation. Elicitation techniques were based on those developed by Labov (1966, 1972), the request for humorous narratives being an attempt to reduce the social distance between participants and the analyst.

The plan of the thesis is as follows:

Chapter One presents a critique of the fundamental principles of sociolinguistic analysis and attempts to show how traditional sociolinguistics can benefit (in terms of explanatory power) from a more qualitative approach to linguistic data. The critique covers literature relevant to the quantitative analysis of variables which follows (Chapter 3) and prepares the way for the merging of statistical and observational techniques (Chapters 5 and 6).

Chapter Two describes the methods and materials used in collecting the data and outlines the research orientation.

Chapter Three presents a sociolinguistic analysis of 3 phonetic variables - (h), (t) and (ing) - as used by the four occupational groups. It is intended that this study (which shows sex and occupational differences in speakers

choice of linguistic variants) should provide a valuable quantitative point of reference for the in-depth qualitative examination of the data.

Chapter Four reviews the literature on stories and narratives and focuses on the distinction between criterial and typical story features, highlighting features which form part of the qualitative analysis.

Chapters Five and Six present the major analysis of the data. Chapter Five focuses on the characteristics which are shared by the samples of narrative collected. It concentrates on the forms and functions of humour in the data, on narrative structure, and on characteristics of linguistic devices which typify the humorous narratives.

Chapter Six considers inter-narrator variation in narrative style, focussing on narrators' perspectives in storytelling, sex differences and occupational group influences. Finally, Chapter Seven presents a summary and conclusions of the study as well as suggestions for future research.

The analysis shows that while there are similarities among the narratives (i.e. they display humour, they share structural characteristics, and they exploit recurrent linguistic devices), there is a considerable degree of intra- and inter-narrator variability in narrative strategy, structure and style. Individuals not only differ in the perspectives which they adopt in storytelling, there are also marked sex-preferential tendencies in topic choice and bonding behaviour. Topic choice agrees with cultural



expectations for the sexes, men exploiting taboo topics more often and more successfully than women (whose focus is social embarrassment). In addition, men tend to attack others through humour, while women more often make fun of their own weaknesses. Male bonding is found to be <sup>! though</sup> competitive (men preferring "point-scoring", and competing <sup>th</sup> more fiercely and more successfully for floor space), whereas female bonding is cooperative and relies on a mutual support system of contributions to each others' stories.

The use of a combination of techniques has facilitated the isolation of the phenomenon called "Token Mimicry" (imitation of the speech of an absent third party). It is found that this effect is not amenable to statistical analysis because the linguistic features utilised occur in very small proportions and mimicry itself also relies on a constellation effect (i.e. tokens may be selected from several linguistic levels simultaneously). An unpredicted finding of the investigation is that men and women show a preference for different types of token mimicry. Women in the sample do not mimic low prestige regional or ethnic accents, however, they do show a preference for <sup>regional</sup> idiosyncratic mimicry. In contrast, men avoid idiosyncratic effects but frequently imitate regional and ethnic accents, regardless of their prestige. The analysis suggests that this behaviour parallels the female tendency to converge towards RP in other situations, and that suppression of the vernacular may be strong enough to make the imitation of non-RP forms both psychologically and hence linguistically

very difficult. It also suggests that token mimicry, as a self-dissociated (Goffman, 1974) form of talk provides an acceptable means by which females can criticise others.

Another significant finding of the study is that although the four occupational groups are distinguished by the length and specialisation of their training, a factor which may be even more important is the hierarchical structuring of each occupation (since this influences the authority to which occupational members are subjected). It is found that the nurses (who were trained within the highly structured and constrained hospital hierarchy) use a combination of linguistic features (high proportions of standard variants, hedges and tag questions) which realise the most detached and hesitant narrative style of the four groups, whereas the taxi-drivers (who are relatively free from any authority) have a very distinctive and involved storytelling style. It is concluded that a more relaxed working environment encourages a performed style of narrative.

A future avenue of research would be to extend the present study of narrative style not only to other occupational groups but also to other social contexts. Also, the necessity of examining a range of features means that all cannot be dealt with in depth. Token mimicry is a feature with considerable potential for further research as is the linguistic study of humour. However, the examination of variation in narrative style must necessarily begin with small, deliberately structured studies which are capable of

highlighting the major areas of variability. It is the author's belief that the blending of quantitative and qualitative approaches to data can enhance the range of features which emerge and will ultimately provide an analysis with more explanatory power.

## Chapter One

### A CRITIQUE OF THE ESSENTIALS OF SOCIOLINGUISTIC

#### ANALYSIS

#### 1.0 Introduction

Dell Hymes(1979: 42) makes the point that,

"In the elementary sense of coherent discourse, of the creation of text, narrative ability is apparently universal."

However, sub-cultural and cross-cultural studies of narrative (discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.2) have made it clear that this ability can assume a variety of forms and serve many diverse functions for different speakers (Cazden and Hymes, 1978). The acceptability of narrative is highly constrained and social interaction through narrative may support group boundaries and social hierarchies. One aspect of what it means to be part of a group is surely to share the narrative tradition of that group and to be aware of the socially appropriate conditions for narrative (Hymes, 1979). However, an employer may win an audience by virtue of his position rather than by skill, while an employee who is a gifted narrator may find the occasions for narrative performance considerably reduced in a hierarchically structured work setting (Hymes, 1979).

This suggests that some social conditions may encourage narrative, while others may counteract it. It also suggests

that there may be differences of narrative technique and quality between the dominant and relatively more powerless groups in society and that these may be perpetuated by the the roles which society assigns them. A study of narrator identity, characteristics and role is therefore a necessary prerequisite for the investigation of what is universal in narrative performance and should ultimately extend our understanding of competence. The study of linguistic variation in and between socially defined groups is of course a major concern of sociolinguistics, and the implication of this is that the "discourse of narrative" tradition would benefit from cross-fertilisation with the Labovian paradigm within sociolinguistics.

With this in mind, the study reported here was undertaken to study variation within narrative with reference to two social dimensions: a) the occupational background of narrators and b) the sex of narrators. Despite the fact that previous sub-cultural studies of narrative are available (e.g. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1972; Kalcik, 1975; Heath, 1983), the dual influence of occupation and sex on narrative performance remains unexplored. As the prestige accorded to an occupation reflects the sex-typical incumbent - men in male dominated occupations and women in female dominated occupations (Jacobs and Powell, 1985) - the distribution of men and women into dominant and submissive roles in society may be reinforced by their choice of occupation, and may influence (or even perpetuate) their narrative style.

Two distinct methodologies are used to describe the corpus of narratives:-

- a) quantitative treatment of phonetic variables in the Labovian tradition.
- b) qualitative treatment of dynamic development and structure, in the "discourse of narrative" tradition.

It is intended that the two methodologies should complement each other. The quantitative approach establishes a firm basis on which to assess distance from the prestige norm of the narratives produced by a) the different occupational groups and b) the two sexes. The qualitative approach establishes a framework which assesses inter- and intra-individual variation in narrative style and highlights linguistic similarities and differences between a) the four occupational groups and b) the two sexes. The adoption of a combination of techniques therefore has the dual function of providing a more structured qualitative approach and increasing the explanatory power of the quantitative work.

In order to set this combination of approaches in context, the merits and limitations of existing quantitative and qualitative techniques of analysis are considered in the following sections.

### 1.1 The Labovian Paradigm

The Labovian (1966) paradigm can be criticised for failing

to take account of certain factors in research design:-

- 1) individual variation and style shift.
- 2) differential sensitivity of linguistic variables to social variables, and degree of reflection of these social variables.
- 3) the absence of large scale global categories other than age, sex and social class.
- 4) the co-existence of different norms, to which speakers may be converging or from which they may be diverging.
- 5) the non-discreteness of many linguistic variants.

Other features of the Labovian paradigm can be equally criticised, notably its dependence on three flawed concepts - the speech community, the variable, and standard versus non-standard speech.

In section 1.2, these flawed concepts are examined in detail. Section 1.3 then shows how analytical techniques have developed in post-Labovian work, to take account of the deficiencies and flaws noted. Section 1.4 examines approaches to the analysis of speech which are more qualitative than quantitative and finally, Section 1.5 outlines the research orientation towards a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques for analysing the narrative data.

## 1.2 The Assumptions of Correlational Methodology

The basic idea in correlating variables, is that the proportions of each variant which a speaker uses in

different situations will place them in social space, relative to other speakers. The correlational method is a way of assigning scores to linguistic texts so that researchers have a basis for comparison. The next step is to draw the inference of a causal connection between the figures and social variables like age, sex and social class. However, statistical results merely show the probability of something occurring by chance, they do not prove a causal connection (Hudson, 1980). Hence, while statistical results provide a useful indication of trends in speech behaviour, they can not offer explanations for speakers' linguistic choices.

This section examines in detail the basic assumptions of correlational approaches to data. The focus is on the three major concepts on which the correlational framework rests and which, it is suggested, are problematic. These are the notions of the speech community, the variable, and standard versus non-standard speech.

### 1.2.1 The Speech Community

Labov's (1966) main interest was in describing community grammars since he assumed that the speech behaviour of any one individual would be far more variable than the speech behaviour of the group to which they belonged. New York City dwellers formed a speech community for Labov (1966) because they appeared to evaluate variables in the same way. For example, they all viewed the use of post-vocalic (r) as



prestigious. Speakers differed only in the extent to which they used particular variants.

The problem with Labov's view of the speech community is that it somehow implies, a) that speech communities are linguistically homogeneous, i.e. all speakers at all times share the same variables and evaluation of variables; and b) that every speaker belongs to a speech community. As Romaine(1982b) has pointed out, language change is impossible in the type of speech community defined by Labov since for change to occur, speakers must go through a stage where they do not show common evaluation of variables. It is also clear that everyone does not belong to the kind of community which Labov(1966) describes.

Some communities are really very heterogeneous. In fact, Bolinger(1975) says that there is "no limit to the number and variety of speech communities in society because there is no limit to the reasons why people league themselves together". He lists amusement, self-identification and security among the reasons why groups exist.

Perhaps people who belong to highly-focussed communities (Le Page, 1968) where they interact frequently and have a large number of shared norms, would feel themselves to be part of a community in the sense of Labov (1966, 1972b). However, such communities are the exception rather than the rule in Britain. All speakers are likely to feel affiliation with different groups at different times as they

move through society. Le Page (1968) believes that the speaker "locates himself in a multidimensional space according to the groups which from time to time he wishes to identify". This allows for the overlapping of groups and gives the idea that speakers can simultaneously belong to different groups each of which become relevant at some time for the speaker.

Each of the groups may represent maxima of different kinds of prestige. For example, a medical researcher at a hospital may feel that at work, he is part of an occupationally defined group. However, on the sports field he may feel that it is physical achievement and friendship which makes him part of a team. It would be difficult to rank the prestige of medical research against the prestige of physical achievement in sport, since it is possible to imagine situations where the fact that the man is a member of the rugby team is more important to an interaction (and has more influence on his speech behaviour) than the fact that he is medical researcher. His affiliation with any occupational group might seem irrelevant at a "rugby dance".

It is possible to recognise that people may feel they belong to a speech community without using language in the same way as other members. This is psychological rather than linguistic reality.

The correlation of more and more linguistic variables with large-scale social variables like social class, has

influenced researchers to see everything in terms of global categories. In a different and more recent tradition, James and Lesley Milroy (1977, 1978) found that the concept of the "social network" could be more usefully applied than the concept of the speech community to the Belfast communities they studied (this study is considered in detail in Section 1.3). They found that the strength and type of a person's ties with other members of their community could more directly explain their speech behaviour than the assumption of three homogeneous speech communities.

The concept of the speech community is problematic since its use can bias researchers towards overlooking the representativeness of their sample. A truly representative sample of a community is probably unattainable. However, studies like Labov (1966) and Trudgill (1974a) which claim to have collected representative data are in fact basing their conclusions on very few speakers in each social group (Romaine, 1980a).

In conclusion, it seems that the notion of the 'speech community' as Labov (1966) defines it is a convenient fiction. Communities do exist but members do not necessarily share the same constraints on their speech behaviour or operate with the same linguistic rules. The notion of the individual as a speaker in "multidimensional space" (Le Page, 1968) is probably closer to the way speakers actually operate but it is more difficult to use as a basis for quantitative work. This is one reason why exploring new

concepts like the "social network" has proved to be valuable.

The idea of a single, undifferentiated speech community has also affected the way variables are chosen and measured. The concept of the "variable rule" was based on the static idea of speech communities as Labov (1966) viewed them. The delimitation and identification of individual variants is problematic in itself without assuming that every linguistic variable corresponds to a rule of grammar.

### 1.2.2 The Variable

Prior to correlational studies, within sociolinguistics, variability had been categorised as being due to 'free' variation or alternatively as the mixing of different dialects. Once linguists and dialectologists realised that variability is actually the product of socio-psychological constraints, they attempted to develop theories describing such variation.

Many of the problems inherent in variability theory seem to surround the concept of the "variable rule" which was developed by Labov (1969, 1972a). The "quantitative paradigm" (Labov, 1969; Cedergren and Sankoff, 1974) proposes that a speaker's variability in choice of linguistic forms can best be described by variable rules in his grammar and that such rules can be formulated for the whole community. Although this paradigm has been used to

advantage in studying phonological variation (Cedergren, 1973), it has been criticised for presenting results for whole speech communities which are hard to delimit and for ignoring individual variation (Kay, 1978; Milroy and Margrain, 1978, Matthews, 1979).

Dissatisfaction with the quantitative model led others to develop the "dynamic paradigm" (Bailey, 1973; Bickerton, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975; DeCamp, 1971, 1972). Advocates of this approach distinguish between a speaker's "idiolect" i.e. his linguistic repertoire in full, and the grammar or "isolect" which is a set of linguistic rules which the speaker can use. The separation of idiolect and isolect, means that a speaker can have more than one isolect in his idiolect and can display variable speech behaviour as a result.

Bickerton(1975) suggested that the isolects or lects were ordered in a hierarchy where rules could be written for the conversion of one lect into another and the possession of one property in the hierarchy entailed the possession of all others below it in the hierarchy. So this is a kind of "implicational" ranking system.

Two main criticisms of this theory have been voiced. Firstly, the theory takes no account of the frequency and availability for speakers of particular linguistic forms (assuming that they are all equally "accessible" to all speakers), and secondly lects which do not fit into the

implicational hierarchy are excluded from the analysis. Hence, implicational scales cannot cover every aspect of variability within a community (Hudson, 1980).

The limited success of sociolinguists in describing language in terms of variable rules or implicational scales may mean that language can not be described in this way. However, one important development to come out of the realisation that variation is influenced by social factors is the linguistic variable. This was the measuring device developed for looking at social constraints on language and it has been successfully used to illustrate several important patterns of linguistic and social variation.

Labov(1972a) defines the sociolinguistic variable as one which is correlated with some non-linguistic variable of the social context. The linguistic variables studied have been those which have different realisations with a common meaning. For example, it could be said that the word 'cooking' has the same meaning whether it is pronounced [Kʊkɪŋg] with the final plosive pronounced, or [Kʊkɪn] without. Thus (ɪŋg) is a linguistic variable. The variable is represented within brackets which are deliberately chosen to represent the element (ɪŋg) not as "an item in a phonemic inventory" but as a "phonological entity".

The equivalence of meaning between variants of a variable can be debated, but linguists were not initially concerned with social equivalence. The researcher had to focus on a

set of linguistic variables which were known to have different realisations in the community to be studied. In the early stages of correlational methodology, these were generally phonological variables since these were easy to identify and they occurred in high frequencies compared to variables at other levels of linguistic analysis. It was also a widespread assumption that constancy of meaning was easier to assume among phonetic variants of the same variable. Once one stepped into the realms of syntax, lexis and prosody, the boundaries between variants became fuzzier and variants were more difficult to identify.

This discussion is not intended to give a detailed overview of correlational studies. This has been adequately dealt with elsewhere (Trudgill, 1978; Romaine, 1980a; 1982a). However, by looking at some of the variables which have been dealt with, it is possible to show that some of the assumptions made by quantitative studies are flawed, especially in their treatment of linguistic and social variables. Problems which researchers have encountered with "the variable" can be dealt with under four main headings:-

1. Identifying the linguistic variables and their variants.
2. Choosing the dimensions on which to measure variables e.g. backness/frontness; nasality/orality.
3. Ranking variants of the same variable with respect to each other.
4. Determining the sensitivity of linguistic variables

to social variables.

These points are considered in the following sections.

#### 1.2.2.1 The Identification of linguistic variables and their variants.

A large number of consonant and vowel variables have been investigated in many dialects of British English. According to Romaine(1980a), " The problem of identifying the linguistic variables and their variants is arguably the most difficult and critical step in sociolinguistic methodology". It is a rather subjective process. As Knowles(1978) points out, different researchers can produce different analyses of the same texts even when they are highly trained phoneticians.

The problem not only involves the current disarray of phonological theory but also the 'discreteness' of variants on the phonetic continuum. Phonological theory has to ask itself whether different variants are really realisations of the same variable. For example, do all 'h-droppers' have the (h) as an underlying form or is it absent to begin with.(See Hudson, 1980:159). Similarly, one could ask whether (ing) in 'cooking' has the same underlying form as (ing) in 'finger'. The theory has not yet provided definitive answers to these questions.

Divisions on the phonetic continuum for variables are often



made for convenience rather than for accuracy.

Trudgill(1974a) in his study of Norwich, focussed on a total of sixteen variables. One of the vowel variables was (a:), the vowel in words like 'father' and 'cart'. At the two extremes on the phonetic continuum in Norwich are the back variant [ɑ:] and the low front vowel [a:]. Trudgill transcribes one intermediate vowel variant lying on the continuum somewhere between these two as [ɑ~a:]. It is not clear what criteria have been used to make this division and it appears to be an arbitrary choice made out of necessity (Milroy, 1982).

Obviously, Trudgill has to make some kind of division, otherwise he would give the impression that speakers in Norwich only ever use the extreme variants. This would be inaccurate. However, Milroy(1982) says that his division is merely a descriptive device on which to base the quantitative analysis.

Many researchers working on varieties of British English have questioned the so-called "discreteness" of certain vowel and consonantal variables. Consider, for example, the variable (ɪŋ) which has been widely investigated in Britain and elsewhere (See Chapter 3, section 3.1.3). Traditionally, there have been three major cut-off points on the proposed phonetic continuum for this variable, giving the variants [ɪŋ], [ɪŋg], and [ɪn]. [ɪŋ] is the standard variant and [ɪn] is non-standard. [ɪŋg] is intermediate between these two.

Knowles(1978) has shown that the three cut-off points are not adequate for Liverpool speech. A preliminary analysis of Liverpool speakers would class (ing) as a binary variable, with the presence or absence of a final [ŋ]. However, Knowles points out that the variant [ɪŋ] for many speakers from the linguistic north, is an allophone of /n/ occurring before /g, k/. He says, "a final oral stop can arise in Scouse from other sources than phonological /g/ and g-deletion can be carried out at more than one level." This leads him to identify four forms of (ing) which he transcribes in the following way:-

1. sɪŋ:g

2. sɪ:ŋ

3. sɪŋ:

4. sɪ:ŋ<sup>g</sup>

The form [sɪŋ:<sup>g</sup>] is also possible in theory but in practice it would be virtually indistinguishable from [sɪŋ:g]. Hence it is clear that Scouse has several variants which neither correspond to the RP variant [ɪŋ] nor to the non-standard variant [ɪn]. Yet these variants do have important sociolinguistic meaning. For example, the fourth variant above is the only one which is specifically Scouse (and stigmatised) and which is probably widely recognised as Liverpudlian both inside the city itself and elsewhere. The RP variant [ɪŋ] is infrequently used, yet a stop which

realises phonological (g) is quite prestigious locally and it may signal to natives of the city that the user "speaks nicely" or perhaps that they are middle-class (since this is the form favoured by middle-class women). A straightforward correlational approach would exclude these variants and would miss the fact that in style-shifting to RP, Liverpool speakers may be oscillating about the variant [ɪŋ:ɡ] of the variable (ing), rather than about the RP variant [ɪŋ] (See the discussion of a "Regional Standard" in Section 1.2.3).

It is clear that the cut-off points originally proposed for (ing) do not adequately describe variation in Liverpool speech. However, with a more sensitive analysis comes the possibility that researchers will find it more difficult to identify each variant and will inevitably arrive at different conclusions depending on their own sociolinguistic background and what they expect to hear.

Variables like (ing) are comparatively simple compared to the variable (t) which in Liverpool can have many non-standard forms including one which varies from a stop to an affricate to a fricative (transcribed as [t<sup>s</sup>] in this study) and each of these latter forms is very difficult to distinguish by ear (as exemplified by the statistical analysis presented in Chapter 3). The point is that Liverpool speakers themselves may not only be able to distinguish several different degrees of affrication and frication but they may assign distinctly different

sociolinguistic meanings to each form.

Sociolinguistics must reach a compromise where the measuring techniques are adequate for dealing with such forms as well as taking account of the sociolinguistic make-up of the cities to be studied. This would enable them to make more sensitive statements regarding the meanings which speakers and listeners attribute to the use of particular linguistic patterns and would provide an analysis with more explanatory power than one which continues to apply artificially constructed phonetic scales to the data.

Of course, the variants which are identified depend on the parameters which one uses for measurement.

#### 1.2.2.2 The Problem of "Dimension"

Trudgill's (1974a) study of sixteen variables in Norwich speech was mentioned in the preceding section. Another criticism which has been made of this study concerns the problem of dimension. In classifying the variants of (a:), Trudgill used only the dimensions of frontness and backness, yet the front variant [a:] can also be realised in a nasalised form. This would give another variant to add to those which Trudgill quantifies and incorporating this may have altered his findings slightly, yet he chooses not to use the dimension of nasality/orality (as pointed out by Milroy, 1982).

The problem of which parameters one should use to measure variables is a difficult one. The analysis would be too complex if every dimension were used, since this might make the number of variants too numerous and difficult to identify. Milroy(1982) discusses in detail the problems he encountered with the analysis of short (a) in Belfast speech. Many features apply to this variable. These include fronting, backing, rounding, length and diphthongisation. Some of these parameters are not applicable to certain realisations of (a) and their applicability depends on the linguistic context and the lexical item involved.

The variants of Belfast (a) do not fall on a single continuum. The prestige variant associated with middle-class speech is [a]. However, in working-class speech, [ɛ], the raised and fronted variant is preferred before velar consonants, e.g. back, bag, whereas a variant further back than [a] is used in other contexts. The latter variant can also be raised and may or may not have a centring off-glide. This produces the variant [ɔ̟]. The Labovian method of assigning scores to variants on a single continuum can obviously not cope with this complex variable. The variants of (a) can not be ordered with respect to each other.

Correlational studies have often overlooked the problem of dimension. Milroy(1982) stresses that early sociolinguistic work did not pay enough attention to how to prepare the

data, but took the method of analysis for granted. He says that there was also insufficient account of the linguistic input to the figures with regard to context and lexis. Although Milroy's approach to short (a) provided problems of statistical analysis, it obviously tells us more about the forms of (a) which are used in Belfast (and about the kinds of linguistic and social contexts in which they occur) than a one-dimensional study would.

The dimensions chosen are crucial since they influence how the data is analysed. As indicated above, when several dimensions are used, variants may not fall on the same phonetic continuum and this provides problems of how to rank the variants with respect to each other.

#### 1.2.2.3 Ranking Linguistic Variants and "Index Scores"

The Labovian approach to analysing linguistic data calculates index scores for each variable by assigning a numerical value to each variant of the variable. The figure assigned depends not only on the variant's place on a phonetic continuum (which again raises the problem of which dimensions to use for measurement) but also on its association with the social dimension of standard/non-standard. The analyst assigns a score to each instance of the variable in a given text and then sums these and takes an average of them to give the index score for the variable.

This method appears to work for simple variables which have only two or three variants. For example, suppose that in a given community, speakers use three variants of the variable (*ing*), these being; [ɪŋ]; [ɪŋŋ]; and [ɪn]. Let us suppose that [ɪŋ] is the standard variant and this is assigned a score of one. [ɪn] is non-standard and this is assigned a score of three. [ɪŋŋ] is an intermediate form and so this has a score of two. If a particular sample of speech from this community contains 30 instances of [ɪŋ], 58 instances of [ɪŋŋ] and 89 instances of [ɪn], the index score for the variable (*ing*) can be calculated as:

$$\frac{(30 \times 1) + (58 \times 2) + (89 \times 3)}{177} = 2.33$$

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The Index Score for (*ing*) for this text = 2.33

This of course facilitates the comparison of texts. However, there are a number of flaws in this method and the first concerns the way in which variants are ranked with respect to each other.

As was shown earlier in the discussion (section 1.2.2.1) Liverpool speakers' use of the variable (*ing*) can not be described in terms of the three variants above. A traditional approach would say that all forms which realise phonological (ŋ) are stigmatised and non-standard and the score assigned to these variants would reflect such a judgement. This would give an inaccurate account of what is actually the case for Liverpool speech. The variants are

also difficult to rank with respect to each other and there is the problem of what to do with forms like [ɪŋk] which occur infrequently and only with a certain set of lexical items i.e. the compound nouns "something, anything, nothing". Are these non-standard forms, and if so, are they more or less standard than other variants?

Multiplex variables can not be dealt with in Labovian methodology. The variable (t) has a total of six variants in Liverpool speech (as found in the analysis presented in Chapter 3). These are [t] - the RP variant; [t<sup>2</sup>] - the glottal stop; [t<sup>r</sup>] - a tap; [t<sup>d</sup>] - a voiced variant; [t<sup>ø</sup>] - the absence of closure or friction; and finally, [t<sup>s</sup>] - an affricate or fricative. As the analysis presented in Chapter 3 will show, the variants [t<sup>ø</sup>] and [t<sup>r</sup>] are strongly influenced by lexical input. [t<sup>ø</sup>] occurs most frequently with the class of truncated verbs ending in "n't" (n apostrophe t) such as "wouldn't, couldn't" when they are followed by a vowel. [t<sup>r</sup>] occurs most frequently between two vowels (the first of which is short), as in the phrase 'get off'.

How does one begin to rank these variants? Which is more standard [t<sup>ø</sup>] or [t<sup>r</sup>]? It is also possible that these variants do not function as realisations of the underlying form (t) in the same way that [t<sup>s</sup>] and [t<sup>2</sup>] do. [t<sup>s</sup>] is particularly complex because it has several forms varying from affricates to fricatives and some of these are difficult to distinguish from a heavily aspirated stop.



It is clear that to assign scores to the variants of (t) on the basis of standardness or non-standardness might result in serious distortion of the data. Obviously, (t) is a complex example (as the statistical analysis presented in Chapter 3 shows), and sociolinguists tend to make broad distinctions because they are invariably subject to the limitations of time and money which affect most research. However, they should be aware of the distortions involved in calculating index scores for the whole variable since it is not a simple matter to order variants on the phonetic continuum or with respect to standardness/ non-standardness.

Index scores often take no account of the relative contributions of particular variants and the lexical input or linguistic environment of the variants. As Romaine (1980a) has pointed out, a score of 200 for a variable whose index ranges from 100 to 300 could be interpreted in two ways. One could assume that there is equal use of the highest and lowest variants or an equally valid interpretation is that the intermediate variant is produced 100% of the time. Many researchers now advocate an approach where results are presented for individual variants, which gives a clearer idea of the sociolinguistic facts (Hudson, 1980; Milroy, 1980; Romaine, 1980a).

Labov(1966) also chose to present his results for groups rather than for individuals. However, to rely totally on group scores conceals the amount of variation within the

group and may bias the results in favour of the speech behaviour of the more talkative speakers. This of course could be counteracted by presenting a measure of the standard deviation within the group (Jahangiri and Hudson, 1982) or by only counting a similar number of tokens from each speaker in certain linguistic environments (Macaulay, 1977, 1978).

The problem is that group index scores can be calculated in two different ways and researchers do not always clarify which method they are using (Romaine, 1980a). One method is to look at each individual separately and count the number of times they use each variant and then calculate an index score for that individual and take an average of all the individual index scores to achieve a group score. The second method involves taking the group as a whole i.e. as though it were one speaker, and calculating an index score for the whole text as produced by all speakers. The second method obviously obscures the important sociolinguistic information that some speakers may vary quite considerably in their use of a particular linguistic variable and others may not vary at all (Romaine, 1980a).

