Evaluating dialect in discourse: Teachers' and teenagers' responses to young English speakers in Wales

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ABSTRACT

School students (15–16 years) in six regions of Wales were recorded telling stories in their local English dialects. Some of these narratives were used as samples representing the main English dialect regions in Wales. Comparable groups of students (n = 169) and a group of teachers (n = 47) rated the audio-recorded speakers on a number of scales of affiliation, status, and Welshness. Statistical analysis of their ratings, employing cluster analysis and multidimensional scaling, made it possible to detect some of the competing or additive effects of dialect and narrative features. Judgments of "Welshness" of the speaker/narratives were grounded in the regional dialect properties; but other judgments, such as the likability of the speakers, tended to draw on features of both dialect and narrative. In addition, comparison of students and teachers revealed differences in their evaluations of particular dialect communities and the characteristics of the narratives. The findings illustrate the importance of approaching the analysis of dialect variation within the broader context of speech and discourse performance. (Attitudes, Wales, English, dialects, adolescents, narratives)*

The social evaluation of speech styles is recognized as a central concern in sociolinguistics, and as a complement to the study of socially and geographically distributed linguistic variation. Systematic patterns of social evaluation provide information that may be even more pertinent than descriptive distributional data in the explanation of linguistic maintenance and shift. Evaluative data allow us to access the dynamic identificational and relational forces at work within sociolinguistic communities. These include prejudices held against regional or social varieties; allegiances and affiliative feelings toward one's own or other groups' speech norms; and stereotypes of urban/rural, authentic/inauthentic, or attractive/unattractive speech styles. So, in addition to sociolinguistic processes at the level of the social group (see Giles & Coupland 1991 on "intergroup" sociolinguistic factors), social evaluative studies can access local processes of interpersonal

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attraction/distancing and can help predict the character of social relationships – or at least first-acquaintance relationships – within a speech community.

Explanations of sociolinguistic phenomena are most likely to reside in social psychological processes, and "language attitudes" are therefore a key dimension for sociolinguistic theory-building. However, though attitudes research is commonly cited in sociolinguistic overviews, many linguists have reservations about its assumptions and methods.

Since the 1960s, research into language attitudes has been overwhelmingly influenced by Lambert's "matched guise technique" (MGT; Lambert et al. 1960). In the classical form of MGT, one speaker constructs a series of stimulus recordings, usually based on a prepared reading text, in the guises of different accents, dialects, or languages. The motivating claim is that by such a "matching out" of potential variables – such as content, voice quality, speech rate, and other paralinguistic or prosodic features – one "pure" variable (e.g. accent/dialect) will remain to explain variable patterns of response among listeners. Problematic aspects of speech or speaker evaluation tasks are thus "designed out," especially the "interfering" effects of spontaneous speech production by different speakers in naturally occurring speech situations; and some of the "messiness" often involved in the process of researching language (Holmes & Ainsworth 1997) is thereby avoided.

MGT studies lend themselves to the secure application of statistical measures. Typically, the measurement overlap in the bipolar semantic differential scales ratings is analyzed in order to identify the broader evaluative dimensions with which the judges are operating, such as prestige, social attractiveness, or dynamism (Zahn & Hopper 1985); then a clearly identifiable and isolable independent variable, such as accent/dialect, is tested through analysis of variance for significant effects on these dimensions.

Some studies have employed a number of different speakers to make the stimulus recordings, either because it was simply not possible to find a single individual who could produce all the varieties required for the study (e.g. Garrett 1992, Nesdale & Rooney 1996), or because researchers wished to defend themselves against charges of artificiality (e.g. Masterson et al. 1983). Nevertheless, many such studies have adhered to other typical MGT features, creating "verbal guises" (Cooper & Fishman 1974) in which other variables such as loudness and speech rate are still matched, or in which at least the same passage is read (but see El-Dash & Tucker 1975 for an instance where spontaneous speech samples are employed, matched only by topic). This is considered sufficient control for the researchers to have reasonable confidence in the results gained from the same type of statistical analysis.

The merits and demerits of the MGT have often been debated (e.g. Giles & Coupland 1991). Our own view is that social evaluation studies will benefit, at least for some purposes, from ecologically more valid source material, rather than from the mimicked vocal renditions of linguistic varieties in decontextual-

ized environments that characterize so many matched guise studies. Over and above matters of methodological convenience, the nature of aural stimuli in language-attitudes research raises significant theoretical issues – mainly to do with the integrity of dialect varieties, and with how dialectally marked speech encodes social meaning (since much MGT work has focused on dialect). In fact, the descriptive methods of variationist sociolinguistics have themselves contributed to the illusion that socially significant dialect variation can be captured wholly in terms of frequency arrays, displaying discrete sets of phonological, lexical, and morpho-syntactic forms. That is, a "standard" speech within a speech community can be defined as using a particular range of variants with a particular frequency, whereas "nonstandard" speakers in the same community will use different features, or the same features with a different frequency.

Language-attitudes work operating within the MGT paradigm has tended to work within this same general view of dialect – for example, by manipulating "levels of accentedness," or by investigating the relative evaluative potency of "accent" vs. lexical qualities (Giles & Sassoon 1983, Levin et al. 1994) or "accent" vs. grammatical qualities (Petty et al. 1981, Levin & Garrett 1990).

But dialect difference is encountered quite differently in everyday social situations. Because of the cultural constitution of dialect, speakers of different regional or social dialects engage with communicative tasks on a subtly different footing from speakers of others. We are accustomed to treating dialect differences as indexing socio-economic class differences – even though the experience of class membership shows through in the phenomenology of class-related communication – or "ways of speaking" (Hymes 1974, Coupland 1998), and as doing so in less obvious ways than through phonological and other quantifiable types of variation. There is a wide range of semantic and pragmatic phenomena on the fringe of dialect which sociolinguistics has not systematically addressed, having to do with rhetorical style, stance, and implicature. This is why it seems appropriate to view dialects as ideological as well as linguistic entities (Lee 1992), and why the study of dialect needs to be linked coherently to current emphases in the analysis of discourse (Macaulay 1991, Coupland 1999).

The study of language attitudes and perceptual dialectology (Preston 1989, 1996, 1999) has a vital contribution to make to this growing debate. People's responses to dialect are necessarily holistic. They are sensitive to the full range of social semiosis that any particular "dialect performance" generates, and some aspects of the performance are likely to be more or less salient in specific judgments in different contexts. However inconvenient the methodological implications may be, it is important that at least some sorts of attitudes research should be based on less controlled speech data, and that ways should be developed to account for how "dialect" in the narrow sense interacts with socio-culturally conditioned ways of speaking. In line with this set of priorities, the study reported here analyzes both teachers' and teenagers' responses to fourteen young people in Wales, telling spontaneous personal narratives in English. At the broader level,

the speech samples are a fairly homogeneous set: They were produced for a common purpose and in similar conditions by male school students of closely similar ages, but from widely different regions of Wales. However, the analyses are "complicated" by the fact that the speech is unscripted; it therefore varies in rhetorical structure and completeness, and in the details of topics and emphases. This and other research design features made the standard MGT analytical procedures less appropriate and we therefore sought other ways to analyze and interpret our data.

LANGUAGE ATTITUDES IN WALES

Some of the earliest language attitudes studies were conducted in Wales – either on specific groups' beliefs about the Welsh language, or on varieties of Welsh English (see the review in Giles 1990). It is fair to say that there is a lack of consistency in the findings of earlier studies. For example, Bourhis et al. 1973 found that Welsh English was evaluated more highly than Received Pronunciation (RP), but on a par with Welsh. Bourhis & Giles 1976 found both Welsh English and RP downgraded in relation to Welsh. Price et al. 1983 found Welsh English to be a "linguistic no-person's land," downgraded in relation to both Welsh and RP; they called for studies to be conducted in different regions of the same country or state in order to build up geolinguistic atlases of attitudinal variation.

In recent work of our own (Coupland et al. 1994, 1999; Garrett et al. 1995; Williams et al. 1996, 1999), we have responded to the call of Price et al. and have given accounts of highly differentiated stereotyped beliefs held about English-language communities within Wales. Our work has demonstrated that social evaluations are structured at a far more local level than previous studies have tended to assume. For example, a sample of 129 teachers reliably identified eight English-language dialect zones within Wales with very different profiles along several dimensions: perceived linguistic features, affective qualities, prestige, urban/rural character, and, in particular, perceived Welshness. They drew on a rich set of culturally recognized traits to distinguish, for example, an "authentically Welsh" Southeast Wales Valleys dialect zone, as opposed to a far less Welsh and less attractive Cardiff zone – perceiving the rural southwest (Carmarthen) as having the most favorable combination of attributes, and therefore functioning for some as a regional Welsh standard variety of English (Williams et al. 1996). Figure 1 identifies the principal regions of Wales that are the focus of most analyses both in our earlier studies and in this one.

In this article, we first consider whether the broad lines of the teachers' "perceptual maps," as Preston 1989 has called them, are replicated in the more direct sociolinguistic evaluations produced when teachers and a diverse sample of 169 teenagers from all regions of Wales listened and responded to audio recordings of other young speakers from the Welsh regions. We focus on teachers because this group fulfils a highly significant gatekeeping function through the judgments,
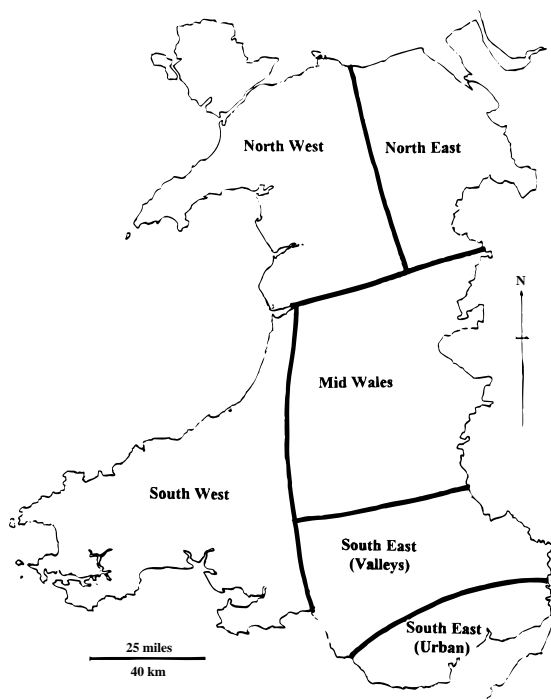
FIGURE 1: Map of Wales showing main dialect regions.

both formal and informal, that they make about young people. We focus on teen-age school students because the mid-teen years are a particularly salient period of social sensitization, as young people establish social identities and positions that will influence their employment and relational decisions in the near future. Furthermore, work on language attitudes in Wales has repeatedly shown that age fifteen marks the end of a significant period of attitude shift in relation to the Welsh and English languages (see Baker 1988).[1] Therefore, we consider the possible implications of similarities and differences between teachers' and teenagers' patterns of response.

