AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE LANGUAGE ATTITUDES, BELIEFS AND VALUES OF SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED BOYS IN SANDWELL AND HOW THEY RELATE TO THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM AND ITS IDEOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS

BY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a case study that was conducted with boys aged ten and eleven in a primary school in the West Midlands, UK. The boys were all from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Their communicative repertoires included local varieties of English. The research questions were: (1) What are the boys' attitudes to standard and non-standard English spoken forms? (2) How do the boys' language attitudes, beliefs and values relate to requirements of the National Curriculum and the language ideologies underpinning it? (3) What are the implications for educational practice and policy? The research design incorporated different approaches to data gathering and data analysis: Firstly, an analysis of the content and discourse of the 2014 National Curriculum documents for English, showing how Standard English is discursively constructed as the legitimate language of schooling. Secondly, a small-scale study with thirty boys (an Accent Awareness Test) that generated a quantitative account of their language attitudes and awareness. Thirdly, discourse and narrative analysis focusing on audio-recordings of group discussions and small stories exchanged between the boys. Here, the focus was on gaining insights into the boys' emic perspectives. The project findings led to school-based curriculum innovations that took account of the boys' communicative repertoires.

DEDICATION

To my three sisters. You are my life and my world. You drive me to be a better person and I would not have been able to do this without your love, support and devotion.

It is all for you.

To my dad, who taught me the meaning of dedication and overcoming adversity, and to all who have supported me. It has meant more than you will ever know.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

This opening chapter sets out the main issues under investigation in this research project, namely how the language attitudes, beliefs and values of boys from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, in a school in the UK, relate to the National Curriculum (NC) requirements for the study of Standard English (SE) in the primary classroom. The research has been designed as a case study which focuses on one group of boys in this school, which is situated in a working-class neighbourhood in Sandwell, within the West Midlands. The boys are speakers of different varieties of Midlands spoken English.

1.1 Motivations for this study

My interest in this topic stems from recent changes in statutory testing and English National Curriculum requirements for primary school children. I am a serving Headteacher who has worked and taught in primary education for 13 years. During this time, I have personally and professionally witnessed, and had to work with, many changes to the National Curriculum, linked to statutory policy and test frameworks.

During my initial teacher training (2004), 'English' and 'literacy' teaching in school was based on the National Literacy Strategy. Following the International Adult Literacy Survey, the National Literacy Strategy was launched in September 1998 to address the low rates of literacy identified by this survey. Moser (1999, p. 1) stated that "something like one adult in five" had difficulties with literacy. He described these rates as "shocking" and deemed them to be a "sad reflection on past decades of

schooling". Articulating a 'skills' view of literacy, he also argued that such rates of literacy had led to "relatively low productivity in our economy". The National Literacy Strategy informed my early impressions of English provision and my early understandings of the 'best' approaches to fostering literacy, in English, in primary classrooms. However, there were a series of policy changes from my first year as a newly qualified teacher onwards. These policy changes subsequently transformed school and classroom practices, and my own approach to English teaching. A detailed account of these changes is set out in a Table 1a in Appendix 1.

1.1.1 The publication of the 2014 version of the National Curriculum

Crucial changes occurred after the introduction of the 2014 version of the National Curriculum for English. Schools were required to embed this version within their school and classroom practice and work from it, from September 2014, for the majority of pupils. As with previous versions, it is a statutory document which has to be adopted by all local authority maintained schools. It is a comprehensive document covering the programmes of study (PoS) and the attainment targets for all four key stages of education, from early primary to secondary school.

In this version of the National Curriculum, greater prominence is given to the forms of language, to the grammar of Standard English and to the use of metalanguage. There is also greater concern with the teaching and learning of Standard English, in both its spoken and written forms. This concern is articulated most clearly for primary schooling, in the latter part of the Year 1 Curriculum and in the Year 2 Curriculum. In addition, there have also been significant changes to the teaching and assessment of

'speaking' and 'listening' (SnL) in primary schooling. Speaking and listening no longer exists in the same format. It has been removed and replaced with a new element called Spoken Language. Other changes include the following: (1) Schools are no longer required to submit assessments for SnL in national attainment data; (2) Assessment of SnL/spoken language is the responsibility of individual schools, to be tracked, recorded and reported as they see fit.