Therefore, the Labovian method of assigning index scores is flawed in two major respects. Incorporating variants into variable scores means that information is lost about linguistic context and the relative contributions of the different variants to the variable score. It also means that variants have to be ranked with respect to each other

which may be an arbitrary process for multiplex variables. Presenting group scores means that information is lost about individual variation and the relative contributions of individuals to the groups scores. If index scores must be used (since they are useful when there are a large number of informants and hence a great deal of linguistic data), researchers should make it clear how they assign scores and how indexes are calculated. They should also present scores for individual speakers and individual variants to show how these contribute to the overall pattern.

#### 1.2.2.4 Linguistic Variables' Reflection of Social Variables

Early correlational studies assumed that linguistic variables would reflect social variables equally. For example, Trudgill(1974a) assumed that the variable (ing) was capable of differentiating the age groups, the sexes and the social classes in the community of Norwich. The possibility that certain linguistic variables might illustrate sex differences in speech behaviour but not age or social class differences and others might reflect age differences but not social class or sex differences was not taken into account.

Recent studies have shown that the match between linguistic and social variables can not be taken for granted.

Jahangiri and Hudson(1982) studied patterns of linguistic variation in Tehrani Persian. They assumed that one of the

most influential factors on an individual's speech behaviour in Tehran would be their level of education. By keeping other social variables fairly constant and focussing on age, sex and educational differences, they were able to show that some of the ten variables which they studied differentiated the sexes in certain educational groups but not in others. For example, the variables (a:) and (r) did not differentiate male and female adult speakers from the higher educational groups (university and secondary education), but they did distinguish the higher educational groups from the lower educational groups (primary and no education). The variable (h) on the other hand was a good indicator of sex differences but not of educational differences. Jahangiri and Hudson also showed that certain other variables like forms of (be) had good discriminating value in that they differentiated speakers in terms of all three categories sex, age and education. Jahangiri and Hudson (1982) therefore conclude that variables differ as to whether or not they have good discriminating value for social groups.

Obviously, the best variables to use for a correlational study would be those which have good discriminating power for all social groups. How does the researcher determine which variables have such power in the particular community he wants to study? A pilot study involving several variables and several social groups would probably reveal such tendencies. However, sociolinguistic researchers do not always have time to carry out an extensive pilot study and so they must be aware in interpreting their results that

some linguistic variables may be better indicators of certain social variables than others.

The preceding sections have shown that there are many problems with "the variable" which include identifying and ranking variants and determining which linguistic variables are good indicators of social variables. Another criticism has been levelled at the fact that sociolinguistics consistently describes speakers in terms of their deviation from the "standard". It would be illuminating at this point to look at exactly what standard speech is.

### 1.2.3 Standard Versus Non-Standard Speech

Standard speech is generally recognised as that which has been codified to some extent. It is also the speech associated with the higher social classes of society and until recently, it was the speech used by the media.

Sociolinguistics makes a distinction between standardness (which refers to morphology, syntax and lexis) and accent variation. The accent Received Pronunciation (RP), is the norm against which sociolinguists measure accent variation and although they take great care in laying down the characteristics of non-standard varieties of English, they assume that everyone knows which standard they are using for comparison. Although it is widely assumed that everyone knows what RP is, this section aims to question whether its identity is really so clear cut.

There has been very little research into variation in RP. However, it would appear that it is not a homogeneous variety. Wells (1982b) distinguishes several forms of RP, which he calls U-RP (upper-crust RP); Mainstream RP; Adoptive RP; and finally Near RP.

Mainstream RP coincides with the traditional image of RP and this is probably used by a very small percentage of British people. U-RP is the speech of some of the upper classes and it is typified by the Oxford don stereotype. It differs from Mainstream RP in many ways, for example, in the realisation of vowels which are monophthongs in Mainstream RP. These often become diphthongs in U-RP. The vowel in "man" is [æ] in Mainstream RP, yet in U-RP it is often realised as [ɛæ] or [eæ] both of which are open-diphthongs. U-RP also differs in that it incorporates some of the features of lower-class speech. The variant [ɪn] of the variable (ing) is a feature of U-RP speech which occurs in words like "huntin, fishin, shootin" and this would not occur in Mainstream RP.

Adoptive RP is spoken by people who did not speak RP as children. The adoption is usually in response to a change in the person's social circumstances. They may obtain employment which requires a certain standard of speech or their colleagues may speak RP. The characteristics of adoptive RP are a lack of control by the speaker over the informal and allegro characteristics of RP. For example, where RP speakers might naturally have an intrusive /r/,

adoptive RP speakers would see this as slipshod and would eliminate it. The adoptive speaker often uses his RP for more formal situations and reverts to using more regionalisms in informal speech.

Near-RP sounds like "educated", "middle-class" speech.

There are very few regionalisms which might enable a listener to place the speaker in a corner of Britain. For example, a near-RP speaker from the North of England may use the vowel variant [æ] instead of the RP [ɑ] in words like "bath, path" and yet contain very little else in his speech to indicate that he is a Northerner. It is rather difficult to separate Mainstream-RP and Near-RP, however, Near-RP refers to accents which are well away from the lower end of the social scale and yet are distinctly different from RP itself.

As has been pointed out, standard speech and the RP accent are generally associated with correctness by people who aspire to such speech. A regional speaker who wishes to speak with the characteristics of Mainstream RP faces a dilemma. He probably has a stereotype in which RP speakers enunciate their words clearly and do not make elisions. In fact, as Wells(1982b) points out, Mainstream RP is subject to both elision and assimilation, especially in informal RP speech(Ramsaran, 1978). This occurs in phrases like "ten minutes" ['tɛm'mɪnɪts]; "good girl" ['gʊd'gɜ:l] - (assimilation): and "stand near me" ['stænd'nɜ:mi:]; "next day" ['neks'dɛɪ] - (elision).

Similarly with the phonetic variable (h). In RP, 'h' is dropped on unstressed pronouns like he, him, her, his. If a non-RP speaker was asked to read a passage in an RP style and the passage contained such constructions, they may hyper-correct and insert the 'h'.

There are many more examples of variability within RP. The problem really is that very little is known about the stereotypes which non-RP speakers have of RP and who they use as role models. If regional speakers are not surrounded by Mainstream RP speakers in their environment, who do they take their cue from in style shifting to RP. They will probably look to the "posh" members of their immediate community. The people who they consider speak "nicely". It is likely that these people will not be Mainstream RP speakers. They may be Near or Adoptive-RP speakers but it is more likely that they are speaking a "Regional-RP" which is neither truly RP nor truly regional. Of course the role models a speaker adopts will depend on his social class and the kind of area in which he lives since these will obviously determine his native speech and the people with whom he mixes.

Sociolinguists have argued for the recognition of a "Regional-RP" and investigations into what the characteristics of this variety are (Knowles, 1978, Thelander, 1982). Surely it is more sensible to compare people's regional speech against the standard for their own



community, rather than against a universal standard which is used by a small percentage of people and is misrepresented by a larger number of speakers.

The significance of this is that sociolinguists must do more work on the type of RP to which regional speakers may be aspiring when they role shift. Only then will they be able to make significant statements about regional speech and what people are trying to do when they role shift into a form of RP. The qualitative approach to data seems to have potentially more explanatory power in this respect than a purely quantitative approach.

#### 1.2.4 Conclusions

The discussion so far has illustrated that the three concepts; the speech community, the variable, and standard/non-standard speech; on which it has been suggested correlational methodology rests are flawed in many respects. However, correlational work is not the only kind of sociolinguistics and recent developments in the field do take account of the criticisms voiced. It is clear that current thinking on sociolinguistics is in favour of a more qualitative approach to data since it appears that quantitative work can not by itself "explain" linguistic patterns, although it can predict trends. The following section examines some of the developments which have been made in quantitative research.

### 1.3 Post-Labovian Developments in Sociolinguistic Methodology.

More recent sociolinguistic studies are in general more sensitive to the kinds of factors mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. For example, many researchers now take account of individual variation (Cheshire, 1978, 1982; J. and L. Milroy, 1978; L. Milroy, 1980; J. Milroy, 1982).

The study by Jahangiri and Hudson(1982) which takes account of the differential sensitivity of linguistic variables to social variables has already been mentioned (Section 1.2.2.4) They found that some variables were good indicators of sex, while others did not differentiate the sexes but were good discriminators for educational groups. Their findings obviously provide an important development for sociolinguistics.

Jahangiri and Hudson(1982) also address the question of which individuals or social groups set speech norms. Their data, however, indicates that no single individual or group presents a consistent norm in their linguistic behaviour which others may follow. They do suggest that university-educated females may provide a better model for Standard Persian than other groups. However, there is considerable variation among individuals in this group also. Therefore, by presenting figures for individual speakers and variants and by looking at the distribution of variants rather than merely at the proportions of each one, a more

sensitive analysis is possible.

Thelander (1982) also argues for a qualitative treatment of linguistic data. He suggests ways of dealing with quantitative data without completely ignoring the qualitative tendencies in them. He studied speakers in the town of Burtrask in Sweden in an attempt to show the factors which favour shifts between the dialect of Burtrask and standard Swedish. One of the variables studied was the use of [dɔmm] or [dɛmm] for 'they'. [dɔmm] is the variant of Standard Swedish and [dɛmm] is the Burtrask dialect form. Fifty four percent of the occurrences of this variable were realised in the standard form. Thelander suggests that this could be due to the fact of 'inherent variability' (Labov, 1969), the fact that the corpus is non-homogeneous or the fact that this variable itself is non-homogeneous. His study sets out to encourage speakers to shift between the dialect and the standard in order to discover what is causing the relative distribution of [dɔmm] and [dɛmm].

Thelander also makes the distinction between micro-variables which may be affected by intralinguistic and extralinguistic constraints (e.g. postvocalic (r), the use of which may be affected by the speaker's age, sex and phonetic environment of the variable, (Romaine, 1978) and macro-variables which are only affected by extralinguistic constraints (since a change between languages or dialects usually means a complete change of environment).

Thelander found that each micro-variable was not necessarily an indicator of shifts between the dialect and the standard. He did, however, notice considerable age-related differences in choice of variants. For older speakers (fifty years or above), the percentage of standard variants of each variable used was quite similar. For younger speakers (especially those below twenty years of age) the pattern is more complex. The youngest speakers used the dialect forms of certain features very rarely and at the same time avoided the use of standard variants of other features. He also found that the forms which the younger speakers used very infrequently were those which had the most limited geographical distribution. The dialect forms which younger speakers used in preference to the standard forms were also ones that were common to most dialects of northern Sweden. Thelander(1982) therefore suggests that, " This may be an important aspect of the mechanisms by which local dialects give way to regional dialects ".

The fact that the micro-variables in the study do not show a consistent pattern of behaviour suggests that Burtrask is not a community with two speech varieties, standard and dialect, between which speakers can shift. Thelander suggests that although the data can not be viewed in terms of one macro-variable, it can be viewed in terms of two macro-variables which are related in such a way as to produce three distinct speech varieties, dialect(D), standard(S) and an interlanguage which he calls the regional standard(RS). The regional standard is characterised by the

use of dialect variants of some features and standard variants of others.

Thelander(1982) concludes from the patterns of variation observed that what actually caused the relative distribution of [dɒmm] and [dɛmm] (54%/46%) was,

" to a large extent, .. a non-homogeneous corpus organised in relatively consistent sequences of uni-code speech and, to a lesser extent, inherent variability permitting variants to occur in free combination".

(Thelander in Romaine, 1982a:83)

In using a combination of analytic approaches, Thelander is able to show that micro and macro variation are more complex, and speakers are more variable than traditional Labovian approaches would suggest.

Obviously, this research does not focus on British English but it does have implications for such studies.

Sociolinguists working on British speech varieties now tend to look more closely at the role of the individual, rather than concentrating solely on social groups. Lesley Milroy (1980) in her work in Belfast communities, solved the problem of defining group boundaries by looking at the network ties of individuals.

It has also been shown that the variants of linguistic variables do not necessarily fall on the same phonetic continuum and that simple divisions may be convenient but they often do not reflect the sociolinguistic facts (Knowles, 1978; Milroy, 1982)

Sociolinguistic studies have also been extended to incorporate variables other than phonological ones. Cheshire(1978, 1982) studied peer groups in Reading and incorporated syntactic variation into her study. She focussed on features like non-standard never and "ain't" as used for the negative present tense forms of "be" and "have". By looking at individual scores for both speakers and variants and by examining the distribution of certain features in the data, Cheshire was able to show that the use of "ain't" does not always correspond to the standard negative present tense forms.

The variants of "ain't" elicited were [ɪnt], [ænt] and [eɪnt]. Cheshire(1982a) says that use can be divided into two main groups - those approximating to "ain't" and those approximating to "in't". She suggests that a preliminary analysis might expect [ɪnt] to correspond to Standard English "isn't". However, she found that it occurred with all subjects and in conjunction with utterances where the auxiliary verb was "have" rather than "be".

[ɪnt] was also found to occur in conjunction with tag questions which were intended to indicate assertion or aggression on the part of the speaker (rather than seeking corroboration). In other kinds of tag question, forms of both "in't" and "ain't" were found. Cheshire suggests that the use of [ɪnt] as an assertive or aggressive form may

reflect the norms of the vernacular culture.

Cheshire(1982a) was also able to show that certain linguistic variables were more sensitive markers of vernacular culture and norms than others and that those which functioned in this way for male groups did not necessarily have the same function for female groups.

It is clear that there have been considerable advances in the way that sociolinguistic data is treated and in the linguistic and social variables which have been considered. Studies have been extended to incorporate syntactic, discursal and even prosodic variation (Cheshire, 1982; Dines, 1978; Pellowe and Jones, 1978; Local, 1986). Social psychological features like social ambition have also been considered (Douglas-Cowie, 1978).

Despite the criticisms voiced to date, it must be reiterated that sociolinguistics has made a significant contribution to documenting patterns of language use. It has pioneered methodologies which have forced linguists to contend with the problems of working with actual speech in real, everyday contexts. It is clear that there are now many avenues of sociolinguistic research which recognise the limitations of a purely correlational approach to data and they try to take account of this in their research design. However, the problem is that for many, quantitative work has become sociolinguistics, to the complete exclusion of any qualitative approach.

The exclusion of qualitative description of data is neither necessary nor desirable. Sociolinguists should be re-examining the assumptions of correlational methodology and extending the range of their investigations to include the motivations underlying speech behaviour. This can only be achieved, as the analysis presented in Chapters 5 and 6 will illustrate, by approaching data from both quantitative and qualitative angles.

#### 1.4 Sociolinguistics and the Qualitative Approach

Sociolinguistics has proved to be a rather practically orientated domain with much emphasis on the quantitative approach to data. The preceding sections have shown that traditional sociolinguistics merely describes rather than explains the phenomena it discovers. This clearly limits the predictive power of a model based on such data (Giles, 1977; Scotton and Ury, 1977).

It is also true that the motivations, beliefs and feelings have, in the main part, been ignored by sociolinguists. In their defense, however, it is because sociolinguists tend to see the 'linguistic' aspects of the data as central that they have chosen to concentrate on the linguistic and not the social or psychological as primary. However, it is possible that aspects of personality could interact to determine a person's speech output. In fact, recent work in social psychology is beginning to show that this is indeed the case (Giles, Smith and Robinson, 1980; Smith, Giles and



Hewstone, 1980).

Another criticism of sociolinguistics concerns the nature of language as an independent variable, in that it can, "by its inherent ability to organise events, define the nature of social settings" (Giles and St. Clair, 1979). Finally, no-one working in the field has yet tried to explain why language is more important than non-linguistic variables in influencing social relationships and situations (Giles, Smith, Ford, Condor and Thakerar, 1980). One theory which has attempted to address some of these questions is 'Interpersonal Accommodation Theory'. This theory draws on four main social-psychological theories to explain shifts in speech style. These are discussed below.

#### 1.4.1 Interpersonal Accommodation Theory

In an attempt to see the speaker as something other than a "sociolinguistic automaton" (Giles and Smith, 1979), social psychologists have developed a body of theory which tries to explain the factors affecting shifts in speech style in conversation. The theory, which has already been mentioned, is 'Interpersonal Accommodation Theory' and it draws on four social psychological theories to expand the basic framework which deals with "negotiations" between speakers. These will be examined in turn. The theory is different from existing theories in that it looks at the motivations underlying certain shifts in speech style and attempts to find reasons for them. It has been suggested that by

incorporating current, social psychological knowledge into sociolinguistic theory, sociolinguistics may be directed towards a richer theoretical base(Giles and St. Clair, 1979).

A basic idea in accommodation theory is that people are motivated to adjust their speech styles as a means of expressing attitudes and intentions towards other people. People can express social approval or disapproval by shifting their speech style towards or away from conversational partners.

The theory regards two concepts as central, namely 'convergence' and 'divergence'. Convergence is a linguistic strategy which speakers use to make their speech more similar to other speakers. They can use this to indicate or gain social approval. Speakers can alter several features of their speech, such as, speech rate and pronunciation to indicate convergence. Convergence, therefore, is often a reflection of social integration. Divergence is a linguistic strategy by which speakers make their speech dissimilar to their partners and the aim is to accentuate the differences between speakers. In other words, this can be a tactic of social dissociation(Giles and Powesland, 1975).

We mentioned earlier that accommodation theory draws on four theories for its base. These are now examined in more detail.

#### 1.4.1.1 Similarity-Attraction Theory

One of the theories which deals with convergence, similarity-attraction theory (Byrne, 1969) proposes that if one person converges towards another, then that person will be liked more since the efficiency of the communication channel is increased and the person appears more attractive (Bishop, 1979), more predictable (Berger, 1979) and more intelligible (Triandis, 1960) in the eyes of the conversational partner.

In assessing the attractiveness of other speakers, the individual is apparently looking for things like 'perceived understanding, loyalty, concern for the other's welfare and help in reaching goals (Berger, Weber, Munley and Dixon, 1977). There is a certain satisfaction gained from obtaining and giving such supporting behaviour.

Obviously, the speaker must have the necessary linguistic repertoire to converge towards the other person's speech and convergence will probably not occur towards any undesirable features of a partner's speech e.g. stutters and lisps.

(Although this does occur in "Token Mimicry" which is described in Chapter 5, section 5.3.2).

#### 1.4.1.2 Causal-Attribution Theory

Causal Attribution theory (Heider, 1958) explains that people evaluate others' behaviour according to the motives and

intentions which they think underly that behaviour. Simard, Taylor and Giles(1976) showed that when French Canadian listeners attributed an English Canadian's convergence to French as being due to a wish to break down cultural barriers, then the shift was viewed positively. If it was attributed to factors in the situation forcing the English Canadian to converge, then the shift was viewed much less positively. Similarly, when the speaker diverged, his behaviour was seen as very unfavourable only when it was attributed to a lack of effort on his part.

#### 1.4.1.3 Tajfel's Theory of Intergroup Processes

Tajfel(1974) says that when people form a group, they compare themselves on dimensions which are important to them, for example, possessions and personal attributes. In this way, people create dimensions upon which they can be viewed as positively distinct from a relevant outgroup. Achieving this makes the speaker a favoured member of the ingroup and this reinforces his social identity. The value of belonging to a group is illustrated by Labov's work on peer groups and the Milroys' work in Belfast (Labov, W., Cohen, P. Robins, C. and Lewis, J., 1968; J. and L. Milroy, 1978; L. and J. Milroy, 1977; L. Milroy, 1980)

People can use regional speech as a marker of social identity to reject the values of RP speakers and to gain favour within their own group. This results in speech divergence when speaking to members of the outgroup.

#### 1.4.1.4 Social Exchange Processes

Finally, accommodation theory draws on the notion of social exchange (Homans, 1961). This explains the fact that before performing any convergent or divergent act, speakers assess the rewards and costs associated with it. A shift should incur more potential rewards for a speaker than costs.

For example, consider the interview situation where the interviewee speaks with a regional accent and the potential employer with an RP accent. It is likely that the interviewee will shift his speech in the direction of the interviewer if he wishes to be positively received. The potential gains, i.e. to be regarded as more intelligent, self-confident and industrious by the employer, are higher than the actual costs i.e. the effort of convergence and possible loss of social integrity (Giles, 1970).

It is documented that RP speakers appear not only more intelligible but also more persuasive and they are therefore more likely to enlist the co-operation of others (Giles, 1980). The potential rewards for females adopting RP speech are apparently even higher. They are thought to be more competent than women with regional accents and also less weak, more independent, more adventurous and more feminine (Elyan, Smith, Giles and Bourhis, 1978).

Researchers working on accommodation theory also advocate the empirical testing of the theory. So far, it has been

implied that convergence and divergence represent a binary choice for the speaker. The following sections will show that the mechanisms underlying speech behaviour are much more complex than this.

#### 1.4.2 Empirical Evidence for Accommodation Theory

Accommodation theory has a largely empirical base. Much of the work testing the hypotheses has been carried out in the bilingual community of Quebec since shifts are from one language to another and are therefore more easily measured. Giles, Taylor and Bourhis (1973) devised an experiment to test the hypothesis that "the greater the effort in convergence perceived from a speaker, the more favourably he will be evaluated by the listener and the more the listener in turn will converge back".

English Canadian students heard a tape-recorded message from a bilingual French Canadian student describing a picture for them. The English Canadian students were told to draw the picture as it was described. The recording was then turned on, but on purpose it was turned on too far back and the English Canadian(EC) students heard the French Canadian(FC) student being given his instructions. The FC student was heard to be told that the recipients of the message would be EC bilinguals. He was then heard to ask what language he should use for the message. The instructor asked if he could speak English. The answer was affirmative (this dialogue was all in English) and the FC speaker was then

told that he could use the language of his choice. The point of this exercise was to make the EC students aware that the language the FC speaker chose for the message was a 'conscious' choice on his part.

There were four groups who all heard a description of a very simple harbour scene. The same male FC student read all the versions but in four different modes;

- 1) all in French;
- 2) in mixed French and English;
- 3) in fluent English but with a distinct FC accent; and
- 4) in non-fluent but understandable English which contained many pauses, speech disturbances and grammatical errors.

Giles and his colleagues assumed that this continuum 1-4 would reflect messages increasing in respect of their perceived effort of convergence. Following the drawing exercise, a questionnaire was presented and the students were asked to evaluate their reactions to the speaker and his performance. They were then given another picture and were asked to describe it for some FC bilinguals who would draw it at a later date. Another questionnaire assessed their performance on this task.

The hypothesis was confirmed in that the greater the perceived degree of convergence by the speaker, the more favourably he was evaluated. Interestingly, more EC

bilinguals converged back to non-fluent FC in condition 4 by using French in their descriptions than to any of the other speakers. This experiment is illuminating, if somewhat artificial and unrepresentative of interaction in everyday life.

Bourhis and Giles(1977) investigated accent divergence among Welsh people. The setting was a language laboratory where people who felt strong loyalty to the Welsh heritage were learning the Welsh language. In one of the sessions, these people were asked to take part in a survey examining methods of learning a second language. They were asked questions in English by a speaker with a marked English accent (they were in individual listening booths). At one point the English person strongly challenged the Welsh learners by asking their reasons for learning a "dying language with a dismal future". This question was thought to be threatening to the Welshman's feelings of national identity. The people in the booths were heard to switch to the Welsh language in their replies, most markedly in terms of accent, but also interjecting Welsh words and phrases. One person even started conjugating Welsh verbs into the microphone. In response to neutral questions, the speakers did not diverge so much in terms of accent but there were observable divergences in terms of the content of what they said.

Despite the advances made by accommodation theory, Coupland(1984) argues that the theory is linguistically naive. He says that a theory of linguistic accommodation



can not be fully explicit without an investigation of which precise linguistic features are being manipulated.

Accommodation theory has tended to talk about convergence and divergence in terms of speech rate and pronunciation without supplementing this with objective measurement of specific linguistic variables.

Coupland(1981, 1984) looks at phonological variability in the speech of individuals in a Cardiff travel agency. He recorded fifty one clients, all natives of Cardiff in interaction with one female assistant at the travel agency (Sue, who was also a native of Cardiff). He hypothesised that the assistant's speech would vary in relation to that of her interlocutors 1) if she wanted their approval (and the potential rewards for converging were greater than the potential costs), and/or 2) if she wanted to improve communicative efficiency.

Coupland tests accent convergence, basing the analysis on four linguistic variables which are; (h); (intervocalic t); (ng); and (Consonant Clusters). The accent behaviour of the fifty two participants was assessed for these four variables using the sociolinguistic variable techniques developed by Labov(1966). Coupland(1984) ranks the variants on a scale of standardness/non-standardness, assigning a score of zero to the standard variants and a score of one to the non-standard ones. He also found that the interlocutors differed with respect to social class and he divides them into six groups based on the Registrar General's

## Classification of Occupations.

Coupland found evidence to support the predictions of accommodation theory. When the female assistant was talking to a client from one of the higher social status brackets who used a fairly high percentage of standard variants, her own speech showed a high percentage of use of standard forms. Conversely when she was talking to someone from one of the lower status brackets who used more non-standard forms, her own speech showed a higher percentage of non-standard usage (the assistants normal distribution of variants had been quantified prior to the experiment). Therefore, the assistant's accent does match that of her interlocutors in a way that conforms to the predictions made by accommodation theory.

Admittedly, it must be remembered that convergence and divergence are not static phenomena and the clients were probably accommodating their speech as well. Coupland also suggests that in talking to clients, the assistant may not be merely trying to match the linguistic behaviour of these people, but rather that she is attempting to modify other behaviours as well in an attempt to present a social image which is similar and therefore acceptable to her interlocutors. He calls this the interpretive version of accommodation theory.

Coupland(1984) criticises accommodation theory for treating phonological variation on the same level as shifts in speech

rate, pause, utterance lengths, content, vocal intensity and pitch (in fact it could be important to quantify each of these with a separate technique). Since variation in pronunciation can cause speakers to be rated significantly differently on a number of evaluative dimensions, RP speakers being rated as more competent and intelligent and regional speakers as more trustworthy and friendly (Giles and Powesland, 1975), pronunciation shifts carry a lot of independent meaning. Coupland (1984) therefore says,

" Now, if accent behaviour carries so much independent meaning, it seems a travesty to treat variations in Sue's speech as 'merely' the matching of her speech patterns to those of her interlocutors ".  
(Coupland, 1984:66)

Such an approach would exclude speakers' individual style shifts and also excludes the possibility that speakers may converge on some linguistic levels and diverge on others. In assistant/client interactions the assistant must not only appear competent and intelligible but also trustworthy and friendly. She is therefore more likely to adopt some features of high-status clients' speech which make her appear more competent but not those which would make her appear unfriendly.

Coupland's research certainly advances the experimental aspects of accommodation theory since he applies it to real-life settings rather than using artificial laboratory data with simulated voice patterns. However, he utilises the very same sociolinguistic variable techniques which have

been subjected to criticism. Admittedly he does choose variables which appear to have binary realisations (except for consonant clusters) and so it is less difficult to rank the variants with respect to each other. However, the standard used for comparison is the British RP standard which may not be the standard towards which Welsh-accented speakers converge in such situations.

It does seem, however, that sociolinguistics and social psychology could benefit in adopting ideas from each others' disciplines. However, it was mentioned earlier that convergence and divergence are complex concepts and they do not merely represent a dual choice for the speaker.

#### 1.4.3 Speech Complementarity

Speakers can converge or diverge along a number of dimensions, for example, speech rate, pronunciation, or content. It is important to make the distinction between speech convergence/divergence and psychological convergence/divergence. Speakers may psychologically converge and yet in terms of speech variables, they may diverge. Take the case of a courting couple. The partners may wish to accentuate their male and female traits by the woman adopting a soft voice quality and the man a harsher one, yet psychologically this represents a wish to converge. The converse is also true. In Montreal, Francophone shoppers have asked an Anglophone assistant for the services of a Francophone assistant in fluent English.

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Linguistically there is convergence here, yet psychologically the desire seems to be one of dissociation.

It is also true that where partners in interaction have complementary roles e.g. doctor/patient, father/son, the holder of the subordinate position may adopt a speech style suited to that role, diverging in his speech behaviour by psychologically acknowledging and accepting his position. This has been called 'speech complementarity' (Giles, 1980).