As a second main concern, and following from the theoretical issues raised in the first section, we re-open some contentious methodological questions about how social evaluations can be adequately surveyed. Can systematic responses linked to stereotypes of region (and therefore dialect) be detected when relatively uncontrolled speech data are used? Can we assess the role of dialect differences relative to other dimensions of situated discourse? Are the evaluations made by teenagers and teachers mediated by, or even overwhelmed by, characteristics of narrative performance, and by the social contextual data that inevitably leak

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through any situated discursive act? Rather than treating these considerations as limitations (which they undoubtedly are from the MGT perspective), we try to build them into the study and into our interpretations of the data.

METHOD

Preparation of audio-recorded materials

A large database of audio-recorded narratives by school students aged fifteen and sixteen was collected throughout Wales. To achieve this, from a comprehensive list of secondary schools throughout Wales, we selected and contacted forty, based on the criteria of regional spread and lack of proximity to the borders between the six regions displayed in Fig. 1. We invited these schools to participate in a study of regional variation in Welsh English. Of the schools that agreed to participate, we initially selected two from each of the six regions listed below. We identified these regions in Fig. 1 on the basis of the limited amount of available dialectal research on English in Wales (see Coupland 1990), plus the data from our previous studies on perceptions of English dialects in Wales.

(a) The Cardiff Conurbation: Cardiff is the capital city of Wales. The region established itself as an industrial urban center during the nineteenth century and is historically very anglicized. Compared to other parts of Wales in recent years, Cardiff has been prospering from a great deal of inward investment and is economically more buoyant than the other regions. The English language variety in this area has been characterized in many studies (e.g. Mees 1983, Coupland 1988, Windsor Lewis 1990).

(b) The Southeast Wales Valleys: From the nineteenth century until the 1980s, this was a heavy industrial zone, producing coal and steel; but with the rapid closure of these industries, it now suffers high levels of unemployment and social deprivation. This area has another broadly distinguishable regional variety of English (see Hughes & Trudgill 1979, Connolly 1990, Tench 1990, for descriptions of localities impinging on this region).

(c) The Southwest: This is a rural, agricultural, and traditionally Welsh-speaking "heartland," now somewhat fragmenting in terms of its Welsh language speakers, according to the 1991 census data (Aitchison & Carter 1994). The English variety here is more subject to influence from the Welsh language than are those of the previous two regions (see Parry 1990).

(d) Mid-Wales: This predominantly agricultural zone, occupying the center of Wales on a north/south axis, is taken to exclude the western coastal areas, which tend to be incorporated into the Southwest zone. Compared to the "heartlands" of the Northwest and Southwest, this area is largely non–Welsh-speaking. To our knowledge, there have been no sociolinguistic or dialectological studies of this region; but eastern Mid-Wales English is characteristically rhotic, and in some respects it aligns with the features of the "Upper South West" dialect area of England (Trudgill 1990).

(e) The Northeast: This comparatively urban industrial zone, like Mid-Wales, is relatively anglicized in contrast to the Northwest and Southwest regions. The English dialect of Northeast Wales is strongly influenced by the English of the nearby Liverpool conurbation.

(f) The Northwest: This predominantly rural and agricultural zone is strongly associated with sheep farming and slate quarrying, the latter of which has declined considerably over recent decades. The region is a key part of the Welsh language heartland "Y Fro Cymraeg," where Welsh language influence on English is stronger.

In each of the selected schools, we audio-recorded approximately fourteen males and females aged fifteen and sixteen, as they told personal anecdotes which they judged newsworthy in some way, in front of their peers in a classroom setting. They were told that we were interested in collecting "stories that young people your age tell." We supplemented this general request with the following prompt:

All people are story tellers. You come to school every day and tell your mates about things that have happened to you. This is what I want you to do today. Think of something that has happened to you or someone you know and tell us about it. For example, a funny or embarrassing incident, a frightening story, accident or danger, or a time you got into trouble with your parents.

The request clearly encouraged the speakers to produce interesting and somehow involving narratives. But given that the students self-selected into the task, and that they then needed to survive the event in front of their peers, we took it that a degree of predicted newsworthiness was also an internally motivated requirement. There was rarely any difficulty in eliciting a supply of volunteered narratives. The majority are based around actual or fictitious events with a mildly anti-establishment character, often involving personal and physical threats or accidents. Overall, 175 narratives were collected from schools throughout Wales.

For the purposes of the evaluative study, we selected two narratives from each of the six Welsh regions. The six specific Welsh communities represented were Cardiff (Urban Southeast), Newtown (Mid-Wales), Carmarthen (Southwest Wales), Merthyr Tydfil (Southeast Wales Valleys), Mold (Northeast Wales), and Blaenau Ffestiniog (Northwest Wales). The selection criteria were that the speakers should be representative of their particular dialect communities, confirmed by detailed phonetic descriptions produced by independent experts; and that the narratives were reasonably successful, in the sense of being well received by their audiences. Regionally identifying references were also avoided. In addition and for comparison, personal narratives of an identical sort were tape-recorded from two Received Pronunciation (RP)-accented fifteen-year-old students from a private school across the English border in Gloucestershire. To control for gender differences, we confined the study to evaluations of male

speakers, because they constituted the majority of story-telling volunteers and so gave us a larger number of narratives to select from.

For the responses study, we then selected an excerpt from each of the fourteen narratives, as a reasonably self-contained episode lasting around fifty seconds. The brevity of the excerpts is an inevitable requirement of the listening task to follow, in order to reduce possible fatigue effects – since, even with only two representative dialect examples from each of the communities, each group of listeners had to hear and respond to fourteen extracts. To counter order effects, two audio tapes were prepared, allowing the excerpts to be heard in a different sequence by each half of the sets of students and teachers.[2]

Preparation of questionnaire

A speaker evaluation questionnaire was prepared, containing seven judgment scales. The scales were selected after pilot work in which a comparable sample of mid-teenagers was asked to listen to the stimulus tape and write down, open-endedly, their thoughts about and reactions to the speakers. These written evaluations were discussed and elaborated in a classroom setting. The procedure provided a set of frequently used evaluative labels which were particularly pertinent and meaningful for this group of listeners. All seven resulting questions were formulated to be answered on a 5-point scale, where 1 = "not at all," and 5 = "very much." The questions were:

(1) Overall, do YOU LIKE this speaker?
(2) Do you think this speaker does WELL AT SCHOOL (e.g. gets high marks in exams)?
(3) How much LIKE YOU do you think this speaker is?
(4) Do you think you could MAKE FRIENDS with this speaker?
(5) How WELSH do you think this speaker sounds?
(6) Do you think this speaker is a GOOD LAUGH?
(7) How INTERESTING does this STORY sound?

Several of these scales ("you like," "like you," "make friends," "good laugh," and "interesting story") seem to relate to a basic SOCIAL ATTRACTIVENESS dimension that has proved to be salient in the vast majority of language-attitude studies (see Zahn & Hopper 1985). But the "interesting story" scale – which is event-focused, rather than speaker-focused – is particularly relevant to our interests in accounting for non–dialect-based as well as dialect-based responses. The "good at school" scale indirectly reflects a STATUS dimension, viewed from within the educational establishment, to the extent that this is relevant in young people's judgments of one another. The "how Welsh" scale reflects a judgment of perceived ethnicity, and in some respects authenticity, which has emerged very strongly in our previous work as a salient evaluative dimension of Welsh English dialect communities.

Respondents

The evaluation phase of the study involved returning to each of the six regions to collect school students' responses. The risk that students would recognize individual speakers precluded using the same schools that provided the initial audio recordings. However, the schools in the evaluation phase needed to be matched as far as possible with those from which the narratives had been collected. Teachers assisted us in the selection of schools that made a reasonable match. In the more rural locations, where few secondary schools exist, there were some difficulties in finding good matches nearby; hence, in Mid-Wales, it was necessary to accept a school in Builth Wells as a match for the Newtown school, even though the schools were about forty-five miles apart.

Procedure

In each school, the selected audio-recorded story extracts were played to a group of mixed-ability year 10 students (fifteen or sixteen years of age), males and females. Mixed-ability groups were achieved by drawing students from a number of classes – or, where numbers were smaller, by taking all the pupils from a whole year. A total of 169 students filled in a questionnaire to evaluate each speaker in turn. Evaluation data were also obtained from forty-seven teachers, with ages ranging from thirty to seventy-nine (mean age 47.7). Of these, 68.1 percent were female and 31.9 percent were male. The data were collected in locations different from the students' data.[3] The teachers were given the same questions as the students, but they had no difficulty in responding to them as meaningful evaluative dimensions. The basis of our interest in collecting these comparable data from them was that they would predictably respond to these items from a perspective that was different from that of the students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Preliminary analysis using MANOVA (cf. Tabachnik & Fidell 1989) revealed no significant effect for gender, so we consider evaluations from males and females together below.

Students' overall evaluations

Table 1 reports the mean values for all 169 students' responses to the fourteen extracts on the seven evaluative scales. Speakers are listed down the left side of the table. The regional origin of each speaker is listed, followed by the speaker's randomly allocated identifying number (1–14). This convention is adopted for the remainder of this paper.

Even from these descriptive data, several major trends are apparent:

(a) Since 3 is the midpoint assessment, it is clear that the judgments of the students are better seen as differing in degrees of negativity rather than positivity.