These changes have provoked a mixed response from educationalists and professionals. For example, the staff of The University of Cambridge's Open Resource Bank for Interactive Teaching (ORBIT) argue that:

> Despite references to the development of children's language skills, National Curriculum guidance does not make it clear that such direct teaching may often be required. There seems to be an implicit belief that the subtle skills of active listening and reasoned speaking will develop simply through children's involvement in whole class and small group dialogues (ORBIT, 2018).

In contrast, while also commenting on the content and quantity of guidance, representatives of the National Association for the Teaching of English (NATE) (2015) argue that the reduced quantity of spoken language requirements/objectives "brings a certain relief: at least the requirements do not actively prevent teachers from teaching well. It is perfectly possible to nurture pupils' growing competence in the spoken language within this sketchiest of frameworks" (2015, p. 3). At the same time, NATE take the view that "(t)he paucity of requirements to do with knowledge about language other than grammar is regrettable" and that the NC "undervalues spoken language at Key Stages 1 and 2, and is over-concerned with formal, performance-based uses of spoken language in the secondary years" (2015, p. 20).

These NC changes have had a significant influence on teachers' classroom practice and continue to challenge and guide my strategic leadership as Executive Headteacher. The changes have also had a significant impact on national provision, on end of Key Stage 2 assessment frameworks and age related expectations for 10-11 year-old pupils. Because of these changes, there have been significant shifts in the ways in which children are prepared for the new assessment tests so as to meet the more challenging 2014 National Curriculum requirements.

These changes became one of the main motivations for undertaking the research presented in this thesis. During my time as a teacher, SNDWLLSCHOL[1] was judged 'Good' under the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) inspection framework. In 2009, the school was told it could not be judged to be 'Outstanding' because of low achievement in writing.

1.1.2 Boys' attainment in writing

At SNDWLLSCHOL, boys' attainment in writing in English was not in line with other subjects and, as with the national picture, they were significantly behind the girls. As a teacher, I took the view that our children were intelligent, competent individuals - succeeding in all areas of school life except writing. I therefore felt there may be an underlying reason for their 'under achievement' against the national tests, and thus, I was motivated to explore the links between the boys' language attitudes and beliefs, the National Curriculum requirements and underpinning ideologies and their

[1] This is a pseudonym for the school in this study to prevent identification and for child and data protection.

attainment/progress. I was looking at spoken language in the study that I ended up conducting, but the NC and Department for Education (DfE) clearly state that SnL is bound up with attainment in English, in areas such as writing and in the mastery of the forms of written language (e.g. spelling, punctuation and grammar). In their view, it "underpins the development of… reading and writing" (DfE, 2014, p. 1).

Throughout these curricula changes, boys' academic attainment in English has been, and still is, a highly debated area. Boys' attainment in English subject areas (writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar) has long been the subject of local and national concern across the United Kingdom (Ofsted, 1993; Millard, 1997). Insights from Ofsted data (1993, p. 2) obtained under the original National Curriculum included the following: "(b)oys (did) not do as well as girls in English in schools". Furthermore, there were "contrasts in performance and attitudes towards the (English) subject". Ofsted have also noted that "(t)he majority of pupils who experience difficulty in learning to write are boys" and "(b)oys' results in public examinations… are not as good as girls" (1993, p. 2). Despite the introduction of the NC and the National Literacy Strategy, and despite the numerous curriculum reviews and investigations, in 2007 a DfE National Statistics publication showed that 85% of girls achieved the expected national standard (level 4) in their English Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) compared to only 76% of boys. Additionally, 39% of girls reached the higher standard (level 5) as compared with 28% of boys. The percentage of boys reaching the national target levels in English was 9% behind girls' achievement and 9% behind government objectives for 2007. Furthermore, 2007 DfE statistics showed that there were specific

areas of English which demonstrated the largest gaps between boys and girls. These included writing and grammar.