Speech complementarity has in fact received scant attention (Jablin, 1979). Apart from Brown and Levinson's (1978) work on address forms, insights into the distribution of power and status relationships have been few. Thakerar, Giles and Cheshire (1982) discovered that when two people of differential status interact to achieve a mutual goal, they converge in their speech rates. High-status speakers decrease their speech rates while low-status speakers increase their speech rates. Also it seems that the high-status speakers were judged to have become less standardised in their accents and the lower-status speakers more so. Thakerar and Giles (1981) suggest that listeners associate non-content speech stereotypes with speakers of different statuses and that these stereotypes subject their opinions of these people to strong biases. These prejudices are also extremely hard to change even when the speaker has been listened to extensively.

From the experimental data presented so far, three things

must be noted. Firstly, speech convergence does not always imply social integration and speech divergence does not always imply social differentiation. Secondly, what is measured in terms of convergence/divergence on linguistic levels may not always reflect speakers notions of the direction in which they think their speech is shifting. Finally, the relationship between linguistic and psychological shifts in speech style is very complex as different status speakers may use the same linguistic strategies but the motivation underlying these devices may not be the same.

#### 1.4.4 Speech Style

Accommodation theory is obviously widely applicable to many kinds of data and it can be used to explain shifts of speech style of various kinds. Modifications in speech style are related to the nature of the topic discussed, the person spoken to or the audience and the context in which the interaction occurs (Ervin-Tripp, 1964; Hymes, 1972; Giles and Powesland, 1975). The theory can, therefore, be used to investigate the salience of different topics for speakers, the effect of audience or linguistic variability and also the effect of different settings. With regard to topic, people speak in a grammatically more complex manner the more abstract the topic of conversation (Lawton, 1968), they are more voluble the more salient the issue is for them (Matarazzo, Weins, Jackson and Manaugh, 1970) and finally the more technical the subject is, the more likely that a

characteristically formal speech pattern will emerge (Moscovici, 1967).

Another aspect of topic which has received some attention and which is relevant to the aims of the present work, is the seriousness-humorous dimension. Giles, Bourhis, Gadfield, Davies and Davies (1976) suggest that when people move from a serious to a humorous topic, they do tend to modify their speech style. Their experiments involved speakers recording two serious stories and one joke and then rating them on certain scales. Independent judges then rated these speakers and found them to be more non-standard in accent usage, less precise in enunciation and more fluent and varied both in tempo and pitch when reading the joke than when they were reading the serious stories. What is most interesting and relevant for the work proposed here, is that they suggest that their funny story or joke was too neutral emotionally,

" ... had the humour been of an ethnic or minority group variety where the characters in the joke had speech styles which would be distinct from those of the joke tellers, a greater variety of speech modifications may have accrued ".

(Giles, Bourhis, Gadfield, Davies and Davies, 1976:152)

They also note that the humorous setting is probably one where it is inappropriate and socially disadvantageous to use a prestige speech style (Bourhis, Giles and Lambert, 1975).

The humorous story data collected for the present work does

illustrate shifts of style which take account of a character whose speech style is markedly different from that of the narrator. It is speech modifications of this kind which may be overlooked in a purely quantitative analysis. When a speaker shifts his speech style over a few utterances to produce a comic effect (as in mimicry), the frequency of occurrence of individual variants is usually very low (as Chapters 5 and 6 will indicate). Hence statistical tests (which can only be used if variants occur in sufficiently high numbers) would probably overlook this kind of style shift.

In this context, a qualitative approach to the data has advantages over a strictly quantitative one. It is only by incorporating explanatory theories such as accommodation theory into the sociolinguistic framework, that one can move towards explanations for speech behaviour. Concentration on isolated variables leaves too much unaccounted for.

### 1.5 Research Orientation

The present research does carry out correlational work on three linguistic variables (*h*), (*t*) and (*ing*). However, this is not in an attempt to replicate classical (correlational) sociolinguistics or to give a practical demonstration of the problems which have been outlined in the preceding sections. The research combines these methods with a qualitative approach in order to test specific hypotheses about the data, namely that:-

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- a) there will be differences between the four occupational groups in their percentage use of variants.
- b) there will be differences between the sexes in their percentage use of variants.
- c) there will be differences between the four occupational groups in their narrative styles.
- d) there will be differences between the sexes in their narrative styles.

The research recognises the lack of explanatory power in purely correlational approaches to data and hence looks to other accounts of variability (such as those provided by accommodation theory) for more sensitive statements of variation in narrative.

The incorporation of sociolinguistic analytical techniques into narrative analysis is an attempt to provide a structured account of subcultural variation in storytelling. The aim is not only to address the question of how narrator characteristics (i.e. narrator sex and occupation) affect narrative style, but also to explore the relationship between narrator's sex and occupation i.e. to explore to what extent aspects of occupational social hierarchy and occupational group membership constrain or encourage the narrative style of the sex typical incumbent (men in male dominated occupations and women in female dominated occupations).

The use of a combination of observational and statistical measures means that many more features of the data can be highlighted and described than those which would be dealt with in a straightforward correlational study. This means that the research is able to document certain patterns of variation which relate to a person's sex and occupation which would normally be overlooked in quantitative work (for example, the phonetic marking of Token Mimicry - discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.), features which should attain a more central place in the linguistic literature.

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## Chapter Two

### NARRATIVE DATA COLLECTION

#### 2.0 Introduction

Clearly, very different kinds of narrative could be collected - reminiscences of the elderly, creative imagined events by the very young, tales of wartime bravery, stories of schoolboy pranks. The list could be endless. The purpose of this thesis is not to produce a typology of narrative, but to examine the same broad category of narrative produced by different occupational groups and by both sexes. The category selected is humorous narratives relating to occupationally defined roles. The data collection is deliberately restricted to occupational groups which do not have radically different status in society: they are all "artisan class" - i.e. they are "blue collar" workers, whose expertise is acquired either through on-the-job training and observation or through a combination of these plus a pre-training period. The latter is characteristic of two of the occupational groups selected - chefs and nurses - while the former is characteristic of the other two occupational groups - taxi-drivers and hairdressers.

The type of narratives sought can be broadly described as "humorous vernacular narratives." They all involve narration of humorous incidents in which the narrators have

been involved within the course of their everyday work. One benefit of selecting humorous vernacular narratives is the rich variety of stylistic devices open to narrators. Humour has a facilitatory effect in storytelling sessions. It helps to reduce tension and self-awareness, and thus to release a greater range of the narrator's stylistic repertoire. Reference to the facilitatory effect of humour has already been made in Chapter One (section 1.4.4). (The issue of humour is again taken up in Chapter 5, where the narratives' humorous characteristics are examined, and in Chapter 6, where sex differences in humour preference are explored.)

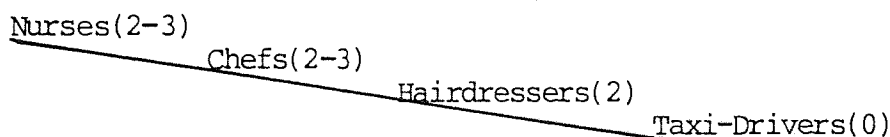
## 2.1 Occupational Groups

Four occupational groups participated in storytelling sessions. The four groups comprised; a) nurses; b) hairdressers(H/D); c) taxi-drivers(T/D); d) chefs.

These particular occupations were chosen to include the two main variables of sex and training. Two of the occupations are female-dominated and two are male-dominated. Nursing and hairdressing are female-dominated occupations in that they attract a much higher percentage of female employees compared to male employees. The taxi-drivers and chefs are both part of male-dominated occupations since there are very few women taxi-drivers and professional chefs. The catering profession as a whole may be female-dominated but chefs are a sub-category which differs in this respect.

The second variable, training, divides the groups according to the qualifications required to enter the job, the length and depth of training which occupant members receive and the conditions and constraints under which they work.

The occupations can be placed on the following cline according to the length and depth of training and the codes of behaviour attached to each one. The numbers of years training required to become qualified in each occupation is placed in brackets.



Intentionally, the four groups are chosen from the lower end of the social scale. Tannen(1982b) notes that working-class speakers are often (though not exclusively) considered to be good storytellers. This also applies to speakers from rural communities and members of certain cultures like Jews or Greeks. It seems, therefore, that individuals from the lower end of the social scale are inherently advantaged when it comes to storytelling, in that they have access to a richer repertoire of stylistic devices - a repertoire which speakers at the prestige end of the continuum may not all have (See Chapter 4, section 4.2.4 for further discussion of this point).

The groups are also all service occupations in that they provide a service for the general public, and are therefore

likely to have a fund of personal experience of members of the public.

The occupations selected had to be easily accessible for the researcher. For this reason, policemen and women and members of other law institutions were excluded. Too many senior members of the profession would have to be consulted before the recordings could go ahead. This would have altered the nature of the interactions since official sanctioning of the recordings might have made respondents feel that they had to react in a certain way.

The populations were drawn from two cities, Liverpool and Birmingham. The focus is not on Liverpool and Birmingham speech per se, but rather on establishing narrative style. In other words, the study focuses on how the taxi-drivers differ from the hairdressers, chefs and nurses observed. The sex composition of the occupational groups investigated (males - taxi-drivers, chefs; females - hairdressers, nurses) allows sex differentiation in the narratives to be examined.

These particular cities were selected since the researcher is a native of Liverpool which facilitated the choice of variables and speakers. Also, previous research carried out on Birmingham speech by the researcher (Rimmer, 1981) provided a good base for further research on another topic.

## 2.2 Subject Numbers

The numbers within each occupational group varied according to the availability of people willing to be recorded. Table 2-1 shows the number of speakers from each occupational group who were recorded in each city.

	Nurses	H/D	Chefs	T/D
Birmingham	3	6	1	5
Liverpool	3	8	1	7
Total	6	14	2	12

Table 2-1 The number of speakers in the four occupational groups.

Clearly, it is unfortunate that there is an imbalance in the number of subjects in each occupational group and it must be acknowledged that this is a weakness in the research design. With unlimited resources of time and finance, the fault could have been rectified but these resources were limited to the time available for the research project.

In spite of the imbalance of subject numbers, however, the data collected (143 narratives - see 2.3 below) shows beyond any doubt that variability in narrative techniques does exist at the inter-group level, and the intra-individual level. Since a primary aim of the research is to show what narrative techniques are used in different occupational groups, and to demonstrate distinct preferences by the sexes, the lack of balance in subject numbers is not of crucial importance. It might have been, were this a purely statistical analysis. However, the case for differentiation in narratives rests heavily on qualitative description and

therefore the small number of chefs recorded is not an invalidating factor.

Chefs and their trainee chefs simply do not naturally congregate in informal groups to chat, at least not in the workplaces which were selected. It proved impossible to find a group of chefs as opposed to single individuals who a) were willing to be recorded telling stories, and b) were all free at the same time. However, interviews with two head chefs did elicit a number of narratives which were subjected to qualitative analysis. It is stressed in Chapter 3 that the chefs' data is excluded from the statistical analysis.

### 2.3 Quantity of Material

The analysis is based on a total of 143 narratives taken from about nine hours of recorded conversation. The population consists of 34 people. The table below shows the number of narratives told by each occupational group in each city.

Occupation	Number of Narratives		Number of Subjects	
	L'Pool	B'ham	L'Pool	B'ham
Nurses	8	16	3	3
H/D	18	24	8	6
T/D	24	30	7	5
Chefs	10	13	1	1
Total	60	83	19	15

Table 2-2 The number of speakers in each occupational group and the number of narratives told by the nurses, hairdressers, taxi-drivers and chefs in Liverpool and Birmingham.

One hour of recording was assessed as the average time which



was required for sufficient narrative data to be collected, however, the time spent with each group was largely determined by the group itself. Hence the Birmingham hairdressers could only be recorded for half an hour (although they told more stories overall than the Liverpool hairdressers) and the Birmingham taxi-drivers were recorded for over two hours. Only one and a half hours of the taxi-driver data was used in the qualitative analysis and this was taken from the middle portion of the tape. Even though the entire conversation was transcribed, the research would have been too heavily biased in favour of the taxi-drivers if the whole transcript had been used. As the figures above show, they tell only slightly more stories than the Liverpool taxi-drivers in this time, though of course these figures do not take account of the length of the stories.

Twenty women and fourteen men took part in the discussions. The lower number of men is due to the small number of chefs who were recorded. However, the quantitative analysis of sex differences presented in Chapter 3 compares the taxi-drivers with hairdressers and the taxi-drivers only since the numbers of these are compatible. Also, if one calculates the average number of narratives told by individuals in each group, then it emerges that this is between 3-5 per person for the nurses, hairdressers and taxi-drivers. The chefs on average tell more stories because they were interviewed singly and so did not have to compete for the floor. They therefore provide sufficient narratives for qualitative analysis.

Obviously the averages do not take account of the fact that some speakers were more vociferous than others and told more stories. Some idea of the distribution of speakers in the groups can be obtained by looking at the individual figures presented in Table 13., Chapter 3.

## 2.4 Characteristics of the Occupational Groups

The following sections examine the nature of the four occupations and outline the major social characteristics of the narrators. The interpretation of the speech data obtained depends on a wider understanding of the constraints within which occupational members work, and hence the discussion necessarily incorporates some general comments on occupational hierarchy and structure.

### 2.4.1 Nurses

Historically, the curing/caring dichotomy which still exists in British hospitals relegated nurses to the caring, low-status work whilst doctors, who had minimal contact with patients were considered to be high-status because they were doing the 'real' work, the curing. Quite often the nurse who is looking after a dying patient knows much more about the pain the patient is feeling than the doctor and can more effectively relieve that pain with a knowledge of his family situation. The reality of nursing is that nurses must remain passive and are not encouraged to make comments on the likely treatment for a patient.

This is actually a throwback to the Nightingale system which stressed deference to doctors, close supervision of the whole behaviour of a nurse and a willingness by nurses to do any jobs deemed necessary (Skevington, 1980).

Nurses are constrained by a rigid hierarchy where rules and regulations control their almost every action and privileges differ according to rank within the hierarchy. All the nurses in the sample are State Enrolled Nurses (S.E.N.'s) or are of similar rank. Two of the Liverpool nurses in fact began their training before S.E.N.'s were recognised in 1949. S.E.N.'s are considered to be of lower status than State Registered Nurses (S.R.N.'s) in the hospital hierarchy. S.E.N.'s only have to obtain two O'levels for entry to the two year practical training, whereas S.R.N.'s must obtain at least five O'levels for the three year academic and theoretical training. S.E.N.'s in hospitals are paid less money, have fewer holidays and fewer responsibilities than S.R.N.'s (Skevington, 1980).

The nurses in the sample were all practising at local health centres and had chosen to escape the rigid hierarchy of hospital life. Health centres were chosen for the recordings since it was expected that the atmosphere would be much more relaxed than in a large hospital and that the nurses would be more forthcoming. Also access to large hospitals for recording purposes proved to be difficult and the data might have been affected by the official

sanctioning mentioned earlier. Both establishments were close to the city centres of Birmingham and Liverpool. Since the number of staff was small and the atmosphere relaxed, there were really no differences in occupational status between the women. They all had similar responsibilities and shared the work equally. There were resident doctors to whom they deferred but this was not in the same sense as hospital life would have required. Relationships between the doctors and nurses were cordial since the nurses assumed responsibility for a lot of the minor cases and were much more involved in diagnosis and treatment than they would have been in a large hospital.

Socially, however, there were some status differences. One Liverpool nurse, for example, was married to a surgeon. Her accent had more RP, and few regional features and her active vocabulary seemed more extensive. Similarly, one of the Birmingham nurses had at one time fostered ambitions of becoming a psychiatric nurse. She had obviously undergone more intensive training than the others because she had completed her psychiatric training and had then decided to go into general nursing where the techniques are somewhat different. She had therefore undergone an extra two years training compared to the others. She came from a middle-class background with both parents being professional people whereas the other two Birmingham nurses came from working-class backgrounds. The research was not designed to investigate social class as a variable. It does, however, have some relevance to the variable of occupation since

people from different social classes may be drawn to different occupations.

The Liverpool nurses were aged between forty five and fifty five years, whereas the Birmingham nurses were a little younger, being between twenty five and forty years of age.

Although the nurses recorded had chosen to leave the working environment of a large hospital due to their dislike of the subservient role of nurses, aspects of the early hospital training had obviously made a deep impression on them (as evidenced by the stories they tell). They felt that most of the rules and regulations were unnecessary and believed that nurses, in consultation with doctors, could play a more positive role in the hospital scenario by becoming more involved in diagnosis and treatment of patients.

The general feeling within the profession is that nurses should receive higher pay. The job requires much physical strength and endurance, however, a first year student nurse gets only about £3,700 per year compared with £6,700 for an eighteen year old police constable. Also, nursing, more than other jobs, pervades the whole life of occupants of this role. Nurses are not only expected to behave in a certain way in their private life (i.e. they have been criticised for smoking since they are supposed to 'know better') but they are also expected to deal with the minor ailments of friends and family. Most hospital wards are understaffed and in many cases nurses are expected to cope

under extreme pressure. If they don't it is seen as their own weakness rather than as a fault of the system.

Why do so many women go in for nursing if it is fraught with so many pressures? The satisfaction seems to come from being able to help people who can not help themselves. Nurses appreciate being in touch with basic human feelings and people who enter this profession are generally interested in jobs which are socially useful. As well as being subject to a great deal of authority, nurses also wield a certain amount in relation to the patients which can be fulfilling.

Nurses, then, work in a highly regulated environment and receive very specialised training due to the nature of the profession which deals with life and death. The research aims to discover how these factors affect the nurses in a narrative style since it is expected that aspects of the training regime and their relatively subservient occupational role (in comparison with the other groups) will be reflected in their speech behaviour.

#### 2.4.2 Chefs

The nature of the catering industry is that tensions frequently emerge. Impatient customers demand their food and everyone from waiters to chefs must meet that demand, especially at busy periods. Apprenticeships are no longer a feature of this industry. In 1959, academic passes became

necessary to enter catering college and training takes two or three years depending on the establishment and the level to which trainees aspire. The chef who comes straight from training college is thrust into the strictness and formality of a kitchen. Among chefs, occupational affinity derives from an early occupational conditioning process, when the apprentice first enters the kitchen and this is reinforced by customs, norms, and practices that emphasise professional conduct and attire, as well as possible sanctions against an offender (Cracknell, Kaufman and Nobis, 1983).

The size, type and quality of a kitchen will determine the status accorded the Chef de Cuisine or Head Chef. Chefs in some of the larger establishments are well known for being flamboyant and rather eccentric. The aggressive, assertive act often substitutes for the compliments which chefs are denied at the hands of the customer. Head chefs are usually dominant in the kitchen, having well-defined territorial rights and they are often very strict with new recruits in order to assert their dominance at the outset.

The job demands extreme dedication in working long, unsocial hours and the wages are low. This is why there are so few women chefs since the job allows no time for the responsibilities of a family and a chef must generally be free to travel anywhere in the world. For men, the attraction seems to be the possibility of foreign travel and the social aspects of the work.

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The chefs recorded were each in charge of a large university kitchen, one in the University of Aston(Birmingham), the other in the University of Liverpool. University kitchens were selected in preference to those in some of the large hotels since the university chefs tended to be more sympathetic towards the kind of research project being undertaken. Access to hotel chefs proved to be impossible since the management generally refused permission being suspicious of the motives of the recording. They also believed that it would be a disruptive influence on the staff and might affect the heavy work schedule.

The two chefs interviewed differed in their backgrounds. The Liverpool chef left school when he was very young and joined the Merchant Navy where he completed his training as a chef. The Birmingham chef was considerably younger and he attended catering college and acquired formal practical and theoretical training for two years before starting work in a kitchen. The Liverpool chef was fifty three and described his origins as 'working-class' whereas the Birmingham chef was twenty eight and described his parents as working-class with middle-class aspirations. In other words, although his parents were not particularly wealthy, both of them worked and they had encouraged him to go on to further education and to strive for a good position. The Liverpool chef had left home at an early age mainly to earn some money since his family were rather poor.



The differences between the sociolinguistic backgrounds of these two men make comparisons between their narrative styles difficult. It has been acknowledged that the small number of chefs is a limitation of the research design, however, they do in fact tell a number of stories (23 in total, see Table 2-2, section 2.3). These are sufficient for qualitative analysis and it has been possible to make a number of observations about narrative style.

#### 2.4.3 Hairdressers

Hairdressers train for two or three years with much of the time being spent in a professional hairdressing salon. Many girls enter the job straight from school at sixteen because they want to escape the discipline of school life and hairdressing seems like a glamorous alternative. The periods in the salon are alternated with periods at a 'training college' where the girls not only learn the techniques of good hairdressing but are also taught the rudiments of subjects like computing and management. This means that should they be unsuccessful in their chosen career, they are better equipped to enter another profession. It also means that they are aware of some of the problems of running a large salon. The job demands a particular flair and girls who want to take this up as a career usually realise the fact from an early age. The entry requirements are minimal which may also be why the job attracts people who do not wish to go on to further education.

Image is all important in the salon. The idea is that pleasant surroundings will relax the customer and encourage him or her to return. Although the behaviour of trainee stylists is monitored fairly closely, the atmosphere is generally convivial and the girls are allowed to talk freely with clients. They are kept busy and the qualified stylists are often under pressure since client bookings are organised to maximise the salon's profits. However, there are few constraints on hairdressers' behaviour compared to the rigidity of the nursing profession.

The hairdressers in the sample are mainly young girls between the ages of sixteen and twenty eight years of age. Two senior members of staff were present at the recording in the Liverpool salon. These include the manageress who is fifty two and the supervisor who is thirty eight years of age. Table 2-1 (section 2.2) shows that altogether fourteen hairdressers were recorded. They all work in two large, well-established salons, one in Liverpool city centre and the other in Birmingham city centre. Both salons have a reputation for a good standard of hairdressing.

Most of the girls had entered the salon at sixteen and many of them did not have any formal qualifications and admitted that they had been poor students at school. They all came from working-class or lower middle-class backgrounds. In each salon, the girls were supervised by a female manageress, however, in both cases the proprietors were men.

About one third of the hairdressers interviewed were fully qualified. The others were apprentices but many of them were styling and cutting hair even though they were not fully qualified.

Hairdressers enjoy meeting people and they learn to be particularly good listeners since they often act as unpaid counsellors for their clients. It is interesting that some of the men drawn to this profession are stereotyped as having some of the more endearing feminine traits. The stereotype which persists is that male hairdressers have an effeminate voice quality and that they are more interested in emotions and relationships than other men. This is a subjective generalisation and has not been verified by extensive research but it may be that men with these qualities are drawn to professions where there is more human interaction.

It was thought that the hairdressers narrative style would reflect the less specialised training programme and the relative flexibility of their working atmosphere in comparison with that of nurses and chefs.

#### 2.4.4 Taxi-Drivers

The main attraction in becoming a taxi-driver appears to be the flexibility of the job. Taxi-drivers who are members of an Association and drive standard Black Cabs do not have an employer constantly watching them. They can work as many or

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as few hours as they choose according to their financial position. The driver must cover overheads like petrol, repairs and the cab license which is required by law but anything more which he earns is his wage. Many drivers rent their cabs by the week or the month since the cost of buying their own is too high and a registered license for their own vehicle can cost in excess of a thousand pounds. However, owning a cab gives a driver more earning power since he can drive both days and nights. Generally, drivers opt for one shift or the other.

The trade has been severely affected by the recession. This not only means that people use taxis less often but there has also been an influx of unemployed people to the job and hence there is more competition for custom. The job offers no sick pay, health insurance or pension schemes and the benefits in this respect are few. The element of danger is also obvious in a job where the customers are taken very much on trust. This is probably one reason why there are so few women taxi-drivers.

The training is almost non-existent since the driver spends a short time familiarising himself with routes and street names. It is only in the larger cities like London that the training is more extensive. More usually the driver uses his initiative and common sense to reach a destination.

The taxi-drivers in the sample work on taxi-ranks in the centre of the cities Birmingham and Liverpool. In both

cases, the ranks are annexed to the city's main railway station and are the major outlet for travellers. The men ranged in age from about twenty to fifty five years. They all drove Black Cabs and many of them had occupied the same job all their lives although few owned their own taxi. The majority of them had received little education and had left school at an early age obtaining few, if any qualifications. The majority of the drivers had working class origins.

Taxi-drivers have to be understanding since they are often subjected to the idiosyncrasies of human nature. The customer is paying for the service and does not expect to be questioned about his behaviour and since the possibility of a tip is something the driver expects, he defers to the passenger. Shamir(1980) says that the dependence on the customer may be a source of stress for occupants of subordinate service roles, more than a source of reward or satisfaction and in fact drivers are quite often deprived of the entire fare if they get a 'runner' or a 'bilker' (someone who tries to evade payment - the latter term is favoured by the Liverpool men).

These negative aspects of the job may explain why taxi-drivers seem to have a well-developed sense of humour. Certainly, men who do not have a good sense of humour do not survive in this trade since good humoured banter, witty repartee and storytelling are all daily rituals which the drivers enjoy. These daily rituals coupled with the relative flexibility of the job might lead one to expect

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that the taxi-drivers will have the most distinctive humorous storytelling style of the four occupational groups.

## 2.5 Elicitation Techniques

Participants were asked to relate amusing anecdotal stories related to their job of work. The researcher explained that the focus of the work was, 'looking at humour in different cities', thereby laying emphasis on humour rather than speech. To initiate the conversation, the interviewer asked a series of general prompting questions like, "Have you ever had any funny clients?" or "Has anything funny ever happened to you at work?" The respondents did not usually require much prompting.

It is not assumed that the recordings represent the same style of speech that the occupational members would have used if both the tape-recorder and the interviewer had not been present. However, an attempt was made to allow the groups attention to shift from the analyst and the tape-recorder to other members of the group. This was done by gradually withdrawing from 'interview-type' questions and simply letting group dynamics take over.

Interviews generally took place at the respondents' place of work (during working hours). It was important to interview the groups at work because it was thought that the specific effects of occupation on linguistic behaviour would be more difficult to ascertain in other contexts where speakers

would be free to talk about topics totally unrelated to their job.

The data was recorded on a Dolby Super Seven Ferrograph tape-recorder which was on a direct connection lead in the same room (or in the immediate vicinity of) the participants. An external, omni-directional microphone was used to obtain good quality recordings. Some of the interviews (those at the taxi-ranks) were conducted in the open air and so the equipment had to be able to overcome external noises. Every effort was made to make the equipment as unobtrusive as possible.

Some specific comments on the context of recordings with each occupational group are necessary since conditions varied and they obviously influence the type of speech data obtained.

#### 2.5.1 Nurses' Recording Context

The nurses were contacted directly by visiting the health centres in Birmingham and Liverpool. These particular centres provided easy access for the researcher since she was already familiar with the interviewees and had known the Birmingham nurses in particular for a number of years.

In both cities, the setting for the recordings was the 'common room' where the nurses took tea and lunch breaks. They were recorded during their lunch hour. The equipment

was placed on a table equidistant from all speakers and where possible, both the tape-recorder and the microphone were hidden from view, although respondents were obviously still aware of their existence.

The nurses initially seemed a little unsure of what was expected of them. The researcher therefore engaged them in general conversation before introducing the key prompting questions. After a time they relaxed and were more forthcoming although the data will show that they were more nervous of the recording session than any of the other occupational groups. They were recorded in fairly small groups of three speakers which may have inhibited them slightly although a number of amusing stories were told.

#### 2.5.2 Chefs' Recording Context

The chefs were interviewed singly and the recordings took place in their own office at the universities in question. The structure of the discussion was much more like an interview, however, this did not seem to inhibit the men and a number of stories were elicited.

The researcher was introduced to these men " via a friend of a friend " (Milroy, 1980). In Liverpool, the resident Catholic priest at the University who was an old friend of the researcher provided the introduction to the Head Chef. In Birmingham, members of the catering staff known by the researcher provided the introduction to the Birmingham chef.



Since the interviewer did not know these men personally she visited them prior to the recording not only to explain the purpose of the study but also to get to know them and to put them at their ease.

### 2.5.3 Hairdressers' Recording Context

The hairdressers were recorded on the salon premises in the staff room. They tended to congregate here at breaks or when they were waiting for clients to arrive. Permission to record was sought initially through the owner or the management. The girls themselves were then asked to participate and were briefed some time before the actual recording so that they knew what to expect.

These particular salons were chosen because the researcher had visited them many times as a client. The hairdressers were therefore friendly and easily acquiesced to the interviewers request for 'funny stories'. They seemed to view this as an amusing and entertaining task and showed no reluctance to talk.