TABLE 1. *Overall means for Welsh teenagers' evaluations of regional speakers (N = 169).*

Speaker	Do you like	Good at school	Like you	Make friends	How Welsh	Good laugh	Interesting story
Cardiff 1	2.43	2.62	1.88	2.39	2.83	2.34	1.87
Cardiff 11	3.20	2.44	2.53	3.12	2.88	3.75	3.69
NE 2	2.74	3.01	2.22	2.79	1.88	2.97	2.87
NE 9	2.86	2.48	2.26	2.77	1.60	3.24	2.71
NW 7	2.09	2.09	1.53	1.95	3.44	2.27	2.52
NW 10	2.72	2.67	2.22	2.74	3.41	2.97	3.28
SW 4	2.67	2.52	2.01	2.67	4.47	3.17	2.60
SW 13	2.14	2.38	1.65	2.15	3.91	2.16	1.89
Valleys 5	2.23	2.35	1.67	2.14	4.01	2.16	2.58
Valleys 8	2.01	2.40	1.46	2.11	3.76	2.16	1.79
Mid 6	2.13	3.11	1.71	2.19	2.29	1.99	1.89
Mid 14	2.03	3.00	1.66	2.07	2.14	1.98	1.86
RP 3	2.04	3.49	1.73	1.93	1.56	1.70	1.78
RP 12	2.01	3.56	1.70	1.98	1.51	1.88	1.99

Indeed, on the "like you" scale, even the highest-rated speaker does not reach the midpoint.

(b) Some speakers or narratives attract relatively favorable evaluative profiles along a number of scales that appear to make up the affiliative/attraction dimension. Thus Cardiff11 is ranked the highest on the "you like," "like you," "make friends," and "good laugh" scales and has the highest score for "interesting story." Other speakers with relatively high affiliative profiles are NE9, SW4, and NW10.

(c) A few extracts attract distinctively low ratings on these same scales, particularly the two RP speakers, 3 and 12. The lowest rating on each of the "you like," "make friends," "good laugh," and "interesting story" scales is achieved by either RP3 or RP12, with RP3 being the lower-rated overall. Of the speakers from the Welsh regions, Valleys8 and Mid14 have quite consistently low ratings on affiliative scales.

(d) The "good at school" ratings pattern very differently from the attractiveness scales; RP3 and RP12 are rated highest on this scale. The only speakers from within Wales to reach midpoint on "good at school" are Mid6 and Mid14, neither of whom is deemed attractive, and NE2, who is awarded moderate attractiveness.

(e) Students' assessments of "how Welsh" speakers are show far greater variability than other dimensions. SW4 is adjudged the most Welsh of all fourteen speakers, with Valleys5 also rated high. Welshness is in fact the only scale that almost perfectly pairs speakers from particular Welsh communities in an overall rank-order; this suggests that perceived regional provenance tends to override other variables for this question. We find a rank ordering here that is closely in line with the results of our previous studies (e.g. Coupland et al. 1994).

TABLE 2. *Overall means for teachers' evaluations of regional speakers (N = 47).*

Speaker	Do you like	Good at school	Like you	Make friends	How Welsh	Good laugh	Interesting story
Cardiff 1	2.82	2.61	1.43	3.30	3.02	2.47	2.09
Cardiff 11	3.24	2.85	1.85	3.91	3.15	3.91	3.81
NE 2	2.95	3.16	1.93	3.59	1.52	3.04	2.66
NE 9	3.14	3.14	2.36	3.39	2.16	3.00	3.24
NW 7	2.96	2.82	1.69	3.02	4.20	2.81	3.00
NW 10	3.31	3.33	2.24	3.24	3.76	2.87	3.09
SW 4	3.72	3.11	2.07	3.96	4.54	3.98	3.41
SW 13	3.16	3.20	1.80	3.44	4.53	2.72	2.62
Valleys 5	2.75	2.52	1.70	2.82	4.36	2.32	2.81
Valleys 8	2.43	2.22	1.41	3.07	3.70	2.21	2.06
Mid 6	3.41	3.48	2.35	3.41	2.30	2.89	2.85
Mid 14	2.89	3.11	1.87	3.09	1.98	2.47	2.74
RP 3	3.30	3.77	2.68	3.27	1.25	2.38	2.83
RP 12	2.95	3.89	2.45	3.34	1.14	2.55	2.70

Correlations among the students' responses to the seven questions almost all reach statistical significance, owing to the large number of individual students' judgments. However, the variable size of individual correlations lends support to the interpretation that "good at school" and "how Welsh" pattern less well with the other (affiliative) scales than the latter do among themselves. For example, the coefficients for "how Welsh" are 0.26 (you like), 0.33 (good at school), 0.17 (like you), 0.24 (make friends), 0.39 (good laugh), and 0.28 (interesting story).

Teachers' overall evaluations

Table 2 shows that, like the students, teachers consider certain speakers generally more socially attractive than others – in particular, SW4 and Cardiff11, both of whom were also highly ranked by the students. But the teachers favor SW4 over Cardiff11 (the students' favorite), and they rank SW4 highest of all on "you like," "make friends," and "good laugh." This finding needs to be considered in relation to our earlier work with a sample of teachers taken from all over Wales, who considered the variety associated with Southwest Wales to have the best combination of positive attributes of all the Welsh English varieties: prestige, attractiveness, and authenticity (Coupland et al. 1994, Garrett et al. 1995). The least attractive speakers for the teachers, however, are not the RP speakers but the two Valleys speakers, and particularly Valleys8. They concur with the students that the RP speakers are likely to do best at school, but they consider the RP speakers to be most like themselves, which the students certainly do not. Teachers and

students are largely in accord in their rankings for "how Welsh." The teachers also share the students' opinion that Cardiff11 tells the most interesting story.

As with the students, teachers' "how Welsh" responses pattern less well with responses to the other items; none reach significance at the 0.01 level, and three ("make friends," "good laugh," "interesting story") fail to do so at $p = 0.05$. (Given the smaller number of teachers compared to the student sample, it is worth noting significance levels.) In contrast with the students, teachers' responses to "good at school" seem reasonably in line with the others, with all correlations significant at the 0.01 level. However – perhaps understandably, given that these are teachers' evaluations of teenagers – the "like you" scale patterns rather differently, and it fails to correlate significantly at the 0.05 level with "good laugh." It is interesting to note here that the highest individual correlation for the teachers is between "you like" and "good at school" (0.70), thus matching judgments of social attractiveness with those of pupil competence. For the students, this correlation is also high, but there are higher ones – suggesting that students are more inclined to like those who are a good laugh, and with whom they can easily make friends.

Overview of regional dialect effects

We are still not in a position to indicate what is the BASIS of the judgments being made. The fourteen speakers are paired in the sense that the describable linguistic characteristics of their speech represent the dialect norms of six different regional communities in Wales, plus RP. But the patterning of the evaluations respects these pairings only very selectively. We see, for example, that the RP speakers are quite consistently linked in the students' evaluations by being placed at (or close to) the bottom of the affiliative scales of "you like," "good laugh," and "make friends"; thus they are to some extent "outgrouped" by the Welsh students and credited only with taking away the prizes at school, an attribution they again share. The Northeast speakers are also rated quite closely to each other on several affiliative scales. By contrast, the Cardiff pair are quite clearly distinguished affiliatively, with Cardiff11 favored quite markedly over Cardiff1 by the students.

The "how Welsh" scale shows that teachers and students CAN respond in very precise ways to the dialectal constitution of the narratives, when this is made salient in a particular question. But "interesting story" pulls the dialectal pairs apart, most strikingly in the case of students' judgments of the Cardiff speakers and in teachers' judgments of the two Southwest Wales speakers. Evaluations, then, are apparently conditioned by a range of factors here; these include the connotations of dialect varieties, but are not exhaustively accounted for by these associations. In other words, the social meanings associated with the narrative tellings are multidimensional. Studies of language attitudes have repeatedly shown that vocal styles regularly trigger inferences about a speaker's social attractiveness – and, as a separate dimension, his or her competence. But speakers in our study can receive different ratings on these dimensions, despite sharing dialect

characteristics. Being rated a "good laugh" and being easy to "make friends" with may be partly an inference from dialect (and in the case of our RP speakers, low ratings on these scales do seem linked to dialect). Yet these attributions are also very plausibly linked to interactional behavior, and the discourse of the narrative fragments gives listeners access to relevant evidence by a different indexical/inferential route.

"Good at school" is potentially another inference from dialect, at least in the case of RP speakers being rated as likely high achievers. But teachers and students may arrive at their similar rankings for different reasons – the teachers acknowledging the historical correlation of high social class with educational achievement, but the students using "good at school" as a blaming strategy. Teachers' very low rankings on this scale of the Valleys speakers (and to a lesser extent, the Cardiff speakers) again suggests a stereotyped association of low-status dialects of Welsh English. But rhetorical style, general animation, narrative framing, and creativity might also offer clues to success at school.

Thus far, then, the analyses have not been able to focus on how the various components of the narrative performances and their dimensions of social meaning might be working IN RELATION TO each other in listeners' evaluations. Evaluations of speaker performances are likely to be made along competing or complementary dimensions. For example, speakers might be judged a "good laugh" because they can discursively undermine, confirm, or even parody the stereotyped associations of their dialect.

Multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis

To explore these issues further, we employed multidimensional scaling (MDS) in conjunction with cluster analysis. Since we had only two speakers from each community, the conventional MGT analysis of variance would, in any case, leave too much margin for error. Further motivations come from the suggestion of Giles 1990, in his review of research into the social meanings of Welsh English, that MDS procedures be employed alongside audio-taped extracts to develop a global set of cognitive maps relating to Welsh English varieties around Wales – as well as from the recent work by Preston and his colleagues (e.g. Preston 1999).

MDS is a set of mathematical techniques that help to uncover the "hidden structure" of data (for an introduction, see Kruskal & Wish 1978). By analyzing how similar or different objects are perceived to be (in the case of the present study, speakers/narratives), it creates a spatial representation of these as a configuration of points, as on a map. So far, we have looked at the judgments of speakers/narratives along individual scales; however, more than just regional origin of the dialect is arguably affecting evaluative outcomes, because dialectal pairs were pulled in different directions. MDS, by looking at the differences and similarities in the quantitative judgments of the range of varieties, locates the variable in relation to more than one dimension. It is then up to the researcher (as in factor analysis) to try to place a meaningful interpretation on those directions

in terms of the possible variables at work in the study. One decision to be made when using MDS is how many dimensions should form the basis of the output. The issue is in large part pragmatic, revolving around questions of interpretability and ease of use (Kruskal & Wish 1978:48). The results reported below are based on a two-dimensional analysis, following other sociolinguistic studies (e.g. Van de Velde et al. 1997, Dailey-O'Cain 1999, Demirci & Kleiner 1999, Hartley 1999, Kuiper 1999), as well as human communication studies (e.g. Baxter & Wilmot 1984).