This national gender attainment gap has continued since 2007 despite further significant changes to the National Curriculum and SATs over the last ten years. Thus, even with the introduction of:

- the revised National Curriculum in 2014,
- increased end of Key Stage 1 and 2 Age Related Expectations (ARE)/standards,
- separate and specific grammar and punctuation tests,
- the Year 1 Phonics Screening check,

the gender attainment gap has widened. More recently, DfE (2016a) statistics revealed that 78% of girls achieved the Age Related Expectations (ARE) in Key Stage (KS) 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling (SPAG) tests. This is 11% more than boys nationally, as only 67% of all boys were able to reach the expected SPAG standards. In addition, the gender gap is now even greater in writing, as 81% of girls achieved Age Related Expectations in writing compared to only 68% of boys. DfE analysis of NC assessment results acknowledges the issue stating: "Girls outperform boys at the expected standards in reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling and writing. The largest gap is in writing" (DfE, 2016a, p. 1). The DfE further highlight the significance of the gender gap by also declaring that girls significantly outperform boys in grammar, punctuation and writing at greater depth:

> (G)irls outperform boys at the expected standard in reading (70% compared to 62%), grammar, punctuation and spelling (78%

> compared to 67%) and writing (81% compared to 68%). The gap is largest in writing (13 percentage points)… This is similar to the pattern seen in previous years. Girls also outperform boys at a high score in… grammar punctuation and spelling (27% compared to 18%) and at greater depth in writing (19% compared to 11%) (DfE, 2016a, p. 6).

This picture continued throughout 2017:

> As in previous years, girls on average do better than boys in reading, writing and mathematics combined… a higher proportion of girls than boys reach the expected standard in all subjects… The biggest attainment gap between boys and girls is in… writing… As in 2016, girls made more progress than boys in reading and in writing (DfE, 2017, p. 14).

KS2 SATs data trends over the last decade therefore reveal a very consistent picture. Despite the increased focus on grammar and Standard English in the National Curriculum, boys' attainment remains behind girls in English subject areas, and growing numbers of boys still fail to achieve the Age Related Expectations in KS2 writing and SPAG assessments. The significance of this is further reinforced by the fact that boys at least match or exceed girls' attainment in other subject areas such as maths:

> As in 2016, girls made more progress than boys in reading and in writing while boys made more progress than girls in mathematics (DfE, 2017, p. 14).

This ongoing gender gap in attainment in English has been a significant issue nationally and it has been a significant challenge professionally. I was a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) in SNDWLLSCHOL when they were unable to achieve an Ofsted 'Outstanding' grading because boys' writing attainment was not high enough.

Following this inspection, boys' attainment in English (more specifically writing and grammar) lay at the centre of all school improvement and action plans. During my early years as a developing teacher, I was thus orientated to the view that boys' writing was a 'problem' that needed 'fixing'.

In their publication, *The Research Evidence on "Writing"*, The DfE Education Standards Research team and Education Standards Analysis & Research Division highlighted solutions such as "(e)xplicitly teaching about language, for example strategies for writing subordination and co-ordination" or "active learning tasks". They have also argued for "incorporation of 'talk for writing' time into literacy lessons so that pupils can talk about their text before they start writing it" (DfE, 2012, p. 11). In addition, they have called for "the use of drama conventions to explore aspects of character, setting or plot" (DfE, 2012, p. 11).

However, sociolinguists such as Rampton (1995b, p. 316) have argued that the specific nature of the role language plays in writing development has not been recognised by educational policy. They have also pointed to the fact that the current hegemony of SE throughout the National Curriculum does not foster language learning or capability in writing. According to Rampton (1995b, p. 316), the National Curriculum constructs have created a "detached neutrality in the study of language" – one that has failed to connect with "the history of group relations and with different positions in social structure". Furthermore, Rampton has argued that the government's "ideological manipulation" of language learning causes "dramatic conflict with

adolescent perspectives and experiences" and has serious repercussions for academic achievement and long-term development (1995b, p. 316).