The composition of the groups varied somewhat since individuals were allowed to join the discussion or to leave at any time. Since the staff room was a general thoroughfare it was impossible to stop people entering the discussion and since the recordings were supposed to represent everyday interaction as far as possible, the interviewer did not place any constraints on the girls.

The maximum number present at any one time was ten people and the minimum number was four.

The fact that individuals were not restricted in joining the conversation meant that in the Liverpool salon, two young male hairdressers contributed to the discussion. This data was excluded from the analysis since the research aimed to look at speech behaviour in females. Since the women were in the majority and only one man told any stories, the small number of males present is not an invalidating factor.

The Birmingham hairdressers were only able to talk for thirty minutes since it was a busy day. The Liverpool hairdressers told stories for a full hour. However, they knew the researcher as a friend as well as a client and this probably encouraged them to spend more time talking to her.

#### 2.5.4 Taxi-Drivers' Recording Context

The social setting in which the taxi-drivers were recorded was rather different to that of the other groups. The social context of the recordings with the drivers is particularly interesting and it will be discussed in some detail.

The researcher did not personally know any Birmingham taxi-drivers and so the contact was made directly through the taxi-rank itself. At each rank, there is usually an office where the taxi-drivers can buy mechanical parts for

their taxis and they can also send and collect messages. This office also functions as a meeting place for many of the drivers since they do not have an official base.

The researcher approached some of the drivers at the office in Birmingham New Street Station which is at the heart of Birmingham city centre. She explained that she was comparing humour in different cities and wanted to get a group of taxi-drivers together to tell funny stories on tape. The initial response was not enthusiastic, however, several names were mentioned of likely candidates for this kind of session. One of the drivers who seemed to have a reputation for being witty and entertaining was called 'Big Trevor'.

A meeting was set up with Trevor through the rank and the initial idea was to record a group of his friends in the taxi-office itself. This proved to be too disruptive since the office was used as a major thoroughfare. Cordial relations between the analyst and the drivers had been established, however, and she was invited to join the night-shift drivers for their meal break at a local curry house.

Trevor proved to be an important contact once he had identified that the researcher was genuine in her goals. He was obviously a dominant member of the group and warranted a high degree of respect from the men, hence his support was invaluable. It was also to the researchers advantage that

she had a non-RP accent (being a native of Liverpool) and hailed from a working-class background.

Trevor arranged for a number of drivers to be present at the meal which was set up for two o'clock in the morning. Due to Trevor's influence the researcher was easily accepted by the men. The storytelling session took place over a meal and the discussion lasted for a few hours. Very few prompting questions were necessary since the drivers had obviously engaged in this kind of storytelling behaviour many times before.

Although these recordings were not strictly carried out on work premises, the setting did constitute a meal break for the night shift taxi-drivers (despite the fact that it was somewhat extended for the benefit of the researcher). The problem is that taxi-drivers do not usually have an official base and tend to congregate at meal times or for tea breaks. This is the only time that they can be recorded in groups. However, this was probably the most natural, real life setting and some interesting data was collected. The surroundings were excellent for good quality recordings since the restaurant was fairly quiet at that hour in the morning.

It was not possible to engage the Liverpool taxi-drivers in the same kind of storytelling session. They were more suspicious of the motives behind the recording session and they initially proved to be a little hostile.

One interesting factor which might have influenced this behaviour concerned the characteristics of the researcher. She was a native of Liverpool but originated from one of the outlying areas of the city. To people living outside Liverpool itself, the researcher's accent was noticeably non-RP and northern. Although, it was not a marked Scouse accent, it contained characteristics of the Liverpool accent which were intensified when the researcher was speaking to native Liverpudlians. To the Birmingham taxi-drivers, her accent might have been identified as non-RP and assessed as acceptable. To the Liverpool taxi-drivers, however, the researcher would be identified as having a 'posh' Liverpool accent as compared with their own accents which were mostly broad Scouse. This might explain the immediate acceptance from the Birmingham men and the delayed acceptance from the drivers in Liverpool. Under the influence of 'Stan' (the man who was used as a contact in Liverpool), however, the drivers soon overcame any hesitancy.

Contact was made at an open-air tea bar near the taxi-rank which was on Skelhome Street in Liverpool city centre. The tea bar was a stopping place for drivers who were waiting for passengers from the nearby railway station or for those who were starting or ending a shift. Initial discussions with drivers here and at other venues which they frequented elicited some name of potential interviewees. "Stan" was designated the contact man. He had been driving for many years and obviously warranted a certain amount of respect

from the other men. He arranged a meeting at the tea bar for Nine O'clock one evening since the night shift drivers congregate at this time prior to starting work

There were some recording problems since the noise of traffic could not be avoided. However, a fairly clear recording was obtained.

The session was quite relaxed although the tape-recorder could not be hidden. It was visible to the drivers throughout the session and they did initially make comments about the equipment. However, after a time they removed their attention from the recording equipment to the entertaining round of stories which were in progress. Stan gave the researcher valuable help, both in telling stories himself and in prompting other members of the group to tell them.

The session lasted for about an hour and the men were free to come and go during that time. This meant that the interaction was similar to that with the hairdressers since some men joined the conversation when it had been in progress for some time and others had to go back to work before the group dispersed completely.

The setting was unfortunately not ideal, however, it does represent everyday interaction and the mens' initial reluctance to talk was soon replaced by spontaneous competition in telling stories.

## 2.6 Dimensions Explored

The narrative data collected is examined within two entirely different frames of reference -

- a) within the Labovian paradigm, specific linguistic variables are treated quantitatively to examine the "distance" between each occupational group and the "prestige norm" (Chapter 3).
- b) within the framework of sociolinguistic and discursal studies of narrative, the data are examined for dynamic development and structuring (including style-shifting) and effects of group dynamics; Chapter 5 examines narrative devices which are common to all the narrators, while Chapter 6 examines devices which differentiate the occupations, and the sexes.

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## Chapter Three

### A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THREE PHONETIC VARIABLES

#### 3.0 Introduction

As stated in Chapter One, quantitative treatment of phonetic variables establishes a firm base on which to assess "distance from the prestige norm" of the narratives of the four occupational groups, and both sexes. The qualitative descriptions in Chapters 5 and 6 make reference to facts established in the quantitative approach, since this can shed light on the social value of the linguistic devices used for dynamic development and structuring of narratives.

The four occupational groups, and the rationale for selecting them, are fully discussed in Chapter 2. It must be stressed that the focus of the study is not on comparison between Liverpool and Birmingham speech, but on differences between the occupations (chefs, nurses, taxi-drivers and hairdressers) and between the sexes. These dimensions are explored in relation to three phonetic variables in the following sections.



### 3.1 The Linguistic Variables

The variables chosen were (h), (t), and (ing) since previous studies (Knowles, 1978; Cullum, 1981; Rimmer, 1981) indicated that these variables were sociolinguistically diagnostic for the cities of Birmingham and Liverpool. These also appeared to occur in sufficiently high quantities for statistical analysis to be carried out.

The percentage frequencies of use of each variant of these variables were computed and statistical tests were utilised to discover if any differences found between the sexes, occupations and locations were significant. The results for the variables (h), (t) and (ing) are presented in section 3.4.

#### 3.1.1 (h)

In the present research, the (h) variable has two variants [h] and [∅] which represent the presence or absence of (h). (h) occurs at the beginning of words like 'house' and also mid-word as in 'ahead'.

Gimson(1970) says that [h] is best thought of as the voiceless onset of the following vowel, although it is technically described as a voiceless glottal fricative. Wells(1982a) prefers to describe [h] as a range of voiceless approximants whose quality varies with the vowel in question.

H-dropping occurs in many non-standard accents and it is a feature of the accents of both Birmingham and Liverpool. The distribution of [∅] is somewhat more complicated since it is also known to occur in Received Pronunciation (RP) on pronouns like 'he, him, her, his', and the auxiliaries 'has, have, had' when they are unstressed and do not follow a pause. However, for the purposes of analysis here, the use of [∅] is not distinguished according to whether it occurs on pronouns or auxiliaries. Instances of h-dropping are combined to give a total score for the variant [∅]. The use of this variant means that there should be no distinction between potential minimal pairs like 'hill/ill' or 'high/eye'. Sometimes, however, the use of the glottal stop [ʔ] or at least a weak glottal constriction indicates the distinction.

The use of (h) has been shown to correlate with certain social variables. Trudgill(1974a) found that the percentage of use of the variant [∅] rose from the lower working class to the middle middle class during casual speech in his study of Norwich. He also found that women tended to use a higher percentage of the standard [h] than men. Cullum(1981) in her study of girls' peer groups, found that in Birmingham, female speakers produce at least 45% standard [h] in conversation and up to 98% [h] during the reading passage.

Cullum's(1981) study, together with observations made by the author in previous work on the Birmingham accent (Rimmer,

1981) indicated that the variable ( $\lambda$ ) could be used as a diagnostic tool for further investigations into Birmingham speech. Knowles(1978) cites ( $\lambda$ ) as a variable of Liverpool speech also. Hence, the ( $h$ ) variable was considered suitable for the present research.

### 3.1.2 (t)

This variable is rather more complex than ( $h$ ). There are several variants which range from the one most commonly found in RP, that is, the voiceless alveolar stop [ $t$ ], to several non-standard forms. These include;

- a) the glottal stop.
- b) the use of a tap, transcribed here as [ $r$ ].
- c) the absence of closure or friction, [ $t^h$ ].
- d) a voiced variant [ $t^d$ ].
- e) and in Liverpool, variants which are lack complete

closure and are either fricatives or affricates. The notation for these non-standard forms is simplified as follows:

- a) [ $t^2$ ]; b) [ $t^r$ ]; c) [ $t^h$ ]; d) [ $t^d$ ]; e) [ $t^s$ ].

These symbols are only used in talking about the variants themselves. In transcription of words, the system of the International Phonetic Association(IPA) is utilised. Each variant will be discussed in turn.

### 3.1.2.1 [t̥]

Glottalling is occasionally found in RP. However, it is found to a much greater extent in accents like London Cockney and it is also found in Newcastle (although Wells, 1982 suggests that the use of this feature may actually be spreading to other English accents). It can occur mid-word as in 'better' [ˈbɛt̥ə] and 'city' [ˈsɪt̥ɪ] and also between words as in the phrase 'it is' [ɪt̥ɪz].

There are few glottal stops in the Birmingham accent and even fewer in the Liverpool accent due to the frication and affrication on stops. When they do occur, they are either mid-word or across word boundaries where final 't' in one word is followed by a vowel at the beginning of the next word. In Liverpool, the glottal stop appears to occur most frequently in conjunction with the lexical item 'nothing' which is sometimes pronounced as [ˈnʌt̥n̩]. The dental fricative [θ] is replaced by a glottal stop. This may be influenced by the Irish origins of Scouse and the tendency to replace dental fricatives with dental stops. In this case, the glottal stop may be preferable to alveolar [t] because the 'n' is usually syllabic in conversation and [ˈnʌt̥n̩] is easier to assimilate than [ˈnʌt̥n̩].

### 3.1.2.2 [tʳ]

The variant [tʳ] is widely used in the middle and far north. It has non-standard prestige and it only occurs in certain

linguistic contexts. The rule is that it can occur between two vowels, the first of which is short, and it is more frequent across word boundaries, for example, 'get off' [ˈgɛɹɒf]. It does sometimes occur within words as in 'matter' [ˈmætə]. In these cases, it will be realised as [ɹ]. If h-dropping occurs, then the rule below can still apply.

t → r / [short V] - ~~∥~~ V (Wells, 1982b)

This variant is used by both Birmingham and Liverpool speakers.

### 3.1.2.3 [t̥]

The absence of closure or friction on (t̥) tends to occur most frequently in the environment of words which end in 'n't' (n apostrophe t). In other terms, it occurs in the environment of the negative past tense forms of certain verbs. In verb forms like 'wasn't, hadn't, couldn't' where the negative part of the verb is contracted, absence of closure or friction on the final 't' is common when the next word begins with a vowel. For example, the phrase 'wouldn't it be ...' might be transcribed [ˈwʊdn̩ɪt̥ bɪ ...] since the 'd' is quite often elided also.

This variant also occurs in conjunction with many rhetorical tags like 'isn't it, couldn't I'. [t̥] can also be used when words ending in 'n't' are followed by a consonant, however, this is more rare than when a vowel follows. [t̥] can occur mid-word as in 'twenty' [ˈtɛnt̥ɪ] and also across

words as in the phrase 'want to' ['wɒntə] or 'going to' ['gɔʊntə] where both 't's' lack closure or friction.

These realisations of (t) occur when people are speaking informally and fairly rapidly. It is a feature of Liverpool and Birmingham speech, although in the data collected, it does not occur in very high frequencies.

#### 3.1.2.4 [t<sup>d</sup>]

The voiced alveolar stop occurs very infrequently in the samples collected. It can sometimes be heard when two 't's' occur between two vowels when the first vowel is short as in 'got to' ['gɒtə] or 'Nottingham' ['nɒdɪŋəm]. It can also occur where (t) is followed by a voiced stop.

[t<sup>d</sup>] appears to be different from the other non-standard variants in that it does not seem to have a strong stigma attached even though it is recognised as a non-standard form. Wells(1982b) says that that this variant may be used in as an informal alternative in some common sayings like 'sort of, whatever, get up'. There may also be a transatlantic influence on this variant since American speakers tend to use this more often. This variant occurs in very low frequencies in the data from Birmingham and Liverpool, so it is not possible to give a very comprehensive account of how it is used or in which environments.

### 3.1.2.5 [t̥]

Knowles(1978) notes that in Liverpool, (t̥) lacks complete closure quite often. It seems to vary from a stop to an affricate to a fricative and it is quite arbitrary at which point one considers that (t̥) has moved from being an aspirated stop to being an affricate or has moved from an affricate to a complete fricative.

It is most often in syllable final environments that (t̥) is affricated, but this can also occur word internally and in syllable initial position. For the purposes of analysis, an estimate was made of the percentage of affricates plus fricatives. These could not be distinguished by ear and so all of them were treated as potential cases of affrication. This was not generally a feature of Birmingham speech. This is not to imply that Birmingham speakers never used affrication on (t̥) but where they did, it was very light and hardly noticeable.

It is important to notice that the majority of instances of (t̥) fall into the category of the standard form. There were comparatively few instances of the other variants which made analysis somewhat difficult. An enormous amount of data would be required to elicit sufficient numbers of tokens of these non-standard variants.

(t̥) was one of the variables studied by Trudgill(1974) in Norwich. He looked at the use of the glottal stop

realisation of (t) and found that the higher a person's social class rating, the fewer glottal forms they used. He also showed that the use of (t) varied with the style of speech. He found that people in Norwich used a higher percentage of glottal stops in informal speech compared with more formal speech situations. Macauley's (1978) Glasgow study also showed a clear correlation between variation and social class for the glottal stop as a variant of (t).

### 3.1.3 (ing)

A great deal of research has been carried out on the (ing) variable. The author investigated the use of this variable in Birmingham in 1981 and found a total of four variants which are; [ɪŋ]; [ɪŋŋ]; [ɪŋ̥]; [ɪŋk]. The first variant of the suffix -ing occurs in RP and is awarded high prestige. Wells (1982b) calls accents which have a high frequency of [ɪŋ], NG-coalescing accents since the velar and the nasal are combined to give [ŋ]. Birmingham and Liverpool have non-NG-coalescing accents because they generally have a velar plosive following the velar nasal.

Wells (1982b) says that it is surprising how widespread the use of [ɪŋŋ] is in England. The RP variant [ɪŋ] is only used by a small number of RP speakers at the top of the social scale. As pointed out in Chapter One (section 1.2.2.1), Knowles (1978) suggests that it may be wrong to think of the variant [ɪŋŋ] as being non-standard. In Liverpool, middle-class women use a final stop which



realises phonological (g) and this is a mark of prestigiousness. Heath(1980) in Cannock, also found [ɪŋg] to be used by all social classes.

There are two classes of words with the -ing suffix. Progressive forms of transitive verbs like 'eating, drinking' can have three possible variants [ɪŋ]; [ɪŋg]; [ɪn]; whereas nouns like 'thing' can only have [ɪŋ] and [ɪŋg]. Mid-word in nouns like 'finger', the 'g' is usually pronounced. In Liverpool, [ɪŋ] is favoured before an obstruent within the word, for example, 'wronged' ['rɒŋd] (Knowles, 1978). It has been indicated that for some speakers in Western, Central England (including Liverpool and Birmingham) the variant [ɪŋ] is an allophone of /n/ occurring before 'g,k'.

One of the most well known studies of (ing) is Fischer's(1958) study of children in a New England village. He found that the choice of variants of (ing) was related to sex, class, personality and mood of the speaker, to the formality of the conversation and the specific verb spoken. A much larger number of girls favoured [ɪŋg] over [ɪn]. The higher a person's socio-economic status, then, the more likely they were to use [ɪŋg]. Also, more formal verbs like 'criticizing, reading and visiting' received [ɪŋg] whereas more informal verbs were pronounced with [ɪn], for example, 'swimmin, punchin, hittin'. Shuy, Wolfram and Riley(1968) found a similar trend to Fischer's among the residents of Detroit. Men used a higher percentage of [ɪn] than females,

who preferred [ɪŋ]. Labov, Cohen, Robins and Lewis(1968) found that [ɪn] was a feature of non-standard speech in New York for both black and white people. They also found that (ɪŋ) was a sensitive marker of style. Trudgill(1974a) discovered correlations between the use of (ɪŋ) and style and sex. The non-standard form [ɪn] seemed to be used more by men and also by working class speakers.

The researcher studied variation in the realisations of (ɪŋ) in Birmingham speech (Rimmer, 1981). In this study a pattern of sex differences emerged which contradicted previous findings that women use more prestigious speech patterns than men(Trudgill, 1972). The males in the Rimmer(1981) study used a higher percentage of the more standard variants of (ɪŋ) whereas the females preferred non-standard [ɪn]. This tendency was also increased for the younger men. The results may have been due to the fact that the interviewer was female (although informants were completely unaware that they were being recorded). It was suggested, however, that men show well-defined territorial behaviour due to the kinds of departments which they oversee in large department stores. They are more aware of a particular role in relation to the customer (i.e. they have a position of authority in their own department which affords them a certain status and this pervades their image of service-giving) and hence might use more standard variants.

It has so far been assumed that there is a simple

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relationship between the variants of (ɪŋg), with [ɪŋ] being the standard form, [ɪŋg] being the intermediate form and [ɪn] having non-standard connotations. The question seems to be whether [ɪŋg] is to be regarded as standard or non-standard. In the past it has been regarded as non-standard but Knowles(1978) says that this is oversimplifying the matter (this point was also discussed in Chapter One, section 1.2.2.1). Where the [ɪŋg] form is used in Liverpool, speakers of this accent may award such a pronunciation some prestige and regard it as a close approximation to the standard RP form [ɪŋ]. Apparently, the only specifically Scouse form which is non-standard and stigmatised (even in Liverpool itself) is [sɪŋ:ɔ̃]. There is a lengthened vowel and a velar nasal with an offglide which sounds like a "weak, homorganic stop" (Knowles, 1978). The form [sɪŋ:ɔ̃] is often considered to be a standard pronunciation. There is some difficulty in practice in distinguishing between [sɪŋ:ɔ̃] and [sɪŋ:ɔ̃], and they are therefore conflated into one category for the purpose of quantifying variants. To compute percentage frequencies of variants of (ɪŋg), the research has not distinguished between all forms of the variable as explicated by Knowles(1978). Variants are placed in one of four categories; [ɪŋ]; [ɪŋg]; [ɪn]; [ɪŋk]; since it is sometimes difficult to determine other forms. It is also simpler to compare scores across occupations, sexes and cities when these categories are used.

Little has been said about the final variant, [ɪŋk]. It

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co-occurs with a certain set of compound nouns which includes 'anything, everything, something, nothing'. This variant is not the only one which can be used for this set. These words can be pronounced with the three other variants, however, they more usually occur with [ɪŋk]. 'Something' is one word in the set which has an extra variant. It is sometimes pronounced ['sɒmɪŋ] in Birmingham speech. This variant was not evident in the Liverpool data. There were very few occurrences of [ɪŋk] and the truncated form of 'something' in the data.

### 3.2 Factors Affecting Analysis and Interpretation

The problem in analysing the results provided by the recordings is that the experiment has a very complex design. There are three independent variables which are;

- 1) Location;
- 2) Occupation;
- 3) Variant.

A fourth dimension could be added by including 'sex' as an independent variable. However, this is examined as a consequence of contrasting two female-dominated occupations with two male-dominated occupations. Therefore, there are really four independent variables.

Another complicating factor is that the group sizes are quite different from one occupation to another. The only groups which are the same size in both cities are the nurses. The chefs were interviewed singly since it was impossible to get a group of them together for the purposes of recording (See Chapter 2, section 2.3.1, for a more

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detailed discussion of this point). The number of speakers in each group is presented in the table below.

	Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxi-Drivers	Chefs
Liverpool	3	8	7	1
Birmingham	3	6	5	1
Totals	6	14	12	2

Table 3-1 - The number of speakers recorded in each occupational group.

The size of the groups, as is obvious from the figures above shows an imbalance, in that only two subjects provide the data for chefs. The lack of symmetry in group size is unfortunate, but was the result of difficulty in finding subjects. The reasons for the difficulty were discussed in Chapter 2. The reader should be aware that the asymmetry of the statistics is an undesirable feature that some future study might be able to avoid.

The first step in analysis necessitated discovering if the independent variables of location, occupation and variant were actually influencing each other. In other words, it was important to know if there was a three way interaction between the variables. A complex Chi-Squared was used which had to be carried out on a main-frame computer (due to the large number of variables and the imbalance of group size). The results section shows that there is no three way interaction between the variables (Table 1) and so this limits the type of analysis which can be executed on the data.

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The comparisons were based mainly on combined scores. For instance, there were so few occurrences of the non-standard forms of the (t) variable, that comparisons between the percentage use of each form would have been meaningless. The raw scores for the variants [t<sup>2</sup>]; [t<sup>r</sup>]; [t<sup>θ</sup>]; [t<sup>d</sup>]; and [t<sup>s</sup>] were, therefore, combined and these combined scores were contrasted with the high scores for the prestige variant [t]. The combined non-standard variants of (t) are labelled [t<sup>ns</sup>] for simplicity.

Similarly, the variable (ing) posed problems but of a slightly different kind. Traditional sociolinguistic approaches (Labov, 1966; Trudgill, 1974a) have viewed [ɪŋ] as standard and all other variants as non-standard. In the data, there were very few occurrences overall of the variant [ɪŋ]. If scores for [ɪŋ] were plotted against scores for [ɪŋg] and [ɪŋ], this would seem to indicate that all the groups used more non-standard forms than is actually the case. The nurses, for example, are fairly standard speakers for all three variables. They produce a high percentage of the standard forms of (h) and (t). Why should they unaccountably show a different pattern for the variable (ing)?

As has been pointed out researchers like Knowles (1978) suggest that when speakers are aspiring to the standard form, they may produce [ɪŋg] as a prestigious form and expect their listeners to perceive it as such. In fact,

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they may not even realise that they are not producing the RP form. Liverpool speakers are known to use the variant [ɪŋg] as a marker of prestige and other native Liverpudlians hear this as more standard speech (Knowles, 1978).

There is another possible explanation for the nurses' use of the variable (ɪŋg). If speakers use standard variants of (h) and (t), the psychological effect on the listener may be too 'distancing'. By filtering out some non-standard variants and retaining others like [ɪŋg], the distancing effect of [h] and [t] is counteracted. Perhaps it is possible that some variables like (ɪŋg) are not so much non-standard as familiar/informal or even used in humorous contexts. If (ɪŋg) is used in this way, it would suggest that it is different in kind from the other two variables. It may also be possible that the use of the variant [ɪŋg] signifies a 'regional standard' rather than an RP standard (c.f. Thelander, 1982, discussed in Chapter One, section 1.3)

Due to the factors mentioned above and as a consequence of the very low frequency of the RP variant [ɪŋ] in the research data (in total, there were only 37 occurrences of [ɪŋ] - 33 of which were produced by the nurses - compared with 283 occurrences of [ɪŋg] and 750 of [ɪn]), it was decided that comparing speakers in their choices of the variants [ɪŋg] and [ɪn] would provide a more sensitive sociolinguistic analysis. Also, the variant [ɪŋk] occurred in low proportions (a total of 21 occurrences) and was

therefore also excluded from the statistical analysis.

One final factor influencing the analysis concerns the variants [ $t^s$ ] of the variable ( $t$ ). Since this variant is indeterminate in nature, there are a number of things which must be taken into account when analysing the data for ( $t$ ).

The linguistic repertoire for Liverpool speakers generally contains the extra variant [ $t^s$ ] which may make Liverpool speech appear relatively more non-standard (with regard to accent) than Birmingham speech. This is not an accurate representation as the results show. Secondly, it is probably misguided to say that Birmingham speakers never produce ( $t$ ) with affrication or frication. The problem is obviously to do with the point at which a stop becomes a fricative or an affricate. It is difficult even for trained phoneticians to hear the difference especially when ( $t$ ) is aspirated. Also, the linguist may be influenced by what he/she expects to hear rather than by what is actually happening linguistically and by personal social and linguistic background.

As a native of the city in question, the researcher might have been able to detect the slightest affrication as having different sociolinguistic meaning to that of an aspirated stop. These problems have been discussed more adequately in Chapter One, but it is important to be aware of them in examining the data.

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### 3.3 Results

Chi-squared tests are presented to test firstly the interaction between the three independent variables of location, occupation and variant (Table 1.), and secondly to determine the effect of these three variables and the sex variable on the three phonetic variables (*h*), (*t*) and (*ing*), (Tables 2-11 inclusive).

In each table, the raw scores or observed scores (O.) are presented alongside the expected scores (E.) for each variant. The observed scores are the actual raw number of occurrences of each variant which were counted in the data. So, for example, in Table 2, the first figure of 82 for the Liverpool hairdressers, means that out of a total of 243 occurrences of the variable (*h*) in the Liverpool hairdressers' speech data, 82 of them were produced in the standard form [*h*]. Similarly, 161 occurrences out of 243 were produced in the non-standard form [*h*<sup>σ</sup>]. The expected frequency of occurrence of each variant can be calculated (assuming there is no association between sex and choice of variant) by summing the rows (e.g. Table 2 - [*h*]- 82+27=109; [*h*<sup>σ</sup>] - 161+356 = 517) and the columns (e.g. Hairdressers - 82+161= 243; Taxi-Drivers - 27+356=383). This gives a grand total of occurrences of the variable (*h*) for both groups of 626. The expected value (E.) for each cell can be computed by the formula.

$$E = \frac{\text{row total} \times \text{column total}}{\text{grand total}}$$

So for the first cell in Table 2. this gives:

$$E = \frac{109 \times 243}{626} = 42.30$$

The expected frequencies can be calculated for each cell using the same formula. The observed and expected scores are then used in the Chi-squared formula:

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

This is done for each cell and the figures obtained are then summed to give the  $\chi^2$  statistic. The degrees of freedom are calculated by dividing the number of rows by the number of columns. For the first box in Table 2, there are two rows and two columns so the degree of freedom is one. However, there are two samples, one from Liverpool and one from Birmingham, each having one degree of freedom. Therefore, there are actually two degrees of freedom if both samples are taken into account as they are for the computation of the  $\chi^2$  statistic. The table value for two degrees of freedom (DF) at the 1% level is 9.210 and the  $\chi^2$  figure 151.69 is greater than this figure. Therefore we have evidence that the independent variable, (in the case of Table 2), sex, has affected the dependent variable - choice of variant. In other words, there is an association between a person's sex and their choice of variants of the (h) variable. Each table is marked at the bottom with the following code, to indicate at a glance whether the results are significant or not.