Kruskal & Wish (46) show how MDS is often used in conjunction with cluster analysis (for an introduction, see Aldenderfer & Blashfield 1984, Everitt 1993). Baxter & Wilmot 1984, looking at the various sorts of strategies that people secretly employ to gauge how their social relationships are progressing, used MDS to discover the characteristics influencing the choice of strategies. MDS supplemented hierarchical cluster analysis using the average linking method, which determined how these strategies fell into groups (or clusters), located in relation to those dimensions. Cluster analysis too requires the researcher to interpret what the most likely bases of the groupings are. It is also necessary to determine the number of clusters to interpret, and this is a somewhat subjective process (Aldenderfer & Blashfield 1984). Ordinary significance tests and other statistical procedures are of questionable value, and hence studies generally make explicit the criteria they have employed in their decision-making (cf. human communication research by Baxter & Wilmot 1984, Marston et al. 1987, Baxter 1992). The primary guide in the present study is the agglomeration schedule. A relatively large distance between two adjacent agglomeration steps is taken as an indication that further agglomeration into clusters is less revealing, and that the data are best represented by the clusters already identified at that point (see Norušis 1990). This is supplemented by the criterion, following Baxter & Wilmot 1984, that the number of clusters accepted should have reasonable logical coherence – and, following Marston et al. 1987, that the number of such interpretable clusters should be more rather than fewer (where agglomerative gaps were not prohibitively large, and where this did not encourage excessive "clusters" containing only one member). Hence, each of the seven different scales used in the present study had its own solution regarding the number of clusters determined to be the most appropriate.

The two-dimensional MDS and the cluster analysis were carried out using SPSS for Windows, Release 6.0. The cluster analysis was hierarchical, using the average linking method.

Teachers' and teenagers' "interesting story"

Figures 2 and 3 show the clusters and MDS displays for the students' and teachers' responses to the "interesting story" question.[4] (Transcriptions of the story excerpts are in the appendix.)
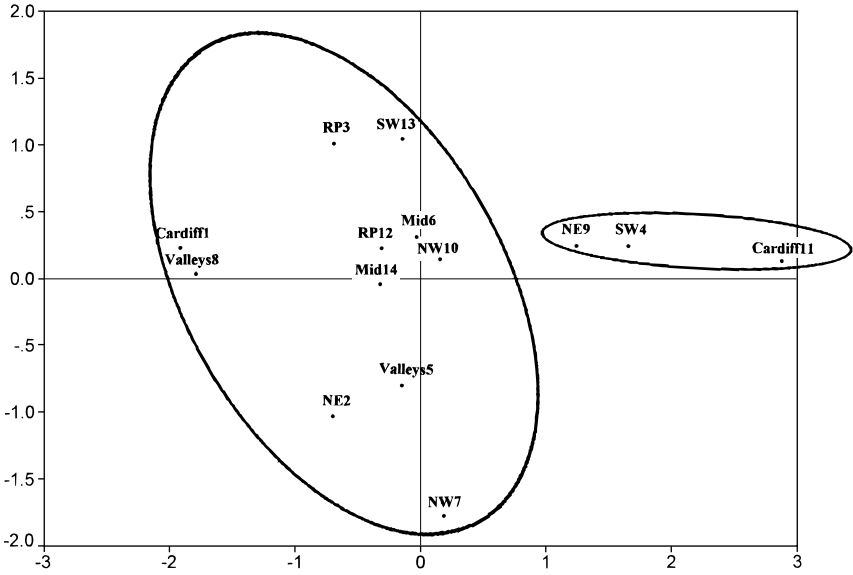
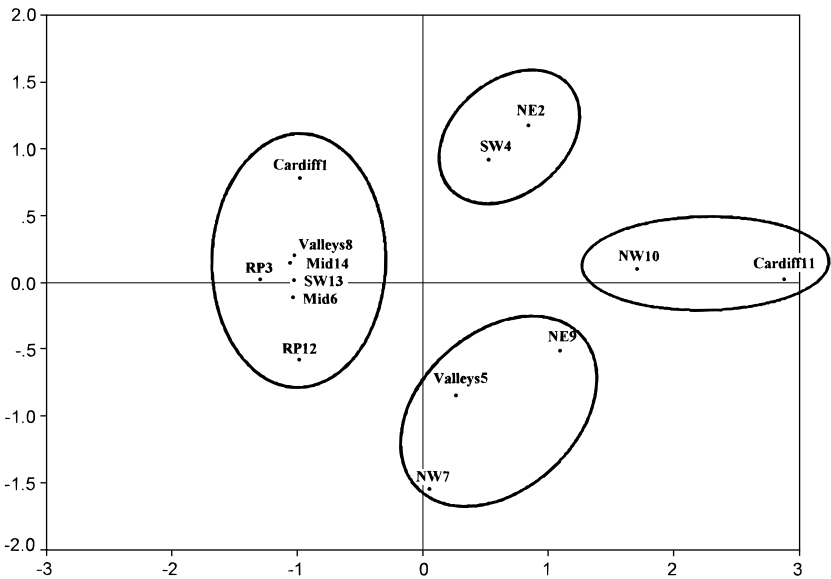FIGURE 2: MDS teachers: "How interesting does this story sound?"

FIGURE 3: MDS students: "How interesting does this story sound?"

The students' judgments place the speakers in four clusters, with 50 percent of them in a single cluster at a very specific point along the X-axis, and only slightly spread out along the Y-axis. These are the narratives with the low mean scores, and the clustering suggests a strong tendency to dismiss or relegate disfavored stories to an undifferentiated "scrap" pile. Cardiff1's excerpt tells how he felt sick from too much sun in Spain (though he was not actually sick) while staying with his uncle who lives there. RP3 cut his finger on a belt sander at school, and the teacher advised him to sit down because it was *quite nasty*. Mid6's story involves a lot of description of the wheels and weight distribution on a tractor, and how the tractor started swaying until his father came to the rescue. Valleys8 was out walking with a friend when they came across an unattended sewage pump; his friend turned it on, and sewage sprinkled into the air. RP12 tells of people he saw at a fun-fair whose carriage fell off a big wheel; he mentions that they were not very high and were not hurt. He also reports that he and his friends were *totally amazed* and *absolutely flabbergasted* when the person in charge continued as if nothing were amiss. SW13's father told him and his brother to take a motorbike and trailer to do some work in a field; the trailer came loose and ran into a hedge. Mid14 thought he heard a bat when he was in bed, and called for his father, who solved the problem.

What is characteristic of this cluster of less interesting stories is that the stories contain mishaps that threatened to occur but did not (Cardiff1), or did occur but were not serious (RP12, Valleys8, SW13), sometimes with adults preventing any real danger (Mid6, Mid14, RP3). In addition, the narratives that are unambiguously rural in character are all to be found in this cluster (Mid6, Valleys8, SW13, Mid14). No one gets into trouble; no one gets hurt; and there is little in the way of humorous effect.

In their ratings of the more interesting stories further along the X-axis, the students appear to be more discerning. These three other clusters are distributed across both dimensions, and none contains a pair of speakers from the same region, thus indicating that narrative features are more salient than regional dialect in the evaluations of these particular speakers.

The cluster containing NW10 and Cardiff11 links stories about what might be regarded as self-inflicted accidents arising from "unconventional" lifestyles which probably capture the imagination of the teenagers. Cardiff11 gets his hand stuck in a pool table while attempting to fiddle ("tieve" = "thieve") a free game, and he has to face the consequences, humorously framed, from a caretaker. NW10 is a story about a third person who steals a metal gate from the fire brigade to build a go-kart, and later builds himself a motorbike on which he injures himself in an accident involving a police car.

The cluster containing NW7, Valleys5, and NE9 groups together three stories that also portray mishaps; but for the teenagers, these probably lack the fun of such pursuits as playing pool and riding motorbikes. The final cluster is in marked

contrast: Neither NE2 nor SW4 tells a story involving accidents, machines, or getting into scrapes with authorities. The evaluations of the speakers in this cluster are instead likely to have been influenced by their vivid description of things happening, people doing things before their very eyes. Both stories are told from a strong affective standpoint (*chuffed*, *a bit sad*, *disgusting*). NE2's story is about himself going out to a nightclub, drinking though underage, meeting rock bands, and getting autographs. SW4 gives a vivid, animated, and comic description of a "Michelin man" rugby player trying to squeeze himself into an undersize rugby shirt.

The narrative components, then, in various ways, have a potent effect on the clustering of ratings on this question. Regional dialect features seem to have little impact. Looking at the means earlier, we noted that the Cardiff pair was pulled apart on "interesting story," but the two-dimensional spread of the clusters shows us that other pairs are separated too: NE9 and NE2, though close in relation to each other on the X-axis (and in the mean scores set out earlier in Table 1), are drawn apart along the Y-axis, winding up in different groupings. The NW, SW, and Valleys pairs are also split. Where pairs do occur within a single cluster (RP and Mid), the cluster also contains speakers of other dialects, so that dialectal connotations do not appear uniquely decisive here either.