1.2 The gender gap and social disadvantage

1.2.1 The West Midlands and Sandwell within the national picture

National statistics reveal that there are particular regions and local authorities which remain behind national trends in attainment. The DfE has highlighted the "considerable variation between authorities" with the "poorest performing areas (being) in the West Midlands" (DfE, 2016b, p. 11). This pattern repeats itself year on year. The DfE has recently pointed out that areas like the West Midlands, "which were low performing in 2015, remain low performing in 2016" (2016b, p. 11). One of the lowest performing authorities in the West Midlands is reported to be Sandwell (2016b, p. 11) Thus, boys from the West Midlands, and specifically Sandwell, remain behind girls and the majority of other areas in England in national tests and attainment against the "expected standards" in writing.

Local data provided by Sandwell Local Education Authority (LEA) and the DfE highlights a specific subgroup causing the most concern – remaining behind national expectations and girls. These are 'disadvantaged' pupils (in receipt of pupil premium), mainstream-schooled British boys from households below the socio-economic average (DfE, 2016b). The DfE defines socio-economically disadvantaged as follows:

> disadvantaged pupils are… those who were registered as eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years… looked after by a local authority… left care in England and Wales through

> adoption or via a Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Order. In 2017, 32% of pupils at the end of key stage 2 were classed as disadvantaged (DfE, 2017, p. 16).

The academic attainment of this specific subgroup – disadvantaged pupils – has received significant attention in media, government and research. Ofsted described this subgroup as "unseen children" (2013, p. 4). This Ofsted report (2013, p. 4) reports that "there is a strong association between low family income and poor educational outcomes", describing this as "a particular weakness of the English educational system". To address this issue, in 2011, the government introduced £625 million of "pupil premium funding" (rising to £2.5billion in 2014) to "raise the achievement of all disadvantaged pupils" (DfE, 2016b). Describing the existing attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and the rest of the school population as a "stubborn, persistent problem in all phases of education", the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) (2018, p. 6) predicted that this problem was likely to persist despite significant government funding. The attainment gap is summarised in the EEF (2018) table below:

Table 1.1: Historic trends in disadvantaged pupil attainment published by the Education Endowment Foundation (2018)

Historic trends

The attainment gap is a stubborn, persistent problem in all phases of education. We see this in Early Years all the way through to GCSE...[vi]

Attainment gaps over time for disadvantaged pupils in primary and secondary school (months)

SCHOOL TYPES	YEAR	EARLY YEARS	PRIMARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL
State-funded mainstream	2007	5.5	12.3	21.9
	2008	5.3	11.8	21.8
	2009	5.2	11.5	21.7
	2010	5.0	11.0	20.7
	2011	4.9	11.1	20.2
	2012	4.9	10.2	19.6
	2013	4.7	10.0	19.0
	2014	4.6	9.9	19.0
	2015	4.3	9.6	19.2
	2016	4.3	9.5	18.9
	2015-2016 Change	-0.1 (-1%)	-0.1 (-1%)	-0.3 (-1%)
	2007-2016 change (%)	-1.2 (-22%)	-2.8 (-2.3%)	-3.0 (-14%)
All state-funded	2016	4.3	9.5	19.3

vi 'Closing the Gap? Trends in educationalttainment and disadvantage', Education Policy Institute (July 2017)

vii 'Level 2 and 3 attainment in England: Attainment by age 19 in 2016', Department for Education (March 2017)

Whilst it is evident from the table above that there have been minor improvements in disadvantaged pupils' attainment nationally, the scale and nature of the gap is also clear. It has also been reproduced year on year with remarkable consistency since 2007.

1.2.2 The specific context of SNDWLLSCHOL and Sandwell Local Authority[2]

Disadvantaged pupil performance varies across different areas of England. Ofsted (2013, p. 4) states that "(t)here are strong associations between a child's social background and their readiness for school as measured by their scores on school entry" and that "(t)his problem is greatest for pupils who come from areas of average to high deprivation" (Ofsted, 2013, p. 54). This issue has thus been a significant factor in Sandwell, as Sandwell is an area with high levels of deprivation.

Sandwell was once the epicentre of industrial development in Britain and England during the industrial revolution. Over the last thirty years, however, the West Midlands has witnessed a changing Sandwell, which has fallen into economic decline. There have been rising unemployment levels and a decline in the industrial sector. The Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) reports that "over the last 30 years it (commerce and wealth generation in Sandwell) has been declining in terms of efficiency and competitiveness and there is a need to "revitalise Sandwell's economic position" (2005, p. 6). According to the SMBC, the fundamental economic challenges affecting the area include:

> Population loss, low level of productivity, low earnings, comparatively poor qualifications and skills, comparatively low level of resident employment (and) continuing higher than average level of unemployment (SMBC, 2005, p. 5).