- \*\* significant at the 1% level
- \* significant at the 5% level
- ns not significant

Two aspects of the analysis must be mentioned before the

tables are examined. Firstly, it will be observed that in measuring sex differences on each variable, the groups used for comparison are the hairdressers and the taxi-drivers while the nurses and chefs are excluded from the analysis for the sex variable. It was not possible to sum the scores for the hairdressers and nurses and compare these with the summed scores for the taxi-drivers and chefs since as has been mentioned, only two chefs were interviewed. This means that there are only fourteen men in the sample whereas there are twenty women. Using data from all four groups would result in a biased sample, in favour of women. It is not certain in this case, therefore, whether a result of significance would mean that there are actually significant sex differences or whether such a result would merely reflect the imbalance of numbers for each sex. It was therefore decided that it would be better to make comparisons on a smaller overall sample but with comparable numbers for males and females. There are 14 hairdressers and 12 taxi-drivers and so these groups are comparable since the number of women is only slightly higher than the number of men. This factor must be taken into account in examining the tables for sex differences. In fact, if the nurses data had been included, this might have resulted in an even higher value for  $\chi^2$  since the nurses are the most standard speakers of the four groups.

The second point to take into account is that the chefs were interviewed singly, one man being from Liverpool and the other from Birmingham. This is a limiting feature of the

design but it proved impossible to get a group of chefs together for the purposes of recording (See Chapter 2, section 2.2 for a detailed discussion of this point). Due to the fact that the number of chefs is so small, the difference in their sociolinguistic backgrounds is likely to be more important (from a statistical point of view) than any differences between individual members in the groups. It is acknowledged that the chefs' data is bound to be discrepant in some respects. The Liverpool man, for example, uses a much higher proportion of non-standard variants than the Birmingham chef (See Table 11). Although the men are in similar positions of authority and they both run similar size kitchens in different large universities, there are many sociolinguistic differences between them. Therefore they have been excluded from the statistical analysis on sex, occupation and location.

Table 11. presents the chef data. Chi-squared tests carried out on the data indicate that the two men differ significantly in their choice of variants of two variables - (*h*) and (*t*) - but they are more similar in their use of (*ing*), since they both prefer the non-standard variant [*ɪn*]. Although there may be individual differences in the other occupational groups, the trends for choice of linguistic variants are in the same direction. For example, all the nurses use a high proportion of standard variants and all the taxi-drivers produce a high proportion of non-standard variants. Although the limitations of the chef sample allowed only very limited statistical conclusions to be

drawn, they did not prevent qualitative observation of the narratives produced by the chefs (Chapters 5 and 6). Both men produced quite a large number of narratives (23 narratives in total) which were sufficient for some qualitative observations to be made, and these were valuable in highlighting aspects of the nature of the profession.

Table 12. presents the percentage scores for the occupational groups' choice of linguistic variants in both cities, Liverpool and Birmingham. It is useful to refer to percentages in describing the trends. Table 13. also presents the scores for the 34 individual speakers on their choice of particular variants to illustrate the variability within the groups.

Speakers	Totals
1	1335.00
2	1472.00
3	1472.00
4	1472.00
5	1472.00
6	1472.00
7	1472.00
8	1472.00
9	1472.00
10	1472.00
11	1472.00
12	1472.00
13	1472.00
14	1472.00
15	1472.00
16	1472.00
17	1472.00
18	1472.00
19	1472.00
20	1472.00
21	1472.00
22	1472.00
23	1472.00
24	1472.00
25	1472.00
26	1472.00
27	1472.00
28	1472.00
29	1472.00
30	1472.00
31	1472.00
32	1472.00
33	1472.00
34	1472.00

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**TABLE 1**

A Chi-squared test to determine whether there is a 3-way interaction between the three independent variables - location, occupation and variant.

Due to the complexity of the research design (i.e. 3 independent variables and different sample sizes), the raw scores (i.e. observed scores O.) presented below were analysed for Chi-squared on a main frame computer.

(h)

Liverpool

		Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Totals
[h]	O.	116.00	82.00	27.00	225.00
	E.	42.55	70.82	116.63	
[h <sup>o</sup> ]	O.	30.00	161.00	356.00	547.00
	E.	103.45	172.13	271.37	
Totals		146.00	243.00	383.00	772.00

Birmingham

		Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Totals
[h]	O.	150.00	81.00	23.00	254.00
	E.	46.80	78.58	128.62	
[h <sup>o</sup> ]	O.	96.00	332.00	653.00	1081.00
	E.	199.20	334.42	547.38	
Totals		246.00	413.00	676.00	1335.00

(t)

Liverpool

		Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Totals
[t]	O.	718.00	540.00	617.00	1875.00
	E.	585.53	545.26	744.20	
[t <sup>na</sup> ]	O.	9.00	137.00	307.00	453.00
	E.	141.46	131.74	179.80	
Totals		727.00	677.00	924.00	2328.00

Birmingham

		Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Totals
[t]	O.	1395.00	1172.00	1475.00	4042.00
	E.	1353.65	1143.63	1546.72	
[t <sup>na</sup> ]	O.	67.00	65.00	198.00	330.00
	E.	110.35	93.37	126.28	
Totals		1462.00	1237.00	1673.00	4372.00

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Table 1 (continued)

(ing)  
Liverpool

		Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Totals
[ing]	O.	64.00	17.00	8.00	89.00
	E.	21.53	34.38	33.09	
[in]	O.	3.00	90.00	95.00	188.00
	E.	45.47	72.62	69.91	
Totals		67.00	107.00	103.00	277.00

Birmingham

		Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Totals
[ing]	O.	115.00	27.00	17.00	159.00
	E.	54.40	51.36	53.35	
[in]	O.	40.00	119.00	135.00	294.00
	E.	100.59	94.75	98.65	
Totals		155.00	146.00	152.00	453.00

$\chi^2$  was calculated at 0.32  
 3 DF  $p > 0.5$  (ns)

Conclusion : There is no 3-way interaction between the variables of location, occupation and variant. They are independent of each other.

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**TABLE 2**

A Chi-squared test for significant differences between the sexes (taxi-drivers vs. hairdressers) in their choice of variants of the (h) variable.

Liverpool

		Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Totals
[ h ]	O.	82.00	27.00	109.00
	E.	42.30	66.69	
[ h <sup>ø</sup> ]	O.	161.00	356.00	517.00
	E.	200.68	316.30	
Totals		243.00	383.00	626.00

$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$		Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Total
[ h ]		37.26	23.62	73.71
[ h <sup>ø</sup> ]		7.85	4.98	

Birmingham

		Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Totals
[ h ]	O.	81.00	23.00	104.00
	E.	39.44	64.56	
[ h <sup>ø</sup> ]	O.	332.00	653.00	985.00
	E.	373.56	611.44	
Totals		413.00	676.00	1089.00

$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$		Hairdressers	Taxidriviers	Total
[ h ]		43.79	26.75	77.98
[ h <sup>ø</sup> ]		4.62	2.82	

$\chi^2 = 151.65$

2DF      p<0.001

Conclusion : There are significant differences between the sexes in their use of the (h) variable. (\*\*)

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**TABLE 3**

**A Chi-squared test for significant differences between the sexes (taxi-drivers vs. hairdressers) in their choice of variants of the (t) variable.**

Liverpool

		Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Totals
[ t ]	O.	540.00	617.00	1157.00
	E.	489.25	667.75	1157.00
[ t <sup>ns</sup> ]	O.	137.00	307.00	444.00
	E.	187.75	256.00	444.00
Totals		677.00	924.00	1601.00

		$(O-E)^2$		
		E		Total
[ t ]				
		5.26	3.86	32.88
[ t <sup>ns</sup> ]		13.71	10.05	

Birmingham

		Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Totals
[ t ]	O.	1172.00	1475.00	2647.00
	E.	1125.20	1521.79	2647.00
[ t <sup>ns</sup> ]	O.	65.00	198.00	263.00
	E.	111.79	151.20	263.00
Totals		1237.00	1673.00	2910.00

		$(O-E)^2$		
		E		Total
[ t ]		1.95	1.44	37.46
		19.58	14.49	

$\chi^2 = 70.34$

2DF p < 0.001

Conclusion : there are significant differences between the sexes in their use of the (t) variable. (\*\*)

**TABLE 4**

**A Chi-squared test for significant differences between the sexes (taxi-drivers vs. hairdressers) in their choice of variants of the (ing) variable.**

Liverpool

		Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Totals
[ɪŋg]	O.	17.00	8.00	25.00
	E.	12.74	12.26	
[ɪn]	O.	90.00	95.00	185.00
	E.	94.26	90.74	
Totals		107.00	103.00	210.00

$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$

		Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Total
[ɪŋg]		1.42	1.48	3.28
[ɪn]		0.19	0.19	

Birmingham

		Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Totals
[ɪŋg]	O.	27.00	17.00	44.00
	E.	21.56	22.44	
[ɪn]	O.	119.00	135.00	254.00
	E.	124.44	129.56	
Totals		146.00	152.00	298.00

$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$

		Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Total
[ɪŋg]		1.37	1.32	3.16
[ɪn]		0.24	0.23	

$\chi^2 = 6.44$

2DF

p<0.005

**Conclusion :** There are significant differences between the sexes in their use of the (ing) variable. (\*)

N.B. If we take scores for the cities separately, then p>0.001, i.e. (ns).

**TABLE 5**

A Chi-squared test for significant differences between the occupations (nurses, hairdressers and taxi-drivers) in their choice of variants of the (h) variable.

Liverpool

		Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Totals
[h]	O.	116.00	82.00	27.00	225.00
	E.	42.55	70.82	111.63	
[h <sup>2</sup> ]	O.	30.00	161.00	356.00	547.00
	E.	103.45	172.18	271.37	
Totals		146.00	243.00	383.00	772.00

(O-E)<sup>2</sup>

<u>E</u>	Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Total
[h]	126.79	1.76	64.16	271.99
[h <sup>2</sup> ]	52.15	0.73	26.40	

Birmingham

		Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Totals
[h]	O.	150.00	81.00	23.00	254.00
	E.	46.80	78.58	128.62	
[h <sup>2</sup> ]	O.	96.00	332.00	653.00	1081.00
	E.	199.20	334.42	547.38	
Totals		246.00	413.00	676.00	1335.00

(O-E)<sup>2</sup>

<u>E</u>	Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Total
[h]	227.57	0.075	86.73	388.23
[h <sup>2</sup> ]	53.46	0.017	20.38	

$\chi^2 = 660.22$

3DF

p < 0.001

Conclusion : There are significant differences between the occupations in their use of the (h) variable. (\*\*)

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**TABLE 6**

A Chi-squared test for significant differences between the occupations (nurses, hairdressers and taxi-drivers) in their choice of variants of the (t) variable.

Liverpool

		Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxidriviers	Totals
[t]	O.	718.00	540.00	617.00	1875.00
	E.	585.53	545.26	744.20	
[t <sup>ns</sup> ]	O.	9.00	137.00	307.00	453.00
	E.	141.46	131.74	179.80	
Totals		727.00	677.00	924.00	2328.00

	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$	Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxidriviers	Total
[t]		29.27	0.050	21.74	265.28
[t <sup>ns</sup> ]		124.03	0.21	89.98	

Birmingham

		Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxidriviers	Totals
[t]	O.	1395.00	1172.00	1475.00	4042.00
	E.	1351.65	1143.63	1546.72	
[t <sup>ns</sup> ]	O.	67.00	65.00	198.00	330.00
	E.	110.35	93.37	126.28	
Totals		1462.00	1237.00	1673.00	4372.00

	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$	Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxidriviers	Total
[t]		1.39	0.703	3.32	71.79
[t <sup>ns</sup> ]		17.03	8.62	40.73	

$\chi^2 = 337.773$

3DF                      p < 0.001

Conclusion : There are significant differences between the occupations in their use of the (t) variable. (\*\*)

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**TABLE 7**

A Chi-squared test for significant differences between the occupations (nurses, hairdressers and taxi-drivers) in their choice of variants of the (ing) variable.

Liverpool

		Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Totals
[ing]	O.	64.00	17.00	8.00	89.00
	E.	21.53	34.38	33.09	
[in]	O.	3.00	90.00	95.00	188.00
	E.	45.47	72.62	69.91	
Totals		67.00	107.00	103.00	277.00

		$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$			Total
		Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Total
[ing]		83.78	8.78	19.02	164.41
[in]		39.67	4.16	9.00	

Birmingham

		Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Totals
[ing]	O.	115.00	27.00	17.00	159.00
	E.	54.40	51.36	53.35	
[in]	O.	40.00	119.00	135.00	294.00
	E.	100.59	94.75	98.65	
Totals		155.00	146.00	152.00	453.00

		$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$			Total
		Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxi-drivers	Total
[ing]		67.50	11.55	24.77	159.91
[in]		36.50	6.20	13.39	

$\chi^2 = 324.32$

3DF

$p < 0.001$

Conclusion : There are significant differences between the occupations in their use of the (ing) variable. (\*\*)

**TABLE 8**

A Chi-squared test for significant differences between speakers from each of the two locations - Birmingham and Liverpool - in their use of variants of the (h) variable.

Nurses

		Liverpool	Birmingham	Totals
[h]	O.	116.00	150.00	266.00
	E.	99.07	166.93	
[h <sup>ø</sup> ]	O.	30.00	96.00	126.00
	E.	46.93	79.07	
Totals		146.00	246.00	392.00

		$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$		Total
		Liverpool	Birmingham	
[h]		2.89	1.72	14.34
[h <sup>ø</sup> ]		6.11	3.62	

Hairdressers

		Liverpool	Birmingham	Totals
[h]	O.	82.00	81.00	163.00
	E.	60.38	102.62	
[h <sup>ø</sup> ]	O.	161.00	332.00	493.00
	E.	182.62	310.38	
Totals		243.00	413.00	656.00

		$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$		Total
		Liverpool	Birmingham	
[h]		7.74	4.55	16.35
[h <sup>ø</sup> ]		2.56	1.50	

Taxi Drivers

		Liverpool	Birmingham	Totals
[h]	O.	27.00	23.00	50.00
	E.	18.08	31.92	
[h <sup>ø</sup> ]	O.	356.00	653.00	1009.00
	E.	364.92	644.08	
Totals		383.00	676.00	1059.00

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Table 8 (continued)

Taxi-Drivers

$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$	Liverpool	Birmingham	Total
[ h ]	4.40	2.49	7.23
[ h.ɸ ]	0.22	0.12	

$\chi^2 = 37.92$   
3DF  $p < 0.001$

Conclusion : Birmingham speakers are significantly different from Liverpool speakers in their choice of variants of the ( h ) variable. (\*\*)

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**TABLE 9**

**A Chi-squared test for significant differences between speakers from each of the two locations - Birmingham and Liverpool - in their use of variants of the ( t ) variable.**

Nurses

		Liverpool	Birmingham	Totals
[ t ]	O.	718.00	1395.00	2113.00
	E.	701.76	1411.24	
[ t <sup>ns</sup> ]	O.	9.00	67.00	76.00
	E.	25.24	50.76	
Totals		727.00	1462.00	2189.00

		Liverpool	Birmingham	Total
$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$				
[ t ]		0.376	0.187	16.209
[ t <sup>ns</sup> ]		10.45	5.196	

Hairdressers

		Liverpool	Birmingham	Totals
[ t ]	O.	540.00	1172.00	1712.00
	E.	605.55	1106.45	
[ t <sup>ns</sup> ]	O.	137.00	65.00	202.00
	E.	71.45	130.55	
Totals		677.00	1237.00	1914.00

		Liverpool	Birmingham	Total
$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$				
[ t ]		7.09	3.88	104.02
[ t <sup>ns</sup> ]		60.14	32.91	

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Table 9 (continued)

Taxi Drivers

		Liverpool	Birmingham	Totals
[t]	O.	617.00	1475.00	2092.00
	E.	744.32	1347.68	
[t <sup>na</sup> ]	O.	307.00	198.00	505.00
	E.	179.68	325.32	
Totals		924.00	1673.00	2597.00

	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$	Liverpool	Birmingham	Total
[t]		21.78	12.03	173.85
[t <sup>na</sup> ]		90.22	49.82	

$$\chi^2 = 294.079$$

3DF      p<0.001

Conclusion : Birmingham speakers are significantly different from Liverpool speakers in their choice of variants of the (t) variable. (\*\*)

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**TABLE 10**

A Chi-squared test for significant differences between speakers from each of the two locations - Birmingham and Liverpool - in their use of variants of the (ɪŋ) variable.

Nurses

		Liverpool	Birmingham	Totals
[ɪŋg]	O.	64.00	115.00	179.00
	E.	54.02	124.98	
[ɪn]	O.	3.00	40.00	43.00
	E.	12.98	30.02	
Totals		67.00	155.00	222.00

	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$	Liverpool	Birmingham	Total
[ɪŋg]		1.84	0.79	13.62
[ɪn]		7.67	3.32	

Hairdressers

		Liverpool	Birmingham	Totals
[ɪŋg]	O.	17.00	27.00	44.00
	E.	18.60	25.39	
[ɪn]	O.	90.00	119.00	209.00
	E.	88.39	120.60	
Totals		107.00	146.00	253.00

	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$	Liverpool	Birmingham	Total
[ɪŋg]		0.14	0.10	0.29
[ɪn]		0.029	0.021	

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Table 10 (continued)

Taxi Drivers

		Liverpool	Birmingham	Totals
[ing]	O.	8.00	17.00	25.00
	E.	10.09	14.90	
[in]	O.	95.00	135.00	230.00
	E.	92.90	137.09	
Totals		103.00	152.00	255.00

$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$	Liverpool	Birmingham	Total
[ing]	0.43	0.29	0.799
[in]	0.047	0.032	

3DF

$$\chi^2 = 14.709$$

$$p < 0.001$$

Conclusion : Birmingham speakers are significantly different from Liverpool speakers in their choice of variants of the (ing) variable. (\*\*)

N.B. If we take the scores for the hairdressers and taxi drivers separately at one degree of freedom, there are no significant differences between the cities, i.e. (ns). It is only the nurses scores which make the differences significant overall.

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**TABLE 11**

Chi-squared tests for significant differences between the Liverpool chef and the Birmingham chef in their choice of variants of all three variables - (h), (t) and (ns).

(h)

		L'Pool Chef	B'Ham Chef	Totals
[h]	O.	27.00	103.00	130.00
	E.	62.50	67.49	130.00
[h <sup>o</sup> ]	O.	325.00	277.00	602.00
	E.	289.49	312.50	602.00
Totals		352.00	380.00	732.00

$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$

	L'Pool Chef	B'Ham Chef	Total
[h]	20.16	18.68	47.23
[h <sup>o</sup> ]	4.36	4.03	

$\chi^2 = 47.23$   
 1 DF  $p < 0.001$  (\*\*)

(t)

		L'Pool Chef	B'Ham Chef	Totals
[t]	O.	824.00	1381.00	2205.00
	E.	1000.42	1204.58	2205.00
[t <sup>ns</sup> ]	O.	352.00	35.00	387.00
	E.	175.58	211.42	387.00
Totals		1176.00	1416.00	2592.00

$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$

	L'Pool Chef	B'Ham Chef	Total
[t]	31.11	25.83	381.40
[t <sup>ns</sup> ]	177.26	147.20	

$\chi^2 = 381.40$   
 1 DF  $p < 0.001$  (\*\*)

Table 11 (continued)

(ing)

		L'Pool Chef	B'Ham Chef	Totals
[ing]	O.	22.00	13.00	35.00
	E.	16.98	18.02	
[in]	O.	125.00	143.00	268.00
	E.	130.02	137.98	
Totals		147.00	156.00	303.00

(O-E)<sup>2</sup>

E	L'Pool Chef	B'Ham Chef	Total
[ing]	1.48	1.398	3.248
[in]	0.19	0.18	

1DF  $\chi^2 = 3.248$   
 $p > 0.005$  (ns)

Conclusion : There are significant differences between the two chefs in their use of two of the variables - (h) and (t). However, they do not differ significantly in their use of the (ing) variable.

TABLE 12

Table showing the percentage use of variants of each of the 3 variables - (h), (t) and (ing) - by the four occupational groups in Liverpool and Birmingham.

(h)

Liverpool		Nurses	H.Dressers	Taxi-Drivers	Chefs
[h]		79	34	7	8
[h]		21	66	93	92
Birmingham		Nurses	H.Dressers	Taxi-Drivers	Chefs
[h]		61	20	3	27
[h]		39	80	97	73

(t)

Liverpool		Nurses	H.Dressers	Taxi-Drivers	Chefs
[t]		99	80	67	70
[t <sup>na</sup> ]		1	20	33	30
Birmingham		Nurses	H.Dressers	Taxi-Drivers	Chefs
[t]		95	95	88	98
[t <sup>na</sup> ]		5	5	12	2

(ing)

Liverpool		Nurses	H.Dressers	Taxi-Drivers	Chefs
[ing]		96	16	8	15
[in]		4	84	92	85
Birmingham		Nurses	H.Dressers	Taxi-Drivers	Chefs
[ing]		74	18	11	8
[in]		26	82	89	92

**Table 13**

**Raw scores showing the distribution of variants as used by each of the 34 individual speakers comprising the research sample.**

Speaker	City	Occupation	[h]	[h <sup>9</sup> ]	[t]	[t <sup>ns</sup> ]	[ɪŋ]	[ɪŋ]
1	L	N	36	8	149	4	18	1
2	L	N	40	12	222	4	14	1
3	L	N	40	10	347	1	32	1
4	B	N	61	17	552	8	52	6
5	B	N	53	66	521	21	51	12
6	B	N	36	13	322	38	12	22
7	L	H.D.	6	22	108	35	1	16
8	L	H.D.	4	11	19	23	1	7
9	L	H.D.	1	9	21	13	1	3
10	L	H.D.	12	41	135	12	6	28
11	L	H.D.	51	59	204	34	7	26
12	L	H.D.	4	9	23	11	1	6
13	L	H.D.	1	0	2	1	0	0
14	L	H.D.	3	10	28	8	0	4
15	B	H.D.	11	119	303	20	1	33
16	B	H.D.	7	21	74	6	1	4
17	B	H.D.	27	84	312	10	6	37
18	B	H.D.	16	37	172	18	7	9
19	B	H.D.	0	0	2	1	0	0
20	B	H.D.	20	71	309	10	12	36
21	L	T.D.	12	233	360	214	5	56
22	L	T.D.	10	51	115	28	2	21
23	L	T.D.	0	27	58	41	0	9
24	L	T.D.	5	34	60	12	1	7
25	L	T.D.	0	4	15	8	0	2
26	L	T.D.	0	7	9	4	0	0
27	L	T.D.	0	5	8	5	0	0
28	B	T.D.	16	397	752	101	10	71
29	B	T.D.	2	150	390	51	5	37
30	B	T.D.	3	40	124	14	0	13
31	B	T.D.	0	51	163	27	1	13
32	B	T.D.	2	15	46	5	1	1
33	L	C	27	325	824	352	22	125
34	B	C	103	277	1381	35	13	143

L = Liverpool  
B = Birmingham

N = Nurse  
H.D. = Hairdresser  
T.D. = Taxi-driver  
C = Chef

N.B. Out of a total of 37 occurrences of the variant [ɪŋ], 33 were produced by the nurses. There were only 21 occurrences of the variant [ɪŋk].

### 3.4 Interpretation and Discussion

The chi-squared test carried out to determine a three-way interaction between the variables of location, occupation and variant was not significant as Table 1. shows. Each independent variable must, therefore, be investigated separately. The sex variable is included in the analysis.

#### 3.4.1 The Sex-Variable

Table 2. compares the hairdressers and the taxi-drivers in their use of the (h) variable. The results are significant at the 1% level. It can be concluded, therefore, that there are significant differences between the men and women recorded in their use of the (h) variable.

The individual percentage scores in Table 12. indicate that the women consistently use a higher proportion of the standard variant [h] than the men do. The Birmingham hairdressers use twenty percent [h] compared with the taxi-drivers from that city who use only three percent of the standard variant form. If figures for the nurses had been included, the discrepancy between the sexes would be even larger since the results show that the nurses use a very high percentage of [h] compared to the other three groups. This becomes obvious when the occupational variable is examined.

Results for the sexes use of the (t) variable are presented

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in Table 3. The sex differences are again significant at the 1% level. The men produce much higher counts of the non-standard variants of (t), although these are still very small in comparison with the total number of variants of (t) produced overall.

To return briefly to Table 12., it seems that the Liverpool men produce the highest percentage of [t<sup>ns</sup>] but this is obviously influenced by their use of the variant [t<sup>s</sup>] which is not characteristic of the Birmingham repertoire. Women in Liverpool appear to have a higher non-standard value of (t) for the same reason. The table below summarises the raw scores for males and females use of the non-standard variants of (t). The four groups are included for comparison. Scores are combined for the cities.

Variants		[t <sup>s</sup> ]	[t <sup>ø</sup> ]	[t <sup>r</sup> ]	[t <sup>2</sup> ]	[t <sup>d</sup> ]
Nurses	(F)	3	43	9	5	16
Hairdresser	(F)	80	46	46	27	3
Taxi-Drivers	(M)	266	102	145	7	31
Chefs	(M)	249	54	49	17	18

Table 3-2 The proportion of non-standard variants of (t) used by the four occupational groups in both cities.

(F) = female-dominated group

(M) = male-dominated group

It is clear that the females produce far fewer non-standard forms than the males in the sample. Of the four groups, the

taxi-drivers use the highest percentage of non-standard variants of (*t*) although they do not favour the use of the glottal stop. The hairdressers do seem to favour this form, however, which is rather unusual and contrary to what might have been expected. It is primarily the Birmingham hairdressers who contribute to the figure of 27 given above, so perhaps this is a feature of Birmingham speech. This question will be addressed again in looking at patterns for the two cities.

To turn to the effect of sex on the final variable (*ing*), Table 4. lists the results which are significant at the 5% level. In fact, if figures had been computed separately for Liverpool and Birmingham, the differences between men and women in their use of (*ing*) would not be significant at all. Both sexes use a high proportion of the non-standard form [*ɪn*]. The mens' score is marginally higher for this variant. Table 4. illustrates that women overall favour more standard variants, despite the fact that the figures are fairly similar to those for men in the groups.

In summary, then, it appears that for each linguistic variable, the different sexes exhibit significantly different choices over linguistic variants and this applies to both cities. The females in the population studied use a higher proportion of standard forms than the men.

This fact is interesting, though not very illuminating. Are the women more sensitive to certain factors in the social

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and linguistic contexts which influence them to use more standard variants than the men? It is possible to surmise what these factors might be, but the figures really provide no answers in themselves. This shortcoming is also apparent in the analysis of the other independent variables.

### 3.4.2 The Occupation Variable

Tables 5, 6, and 7, present significance tests to determine the effect of occupation on linguistic choice.

Table 5 shows figures for the (h) variable. The differences between the four occupations in their speech behaviour is significant for (h) at the 1% level. The percentage scores for each variant of (h) are summarised below.

		Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxi-Drivers	Chefs
Liverpool	[h]	79	34	14	8
	[h <sup>ʔ</sup> ]	21	66	86	92
Birmingham	[h]	61	20	3	27
	[h <sup>ʔ</sup> ]	39	80	97	73

Table 3-3 The percentage of each variant of (h) used by the four occupational groups in the cities of Birmingham and Liverpool.

The nurses are the most standard speakers with respect to the use of (h). Nurses from both cities favour use of the standard form [h]. The members of the other occupations produce a relatively greater number of non-standard variants. In fact, the nurses scores are quite strikingly

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high for [h], which may indicate that this profession is somewhat different from the others. The chefs' score for the standard form is perhaps higher than might have been expected. Table 13. lists the scores for the individual speakers and it shows that the Birmingham chef is surprisingly more standard in his use of this variable. This must contribute to the impression that the chefs overall are more standard in their use of (h) than the taxi-drivers. The Liverpool chef, in fact, uses a large proportion of non-standard variants and so figures indicating that the chefs are standard speakers are not sensitive enough to capture individual differences.

The occupational differences are also significant at the 1% level for the (t) variable (Table 6). The low frequency of non-standard forms makes these results difficult to interpret. However, the nurses overall use the fewest number of non-standard forms. The Birmingham chef and the Liverpool nurses show the lowest count for the use of non-standard variants of (t).

		Nurses	Hairdressers	Taxi-Drivers	Chefs
Liverpool	[t]	99	80	62	70
	[t <sup>ns</sup> ]	1	20	38	30
Birmingham	[t]	95	95	88	98
	[t <sup>ns</sup> ]	5	5	12	2

Table 3-4 The percentage of each variant of (t) used by the four occupational groups in the cities of Birmingham and Liverpool.

It is probably true to say that if it had been possible to exclude the variant [t<sup>s</sup>] from the analysis, the data for

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Birmingham and Liverpool for the (t) variable, would be remarkably similar.