The teachers' judgments of "interesting story" place the speakers in two clusters, one of which contains eleven of the fourteen. Like the students, the teachers separate Cardiff11 (hand in pool table), SW4 (massive rugby player), and NE9 (who finds cockroaches under the table in a restaurant) from the main large cluster. These are also the three stories with the highest mean scores for interest. But unlike the students who placed one of these in each of their three "best" story clusters, pulled apart along the Y-axis, the teachers place all three in a single cluster seemingly unaffected by the Y-axis. It is perhaps most interesting to look at the stories that are included in the students' "top three" clusters but relegated to the teachers' less interesting cluster: NW10 (homemade motorbike), NE2 (nightclub), NW7 (who tells of a local character who tests his crash helmet by throwing a brick into the air and then puts his hands on his head when the brick comes down), and Valleys5 (who related how his father last his foot in a driving accident). Unlike the three narratives in the teachers' "top cluster," three of these four involve injury: NW7's character breaks all his fingers, Valleys5's father loses his foot, and NW10 seriously injures his knee. Perhaps NE2's unashamed underage visit to a nightclub – mixing with *big fellas* who were *already drunk* and pop stars, and regarding the whole thing as an *ego-boost* – met with disapproval from the teachers, as much as NW10's stealing from the fire brigade and having accidents involving police cars. In contrast, none of the three narratives in the teachers' top cluster (NE9, SW4, and Cardiff11) has these qualities. NE9's cockroaches could happen to anyone, and they were not going to cause injury. SW4 was simply a well-performed and amusing description of a scene one might see in any TV

comedy program. Cardiff11 was, of course, stealing pool games; but his story had built-in blame mitigation, in that the caretaker saw and indeed returned the humor in the situation instead of meting out punishment.

The analysis has, then, shown how the respondents' judgments of interest in the stories cannot be explained wholly by the linguistic features of dialect. Narrative properties are also at work, and these are identified in a structured way through cluster analysis, with these properties affecting the teachers' evaluations differently from those of the students.

Affiliative judgments

Given the correlations among the affiliative scales, we focus our discussion primarily on one of these, "good laugh" (see Figures 4 and 5); but we refer to other affiliative scales where appropriate. (The "good laugh" scale shows itself to be the best differentiator of the speakers.) In both figures, the X-axis is an overall reflection of positivity of ratings. For the students, nine of the less favorably rated stories cluster toward one end of this axis; the remaining five stories form two separate clusters toward the other end, with NE2 forming its own "cluster" drawn away from the others by the Y-axis. For the teachers, there are two clusters, one containing twelve speakers with less favorable or mid-range ratings, and the other comprising Cardiff11 and SW4 at the favorable end.

The large, relatively low-scoring cluster in the students' display is a common feature for all of their affiliative scales, and it always contains the same narratives. These include a group of stories that can be judged as relatively "harmless." Cardiff1 felt sick but wasn't; RP3 cut his finger and had to sit down; RP12's accident victims didn't *get squashed*; Mid6's tractor didn't tip over; Mid14's clicking noise was just a bat; SW13's trailer rolled into a hedge; and Valleys8's sewage caused no distress. Two more stories are also included: NW7 (brick on crash helmet), which has the slowest speech rate of the fourteen stories, and Valleys5 (father's foot), which has the highest degree of hesitation (and, understandably, sadness) in the delivery.

The number of clusters that forms from the students' data shows regularity across the other affiliative scales: always three, except for "make friends," where there are four (two of these are single-speaker "clusters"). This regularity is not found in the teachers' data, where the number of clusters ranges from two for "good laugh" to five for "you like" (albeit with two singles again). Within the teachers' clusters in the affiliative scales, some patterning is also evident. The two-cluster outcome for "good laugh," in which the RP speakers fall into the much larger and less well-evaluated of the two clusters in Fig. 4, belies the way in which teachers' affiliative judgments of these speakers contrast with those of the teenagers. Whereas the RP speakers are always included the teenagers' lowest-rated affiliative clusters, they fall into higher-rated teachers' clusters for "make friends," "like you," and "you like." In the latter two, they find themselves separated from each other in different highly-rated clusters. There is more consistent
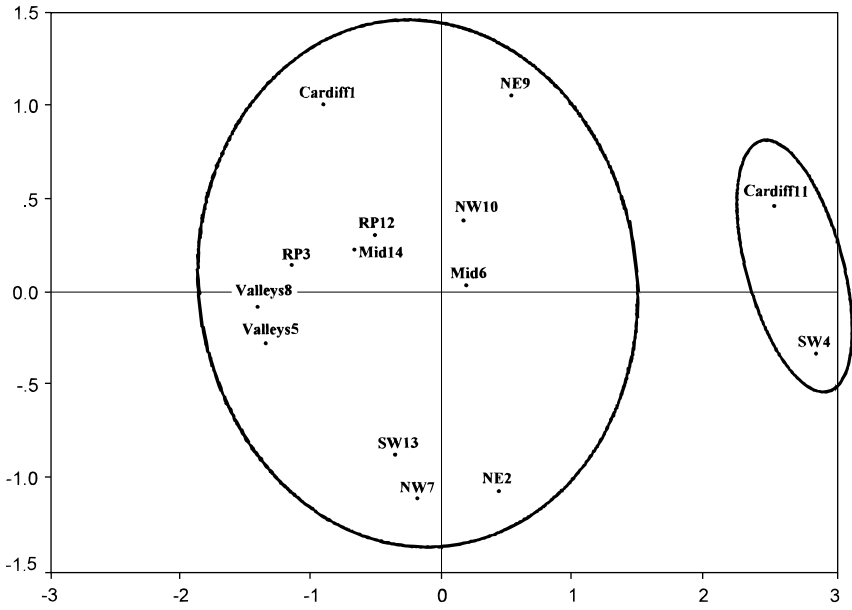
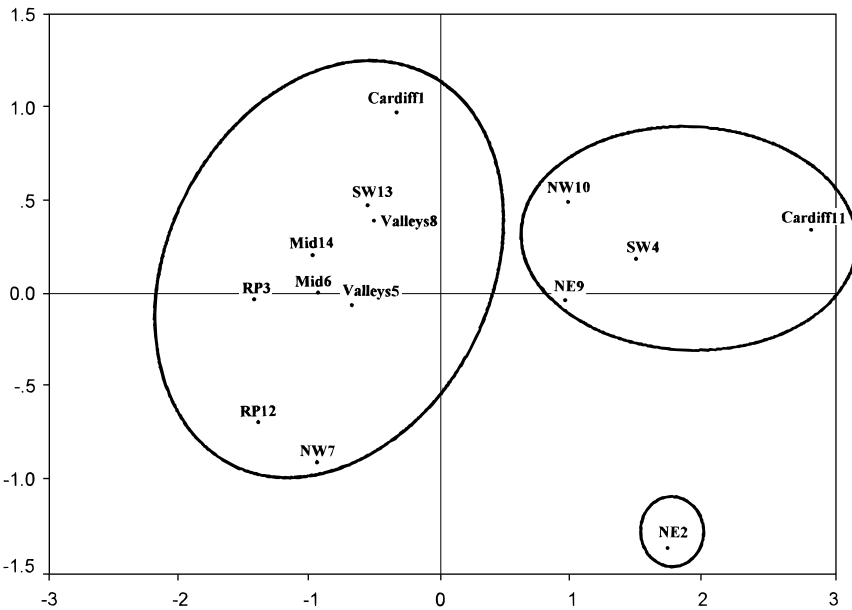FIGURE 4: MDS teachers: "Do you think this speaker is a good laugh?"

FIGURE 5: MDS students: "Do you think this speaker is a good laugh?"

patterning in the teachers' affiliative data with regard to the two Valleys speakers, who always appear together in the lowest-rated cluster: NW7 always accompanies the Valleys speakers in this cluster, and these are joined by Mid14, NE2, and Cardiff1 in all but "make friends." Comparisons with the students' affiliative evaluations are revealing: The position of NE2 as a single "cluster" in Fig. 5 typifies their view of him. A mid-ranking (mean = 2.97) "good laugh" he may be, but he is distinctive. His excursion into the glitz of nightclubs, alcohol, and pop bands may make him more remote from their world than the other speakers. As with "interesting story," the teachers do not share this assessment.

There is evidence, especially noticeable when we turn to the more favorable clusters, that interplay between dialect and non-dialect features influences evaluative patterns. It is particularly relevant to the concerns of this study that some speakers project strong confirmations of their regional stereotypes through their narratives: SW4's rugby player is very much in keeping with the image of the rural Southwest; NE2's chance encounter with rock groups reflects the image of youth from the Liverpool-influenced Northeast; and Cardiff11's story too has urban connotations of streetwise kids holding their own in pool halls. We feel that it may be this well-performed fulfillment of such different regional stereotypes that separates them not only from one another (e.g. SW rural vs. NE urban), but also from the other members of their respective pairs who do not confirm the stereotypes. Thus Cardiff1 is unambiguously not in his urban home but abroad in Spain, in a story that has no Cardiff associations. The division of NW10 from NW7 may reflect a similar process. In our earlier work (e.g. Williams et al. 1996), the Northwest Wales dialect community attracted a clear preponderance of negative over positive stereotyped affective evaluations, vividly exemplified in the comment by one respondent: "slow, makes speakers seem mentally deficient" (p. 189). NW7, with his slow delivery about someone who is clearly portrayed as not very bright, does appear to evoke the negative stereotype in his own speech style. NW10 escapes this through a story that is not only faster in its delivery, but is about someone who is skillful and enterprising enough to build machines and do exciting things with them.[5]

There is no evidence in Figs. 4–5 that regional provenance alone is having an impact on the clustering. It is notable that this is the case for the students' evaluations on all the affiliative scales; but for "you like" and "like you," there is some evidence of a Welsh vs. English dimension on the Y-axis, with the "English" varieties (RP, NE, and Mid) falling into one half of the displays, and the "Welsh" varieties (SW, Valleys, NW, Cardiff) falling into the other half. These trends are not strong enough to cause the speakers to cluster into those groups, but they are undercurrents in the more salient (i.e. clustered) divisions; this suggests an ingroup/outgroup process at work, based on Englishness and Welshness as well as story features, though weaker in their effects than the latter. In the teachers' other affiliative scales, in spite of the above-mentioned patterns in the positioning of the RP and Valleys speakers, neither pair ever appears in its own unique
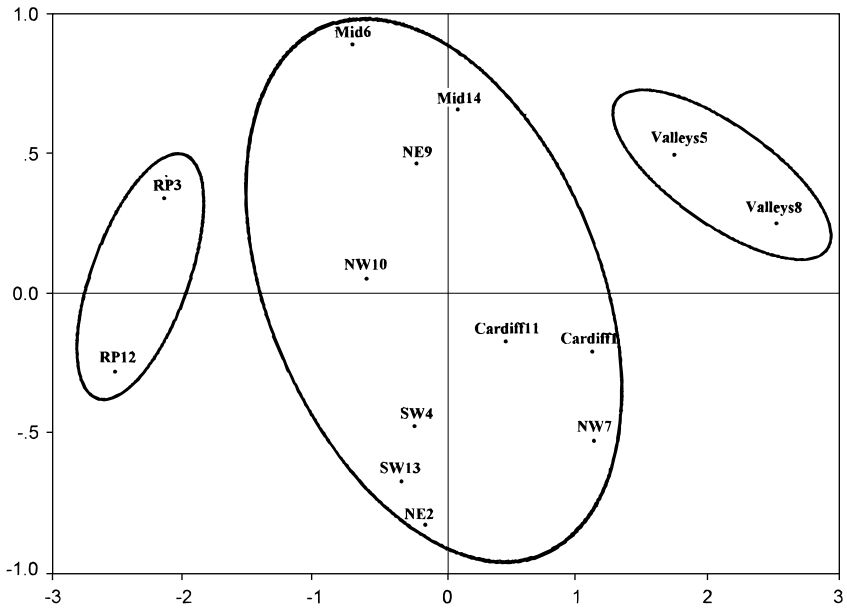
FIGURE 6: MDS teachers: "Do you think this speaker does well at school?"

RP or Valleys cluster; this again indicates that features of the narrative performances are affecting judgements.

"Good at school"

Figure 6 shows the teachers' results for "good at school." Here there is a conspicuous opposition of RP vs. Valleys, as they form their own unique clusters. The X-axis moves from "not good" to "good," from the Valleys cluster at one end to the RP cluster at the other, as if the social background of the RP speakers confers educational advantages that the Valleys cannot achieve. All the other speakers find themselves in a single structure between these two pairs.

   How do the students deal with this question? We saw in Table 1 that the RP speakers attracted almost identical mean scores; but in Figure. 7, we see them separated from each other. They are both "loners," clustering with no one. Mid6 and 14 are clustered as a pair; thereafter, two large clusters remain. One of these is low on the Y-axis: the two Cardiff speakers, the two NE speakers, and NW10. The other group comprises the two SW speakers, the Valleys pair, and NW7. The students seem to see this issue of school success partly in terms of an English/ Welsh dimension, with the anglicized varieties set in their own cluster and the Welsh varieties in theirs (NW10 excepted). But there is also a spread along the Y-axis that partly resembles that of the teachers: The content of the narratives,
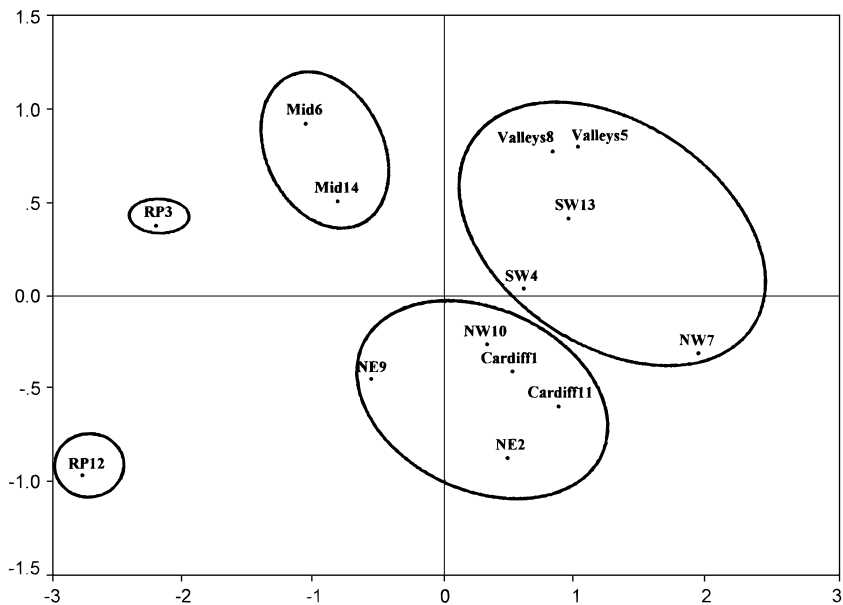
FIGURE 7: MDS students: "Do you think this speaker does well at school?"

and the messages they send out about the speakers, are of significance. The bottom half of the model contains narratives about the storytellers indulging in leisure activities: NE2 (nightclubbing), Cardiff11 (pool), and Cardiff 1 (bars in Spain). NE9 is out at a restaurant (albeit with his family). RP12, in a cluster of his own but far down the Y-axis, is with some friends watching people have narrow escapes at a fairground. None of these speakers is unambiguously projecting a staid home environment where parents might be ensuring that they do their homework. Despite this, RP12 is singled out from the others; his likely success at school is not doubted by the students.

"How Welsh?"

Figure 8 shows the students' "how Welsh" assessments generating four clusters. From left to right, these are interpretable in terms of Welshness on the left, moving toward increased Englishness to the right. Pairs find themselves unseparated and falling into the same cluster, reinforcing our earlier view that regionality is conspicuously salient for this question. However, the English cluster is much tighter and less differentiated than the Welsh clusters. This is an important finding, with the NE and Mid speakers perceived to be as English as the RP speakers. SW Wales and the Valleys are represented as conjoined heartlands of Welsh identity. Cardiff finds its space somewhere in the middle, reflecting its popular image
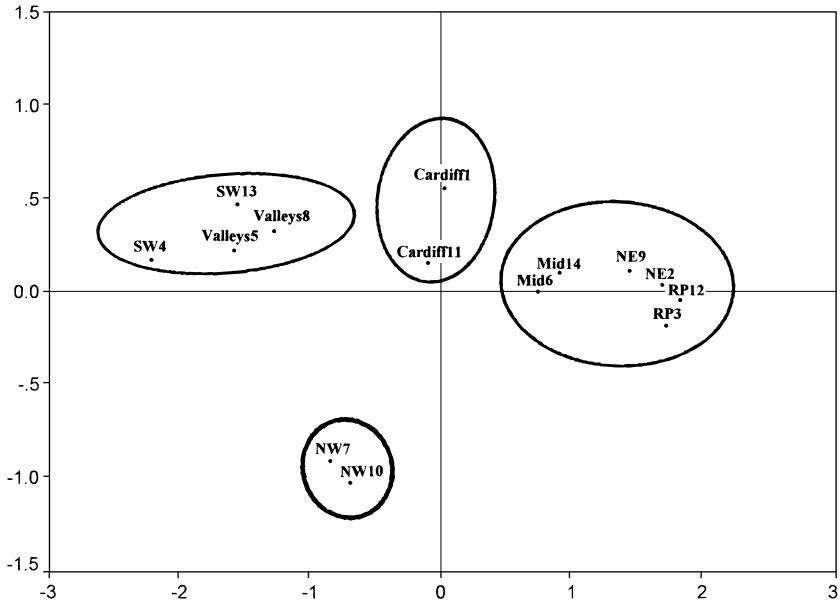
FIGURE 8: MDS students: "How Welsh do you think this speaker sounds?"

as a relatively anglicized city (but not anglicized enough to be included in the English cluster), and its official status as the Welsh capital (but not Welsh enough to be included in the heartlands cluster). School students clearly have already well developed and consistent perceptions of Welshness as indexed in the principal English language varieties; however, the MDS has spread the clusters out across a further dimension that our earlier focus on the overall means could not reveal. Although the other clusters are located largely in the top half of the Y-axis, the NW speakers are far to the bottom, suggesting that Welshness occupies other perceptual spaces. The NW English dialects are far more distinctively influenced by the Welsh language itself, and the NW is geographically more remote from large urban centers than the SW and the Valleys. Most strikingly, what if the upper and lower halves are inverted? Since MDS is simply producing a spatial representation of quantitative distance data, this is perfectly acceptable, as long as the spatial relationships among the speakers remain unchanged. The result bears a close resemblance to a map of Wales, but with the Valleys shifted into a composite SW heartland. The suggestion here is that the Y-axis is fundamentally a perceptual north/south axis, but with the NE, Liverpool-associated speakers coalesced into an "eastern" and "English" hinterland.

The teachers' clusters in Figure 9 follow a similar pattern, placing the "English" speakers together in the left half. Cardiff again finds itself somewhere
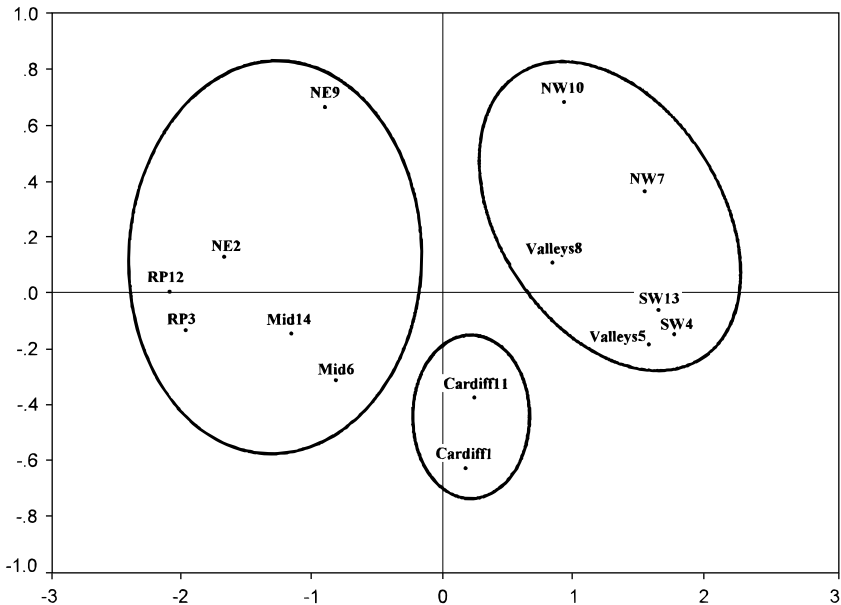
FIGURE 9: MDS teachers: "How Welsh do you think this speaker sounds?"

fairly central on the X-axis, though low on the Y-axis. Although the "Welsh" speakers find themselves in much the same area of the model, the NW speakers are this time embraced into a single Welsh heartland.[6]

CONCLUSIONS

Young people around age fifteen are at a critical stage in their lives. They are moving away from family identity toward more individual and peer-group identity. As they approach employment and new possibilities in their social relationships, many will soon move out of relatively stable and rooted socio-cultural environments, and into more fluid life-patterns. Such developments, and their impact on self-concept – perhaps along with changes in physical appearance (Baker 1992:63) – are key influences in the rapid sensitization to sociolinguistic norms and the reappraisal of sociolinguistic identities that occur at this age. Our data show how, overall, young Welsh people have a complex set of structured perceptions of themselves and their peers in place. This includes a differentiated set of social meanings, organized as variable value-ratings attaching to Welshness (and strongly divergent intergroup relations with English youngsters), to social attractiveness, and to scholastic success. Our data also show that only some of these values are carried by dialect. Uncontroversially, Welshness is taken to be

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marked (to highly variable degrees) through accents of English in Wales; but all other evaluative dimensions in our data relate to a complex interplay between dialect and discourse performance, indexed here through narrative content and style.