Table 7. tabulates the scores for the -ing suffix. The results are significant at the 1% level. The scores for [ɪŋ] decrease on a cline from nurses to hairdressers to taxi-drivers. The scores for the variant [ɪn] increase in the converse direction.

If [ɪŋ] can be considered as a more standard realisation of the variable than [ɪn], then the nurses are again the most standard group with the taxi-drivers being the least standard. This variable produces the greatest polarisation of figures.

The results therefore indicate that there are significant differences between the occupations in their choice of all three variants. The more specialised the occupational group (in terms of length and depth of training - nurses being more specialised than hairdressers and taxi-drivers), then the higher the proportion of standard variants used by occupational group members, the hierarchy for standardness for the three groups being

Nurses	Greater	Standardness
Hairdressers	↕	
Taxi-Drivers	Less	

It is not possible to include the chefs in this hierarchy since as section 3.5.4 shows, they differ markedly in their use of the variables (h) and (t) and are only similar in

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their use of the (*ing*) variable.

Although it is clear that the nurses in the sample use a very high proportion of standard variants in comparison with the other groups, the reasons for this behaviour are not clear. Despite the fact that the study does not record speakers in a non-working environment for comparison (due to the fact that there was no time available to pursue this avenue of research), it must be said that collating scores for variables obscures the sociolinguistic details which influence such behaviour and some sensitivity to possible explanatory factors must therefore be lost. In the recordings, the nurses use different styles of speech varying in formality. They do not consistently use standard variants throughout. Where they opt for non-standard variants should be of interest since it might indicate why they choose more standard variants in certain situations, and if this behaviour is in any way related to their working patterns.

The nurses are the only group who produce the RP variant [ɪŋ] in any quantities. In the discussions, they were more anxious than the other groups and might have been trying harder to create a good impression for the researcher. Their general level of education is of course somewhat higher than the other groups (educated at least to O'level standard) which may also have contributed to the use of more standard variants.

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### 3.4.3 The Location Variable

The independent variable of location is considered to enable any findings to be consolidated. Table 8. indicates that the results are significant for the variable ( $h$ ) at the 1% level.

The Birmingham speakers overall show greater values for the use of the non-standard variant [ $h^{\theta}$ ]. The patterns for the four occupational groups, however, are similar with the exception of the two chefs. In both cities, the nurses use the highest percentage of standard variants and the taxi-drivers, the highest percentage of non-standard variants, with the hairdressers falling somewhere inbetween.

Table 9. lists the scores for the ( $t$ ) variable. There are obviously some discrepancies due to the presence of the variant [ $t^{\delta}$ ] in Liverpool speech which makes Liverpool speakers appear more non-standard with regard to pronunciation. The figures are, in fact, very similar when [ $t^{\delta}$ ] counts are excluded. Another discrepancy is that the glottal stop seems to be more characteristic of Birmingham speech, although this variant occurs in very small quantities.

The effect of location on the ( $ing$ ) variable is more complex. Table 10. notes the final figure for Chi-squared as 14.709 which obscures the fact that Chi-squared as calculated for each individual occupation is not necessarily

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significant. In other words, although it is true that there are significant differences overall between speakers in Liverpool and Birmingham, the nurses are the only group which shows significant differences over the cities when counts for each occupation are calculated separately. Chi-squared for the hairdressers is only 0.29 and for the taxi-drivers, 0.799, which means that any differences are not significant. Hairdressers in both cities are remarkably similar in their use of linguistic variants, as are the taxi-drivers. This means that the linguistic behaviour of some of the groups in both cities is alike, with respect to the use of (ing).

This might provide the beginnings of evidence that people in the same profession are linguistically similar. However, such a claim would have to be further substantiated with research on other occupations and speakers recorded in a variety of situations in various cities.

#### 3.4.4 The Chefs

It has been acknowledged that the data from the chefs is bound to be discrepant in many respects. It has, therefore, been excluded from the statistical analysis. Table 11. illustrates some of the differences between the two men. They show a markedly different use of (h) and (t). The Birmingham chef uses a much higher proportion of the standard forms of these variables. Their use of (ing), however, is not significantly different. They both prefer



the non-standard form [ɪn].

The Liverpool chef has a much larger number of non-standard variants in his repertoire. This is possibly due to the different social backgrounds of the two men, despite the fact that they work in the same type of environment.

The Birmingham chef is much younger than the other man and he began his training in an era where it was much more acceptable and indeed necessary to acquire some formal qualifications for the job. Earlier, it had been more usual to learn the trade through an apprenticeship either at sea or in a large hotel or a similar establishment. The Liverpool chef was trained in the Merchant Navy.

It was not expected that the chefs' data would be conclusive. However, something of the nature of the profession has been illustrated through the stories which were told. What is clear from the data provided by the other three occupational groups is that there is a considerable degree of intra-profession consistency in choice of linguistic variants.

#### 3.4.5 Summary of Results

The statistical analysis shows that

1. the sexes (in both Liverpool and Birmingham) differ significantly in their choice of variants of each

linguistic variable - (h), (t) and (ing) - (for (h) and (t) -  $p < 0.001$  and for (ing) -  $p < 0.005$ ). The proportions of each variant used indicate that women consistently use a higher proportion of the standard forms - [h], [t] and [ɪŋg] - than men (hairdressers - 25% [h]; 89% [t]; 17% [ɪŋg]; taxi-drivers - 5% [h]; 80% [t]; 10% [ɪŋg]). Therefore the results agree with the findings of previous sociolinguistic research which documents womens' speech as being closer to the prestige norm (Trudgill, 1974).

2. the occupations (nurses, hairdressers (H/D) and taxi-drivers (T/D)) also exhibit significant variation in their choice of linguistic variants (for (h), (t) and (ing) -  $p < 0.001$ ). It is found that the proportion of standard variants used increases as the specialisation of the occupational group increases, the hierarchy for standardness being

Nurses	Greater	(68% [h]; 96% [t]; 81% [ɪŋg])
H/D	↓ Standardness	(25% [h]; 89% [t]; 17% [ɪŋg])
T/D	Less	(5% [h]; 80% [t]; 10% [ɪŋg])

3. chi-squared tests indicate that overall Liverpool and Birmingham speakers differ significantly in their use of variants of (h), (t) and (ing) -  $p < 0.001$ . However, closer inspection of the data reveals that scores for the variable (t) are complicated by the presence of the extra non-standard variant [t<sup>s</sup>] in the repertoire of Liverpool speakers, which obviously makes them appear less standard than Birmingham

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speakers. If it had been possible to exclude [tʰ] from the analysis, it would emerge that speakers in both cities are remarkably similar in their use of the variable (t). In addition, the nurses are the only group who vary significantly in their choice of variants of (ing), Birmingham nurses using a higher proportion of the non-standard form [ɪn]. Hairdressers and taxi-drivers in both cities are very similar in their use of (ing). It is concluded that speakers from the different locations only differ significantly in the extent to which they use variants of (h), being more linguistically similar in their use of variants of (t) and (ing).

The results therefore indicate that there is a considerable degree of intra-sex and intra-profession consistency in speakers' choice of linguistic variants of the variables (h), (t) and (ing).

### 3.5 The Analysis of Variables - An Unsatisfactory Approach.

The quantitative approach has demonstrated that there are significant differences between the sexes, occupations and cities in speakers' linguistic behaviour. What has not been demonstrated is when these differences are most apparent and what motivates them.

Calculations for global categories such as groups of

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speakers and variables obscure much of the sociolinguistic detail. The differential figures on standard variants give no indication of the function of non-standard forms in narratives, for both sexes. Yet there are clear indications that non-standardness is not randomly organised but occurs in chunks and performs an important intra-textual function within narrative. The statistical analysis of variants pursued so far fails to shed light on this "blocking" effect of non-standardness. Jahangiri and Hudson(1982) in their work on Tehrani Persian also observe that linguistic variants can occur in blocks and that this may depend on linguistic context, or perhaps more crucially on semantic variables. For example, if a speaker is telling a story to an audience using the pronoun 'we', he is obviously seeing himself as part of the group. It is probable that he will be consistent in his use of the pronoun until his viewpoint changes.

A purely quantitative approach clearly cannot handle the function of blocking behaviour in relation to content and communicative purpose. Because of this omission, traditional statistical treatment of variants may miss some of the very factors that might help to explain segmental variation, rather than simply describe it.

Another factor which the figures presented in section 2.3 cannot show is the possibility that different variables are used in different ways. The point was made in Chapter One that not all linguistic variables are necessarily sensitive

to the same social variables or are sensitive to them to the same extent. It is possible that the non-standard variants of a variable differ in the extent to which they hold stigmatised prestige.

For example, the variant [t<sup>s</sup>] is stigmatised heavily around Britain and even in Liverpool itself (Knowles, 1978). For this reason, its use may be more indicative of social class or sex differences in Liverpool than the variant [t<sup>r</sup>] for example, which occurs in many urban communities including Birmingham.

Variants of this type may also be more often used with specific linguistic intent. For example, to create humour in mimicking the Liverpool accent (See Chapters 5 and 6).

It is possible that by using variables in different ways speakers can moderate and adjust the effect of their linguistic output. It has been suggested earlier that the nurses use a number of [ɪŋg] variants and fewer [ɪŋ] variants to reduce the sociolinguistic distance of speaker and listener. In using standard variants of some variables and non-standard variants of others, the effect is more informal than speech containing standard forms of every variable.

The purely mechanical problems of preparing the data for analysis have already been mentioned. In order to carry out statistical tests, the non-standard variants of the variable

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(t) were combined to give a total non-standard score. This is misleading because each variant may be used to a different extent by speakers and for a different reason. It might have been possible, with higher counts, to compare non-standard variants of (t), but that would have necessitated ranking them with respect to each other. What basis can be used for placing these variants on a scale of standard vs. non-standard? A different answer is arrived at depending on the criterion used. Even if the criterion of stigmatisation was used, placing [t<sup>s</sup>] at the non-standard end of the scale, there is still the problem of what to do with the forms [t<sup>θ</sup>]; [t<sup>ʀ</sup>]; [t<sup>ɹ</sup>] and [t<sup>d</sup>]. The phonetic error in delimiting forms of [t<sup>s</sup>] is potentially significant. It has to be admitted that different phoneticians would almost inevitably arrive at different analyses for the same texts (Knowles, 1978).

A further limitation of ignoring the discourse level in which variants occur derives from the turn-taking mechanism postulated by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), who suggest that different speakers hold the floor for differing amounts of time. The amount of time depends on how much a speaker wants to contribute and how successfully they can sustain the interest of the audience. The problem is that if the majority of speakers in a group use a high percentage of non-standard variants, then the group average will reflect this fact and scores for any standard speakers will be overlooked.

Table 13. lists the scores for individual speaker's choice of the main variants. The majority of nurses use a high percentage of standard variants, yet speaker 5. has a fairly equal distribution of use of [h] and [h<sup>θ</sup>]. In fact, she uses a slightly higher percentage of the non-standard form. Similarly, speaker 6 produces a fairly high percentage of the non-standard form of (ing). While each nurse occupies a roughly comparable proportion of the talk time, the time-sharing pattern for the hairdressers is much more variable since there are many more girls competing to speak. Turns at speaking vary in length to a greater extent among hairdressers as opposed to nurses. This is also the case for the taxi-drivers. Speakers 13 and 19 contribute very little to the conversation compared with speakers 10, 11, 15, 17 and 20, who contribute quite a high count of variants. The pattern appears to be that in large groups, three or four speakers dominate the conversation with smaller contributions from the others.

The important point is that if scores for individuals are not listed, these interesting and subtle sociolinguistic patterns do not come to light. This leads to another related point. Quantitative techniques require that groups to be compared are of equal size, to facilitate the statistical tests. Groups in real life do not generally come packaged in this way. The type of work one does is often determined by the type and frequency of interaction within the group to be studied. For example, hairdressers and taxi-drivers can often have their tea-breaks together

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and large groups may congregate for informal banter and talk. Nurses work under pressure a large proportion of the time, and do not sit in large groups to chat. They are much more in demand and do not always manage to take breaks when their colleagues do. Chefs work with other chefs but there is often one head chef who is in the position of running a large kitchen of trainees. This sets the head chef apart as being in authority. They would not normally sit and chat with a large group of trainees. Thus, trends of congregating habits differ in the four occupational groups.

In summary, we look to a qualitative approach to the data to show patterns of variation which quantitative techniques alone are not sensitive enough to handle. Quantitative analysis shows that sex differences in speech exist. The qualitative analysis presented in Chapters 5 and 6 illustrates not only - as has been seen - that men and women use linguistic variants to different extents, but also that they use them for different purposes. Explanatory ideas such as those found in Accommodation Theory (Giles, 1971, 1972) are combined with close qualitative observation to give a richer, more elaborate insight into the motivations underlying linguistic behaviour which was observed at the segmental level in this chapter.



## Chapter Four

### NARRATIVES AND STORIES: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### 4.0 Introduction

It was suggested in Chapter One, that the outcome of correlational work is essentially non-explanatory. The data presented in Chapter 3 reinforces this assertion. Despite the important contribution which quantitative sociolinguistics has made to the study of language in context, its applicability to the analysis of actual processes of face to face communication is nevertheless limited. As Gumperz(1982) points out,

"The fact remains that linguistic variable counts, no matter how sophisticated, are statistical generalisations based on data collected by survey methods rather than on findings validated through in depth analyses of linguistic competence."

(Gumperz, 1982: 26)

The consequences of this fact are that some other kind of data base is required to illuminate what is actually happening in human interaction, and what underlying mechanisms there are which direct linguistic and discoursal choices.

Researchers from many disciplines have applied themselves to the study of narrative, since storytelling appears to be a universal ability (Hymes, 1979). However, a fully comprehensive survey of all the frameworks within which narrative has been analysed is well beyond the scope of this

thesis.

A full taxonomy of types of narrative analysis would have to cover cognitive psychology and within this, Artificial Intelligence (e.g. Rumelhart, 1975; Schank and Abelson, 1977; Minsky, 1979); anthropologically related work in the tradition of ethnography (e.g. Hymes, 1962, 1974; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1972; Bauman and Sherzer, 1974, Heath, 1983; Scollon and Scollon, 1981); studies in discourse analysis (e.g. Grimes, 1972; Fillmore, 1977; Chafe, 1980; Gumperz, 1982; Tannen, 1984 ); analysis arising out of the theory of action, and indirectly ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (e.g. Sacks, 1972; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974; Levinson, 1983); structural semiotics (e.g. Todorov, 1969; Benveniste, 1966); literary analysis of narrative (Benveniste, 1966; Weinrich, 1971); sociologically oriented research (e.g. Mills, 1940; Goffman, 1974, 1981); readings in philosophy on the art of rhetoric (e.g. Burke, 1950); sociolinguistic work (e.g. Labov and Waletzky, 1967; Labov, 1972; Polanyi, 1978, 1981, 1982); and studies in child language (e.g. Michaels and Cook-Gumperz, 1979, Romaine, 1984). Other perspectives might also need to be considered.

Since a fully comprehensive account of the taxonomy of narrative analyses would be theoretically possible, but in practical terms lies beyond the scope of the question which this thesis addresses, namely:-

On what dimensions do narrators vary when we compare different populations?

Do the variations between sexes and between occupations cast light on the dynamics of narration?

The following sections give an account of those aspects of the literature on narrative which are seen as having particular relevance to the occupational groups selected, and/or to the question of differentials in narrative production. The account focusses on sociolinguistic and discourse analyses of typical story features (including evaluation devices); on sub-cultural and cross-cultural research on variation in narrative style; and on frameworks which help to explain style-shifting within conversational narrative.

#### 4.1 Story Features: Criterial vs. Typical

##### 4.1.1 Narrative Structure and Entertainment Value

Exactly what features distinguish stories from other forms of narrative discourse was an early focus of debate in narrative analysis (Labov and Waletzky, 1967; Labov, 1972; Polanyi, 1978, 1979, 1981, 1982; Tannen, 1979; 1982). Many researchers believed that temporal sequence was important, and argued that if a narrative text were to count as a story, it must recapitulate the past events in the order in which they originally occurred (Labov and Waletzky, 1967; Polanyi, 1978; 1982). Labov and Waletzky(1967) suggested

that only by preserving the original temporal sequence of narrative clauses (which precludes syntactic embedding) could the original semantic interpretation remain unchanged.

However, the advent of cross-cultural studies on narrative provided evidence to show that temporal sequence assumes differing importance for narrators from different cultures. For example, Tannen(1980, 1982b) discovered in the stories told by Greek and American women in response to a film, that the Greeks often sacrificed temporal sequence in their efforts to tell a "good" story (that is, an interpretive human interest story with a "point"). In contrast, the Americans were very concerned with telling events in the order in which they happened in the film. What is interesting is Tannen's assertion that the Greeks told "better" stories (see Section 4.2 for further discussion of this point).

Cross-cultural and sub-cultural perspectives on narrative have helped to make one fact abundantly clear. Narrators have the ability to include, delete, rearrange or even fabricate event sequences according to the "point" which they wish to make in telling a story (Tannen, 1984; 1986). As we shall see further on in this discussion, what the point of a story can be and how that point can be demonstrated is culturally and sub-culturally constrained (Mills, 1967; Polanyi, 1979; Scollon and Scollon, 1981; Heath, 1983).

It has also been suggested that stories may be distinguished from non-stories by their entertainment value (Bascom, 1965; Fischer, 1963; Brewer and Lichtenstein, 1982; Brewer, 1984). However, the assessment of entertainment value depends on the audience, who are more likely to find a story entertaining if it reflects their own attitudes and values (Polanyi, 1982a; Stein, 1982), whether or not it demonstrates novelty, ingenuity, humour or suspense.

Stories may be told for any number of purposes, to inform, to instigate action, to empathise with the listener, to advise, or to meet any number of positive or negative "face" needs (Brown and Levinson, 1978; Tannen, 1984). Whether or not a story is told to entertain and whether it meets this requirement depends on the social situation and on the power asymmetry of participants (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz, 1982). Clearly, a narrator relating to a lawyer, a story about a fight as evidence in a lawsuit, is likely to be more concerned with getting the facts straight than with the entertainment value of the tale. However, the same story may be related in quite a different format to amuse a group of friends in a pub.

It is clear that temporal sequence and entertainment value are not criterial features of stories, although certain groups of speakers may typically expect them as part of the storytelling genre.

Labov (1972) suggested that stories may in fact be composed

of up to four main aspects. He terms these - abstract; orientation; coda; and evaluation. Labov notes that speakers often begin their stories with an **abstract**, that is, a brief summary of what the story is to be about, and typically end with a **coda**. The coda may be a single utterance e.g. "That's life", which is intended to return the listeners' perspective to the present, or it may be a somewhat longer moral or explanatory segment which emphasises the main point of the narrative. Another thing which storytellers must do early on in the narrative is to orient their listeners to the time and place of the story and to describe the major story characters. They do this in the **orientation section**.

However, while the above features are not exclusive to story discourse, one feature which seems to distinguish stories from reports and ongoing commentaries is that they are often told from the personal perspective of the narrator (except for vicarious narratives) in order to make a "point" about the world he shares with the others present (Polanyi, 1978). The means by which the narrator communicates his point through evaluation devices has been studied extensively. The use of these devices, and the assertion that certain combinations of them contribute to a more "vivid" narrative style deserves further attention.

#### 4.1.2 Evaluation

##### 4.1.2.1 Introduction

Labov and Waletzky (1967) define evaluation as:

"that part of the narrative which reveals the attitude of the narrator towards the narrative by emphasising the relative importance of some narrative units compared to others."

(Labov and Waletzky, 1967: 37)

Evaluation devices are supposed to reveal the point of the story: in other words, why the narrator believes the story to be worth telling.

It must be noted that in the context of the following discussion, the term "evaluation" is used with reservations. The adoption of this term in the literature on narrative is confusing and misleading.

The confusion arises from the fact that while listeners are using "evaluation devices" to ascertain what story is about, they may independently be assessing how funny or dramatic the story is and whether the narrator has performed well.

According to the dictionary definition of the word "evaluation", assessing how good or bad a story is, is more akin to the generally accepted idea of what it is to "evaluate" something.

It might have been more realistic and less confusing to use the term DIFFERENTIATION, since evaluative devices clearly differentiate parts of a story to highlight those portions

of the discourse which are crucial to an understanding of the story point (although their use may contribute indirectly to the listener's assessment of narrator performance). For the purpose of discussing the literature on narrative, the term "evaluation" is not totally discarded. However, it should be noted that although the term is widely used in the literature, the term differentiation is adopted in preference to evaluation in the analysis presented in Chapters 5 and 6. Reference is also made in the analysis to listeners' perceptions of story quality. However, this was not a major consideration of the research and it is dealt with only briefly.

#### 4.1.2.2 Linguistic Features of Evaluation

Evaluation is usually classified according to type, either INTERNAL or EXTERNAL. In internal evaluation, the narrator communicates from inside the story. He does not tell the point straight out but allows the story recipients to derive the meaning from the way in which the material is presented. External evaluation, on the other hand, allows the narrator to step outside the narrative and to say explicitly to the listener, "look at this, this is the point I am trying to make." (Labov, 1972).

It has been suggested that internal evaluation devices engender a story with "vividness", since they create interpersonal involvement between the speaker and his audience (Polanyi, 1979; Tannen, 1984). What Labov (1972)



and Polanyi(1979) have called internal evaluation devices are equivalent to Wolfson's (1982) performance features and to what Chafe(1980; 1982) and Tannen(1983; 1984) term features of involvement. They often appear in conversational narrative (and sometimes in literary narrative - see the discussion of Benveniste, 1966 in section 4.3.5.3) in the form of the following:

1. Direct quotations of characters' speech or thoughts,
2. Repetition and/or reiteration,
3. Expressive phonology (e.g. prosodic effects, sound words (Tannen, 1983), exclamations),
4. Conversational Historic Present Verbs (which alternate with the past tense - Wolfson, 1982),
5. Ellipsis - in the form of: a) deletion of the verb of saying; b) deletion of the copula; c) deletion of comment or proposition (Tannen, 1983),
6. Embedded vignettes - i.e. abbreviated or incomplete stories such as "Remember the time I got run over" (c.f. the discussion of Kalcik's "kernel story" in Section 4.2.1.3)
7. Motions and gestures (these were not a major consideration of the present work which relies on audio techniques of recording. However, they are considered briefly in relation to narrators' use of onomatopoeic phonology - see Chapter 6, section 6.3.4.5).

Although these features occur frequently, they are not the only ones possible, since as Polanyi(1982a) points out,

there are no "absolute" evaluation devices. Evaluation depends for its effectiveness on contrast and balance, which means that those features which are thrown into sharp relief from the rest of the text will have the greatest evaluative force, while features which are overused (despite their evaluative potential) become commonplace and unarresting.

In fact, Farag(1986) says that the features which researchers in the field have called "evaluation devices" are characteristic of both story and non-story discourse. She suggests that it would be more realistic to describe them as features of spontaneity. Since the recognition of evaluation clearly requires audience involvement, audience composition could have specific effects on formulation. It could be that features termed evaluation, do in fact form a subset of features of spontaneity.

Apart from foregrounding certain aspects of story material, evaluation devices can provide an important means of involving the audience in the narrative (although it should not be assumed that involvement is the goal of every cultural group - c.f. Scollon and Scollon,1981). However, the reasons why the narrator should want to involve his listeners are not always made clear in studies of narrative.

#### 4.1.2.3 Involvement and Identification

Goffman(1974) suggests that in replaying past experience through storytelling, a speaker is continually engaged in

"providing evidence for the fairness or unfairness of his current situation and other grounds for sympathy, approval, exoneration, understanding or amusement" (Goffman, 1974: 503). Clearly, one benefit of involving the audience is to encourage them to see events from the narrator's own point of view. However, if a narrator wants listeners to empathise with his position, he must persuade them that his views are justified.

As Burke (1950) points out in his discussion of rhetoric, persuasion is achieved by the use of stylistic identifications. In other words, to give a favourable image, an individual may identify himself with traits of character which, from previous interaction, he knows his audience find admirable. All speakers must therefore possess some sort of catalogue of "attitudes" or "values" which are good or bad, praiseworthy or displeasing. They must also be able to associate different views with different individuals since a speaker who mis-judges the attitudes of his listeners may achieve dissonance, rather than the rapport he expects (although it must not be assumed that rapport is always the goal of narrative c.f. Scollon and Scollon, 1981).

As Burke (1950: 55) says,

"You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his."

Hence, although an individual may attempt to bring an audience round to his point of view, he can only do this by

appearing to defer to their opinions. However, once a speaker has persuaded an audience to identify with his own interests, he can draw on identification of interests to establish rapport (or distance) between himself and the audience.

The kind of persuasion involved in conversational storytelling is probably closest to what has been called epideictic rhetoric. In this, a speaker attempts to win praise not merely for his own position, but for the oratory itself. He does this by giving the audience a sense of having participated in the creation of the discourse. He promotes collaboration by signalling indirect messages which rely on the groups' shared background knowledge for their interpretation.

Narrators also invariably make it clear to the audience which character in the narrative they themselves identify with and how they want the audience to judge participants in the story. Narrators therefore enlist the audience by means of identification and division (Burke, 1950).

Although there is no space here to describe the myriad of features which can be used to promote identification between a narrator and his listeners, it is clear that devices which require the collusion of the audience are most effective. Burke (1950) says for example, that the cumulative effect is more persuasive than a plain statement. Thus repetition and reiteration in stories not only give the audience a sense of

how a particular phrase is destined to develop, but also gives them the option of verbal participation by rounding the phrase out. The gradation of visual imagery which often leads up to the story climax reinforces the effect of phrase elongation.

Forms of ellipsis (of the verb of saying, the copula, or of the comment or proposition) also promote listener identification by forcing the audience to participate in the sense-making (Tannen, 1983). Kernels or embedded vignettes (abbreviated or incomplete stories, Kalcik, 1975; Polanyi, 1979) which are particularly characteristic of women's storytelling (See section 4.2.1.3) also operate on this principle, since they rely on in-group knowledge for their interpretation.

Another group-specific device which narrators can utilise to promote identification with themselves and with the audience is the use of forms of humour. Humour is often group specific (see Chapter 5, section 5.1 for a full discussion of this point) and as such it relies heavily on shared background information for its interpretation. Ambiguity in the form of irony, puns, jokes, and characterisation in the form of ridicule or mimicry can delight the audience to the point where they verbally participate in the humour as well as mentally participating in the sense-making. Humour which is understood promotes a feeling among speakers of "being on the same wavelength".

Formulaic language also plays a part in identification. Fillmore(1979) says that "a very large portion of a person's ability to get along in a language consists in the mastery of formulaic utterances". A listener is likely to identify with a phrase which he has heard many times or used himself, and with jargon which relates to his own occupation. Topic choice is also important, since the topic must not only be interesting, it must be relevant to the shared concerns of the storytelling group (c.f. Polanyi,1982a on the "The General Relevance Rule" and "The Rule of Transitive Relevance").

All these devices encourage the listener to empathetically insert himself/herself into the narrative, vicariously re-experiencing what took place (Goffman, 1974). However, not all narrators choose internal evaluation devices to promote identification between themselves and their listeners.

It is accepted that narrators can combine internal and external evaluation within the same story, the use of the former implying that they are re-creating the story as one of the original participants, and the use of the latter, that they have adopted a more detached point of view (Polanyi, 1982). However, narrators tend to show a preference for one type of evaluation or the other and it has been suggested that storytellers who show a preference for internal evaluation tell "better" stories(Labov, 1972; Tannen, 1982; 1984). The credibility of this assertion is

supported by cross-cultural and sub-cultural studies of variation in storytelling style.

## 4.2 Variation in Narrative

### 4.2.1 Cross-Cultural and Sub-Cultural Perspectives

#### 4.2.1.1 Creative Storytellers

Members of certain cultures are recognised for their creative storytelling abilities. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1972) and Tannen(1984) have shown that Jews of East European background characteristically tell "vivid" stories. Tannen(1980; 1983) suggests that this is also true of Greeks, and Labov(1972) found similar patterns in the stories of American blacks.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett(1972) in her work with Jewish immigrants in Toronto, demonstrates the artistry with which Jews alternate among a wide range of linguistic varieties (distinct languages, dialects, styles, imitations of how immigrants speak) in their storytelling performances. This code-switching (see Section 4.3.3 for Gumperz, 1982 definition of this term) which is an essential feature of immigrant narrative helps to create the "vividness" which is so often associated with Jewish narrative style.

However, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1975) stresses that the

skill of the gifted immigrant narrator lies not in the story itself, but in the nature of the performance, and in the "performer's creativity in selecting the appropriate tale and in adjusting his rendition of it to each new situation."

Folktales are one means of reconstructing experience and hence a story which is used as a "gloss" (see Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1972; 1974; 1975) on the immediate situation is more highly valued by the audience (and places more demands on the narrator) than a story which is told for its own sake. Parables and proverbs may be retold many times in different formats by different narrators. These stories are called "classics" by the narrators since they do not lose their effectiveness even after they have been retold many times (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1978). However, there is more to a classic than the punchline. The value lies just as much in the way the tale unfolds - the elaboration, the humour and how the tale is built up - which cumulatively realise the style of narration.

It is pointed out in Chapter 6 (section 6.4.3), that the taxi-drivers in the present study also use the term "classic" to describe certain stories which remain funny to them despite the fact that they have heard them many times before. Although their stories are not preformulated in the same sense as parables or proverbs are (and have not been handed down over generations), they are still used as a means of reconstructing experience. Their use parallels the Jewish immigrant's use of the parable in conversation.



Tannen(1984) notes that New Yorkers of East European Jewish background also tell animated stories. They share what she calls a "high-involvement" narrative style which is characterised by the use of internal evaluation devices to indicate the story point; a focus on personal topics which encode the teller's emotional experience; and a general tendency to interrupt; overlap; speak faster and take more turns at talk; and to persist in a topic when it is not initially picked up.

Similarly, Tannen(1983, 1986) notes that features which contribute to the impression of animation in Greeks' stories are those which create interpersonal involvement between participants. She says that the Greeks' use of features like direct speech and expressive phonology make the action and dialogue appear immediate, as though they were happening at the time of telling and not at some time in the past, while their use of forms of ellipsis force the listener to participate in sensemaking.

Labov(1972) also noticed that the narrative style of inner city blacks in America is more vivid than that of middle class whites. This stylistic gulf is in part due to the range of speech acts which black speakers have at their disposal. These include: signifying, rapping, sounding, playing the dozens, woofing, marking, loud-talking, shucking and jiving (Mitchell-Kernan, 1972). These acts rely heavily on a knowledge of the black culture for their interpretation and are often used in a narrative context to involve the

audience.

The assertion that some storytellers tell "better" stories than others means that story format must vary from community to community as well as from one sub-cultural group to another, a point which the following section explores.

#### 4.2.1.2 What Counts as a Story

A fact which has emerged from the study of inter-community discourse, is that there is no one storytelling style which is used by all races and sexes alike. Story formats vary quite considerably from one community to the next and from one individual to the next, as do the functions which stories are expected to perform (Cazden and Hymes, 1978).

The following discussion considers four very different approaches to storytelling. Sub-cultural differences are exemplified by the work of Heath (1983) in the Piedmont Carolinas, and cross-cultural differences by the work of Scollon and Scollon (1981) with Athabaskans in Alaska and Canada.

The ethnographic work of Shirley Brice Heath (1983), in the two American communities of "Roadville" and "Trackton" in the Piedmont Carolinas, effectively illustrates two radically different orientations to storytelling. Both Roadville and Trackton are working class communities, the residents of the former being white, and of the latter,

black. Storytelling is popular with residents of both areas, however, "the form, occasions, content and functions of their stories differ greatly," (Brice Heath, 1983), as do their criteria for judging whether a story is "good" or "bad".

In Roadville, stories are factual accounts which adhere strictly to the temporal order of the real life events they portray. Exaggeration is rare, and must be qualified, and direct discourse is reported without embellishment. In fact, children in Roadville are coached in the art of strict chronicity in their stories and are taught that fictive inventions are "lies" and will not be tolerated. As a consequence, formulaic openings and closings are common in Roadville stories, their content invariably having moral undertones.

Children and adults alike must wait to be "invited" to tell a story in Roadville, the ability to "invite" or to "narrate" varying according to one's standing in the community (higher-status members have more power to invite stories and to narrate). Brice Heath (1983) says that although stories entertain in Roadville, their main purpose is to make a point about the conventions of behaviour and to assert community membership. Hence, the point of a story is often implicit in the tale and relies on the recognition of shared knowledge and community values.

In contrast, Trackton stories are "highly creative fiction"

in which fact is often difficult to find. The best Trackton stories call for "Talkin' Junk" (Brice Heath, 1983: 166), in which the storyteller embellishes and exaggerates the story to such a point that the final outcome may not resemble at all what actually happened. The story events are interspersed with many statements of evaluation of the behaviour of story characters, through the use of such features as, dramatic gestures, shifts of voice quality, mimicry, humour, and external evaluation statements (Labov, 1972), and this draws out the interaction between the narrator and the audience. Formulaic language is very rarely a feature of these tales.

In Trackton, children's stories must be highly imaginative and clever if they are to capture adult attention. A "good" story from a child is rewarded and may even absolve him from a misdemeanour (despite the probability that the story has no basis in fact). Therefore, children in Trackton learn early in life the value of a good story in winning audience attention and favour and so they compete to insert their stories into ongoing discourse. Children are not coached or instructed in the ways of narration, but learn by observation.

Stories in Trackton are told primarily to entertain and they often have no point, but may go on as long as the audience enjoys the performance. Their primary aim is to stress the strengths of the story's main character (often the narrator himself) by describing him in situations where he overcomes

adversity and outwits the rules of conventional behaviour. In fact, the purpose of Trackton stories is to reaffirm and discuss the larger truths of life, rather than to relate specific events.

It is clear then that to Roadville residents, Trackton stories would be "lies", whereas Trackton residents, would class Roadville stories as "non-stories".

As Brice Heath (1983) points out, the children meet both of fictive and non-fictive narratives at school. Hence, Roadville children who have little contact with fictive stories prior to school, find it difficult to take characters and situations out of context and are accused of lacking imagination, while children from Trackton find it difficult to relate factual, temporally ordered stories and are constantly being told to "stick to the point". This is potentially damaging for the child, who can be labelled as "slow" or alternatively as "aggressive" and "difficult", by a teacher who knows nothing of his community's speech patterns or values (c.f. Michaels and Cook-Gumperz, 1979).

The work of Scollon and Scollon (1981) ably demonstrates how cultural differences in storytelling can lead to negative evaluation. They examine mis-communication in interethnic encounters between Athabaskans and non-Athabaskans in Alaska and Canada, and highlight the way in which a difference in discourse patterns can lead to racial and ethnic stereotyping, and to discrimination against the Athabaskans.

Scollon and Scollon(1981) distinguish between the "Modern Consciousness", characteristic of non-Athabaskans and associated with what they call "Essayist Literacy"; and the "Bush Consciousness", characteristic of Athabaskans and associated with the "Abstraction of Themes". The Modern Consciousness fosters talkativeness and intervention as a means of informing, learning and managing social relations. It also places a high value on the group as a social unit. In contrast, the Bush Consciousness operates on a policy of non-intervention. Athabaskans have a high degree of respect for the autonomy of the individual and pay attention to the negative face needs of others (Brown and Levinson, 1978; Scollon and Scollon, 1981 - see Section 4.3.4.1 for a discussion of positive and negative face). Essayist discourse presents an explicit, decontextualised view of the world that fictionalises both the author and the audience. However, thematic discourse relies on the image power of a few details to evoke a world view. It is highly personalised and contextualised.

These contrasting world views are reflected in the very different storytelling patterns intrinsic to the Athabaskan and English speaking communities. For the Athabaskan, narratives are a good means of acquiring knowledge of the experiences of others. This is important since isolation is a real possibility in the harsh Athabaskan climate. Stories encourage the individual to "stand alone", their main purpose being to tease an individual by telling "lies" about

him, invariably while the person is present (it can be seen that decontextualisation would work against this purpose). Hence, Athabaskan children learn early in life that they must renounce their fear of "losing face" in order to keep face (c.f. storytelling in Trackton). In fact, Scollon and Scollon(1981), see the Athabaskan narrative as a product of the face needs of both the storyteller and the audience.

In Athabaskan groups, the best telling of a story is the briefest, the ideal being that the narrator should merely suggest the theme and the audience should finish the story for him/her (a rare occurrence in most European communities, although there are parallels here with the use of the Jewish parable as a gloss on the immediate conversation - see Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1974, 1975). In fact, Scollon and Scollon(1981) see the Athabaskan narrative as an extended sequence of riddles, the understanding of which depends on a close relationship between the narrator and the audience.

Also, unlike most European folk tales which are organised around three parts - a beginning, a middle and an end, Athabaskan tales are organised around two's and four's - an initial episode, two main episodes and a final one (Scollon and Scollon, 1979). The episodic structure of the story is marked by specific morphemes, rather than by prosody, and pausing plays a much more important role in marking structure than it does in English narratives.

Scollon and Scollon(1981), following Hymes(1977), suggest

that the formal structure of the Athaskan narrative is - line (everything said between pauses); verse (equivalent to the sentence); stanza and scene. The structural elements - verse, stanza and scene - correspond in function to - emphasis, perspective and memory - respectively. The function of the verse is to indicate grounding i.e. background (details not immediately contributing to the speaker's goal) vs. foreground. The stanza marks point of view and any departure from expectations is marked by a new stanza. Changes of scene occur with a change of activity, participants or location.

Athabaskan narratives have a maximum of four scenes. However, in their work on translations sets, Scollon and Scollon (1981) found that an Athabaskan tale told in four parts was retold in English by the same narrator in three parts. They conclude that the Athabaskan narrative is not a pre-determined structure, but is responsive to "traffic signals" from the audience (this may be a consequence of the Athabaskans's heightened perception of the needs of his audience). Story frames may be culturally based, as evidenced by the fact that English speakers tend to recall four-part stories in three parts rather than four (Kintsch, 1977; Kintsch and Green, 1978). However, it is possible that the audience plays a much more active role in developing story format than has previously been thought.

Many of the morphemes which mark story structure in Athabaskan narratives correspond to what in English are



heard as hesitations e.g. "and", "so", "but". Athabaskans also take slightly longer pauses between their utterances. As a result, the Athabaskan narrative is heard as halting and stilted to the English ear. However, the English narrative sounds disorganised to the Athabaskan, who is expecting to hear specific morphemes marking the story plot. The Athabaskan belief that it is bad luck to speak of the future also means that their stories have no formulaic closings (which set up expectations for future interaction) as in English, and their respect for the separateness of the individual precludes definitive talk about the names for their elders and about their actions, plans, and beliefs, especially those which might put them in a good light. As a result, English people often find Athabaskans evasive and label them as "uncooperative".

It is clear that the cultural bias in such a prolonged speech event as a narrative can lead to misunderstanding and negative evaluation where participants have different communicative histories (Cazden and Hymes, 1978).

The research on cross-cultural studies of narrative closely parallels cross-sex studies. As the next section illustrates, men and women also have differing conceptions of narrative form as a consequence of their differing speech styles. However, there is a bias in research towards the study of men's narrative style, both in mixed and single-sex groups (Kalcik, 1975). The discussion which follows stresses the need to redress the balance with more research

on women's storytelling in single-sex groups, since it should not be assumed that men, as the dominant group, tell the only kind of narrative worthy of study.

#### 4.2.1.3 Sex Differences in Storytelling Style

It has been shown that in cross-sex conversations, women are "more actively engaged in insuring interaction than men" (Fishman, 1978). They tend to ask more questions (Fishman, 1978; Hirschman, 1973); use more positive minimal responses, such as, "mm hmm" (Hirschman, 1973); make more acknowledgements of the other person through naming or the use of personal pronouns (Hirschman, 1973); and are more likely to remain silent when they have been interrupted (Zimmerman and West, 1975).

In contrast, men are more likely to interrupt (Zimmerman and West, 1975); to disagree with or challenge another's utterance (Hirschman, 1973); to make more statements of fact and opinion (Fishman, 1978); to disregard lack of response from others (Hirschman, 1973); and they have more mechanisms than women for controlling the introduction and development of topic (Zimmerman and West, 1975).

Various arguments have been put forward as to why men and women behave this way in interaction with each other. One suggestion is that men's dominance in conversation is an extension of their role as the dominant group in society (Zimmerman and West, 1975; Fishman, 1978). Lakoff (1975) says

that the way in which women are socialised makes them unassertive and insecure and this is manifested linguistically in their frequent use of hesitations, false starts, hedges - "sort of, kind of", and tag questions - "isn't it, don't they".

Other researchers who view sex differences as a parallel phenomenon to cultural differences, have suggested that men and women speak differently because they come from different sociolinguistic subcultures (Maltz and Borker, 1982; Tannen, 1982). Maltz and Borker (1982) argue that it is because men and women learn the rules for managing conversation in social encounters between the ages of five to fifteen, precisely when groups engaging in habitual interaction are predominantly same-sex, that they have different conversational needs.

It has been shown that girls interact cooperatively rather than competitively (Goodwin, 1980). Hence, Maltz and Borker (1982) say that through their talk, girls learn to initiate and maintain close relationships, to criticise others in acceptable ways and to interpret accurately the speech of other girls. However, among boys, relative status in the group hierarchy is more important than closeness. Therefore, through talk, boys learn to assert their position of dominance, to attract and maintain an audience, and to assert themselves when other speakers have the floor.

Storytelling, arguing and verbal posturing (e.g.

name-calling, put downs) have been shown to be three very salient features of male speech (Philipson, 1975; Abrahams, 1976). Many studies have noted that audience behaviour in male peer groups is not overtly supportive and may consist of a series of challenges to the speaker, including side-comments, mockery, and puns (Sacks, 1974; Goodwin, 1980). Therefore, a major sociolinguistic skill which boys must acquire for any narrative performance, is to ride out this series of challenges, maintain the interest of the audience, and get to the end of the performance. They must also learn the reverse role of one of the hecklers in the audience.

Several studies which have examined women interacting in same-sex groups have concluded that their behaviour is "interactional" (Hirschman, 1973; Kalcik, 1975). In other words, through friendly talk, women are expressing and negotiating a relationship (one which should be supportive but may involve criticism). Kalcik(1975), in her work with American women's rap groups, has documented some of the characteristic features of their personal experience narratives. She noted that politeness was highly valued in the groups. The women often asked permission to speak and observed the current speaker's right to finish before beginning a story. They preferred a balanced interaction, with everyone participating and no one person dominating. Many females began and ended with apologies either for the content or length of their tales and interruptions were common, but were always supportive. Story rounds were a

common feature of group interaction and these were also supportive rather than attempts to "top" the story of the last speaker. Stories were often constructed jointly by group members.

Kalcik found that continuity of theme was also important and tales often began with a short abstract linking them to the topic under discussion. Stories centred around two major themes - the women's experiences of oppression, both at home and at work, and female physiology, a theme closely related to their own self-discovery. Humour was also used supportively to maintain group closeness and to underline the feeling of "we're all in this together" (Kalcik, 1975). Interestingly, Kalcik notes that the women turned the humour in on themselves rather than on supposed oppressors, a feature which is also characteristic of the women in the present study. Kalcik(1975) suggests that stressing the stereotypes and problems which the women shared served to strengthen group bonds.

The major contribution of Kalcik's(1975) work is that she identifies as a major feature of women's storytelling, the "Kernel Story", which she defines as:

"a brief reference to the subject, the central action, or an important piece of dialogue from a longer story" (Kalcik, 1975:7)

Kalcik(1975) says that a common complaint against women's speech is that they cannot tell jokes or stories properly, and that the tales they do tell are not "real" stories.

However, she believes that this is because some women's stories are not structured in ways that traditional analyses (based on the study of male narratives, c.f. Labov and Waletzky, 1967) suggest.

Kalcik says that kernel stories have no specific length, structure, climax or point since they may change from telling to telling to fit the topic under discussion. They often function as support for another woman's story and in this way reinforce the group sense of "being on the same wavelength". A story may not be developed beyond the kernel if the narrator knows that the audience can predict its direction. For example, the title of Kalcik's (1975) paper - "...like Ann's gynecologist or the time I was almost raped" - contains two kernel stories.

Kalcik (1975) goes so far as to suggest that the narrative structure of the "kernel story" maps the interactional structure of the women, and meets what she suggests is their overall goal - "harmony". Kalcik suggests that in this, the "kernel story" is similar to the "parable", the effectiveness of which stems from the way its structure maps onto the situation in which it is told (c.f. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1975). However, the structure of the "kernel story" is much more fluid, and more easily changed to suit the situation at hand.

It may be that the "kernel story" is uniquely a woman's genre. In fact, subsequent research has found that this

type of story is characteristic of women's storytelling. Kalcik's (1975) "kernel stories" are similar to what Polanyi (1982) calls "embedded vignettes" and they are also found in the present research. If this is so, it will be indicative that to women, the mapping of pieces of their own experience onto the situational context is more important and beneficial than the performance of a formally structured and competitively engineered text. As Kalcik rightly points out, studying storytelling patterns in single-sex groups should tell us more about women's culture, world view and speech than the one-sided view which results from collecting material chiefly from male members of society.

Hence it seems that, like different subcultural groups within the same society, the sexes too may have differing perceptions of what constitutes a "story" and when it is appropriate to tell one. This can lead to misunderstanding and negative evaluation on the part of participants.

The discussion so far has concentrated on variation in story structure, rather than on the communicative significance of the variety of messages which can be encoded in narrative. We now turn to the question of how narrators signal metaphorical information in their stories (particularly by style-shifting) and what frames of reference story recipients utilise to ascertain what the storyteller "really means".

### 4.3 Metaphorical Signals and Interpretation in

#### Narrative

#### 4.3.1 Frames, Scripts, Schemas, and Scenes

It is claimed that speakers measure and interpret new experiences in relation to their expectations about the world. These expectations, based on prior experience, have been called - scripts (Abelson, 1975; 1976; Schank and Abelson, 1975); schemas (Bartlett, 1932, Rumelhart, 1975; Chafe, 1977); frames (Bateson, 1972; Goffman, 1974; Hymes, 1974; Minsky, 1974; Fillmore, 1975; 1976; Frake, 1977); and scenes (Fillmore, 1975; 1976). (See Tannen(1982) for a detailed overview of the origins of these terms). The term frame, which has research origins in anthropology (Bateson, 1972; Frake, 1977); sociology (Goffman, 1974; Hymes, 1974); Artificial Intelligence (Minsky, 1974); and linguistics (Fillmore, 1975, 1976), is probably the most widely used and it is the one which will be adopted here.

In order to correctly interpret utterances, a listener must be able to identify the frame of talk. In other words, he must know whether the activity he is engaging in is 'joking, lecturing, arguing, chatting or narrating'. However, frames are not merely series of static events in speakers' minds (Frake, 1977). They are "active developing patterns" (Bartlett, 1932, Gumperz, 1977, 1982, Levinson, 1983). They do not determine interpretations, they merely constrain them by "foregrounding" certain aspects of background knowledge



and underplaying others (Gumperz, 1982).

Linguistically, speakers signal and listeners interpret frames by means of what Gumperz (1977, 1982) has called **Contextualisation Cues** - any linguistic feature of a message which helps to maintain thematic cohesion and signals how conversational contributions are intended.

Contextualisation cues help listeners to select among a variety of possible interpretations of meaning. Speakers and listeners have some assessment of what counts as "normal" for a particular frame (although norms vary from group to group) and they assess conversational inferences in terms of deviation from this norm. However, as Goffman (1974) points out, it is not only the frame which constrains interpretation but also the "keying" it sustains. In other words, whether the activity involves irony, sarcasm, mimicry, ceremony and so on.

Evaluation devices (Labov, 1972) are among the most important contextualisation cues in narrative.

Polanyi (1978) has demonstrated that storytellers often break narrative frame at strategic moments in their narratives in order to recap or provide further information for their listeners; to act out characteristics of the various figures in the story (usually through direct speech); to invite audience participation or to signal that the punchline is imminent; or simply to repair any aspect of narrative structure which they feel might impair listeners'

understanding of story "point". When narrators break frame in this way, they are actually changing their "footing" (Goffman, 1981), a point expanded in the following section.

#### 4.3.2 Stories and Changes of "Footing"

Goffman(1981: 128) defines footing as:

"the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance".

A narrator engaged in replaying a past event for an audience must manage footing on at least two levels - the level of the reporting speech event, and the level of interaction within the story. These two reference points of a narrative text have been called *sujet d'énonciation* and *sujet d'énoncé* respectively (Todorov, 1969; also cf. Benveniste, 1966 and Jakobson, 1957 - *proces d'énonciation/proces d'énoncé*). *Sujet d'énoncé* is what is talked about or expressed on the concept level, while *sujet d'énonciation* is the actual uttering of expressions.

As Todorov(1969) points out, a narrative text initiates action, displaces and brings about a temporal dimension. However, on the other hand it abolishes time and brings about a non-temporal world. The problem with respect to narrative, is that some discourse features (e.g. present tenses) can be related referentially either to the moment of speaking (*sujet d'énonciation*) or to the temporal world created by the story (*sujet d'énoncé*). As we shall see further on in this discussion (section 4.3.5.4), narrators'

choice of verb tenses is one resource which they can use to manage their footing on both levels. For example, Conversational Historical Present (CHP) verbs which appear on the surface to have a present time reference, refer only to the time at which the story events happened and not to the moment of speaking (the way that CHP verbs function in narrative is discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, sections 5.3.5, 5.3.6 and 6.4.3).

Goffman(1981) says that changes in footing range from the most subtle to the most evident. However, researchers often fail to take account of how frequently speakers change footing. This is potentially limiting, since changes of footing may signal metaphorical information (attitudes, beliefs, values)which is not apparent in surface features of the discourse.

Goffman(1981) believes that the terms "speaker" and "hearer" are too crude to provide an adequate framework for the analysis of changes in footing. For example, hearers may be ratified participants in the talk (whether or not they are listening), but they can also actively or unintentionally play a bystander role respectively as eavesdroppers or overhearers. Goffman says that any individual's relation to any current speaker utterance in an interaction is his "participation status" relative to it, and the relationship of all individual's in the interaction is the "participation framework" for that moment of speech.

Goffman(1981) also suggests that the speaker has three facets, which are:

1. Animator - the individual who gives "voice" to the utterance.
2. Author - the person who "has selected the sentiments that are being expressed and the words in which they are encoded".
3. Principle - someone whose "beliefs" have been made apparent, who is "committed to what the words say", (usually equated with someone who is active in a particular social capacity or role).  
(Goffman, 1981: 144)

He says that three facets taken together express the "production format" of an utterance.

In conversation, the self which a speaker selects for himself partly determines the participation statuses of the hearers. However in stories, as Goffman points out, the narrator can only signal differences in participation status of the various story characters. An audience hearing the replay of a past event are merely recipients of a piece of narrative. Goffman(1981) says,

"The statuses "narrator" and "story listener", which would seem to be of small significance in terms of overall social structure, turn out, then to be of considerable importance in conversation, for they provide a footing to which a very wide range of speakers and hearers can briefly shift."  
(Goffman, 1981: 151)

Even in interactions where participants have non-reciprocal rights, a lower-status individual still has the right to listen to a story from a person to whom he may have no right to tell one.

Different participation statuses and production formats are

possible depending on the degree to which narrators embed the utterances and interaction of others in their talk. For example, direct quotes of the speech of story characters belong to the world that is spoken about and not the world in which the speaking occurs. When a narrator embeds the speech of another person in his talk, he is the animator of the words but the author is usually the person he is quoting. Similarly, he may or may not be the principal. It is true that storytellers are generally held accountable for their stories, however, a narrator may use bracketing devices (Goffman, 1974) to indicate that "he means to stand in a relation of reduced personal responsibility for what he is saying". Narrators may do this when they are repeating the opinions of others (with which they do not agree), or when they have not personally initiated the story, but are telling it at the request of someone else.

Embedded animators, authors and principals are also possible. This is particularly apparent in narratives which relate incidents which happened a long time ago, where the actions, thoughts and beliefs of the "I" in the story no longer apply to the narrator, who over time has assumed another identity and social capacity. In this case, two animators (and probably two authors and principals) are involved, the one who is currently animating the tale, and an embedded animator, who only exists as a figure in the story world.

Changes of footing invariably involve code-switching or at

least style shifting.

#### 4.3.3 Code-Switching

Gumperz(1982: 99) defines conversational code-switching as;

"a discourse phenomenon in which speakers rely on juxtaposition of grammatically distinct subsystems to generate conversational inferences."

His work is particularly interesting since it demonstrates the kinds of meta-messages which speakers are signalling when they code-switch (or, in other terms, change footing or break frame).

Gumperz(1982) evidence comes from the study of code-switching in three distinct bilingual communities -

1. among speakers of Slovenian/German in the region of the Austrian-Yugoslavian border;
2. among Indian college students from urban Delhi who spoke both Hindi and English; and
3. among the Spanish/English communities of Chicano college students and urban professionals born in America.

Gumperz found that speakers in the three communities were fluent and regular users of both codes. However, the use of one code or another was not tied to setting (as in Diglossia - Blom and Gumperz, 1972). Speakers switched code both intra- and inter-utterance, without any apparent change in

specifically mark the switch.

Gumperz found that switching could only occur if it did not violate "the speaker's feeling for what on syntactic or semantic grounds must be regarded as a single unit."

(Gumperz, 1982: 90) He also discovered that code-switching can have different functions and suggests that it can serve to mark the following:

1. direct or indirect speech (it is interesting that speakers are not always quoted in the language they would normally use.)
2. selection of addressee.
3. interjections - sentence fillers like "you know", "Okay".
4. repetition and reiteration.
5. message qualification - qualifiers like sentence and verb complements or predicates following a copula, often appear as code-switches.
6. personalization versus objectivization - in this group, Gumperz (1982: 80) says that code-switches may mark;
  - a. talk about action versus talk as action.
  - b. the degree of speaker involvement, or distance from, a message.
  - c. whether a statement reflects personal opinion or knowledge.
  - d. whether a statement refers to specific instances or has the authority of generally known fact.

He says that passages in the native tongue (Slovenian, Hindi, Spanish) are more personalized, whereas the use of English or German suggests more distance between the speaker and his message.

Gumperz (1982) suggests that due to the situations in which they are normally used, the native tongue (Spanish, Hindi and English) and the majority language (English, German) are respectively symbolic of the "WE" code and the "THEY" code. He stresses that it is the contiguity of these two alternative forms of the same message, having different connotations, which signals metaphorical information, and not the literal content of the communication.

Gumperz demonstrates that the direction of the shift often has communicative significance. For example, a shift from the "THEY" code to the "WE" code can signal that the speaker is making a personal appeal to the addressee, as in the parent who says to his child "please don't do that". However, a shift in the opposite direction, from the "WE" code to the "THEY" code, could be interpreted as a warning, as in the parent who says "don't do that or else". The subtlety of these signals provides one reason why code-switching occurs much more often in intimate, ethnically similar groups, where the indirect messages are much more likely to be understood. Of course, Gumperz does not assign a single meaning to any instance of code-switching, since he points out that the communication



and interpretation of conversational principles is both culturally and sub-culturally specific, and is subject to modification over time.

How do listeners interpret the meta-messages involved in code-switching? To explain this Gumperz(1982) turns to the work of Grice(1975) on conversational implicature.

Grice(1975) suggests that there is general principle of talk called the "Co-operative Principle", which he states as:  
"Make your contribution such as is required at the stage at which it occurs by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged". (Grice, 1975: 67)

There are four maxims in terms of which this principle is articulated in particular contexts. These are:

1. Quantity - make your contribution as informative as is necessary.
2. Quality - be truthful.
3. Relation - be relevant with reference to what is being talked about.
4. Manner - avoid obscurity and ambiguity and obey proper form.

Implicatures or chains of reasoning arise out of these maxims when listeners ascertain (influenced by pragmatics and world knowledge) that they have not been followed.

Implicatures enable listeners to reinterpret what is said in accordance with the situation.

Thus if a speaker says something in the "THEY" code and then repeats himself in the "WE" code, he has broken the maxim of quantity. Gumperz says that the speaker's message could be something like "I assume you did not pay attention the first time I said this, but it is in your best interests to hear

it and I am now making a more personal appeal for you to take note of what I have to say". The actual message relayed of course will depend on the context of situation, and the power assymetry of the participants. It is also possible that in certain bilingual social contexts, some code-switches may function as strategies of neutrality (c.f. Appel and Muysker, 1987).