In these data, therefore, we can see a rich stock of resources for young people in Wales to bolster or reconfigure their social identities at this crucial life-stage. They have resources for maintaining ethnic allegiance to Wales and symbolic Welshness, through distance from the RP speakers whom they deem unattractive, alien, and orienting to mainstream school values. Specific varieties of English in Wales seem to have maintained the full force of their ethnic symbolism for young people, but other varieties (especially in Northeast Wales and Mid-Wales) are not differentiated from RP itself in terms of Englishness. Wales as a pluriculture is again confirmed. "Anglicization" is not only a matter of Welsh language shift. The general patterning of Welsh language loss has certainly produced a pattern of reported Welsh language use becoming less substantial as we move west to east within Wales. But this pattern is strongly echoed in the perceived Welshness of the varieties of the English language found along the same continuum.

Nonetheless, we also have evidence that social attractiveness, often said to be a recurrent accompaniment of "nonstandard" dialects, may be achieved by quite different symbolic routes – and, in our data, more importantly through innovative and humorous narrative-telling than by dialect alone. The data suggest that the dialect semiotic, while still powerfully active in some dimensions of self- and other-definition, works alongside other factors for young Welsh people, whose verbal performance styles have at least equal influence on social evaluations. Future research on Welsh ethnic identity, therefore, needs to address language attitudes as a far more complex and contextualized phenomenon than has been assumed.

With their gatekeeping function, teachers are a significant professional group of adults in the lives of young people. The formal and informal judgments they make about students include the social evaluation of linguistic style, even to the point where this can influence formal school assessment outcomes (e.g. Seligman et al. 1972, Edwards & Giles 1984). Our data show that, on the whole, the teachers were prepared to make evaluations rather similar to those of the teenagers, suggesting some empathy with their perspectives. But despite this, there are revealing differences. The teachers gave higher ratings to the more "innocent" stories and were less approving of stories involving physical injury or potential scrapes with the law. In so doing, they suggested a cultural gap between themselves and the teenagers in terms of pro-social and anti-social stances. In the affiliative ratings, we see the same difference again between teachers' and teenagers' judgments of less innocent stories (e.g., NE2's nightclub experience), and we also see a comparable pro- and anti-social contrast in the evaluations of the RP speakers. For both teachers and teenagers, the Valleys speakers find themselves in lower-rated clusters; but in the case of the teenagers, RP speakers are found to share these clusters with the Valleys pair. In contrast, the teachers make a dis-

tinction between these pairs in all their affiliative evaluations except "good laugh." Considering "good at school" outcomes alongside the affiliative ones, teachers understandably feel more affinity with those speakers who stereotypically strive for and meet the teachers' professional goal of producing successful pupils (i.e., the RP speakers), rather than those who are not stereotypically associated with such success (particularly, in this case, the Valleys speakers). The young adults, on the other hand, do not (and perhaps refuse to) accept a link among their peers between, on the one hand, success at school – where they differentiate the likely outcomes for school success, distinguishing the RP speakers from the Valleys speakers – and on the other hand, those for social attractiveness, where these speakers are lumped together.

The use of uncontrolled speech data has undoubtedly meant that we have had to look closely at a wide range of explanatory factors in our consideration of the data. But we have not been led into the hopeless quagmire that is often assumed. Rather, we have been able to make use of a variety of statistical techniques that have been relatively little used in research on language attitudes and other sorts of sociolinguistic work; and these have enabled us to search through the factors to detect some revealing patterns in responses linked to dialects, stereotypes, and narrative characteristics. Basing our study on reactions to spontaneous language in use has allowed interpretations that have taken us further than the more controlled research traditions, toward understanding how dialect and communicative performance can work with and against each other in relatively systematic ways along evaluative dimensions. In the light of such findings, what has often been referred to as "speech evaluation" or "accent evaluation" now needs to be reconceptualized as the evaluation of speech performance, or of dialect in discourse. We believe that this simple relabeling entails a significant realignment of sociolinguistic studies of dialect. Our present study suggests that the social meanings of dialect performances lie in the systematic interaction of phonological and other markers with features of content (as in the contrasts local/global, pro/anti-establishment, and self/other focus) and rhetorical style – for example, fluency and key – and probably content, as in the contrasts local/global, pro/anti-establishment, and self/other-focus). If this is so, then it will be necessary to transcend the fiction of discrete dialect varieties with apparently bounded meanings. Dialect sociolinguistics will need to address the encoding and reception of dialect forms as part of individuals' and communities' total "meaning potential" (to quote Halliday 1978). Dialect should feature as an integrated component of a sociolinguistic theory of language in use, rather than as the focus of an autonomous dialectology.

NOTES

International Communication Association gave this article a "Top Three Papers" award in its Language and Social Interaction Division.

[1] Welsh is taught as part of the National Curriculum in Wales up to this age. There is a great deal of political debate over the cultural identities of young people in the wake of bilingual educational policies in Wales.

[2] Background data on the speaker of each excerpt, referred to by his accent categorization (Cardiff, NE, NW, SW, Mid, Valleys, RP) and randomly allocated number (1–14), are as follows. All these speakers were fifteen years old.

Cardiff1 lives in Cardiff and speaks only English. He described his father's occupation as "moulder," and his mother is a nurse. His father is Spanish.

NE2 lives in a village near Mold in the Northeast and does not speak Welsh. Both his parents are English. His father is a builder and his mother a radiographer.

RP3 lives in Cheltenham, England, and does not speak Welsh. His stepfather is a social worker and his mother a teacher.

SW4 lives in Carmarthen in the Southwest; his first language is Welsh, and his second is English. His father is a policeman and his mother a teacher.

Valleys5 lives in Merthyr Tydfil in the Valleys, and does not speak Welsh. His father is a psychiatric assistant and his mother a caretaker.

Mid6 lives near Newtown in Mid-Wales and does not speak Welsh. His father is Welsh, and his mother English, and they both speak Welsh. His father is a farmer and his mother a housewife.

NW7 lives in Blaenau Ffestiniog in Northwest Wales; his first language is Welsh, like that of his parents. His father is a building inspector, and his mother provides "meals on wheels" to the elderly.

Valleys8 lives in Merthyr Tydfil; he does not speak Welsh. His father died not long before this recording, and his mother is a school cook.

NE9 lives in Northup in the Northeast and does not speak Welsh. His father is Welsh and is a science teacher; his mother, who had one Welsh and one English parent, is a college lecturer.

NW10 lives in Blaenau Ffestiniog; his first language is Welsh, like that of his parents. His father is a local quarry manager, and his mother a housewife.

Cardiff11 lives in Cardiff and speaks only English. His father does not work, and his mother is a housewife.

RP12's home is in Devon; he does not speak Welsh. His father is a property developer, and his mother a self-employed business executive.

SW13 lives in Carmarthen and speaks Welsh. His parents are farmers.

Mid14 lives in Newtown and does not speak Welsh. His father is a lorry driver and salesman, and his mother is a clerk.

[3] The teachers taught in a wide range of educational contexts: 21.3 percent at primary schools, 34 percent at secondary schools, and 12.8 percent in higher education, while 23.4 percent were supply teachers (i.e. temporary teachers). Of the group, 27.7 percent taught arts and humanities subjects, 8.5 percent were social science teachers, 14.9 percent were physical science teachers, and 42.5 percent described themselves as general teachers. A total of 44.7 percent had lived in Wales all their lives; 15 percent were bilingual with fluent Welsh, and 51.1 percent spoke no Welsh. Over 87 percent described their own accents as "regional," while 12.8 percent described their accents as "RP" – which would be a reasonably representative prediction for such a professional group in the UK, given the estimate in Hughes & Trudgill (1979:3) that probably only 3 percent of the wider population are RP speakers. Because of difficulties in gathering good numbers of teachers together at any one time, the teacher sample was drawn only from South Wales. However, we felt that evaluational comparisons with the more widely spread student sample were reasonable, since teachers are far more likely than teenage school students to have moved localities within Wales during their lives. Support for such a comparison is also found in the overlapping findings with our previous study of a sample of teachers drawn from all over Wales, to which we point in the present paper.

[4] Readers should note that MDS and cluster analysis are based on distance data and are therefore not directly comparable with means.

[5] Slow speech rates can attract negative evaluations on competence and social attractiveness dimensions, especially for younger speakers (Stewart & Ryan 1982). But it is interesting that, although SW4 also shows a relatively slow speech rate, he nevertheless gains favorable ratings. In his case, the low word-per-minute count results from a strategy that enhances the impact of his delivery, as he holds and savors his sibilants in the key words *massive* and *disgusting*.

[6] Open-ended data from this research provide further insights into how the Northwest and the Southwest are regarded in terms of Welshness, particularly by each other (see Garrett et al. 1999).

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APPENDIX

TRANSCRIPTS OF THE FOURTEEN NARRATIVE EXCERPTS

Cardiff1

Um (.) wen on ho I wen on holiday (.) to stay at my uncle's (2.0) cos he he's got a (.) he used to have a house in Spain until he came home and my cousin and my aunt used to live over there as well (2.0) so we stayed over there (1.0) an um it was about the (.) second week cos we were over there for two weeks (.) and my cousin (.) cos at that time he couldn't really get a job over there (.) used to sell lighters for all to all the English bars cos there's all English bars along the beaches there's two beaches like (1.0) so we were coming back from sellin' all these lighters (1.0) an' half way along then I said oh (.) Craig I think I'm gonna be sick (1.0) cos I really felt sick cos we'd been we'd been out in the sun all day an' I really wasn't used to it (1.0) so (.) got back then (.) he said oh don't worry we'll get back in time.