There are parallels between code-switching in bilingual situations and style-shifting in monolingual situations. In the latter, contextual information is signalled through linguistic sub-systems: prosody and/or other syntactic, lexical or discorsal processes. We now turn to the question of how listeners interpret conversational inferences in style-shifting, particularly in narrative.

#### 4.3.4 Style-Shifting

##### 4.3.4.1 Conversational Style

The question of style is a much discussed area of linguistics. It is not the intention here to give a review of the arguments since this has been adequately dealt with elsewhere (see Ervin-Tripp, 1972; Hymes, 1974a,b; and Romaine and Traugott, 1981 for discussions of this term). However, it is important for present purposes to distinguish between style as an identifiable way of talking and style-shifting as a similar phenomenon to code-switching described in the preceding section.

Ervin-Tripp(1972) defines conversational style as "the co-occurrent changes at various levels of linguistic structure within one language". She says that linguistic choices can be made on two levels - syntagmatic and paradigmatic. Syntagmatic choices, following rules of co-occurrence, give rise to identifiable styles. This would include what Hymes(1974) calls 'registers' - styles associated with specific situations - and 'varieties' - major speech styles associated with social groups. Paradigmatic choices, following rules of alternation, result in choices among styles and make possible style-switching on the model of code-switching. The present study is particularly concerned with the latter and follows the broader definition of Hymes(1974), when he refers to styles as 'ways of speaking'.

Gumperz and Tannen(1979) have demonstrated that the linguistic features which speakers use to signal utterance meaning are a major part of what listeners perceive as their 'style'. However, to measure style-shifts it is necessary to know something about the "norm of speaking" for a particular group or individual in particular situations. Speakers tend to measure the styles of others against their own and to extrapolate personality on the basis of the differences they perceive. Gumperz and Tannen(1979) illustrate that this often results in mis-communication and discrimination when speakers from different cultures or sub-cultures meet (c.f the work of Scollon and Scollon,

1981, discussed in Section 4.2.1.2).

Style is learned in the process of language learning (Cook-Gumperz, 1975; Ervin-Tripp and Mitchell-Kernan, 1977; Ochs and Schieffelin, 1979; Ochs, 1982). However, Tannen(1984) points out that stylistic choices are not random. She says they serve universal human needs which Lakoff(1979) has called Rules of Rapport; Brown and Levinson(1978) term positive and negative 'face' wants; Goffman(1967) identifies as avoidance vs. presentational rituals; and which Brown and Gilman(1960) address in terms of power vs. solidarity. We will look briefly at these analyses.

Lakoff(1973, 1979) says that indirectness as a stylistic strategy can be viewed as the speaker observing one or another of the following Rules of Politeness (she later called them Rules of Rapport):

1. Don't impose (Distance)
2. Give options (Deference)
3. Be friendly (Camaraderie)

The terms in brackets refer to the styles associated with these Rules of Politeness.

As Tannen points out, the term distance is not to be equated with aloofness. It is distance between participants or distance between the speaker and his message which is at issue here. Whether this makes the speaker seem removed or not is a value judgement based on one's own expectations of stylistic strategy. In other words, distance should not be

viewed as an inherently negative strategy and camaraderie as inherently positive since in certain cultures distance is highly valued and camaraderie is considered dangerous (as pointed out by Scollon and Scollon, 1981, in their work with Athabaskan Indians, discussed in section 4.2.1.2).

Lakoff(1979) says that the strategies of distance, deference and camaraderie are points on the stylistic continuum. At one end is the style which results from the application of Grice's(1967) maxims (this is rare in conversation) in which the evidence of emotional involvement between speakers and between them and their message is negligible. At the other end is camaraderie, in which evidence of emotional involvement is at a maximum. A person's characteristic style results from their choices at all linguistic levels along this continuum. Their ability to signal meta-messages about the situation at hand through style-shifting is a function of their knowledge of the association between particular linguistic features, particular styles and particular settings and the messages which can result when these are transposed.

Researchers have noted that indirectness is a frequent communicative strategy and that its function is to serve the two main interactional goals of individuals. Lakoff(1979) has called these Defensiveness (which is associated with distance/deference) and Rapport (which is associated with camaraderie). Goffman(1967) called them avoidance and presentational rituals, the former representing an

individual's need to be private and separate from others, and the latter his need for community.

They are summed up by Brown and Levinson(1978), who following Goffman(1967), and Lakoff's early work, suggest the notions of positive and negative face. They define negative face as "the want of every "competent adult member" that his actions be unimpeded by others" and positive face as "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 67).

Brown and Gilman(1960), who studied choice of pronouns in languages containing both singular (informal) and plural(formal) second person pronouns, suggest that "solidarity" (associated with reciprocal pronoun use) is the goal of positive face, and "power" (associated with non-reciprocal pronoun use) when exercised, provokes defensiveness or negative face.

These models of interaction provide a theoretical basis for understanding individual and group variation in narrative style. The concepts of footing (Goffman, 1981) and code-switching (Gumperz 1982) are particularly valuable in studying the kinds of meta-messages which narrators signal via style-shifting.

The kind of style-shifting which occurs when the narrator takes on the role of one of the characters in the narrative via direct speech, is one focus of the present research. Direct speech is a particularly versatile evaluation device

and it has been studied in some detail (See Chapter 5, section 5.3.1 and 5.3.2; and Chapter 6, sections 6.1 and 6.3.4).

#### 4.3.5 Direct and Indirect Speech

##### 4.3.5.1 General Issues

Traditionally, there are two types of reported speech identified - direct quotation and indirect quotation. The basic difference between these types lies in the perspective or point of view of the reporter (Lanser, 1981; Coulmas, 1986). Direct speech is usually interpreted as the reporter taking up the perspective of the original author, whereas in indirect speech, the reporter presents his own point of view.

There are several ways of presenting direct and indirect discourse in English. However, it is only indirect speech which can be semantically ambiguous. For example, in the following quote;

**John says that this lunatic is a genius.**

there are two possible readings of what was originally said by "John". The first is the one literally implied;

1. **This lunatic is a genius.**

and the second (supposing that the referent of the phrase 'this lunatic' is Harry who happens to be John's friend)

could be;

2. **a. Harry is a genius.**

or **b. My friend is a genius.**

This ambiguity is known as the De Dicto vs. De Re

interpretation of descriptive words in obscure contexts (cf. Partee, 1973: 414). Thus if "John" really did use the term 'this lunatic' then the De Dicto reading (number 1. above) is correct. If he did not, the De Re reading (either 2a. or 2b. above) is correct and the term is the reporter's own. In the latter case, this may indicate either that the reporter knows something about Harry which John does not know i.e. that Harry has some mental deficiency, or that his own attitude towards Harry is not favourable i.e. Harry is outrageously foolish. Therefore, in the act of indirect reporting, the reporter may not only integrate his own knowledge of the world (aspects of which are unknown to the original author), but he may also add personal value judgements. It is difficult to ascertain which elements belong to the original author and which to the reporter.

In contrast, direct speech is always given a De Dicto reading (whether or not it is actually faithful to the original quote). It claims to represent the actual words which were spoken in the situation being described.

Indirect speech is more variable in that it can indicate either the actual words spoken or via paraphrasing, only the content of those words i.e. the imputed meaning.

However, the nature of direct speech is not as simple as it might first appear. Studies of the limits of human memory have concluded that listeners search for linguistic meaning rather than form (Bartlett, 1932; Olson and Hildyard, 1983). Therefore speech is very rarely repeated verbatim. As



Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca(1969: 317) point out;  
"Even the words of other people, when repeated by a speaker, have changed their meaning, for in the process of repetition he always adopts towards them a position that is in some way new, even if only in the degree of importance he attaches to them".

Of course, speakers have various means available to them to indicate how faithful to the original words their direct or indirect report is meant to be. For example, they may add a qualifiers like "and that's exactly what he said" or "that's the gist of what he said". However, even in the most accurate of representations aspects of the speech are changed.

In indirect speech, the indexical and referencing expressions are altered so that they concord with the point of view of the "new" speaker and the "new" listeners (Fillmore, 1974). In the following utterance,  
"Natalie told me that she phoned John from home and asked him if he could get there in ten minutes."

it is to be understood that in the relative clause, "Natalie" originally said "here" rather than "there", since she is at the point of John's requested destination. She is also likely to have used the second person pronoun "you" rather than "he", as well as the present tense "can" instead of the past tense "could". However, the report is by the referent of "me", and the personal pronouns, tenses and deictic expressions are selected from his/her point of view as the speaker of the larger sentence. The backshifting of tenses is an optional device in indirect speech. However, when the tenses in the original utterance are

backshifted, present tenses become past and an original past or present perfect becomes pluperfect (Fillmore, 1974).

The analysing tendencies (Voloshinov, 1973) of indirect speech also preclude the use of certain expressive utterances like exclamations, curses and blessings. As Fillmore(1974) points out, these must be reformulated by the reporter to appear as one of the following basic sentence types - assertions, questions, or commands.

Although pronouns, tenses and deictic expressions may be preserved in direct speech, from the original quote to the reported one, there is evidence to support the idea that direct discourse does not always represent actual or verbatim speech.

#### 4.3.5.2 Constructed Dialogue

Tannen(1986: 313), who examined direct quotes in Greek and American conversational narratives suggests six arguments (and provides examples) to support the view that quotes are not always verbatim speech. They are as follows:

1. Direct quotes sometimes represent suggested speech, as in;

Well you could say "I told you so".

or inappropriate speech, as in;

Well you can't say "It was your fault".

and not anything that was actually spoken.

2. Some quotes are general in that they are to be

interpreted as what one might say or might have said in a certain type of situation, but not necessarily in a single instance of speech.

3. Direct quotes can represent the voice of more than one person even when a chorus is not implied.
4. Dialogue is sometimes contributed by listeners who were not present at the time of the situation being described, and who could therefore not have heard what was said.
5. Speakers quote the thoughts of other people, thoughts which they could not possibly know in such detail.
6. Speakers often use vague referents, as in;  
She said "Mrs So-and-So, finish up now and go home".  
which would not have made sense had they been used in the original quote.

Tannen(1986) says that the terms reported or direct speech do not accurately cover instances of the type described above. Instead she prefers the term "Constructed Dialogue" - speech which could not possibly be taken to represent the words which were actually spoken by anybody in the situation being described. It appears that in conversational narratives at least, a considerable proportion of the direct speech used is actually constructed dialogue.

Mimicry in conversation is a special case of constructed dialogue in which there is no serious attempt to present

another's speech as being verbatim. In this, the speaker alters the original quote to convey a stylistic message of his own. The linguistic features which speakers use in mimicry and the kinds of messages signalled are considered in Chapters 5 and 6 (Sections 5.3.2 and 6.3.4.1). However, before we go on to discuss research which is relevant to the study of mimicry, we must consider a third kind of reported speech.

#### 4.3.5.3 Represented Speech and Literary Narrative

Fillmore(1974) suggests that there are in fact three main ways to exhibit speech in English discourse. In addition to direct and indirect discourse, he identifies "represented speech" (a term which he borrows from Jespersen, 1924). He exemplifies each by the following dialogic discourse:

(Quoting) "Can I try it again?" he asked his mother.  
"No," she answered, "you certainly cannot."

(Representing) Could he please try it again? he asked his mother. No indeed he could not, she replied.

(Reporting) He asked his mother if he could try it again, she answered that he couldn't.  
(Fillmore, 1974: 93-94)

As Fillmore points out in represented speech, it is almost possible to present the original author's exact words except for the choice of personal pronouns and tenses which are selected in the same way as for reported speech.

Quoted, reported and represented speech differ not only with respect to their capacity for certain speech acts and the

choice of pronouns, tenses and deixis, but also in the way in which they can be contextualised. Fillmore(1974) points out that in narrative, certain parts of the discourse are presented as being the speaker's actions while other parts are taken as representing their thoughts. Thus a narrative (and indeed any discourse) can be contextualised in two ways - externally, by considering the physical and situational dimensions of the world in which the narrative would be appropriate; and internally, by considering the worlds which exist in the imagination of the narrator and the recipients. In other words, we can consider what participants are doing as opposed to what they are mentally experiencing.

In reported speech, a single clause may contain material which is relevant to both types of contextualisation. Thus in the report;

She told me that she thinks everything  
will happen today.

the word "today" is relevant both to the speech act currently being performed and to the reported speech act (although it may not be the original word used by the referent of the embedded talk). Fillmore says that the backshifting of tenses only occurs in reported speech when the relevance of the situation described in the reported clause to the situation of the reporting utterance is **not** being suggested, as in;

She told me that she thought everything  
would happen on that day.

In direct speech, both the speech and thoughts of the self and of others can be presented in direct quotes. Direct speech thus has both an internal and an external component.

However, for a speaker who represents, contextualising words are almost always internal (with the exception of pronouns and tenses as mentioned above).

Fillmore(1974) applies the framework of external vs. internal contextualisation to the study of impersonal fictional narratives which make no mention of the original author of the text or of the addressee. In this type of literary discourse, the narrative is usually presented through the psyche of one individual. The sections of the narrative which present what this individual is thinking or experiencing are what Fillmore(1974) and Jespersen(1924) have called "represented speech". Fillmore gives the following example taken from the short story "Eveline" by

James Joyce, as she reminisces about her past:

"That was a long time ago; she and her brothers and sisters were all grown up; her mother was dead. Tizzie Dunn was dead, too, and the Waters had gone back to England. Everything changes. Now she was going to go away like the others, to leave her home."

Fillmore says that the word "ago" in the first sentence, and the word "now" in the last sentence are presented from the time of Eveline's experiencing these thoughts and not from the time "of Joyce's writing the story or the reader's reading it". It is also true that since the identities of Tizzie Dunn and of the Waters have not been revealed to the reader, this passage must be identified as monologic i.e. as Eveline talking to herself, and the discourse is therefore taken as representing her thoughts (since one rarely holds extended speech sequences with oneself). The only sentence in the present tense is the one which is relevant to

external contextualisation, that is "Everything changes".

The literary device of representing speech in this way enables the author to present both his own and the character's point of view. Thus the first phrase of "Eveline" above appears from the perspective of Eveline herself, while in the second, which uses third person pronouns, the perspective of the narrator comes through. As Coulmas(1986: 7) says,

"The omniscient author can freely invade other minds and relate events, utterances, and thoughts as if he were a witness to a scene to which no witness can have access. Grammatically, much of what Jespersen called "represented speech" is phrased from the point of view of the narrator, but contentwise it belongs to the hero's speech, thought or perception."

Although it is well beyond the scope of the present work, which focusses on conversational storytelling, to explore the full range of literary uses of narrative, it is worth noting that even in written narrative, it is quite common for the narrator to intervene and use features which suggest involvement (like those described in section 4.1.2.2). However, when he does this, he leaves the plane of what Benveniste(1966) would call historical narration. In his discussion of the tense system of the French verb, Benveniste(1966) makes the distinction between "discours" - a mode of narration which includes every utterance assuming a speaker and a hearer and implies the speaker's involvement - and "histoire" - which excludes every "autobiographical form" and which characterises the narration of past events without the intervention of the narrator. This distinction does not coincide with the distinction between spoken and

written language, since **discours** is common to both spoken and written narrative, while **histoire** is reserved to the written language.

Benveniste(1966) says that discours and histoire are easily distinguishable by their choice of verb tenses. All tenses are possible in discours except the aorist (i.e. the simple past or past definite). However, the aorist is the fundamental tense in historical narration. The imperfect and the pluperfect tenses are also possible in histoire but only in forms of the third person (limited use of the future is also possible).

The significance of this distinction for the study of narrative is that the temporal location of verb tenses which belong to the linguistic system of discourse is the **moment of discourse**, while the temporal location of the aorist is the **moment of the event** (c.f. Todorov(1969) on sujet d'annonce vs. sujet d'annonciation - discussed in 4.3.2). For example, Benveniste says that the perfect tense, which belongs to the system of discourse,

"creates a living connection between the past event and the present in which its evocation takes place. It is the tense for one who relates the facts as a witness, as a participant; it is thus also the tense that will be chosen by whoever wishes to make the event ring vividly in our ears and to link it to the present"

(Benveniste, 1966: translated by Meeks, 1974: 210)

This enables us to understand how narrative provides narrators with the opportunity to use tenses like the



Conversational Historical Present (CHP), which as part of the linguistic system of discourse, suggests involvement, whether the medium is speech or writing.

Benveniste states that historical utterances can sometimes merge with discourse to make a third type of utterance in which discourse is reported in terms of an event and is transposed onto the historical plane. This is typical of indirect speech. In represented speech, although choice of pronouns and tenses sometimes suggests historical narration, the choice of contextualising words suggests the involvement of the narrator.

In fact, represented speech was identified as a conscious stylistic device as early as the 19th Century. It has been labelled in various ways in the literature according to whether it is viewed as a mixture of direct and indirect speech (Tobler, 1894); a kind of indirect speech - 'style indirect libre' (Bally, 1912), 'represented speech' (Jespersen, 1924, Fillmore, 1974); 'quasi-direct speech' (Lerch, 1919; Voloshinov, 1929); experienced speech - 'erlebte Rede' (Lorck, 1921); or an independent style - 'veiled speech' (Kalecky, 1899).

There is one other way in which represented speech in literary narratives differs from direct speech in oral or written discourse. Unlike direct quotes which are invariably introduced by a connective like "he said/thought", or in oral narrative, paralinguistically by a

change in pitch and/or amplitude, represented speech appears in the absence of any such connective as the immediate continuation of the narrative events. A connective is not necessary because as Fillmore(1974) notes, "a 'point of view' narrative style can only represent one person's psyche at a time." The question of how dialogue is introduced in conversational narrative is an important one since narrators vary in the devices they use and different introducers may set up different expectations about the character to be portrayed.

#### 4.3.5.4 Dialogue Introducers in Conversational Narrative

In English narratives, self-imputed speech is usually marked by the personal pronoun "I" and a what Goffman(1974) has called a laminator verb, e.g. "to say". Polanyi (1982b) calls this "Normal Direct Discourse". The dialogue may of course occur in the absence of any connective if it is marked paralinguistically by increased pitch or amplitude (Polanyi, 1982b terms this "Free Direct Discourse"). However, it must be marked in some way to avoid the implication of indirect quotation. When a speaker shifts to quoting the speech of someone else, he is changing his "footing" (Goffman, 1981) and this is often marked linguistically by a change of personal pronoun to the third-person "he, she" (or in the plural, "they") which may or may not accompany a shift in tense of the laminator verb.

Narrators frequently alternate between the Past tense "said", and the Conversational Historical Present (CHP) "says", in introducing narrative quotes. Tense switches of this kind should be of interest to linguists, since they may indicate more than just a change of speaker role.

For example, Johnstone(1986) suggests that such tense shifts may be used to signal the status relations between participants. She found that in stories which contain interactions between authority figures e.g. policemen, parents; and non-authorities e.g. felons, children; the authorities' speech is always marked by CHP, the marked form for a past event, while the non-authority gets the Past tense. Johnstone argues that through the differential in tense choice, the narrator is indicating that the authority and the non-authority are on unequal footings. She says that the authority's speech is introduced by CHP (the marked form) because the story depends on his presence to be told. His talk is more crucial to the story point. In addition, she points out that listeners might expect different levels of formality from speakers introduced by "said" and "says", and since the offender is likely to be more careful about his speech in the presence of an authority figure, it is not surprising to find a Past tense introduction. The authority can be made to sound more colloquial and may even be "put down a notch by being made to sound colloquial and slightly incorrect." (Johnstone, 1986: 45).

Johnstone(1986) suggests that the dialogue in authority stories is especially complex since authority figures are often only the animators of their own words and not the authors or principals.

"Authority figures speak with public voices:  
the voice of the law, the voice of adult  
morality, the voice of received wisdom."

(Johnstone, 1986: 48)

Johnstone's hypothesis is that CHP is the appropriate choice to introduce such formulaic, public language since in English, both are timeless and universal with respect to the discourse world.

Changes of footing marked by shifts in dialogue introducers are examined in more detail in Chapter 5 (Section 5.3.5), where Johnstone's ideas are applied to the data of the present study.

#### 4.3.5.5 Mimicry

A neglected area of research which is addressed in the present work, is the study of quotes in which the narrator attempts to portray not only the speaker's words but the speech mannerisms which accompanied them, in order to comment indirectly on the individual's psyche, behaviour or social group. As Goffman(1974) points out direct quotes invariably contain paralinguistic or kinesic markers which attempt to indicate the sex, age, class and so on of the character being cited and this seems to apply "whether or not mimicry is intended". These efforts serve to vivify and authenticate the performance. However, there are many cases

in which a storyteller acts out the speech mannerisms of someone who is absent by reproducing (and sometimes exaggerating) certain features of their talk. These features may be phonological, paralinguistic, lexical, discursal or any combination of these.

Claudia Mitchell-Kernan(1972) found this type of impersonation in the folk narratives of black people. She says,

"A common black narrative tactic in the folk tale genre and in accounts of actual events is the individuation of characters through the use of direct quotation. When in addition, in reproducing the words of individual actors, a narrator affects the voice and mannerisms of the speakers, he is using the style referred to as **marking** (clearly related to standard English 'mocking'). Marking is essentially a mode of characterisation. The marker attempts to report not only what was said but the way it was said, in order to offer implicit comment on the speaker's background, personality, or intent."  
(Mitchell-Kernan, 1972: 176)

The narrator gets his meaning across by copying aspects of the referent's accent or dialect, retaining any grammatical or phonological oddities and by using "paralinguistic mimicry" (the latter is a very salient feature of marking). There is no serious effort to take the audience in since the characterisations are often humorous and heavily exaggerated. The portrayals are often parodies of class membership and tend to be stereotypic and derogatory. For example, Mitchell-Kernan (1972) points out that individual's who are characterised as "trying to talk proper" are often marked by a falsetto tone of voice and the careful enunciation of words.

Mitchell-Kernan(1972) notes that these kind of characterisations are likely to occur much more often in intimate groups, where individuals are of similar age, sex, ethnic group, or status. Since such satires focus on the negative characteristics of the referent, their salience will only be evident to a group who share similar beliefs, attitudes and values (which are sufficiently different from those of the referent). Their function is often to reinforce and maintain group membership by lauding the positive characteristics of the in-group.

Polanyi(1982b) also observed this phenomenon. She noticed that narrator's sometimes take on the diction of the character whose speech they are reporting. She takes the following example from Schiffrin(1981).

- 1 And my grandfather says  
Now I'm going to stick  
the broom under the couch  
4 I'm going to pull it out  
and you start hitting  
He's telling my father  
Youse start hitting the rat  
8 with the hammer  
You squash him right?

(Polanyi in Tannen 1982c: 161)

In the above extract, the narrator quotes his grandfather's

words once in his own voice (lines 4/5) and then style-shifts (lines 7/8) to use a "lively dialectal style" in an attempt to portray the manner in which his grandfather speaks. Polanyi(1982b) calls this "Double Direct Discourse" since the character's words are reported once with the character's voice and once with the narrator's own diction. However, the analysis of token mimicry presented in Chapters 5 and 6 (sections 5.3.2 and 6.3.4.1) suggests that such style-shifts may extend over several turns of talk (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974).

A narrator is to be held accountable for the content of his portrayal. However, as mentioned above, he often uses bracketing devices to indicate that this is self-dissociated talk and in Goffman's(1974) terms, that an "alien animator" is at work. In stories where there is interaction between the narrator as "character" and the referent of the mimicry, the two persona are invariably on unequal footings (Goffman, 1981), with the narrator often awarding his own character the higher level footing (which may be indicated through more status, authority, intelligence or ingenuity).

In addition, in the simplest of cases, there are probably two animators, two authors, and two principals involved in stories which contain mimicry. The animator who gives "voice" to the story, and the imputed animator of the narrator-dissociated talk; the author who encodes what the story has to say and the embedded author of the mimicked words; the principal who relates his own beliefs and the

principal whose beliefs are reiterated in the mimicked talk. It is important to remember that in mimicry the narrator is the animator of the words, but he is not their author, nor is he the principal since mimicry is invariably intended as a disparagement of the views or social role of the referent. However, the situation is doubly complex, since the narrator is the author of the expressive content of the words, in that it is he who selects which features of the speech are to be copied and he who formulates the indirect message which was probably not a part of the original author's intent. Therefore, it can be said that in mimicry there are three authors involved, the author who stands behind the story line, and two embedded authors - the one who formulated the original character words (usually not the narrator himself), and a second who manipulates the expressive content of those words to signal meaning other than what was originally intended.

In certain cases, especially where narrators portray particular ethnic or social accents, they are not speaking with the voices of individuals, but with the voice of the generally recognised stereotype for a particular race or social group. Stereotypes are not roles, they are expectancies about behaviour (Brown, 1965). Thus it has been said of the English that they are sportsmanlike, intelligent and conventional; of the Chinese that they are superstitious and sly; of the Irish that they are simple, sentimental and drunkards; and of black people that they are lazy and "Happy-go-lucky" (Katz and Braly, 1932). Of



course, the stereotypes which hold will differ from culture to culture.

As mentioned in section 4.3.5.2, mimicry is Constructed Dialogue (Tannen, 1986). It is one of the devices which speakers can use to manipulate their footing in relation to their audience and to other characters in the story and since it breaks Grice's maxims of Quality and Manner (see Section 4.3.3), speakers are likely to search for indirect meaning.

Goffman(1974) says that linguistics has not yet provided an adequately central place for these "mockeries" or "say-fors" (as he calls them). He suggests that there are rules of mimicry which vary cross-culturally and sub-culturally as to how much copying is appropriate. In Chapter 5 (Section 5.3.2) and in Chapter 6 (Section 6.3.4) the present study addresses the question of sub-cultural variation in mimicry and investigates what kinds of linguistic features are copied; what kinds of characters are portrayed; how much copying is appropriate; and whether mimicry gives the speaker more license to use features of speech which he/she would not normally use (for example, are women able to criticise or use taboo words more freely when they are quoting the speech of someone else?) The functions of mimicry are also discussed.

#### 4.4 Topic

This chapter has not so far focussed on a descriptive apparatus for topic. However, since narrative type is influenced by topic, clearly there is territory for investigation in the relationship. The narratives which form the data base are all based on humorous themes. Humour is discussed in Chapter 5, however, a few brief comments on humorous topics are necessary at this point, since humour influence the type of style-shifting observed in the data.

##### 4.4.1 Humorous Topics

According to Giles, Bourhis, Gadfield, Davis and Davis(1976), humour promotes the use of a speech style characterised by a high percentage of non-standard variants, lax enunciation of words, and fluency and variability of both tempo and pitch. Humour also encourages style-shifting. Giles et al.(1976) suggest that humour of an ethnic or minority group variety would be likely to accentuate these traits as well as encouraging a greater variety of speech modifications. Hence it might be expected that stories containing characters from particular regional, ethnic or minority groups would be more likely to encourage the narrator to style-shift in order to portray aspects of their speech in characterisation. Humorous narratives provide an excellent source for observing these kinds of shift.

The present research aimed to investigate the linguistic devices which narrators use to create humour in their stories, focussing in particular on linguistic features which are used in mimicry. The study attempts to delineate the kinds of portrayals which occur in the data and to show whether the occupational groups and the sexes show a preference for imitating different kinds of characters. The intention was also to discover which topics form the best base for humorous interaction in occupationally-defined groups, and whether topic choice varies among the occupations and among the sexes.

#### 4.5 Orientation

The literature which has been reviewed in this chapter has been selected on the basis of its relevance to the questions to be answered. The various insights and types of analytical apparatus described assist in the exploration of the following questions:-

1. Do the humorous narratives related by each of the four occupational groups (nurses, hairdressers, chefs and taxi-drivers) share a typical set of linguistic story features?
2. Is there variation among the occupational groups and among the sexes in:-
  - a) the type of evaluation preferred, either internal or external?
  - b) the linguistic devices which are used to create

humour?

c) the topics which are selected for humorous interaction?

d) the extent and type of role-shifting?

3. How much of feeling, gesture and accent is properly to be mimicked when a speaker is "doing" someone other than himself. As Goffman(1974) points out, the linguistic study of mimicry is a somewhat neglected research area. The present work attempts to go some way towards filling this gap in the literature.

Chapters 5 and 6 focus on the above questions, Chapter 5 concentrating on features held in common among narrators from the 4 populations, and Chapter 6 concentrating on features differentiating types of narrators from each other.