NE2 (Mold)

I went to (.) Tip it was the second time I'd ever been (.) was a couple of weeks ago (.) and um first time I (.) went I just walked straight in cos you had to be eighteen to get in and we got inside (.) and about half an hour after we got in they announced that MTV were gonna arrive nobody knew they were gonna be there an they all turned up and um (.) well I didn't know anyway (laughs) and they turned up and they started throwing T-shirts out and everything most of the big fellas there were already drunk (.) and I was just grabbing these T-shirts (.) and I was fighting the for them off people (.) six seven foot (.) easily an I was really amazed by this it was great (laughs) and it gave me a real big ego boost that did (2.0) and um got several autographs one off a band which I (.) been listening to an I've got a couple of their al got one of their albums I was rather chuffed with that.

RP3

And we were finishing off some (.) boxes alright they were something like that and there's a belt sander which has now been sort of stopped use (.) stopped the use of and uh I was just sanding something down and I was really tired and my fingers slipped off the box (.) and actually hit the belt sander just the ends of my fingers luckily it didn't hit I took it away in time (.) I I didn't think much had happened I thought I'd just sort of scraped the top (.) and um I I didn't feel that bad so I just sort of run it under some water (.) some cold water to try and to try and stop it bleeding but (.) uh it sort of about after two or three minutes I (.) I started feeling really bad I sort of felt really sick (.) so I told the teacher in charge

of it (.) and he said oh well if you're feeling sick you'd better go go and sit outside and he said it's quite nasty.

SW4 (Carmarthen)

I got a friend called Iauan oh he's just massive I just got to say he's just massive (.) and he plays rugby with us (.) and he plays prop but oh one d time we were playing up at Tregib (.) and he had to come on in the second half to substitute for a small chap (.) he came on the small chap pulled his jersey off (.) and then Iauan literally attempted to put the jersey on (.) yeah he just got it on his (.) his (.) two arms and he tried to put his head in but he just couldn't get through (.) I was everybody was howling (.) his everything was wobbling his chest his belly his back his legs his oh it was disgusting and he's got oh ay I just everybody calls him Michelin man he's got to be he's got so many rolls of fat so disgusting (1.0) and then (sigh) he came on (.) and he oh he can't run at all he's so unfit and it's a bit sad to tell you the truth.

Valleys5

One night it was raining heavily and as he was coming back (1.0) um (1.0) the farmers were fetching in in I fetching in the sheep cos of the thunder and lightning and that (.) and he didn't see em so as he come round the corner (.) as he swerved to miss em he hi he hit the lam he hit three lamp-posts bounced off (.) one hit another as he come off that one (.) um he w went head first into the third (.) and a a a as as that happened (1.0) he went flying out through the window (.) th through the windscreen (.) we (.) when he went through the windscreen his foot had become left foot had become trapped in in the (.) in between the pedals so as he went through it tore his foot off (.) an (2.0) where if he had had his seatbelt on he would have been dead (.) completely otherwise (.) cos when when he had hit the engine (.) with the force come back and (.) when a when he when the fire brigade come um my father was laying on the floor and the engine was where he wa where the passenger and the driver's seat was.

Mid6 (Newtown)

I was mucking out the shed I was an (1.0) in the (.) tractor (.) and I got one load in the front fork (__mmm__) and (.) and I went in and I went into the mixer and what you do you just lift up the muck and put it on the top (1.0) so you dig in to a bit of the mixer and get a bit more in the front fork and lift it up into the top (.) and instead of when I put it into the mixer instead of the front end coming up with the muck the back w end wheels came up (.) cos there wasn't enough weight in the back so the back end came up (.) but the wheel's still going round (.) but the front fork only goes so far up so the wheels stopped after a while (.) and the back wheels are (.) above the front ones (.) and the bonnet was on the front (.) so it was swaying about a bit like this and I (.) just about managed to get off half way up (1.0) so then dad came along after and stopped the tractor and put it down and I

just (1.0) there's me standing there getting really worried (laughs) what am I going to do now (1.0) could have been dangerous.

NW7 (Blaenau Ffestiniog)

Um (.) I know this bloke (.) and he's well known of because (.) he's acting a bit weird (.) um there (.) quite a lot of stories going round about him (.) but (.) um (.) I think the best ones are (.) the one where he (.) went to buy a new helmet for his bike (.) and to see if this helmet worked and was unbreakable he found a brick (.) and threw the brick up in the air (.) and tried to make it land on top of the helmet but as the brick came down he put his hand on top of his head (.) and the brick landed on his hand and broke all his fingers.

Valleys8

I was a me and my friend we decided ah go for a walk one day an there's this tunnel by his house (.) an it's like all sewage going into it there's like a walkway (.) in it so we had some torches and we went up it (1.0) and there's a like a bank s down there so we walked it it's about half mile long (.) and when we came out the end the it's like um workmen machines pumping (.) stuff out and pumping stuff in I don't know what (.) and um (.) you know we were just sort of mucking around with all if that see what they were doing and (2.0) my friend (.) he decided to turn it on to see what it done (.) so he turned it on on and an it was pumping a bit and he turned it off (.) and then he turned it on again an the pipe was starting to come off and it was squirting up in the air (.) like a a sprinkler.

NE9 (Mold)

Then I so er (.) decided to cool down and go downstairs and have a meal in the restaurant and er (.) my feet were a bit tired and er (.) it was pretty pretty warm (.) and erm I felt this tickling in my feet and I thought it was just cos I'd been walking quite a bit and that but um (.) so I ignored it for a while and we ordered our food and (.) I I as I I finally go got tired of it and so I asked my mum if er (.) if she if she could feel the same thing and she said yeah and so did my dad so did my sister so we were getting a bit worried and just (.) slowly peered under the table and there was just a huge swarm of cockroaches they were just going everywhere all over the floor it was disgusting like.

NW10 (Blaenau Ffestiniog)

He's done some pretty stupid things um with a wall as well he (.) stole a gate from the fire brigade place (.) and um cut the gate up and used the bars to um build a go-cart with a welder (.) an stuck a motorcycle engine on it and he got in some pretty deep trouble for that (1.0) um (.) he also about three years ago no about two years ago (.) he was o he was on a motorbike that he had built himself (.) and um he he was doing a wheely and the throttle cable s um stuck it wouldn't go back down so he was still going on this massive wheely and he didn't have a clutch or

anything on it (.) and um he collided with a car and somersaulted over that car and over a police car that was um (.) behind that car landed behind the police car and um well the motorcycle you know was just a scrambler it wasn't a road bike or anything (.) and um his um kneecap came out of his leg.

Cardiff11

There was one time when (.) we were all playing pool on the pool table (.) and I saw you know I saw the latch on the thing so I thought oh I know if I put my hand down this pool table hole you know and I can tief a few games like (.) you know keep the latch up (.) an (.) puts my hand down you know ten minutes later I realise I couldn't get it back out (1.0) (laughing) so I thought oh no (.) I got my hand stuck down a pool table (.) you know so had to go and find the caretaker an he was he was like about three hours eventually until they found the caretaker you know I had to stand in this one place an one hand stuck in the pool table you know and one hand trying to eat my tea and my food and stuff (.) an (.) you know come across and he said oh he said how are we gonna get your hand out then (.) an he goes oh (.) well there's only one thing we can do like you know (.) I said what's that he said we'll have to saw the whole pool table in half and I said how you going to do that well he said you know go to the thing goes out to the garden shed like in the back and brings out this massive chainsaw.

RP12

So (.) after that (.) we went (.) ah (.) round to the big wheel (.) and er (.) it was spinning merrily round and then the the bloke decided to stop the wheel and get everyone off (.) and er (laughs) a little car fell off it (.) I dunno how high they were (.) God knows how they didn't sort of get squashed I suppose they weren't very high (1.0) um (.) I dunno (.) five metres up in the air or something when it (laughing) fell off (.) and they sort of rolled about the floor a bit stunned (.) stood up (.) looked at this guy and he quickly sort of put this put this little chair back on an they walked off (.) an the bloke pretended as nothing had happened an (.) we were all standing on there (.) totally amazed absolutely flabbergasted I dunno how on it could have happened (.) should have been shut down really I suppose.

SW13 (Carmarthen)

I remember it was about two years ago (.) and ah we were on (unintel) at home (.) and er (2.0) well my father told me and my brother then to take the motorbike (.) and the trailer behind an knock a few posts down to hold to hold the gates open (.) and er (1.0) well after finishing then my brother told me oh let's go up the field to see how the how the contractors are going along (.) and uh we went up the top field as fast as we could on the motorbike a doing about forty forty five miles an hour (.) and we were following the hedge all the way round an the machine was right at the far corner of the field and uh (.) I stopped the bike an asked the boys what's wrong and they said that they had a blockage and so forth (.) an I talked to

them for a while and my brother come over and said that we'd lost the trailer (1.0) and we looked around an (.) I saw the motorbike there with only the hitch behind (.) and the trailer was up in the hedge with the wheels (.) well …

Mid14 (Newtown)

I was sleeping in bed and um (.) well I heard this clicking noise cos bats click an (.) we knew there was these bats outside (.) oh and they sometimes fly into the house or there were some in my brother's bedroom and I thought there were some in mine cos I heard them clicking (.) and I shouted my dad and he said (.) oh don't be silly there's no bats in this house cos the windows were shut and um (.) they must have flew in in the day or something like that I dunno but I didn't think they flew in the day (.) and they came in (.) and um (.) I turned on the light and I couldn't see nothing and my dad couldn't see anything a so I went back to sleep heard clicking again (.) and I turned on the light and I could see the the flying round in the (.) in the landing (.) and I shouted my dad and a he came in and knocked it an it must have he must have just chucked it out or something (.) and then I went back to sleep I thought they were all gone and then we heard another clicking noise (.) and I thought nothing of it as cos I thought it was out it must've been they were kind of heard him out from outside.