[2] Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0 https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/download-data?currentstep=datatypes&regiontype=la&la=333&downloadYear=2013-2014&datatypes=ks2; Crown Copyright 2018.

This is reflected in government data which shows that Sandwell, currently and historically, has had a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils compared to the national picture. For example, in 2013-14, 41% of all pupils who took the Key Stage 2 standardised tests were classed as 'disadvantaged' compared to 31% nationally. This picture has been maintained up until the present day. In 2016, the British Government's published data showed that 44% of Sandwell pupils taking the Key Stage 2 SATs test were classed as disadvantaged, whilst 32% were recorded nationally. There has been a 3% increase in Sandwell and 1% increase nationally.

The increased numbers of disadvantaged children in local schools is certainly one barrier that Sandwell Local Authority has had to negotiate. However, as in the national picture outlined in section 1.2.1, Sandwell's disadvantaged children do not achieve the same levels of progress or attainment compared to non-disadvantaged children.

Official statistics published by the DfE (2017, p. 15) show that "(a)s in previous years, Free School Meals (FSM) pupils have lower attainment in 2017 compared to all other pupils nationally", and "43% of FSM pupils achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, compared to 64% of all other pupils". Additionally, the gap between disadvantaged children in Sandwell, compared to other local authorities nationally, is already -5.6 months by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and grows to -11.0 months by the end of Key Stage 2 (Andrews et al., 2017, p. 20).

In specific relation to attainment and progress in Key Stage 2, and in English subjects (Reading and Writing), disadvantaged children continue to remain behind non-disadvantaged children. Looking at the data trends from the start of this research study (2013/14) up to the most recent data publication, Sandwell's disadvantaged pupils also remain behind non-disadvantaged pupils' national attainment and progress averages in English reading and writing. In some cases, Sandwell's disadvantaged pupils remain behind national disadvantaged pupils.

Table 1.2: The percentage of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in Sandwell compared to nationally

Year	% Pupils making expected levels of progress				% Pupils achieving Age Related Expectations				% of pupils classed as disadvantaged	
	Disadvantaged		Non-disadvantaged		Disadvantaged		Non-disadvantaged		Disadvantaged Sandwell	Disadvantaged National
	Read	Wr	Read	Wr	Read	Wr	Read	Wr		
2013/14	89	92	92	95	67	78	75	89	41	31
2016/17	Average progress score				% Pupils achieving Age Related Expectations				Disadvantaged	Non-disadvantaged
	Disadvantaged		Non-disadvantaged		Disadvantaged		Non-disadvantaged			
	Read	Wr	Read	Wr	Read	Wr	Read	Wr		
	-0.5	0.2	0.4	0.8	50 (55)	65 (64)	69 (72)	80 (79)	44	32

Table 1.2 reveals how significant the issue of disadvantaged pupil attainment is in Sandwell. In 2013/14, at the start of this study, only 67% of pupils achieved the Age Related Expectations (ARE) criteria in the Key Stage 2 SATs reading test. This is lower than disadvantaged pupils nationally, 8% behind non-disadvantaged pupils in

Sandwell and 11% behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. A similar picture emerged in writing, where Sandwell's disadvantaged pupils were 11% behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally and 11% behind non-disadvantaged pupils in Sandwell.

Unfortunately, this is not an improving picture. In 2016, the average scaled score for disadvantaged pupils in the KS2 SATs reading test was 99 – the average scaled score nationally for non-disadvantaged children was 104. Furthermore, only 50% of disadvantaged pupils in Sandwell achieved the reading SATs ARE compared to 55% of disadvantaged pupils nationally, 69% of non-disadvantaged pupils in Sandwell and 72% of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Again, a similar decreasing picture emerged in writing as only 65% of disadvantaged pupils achieved ARE in KS2 writing. A 13% decrease from 2014 and 15% less than disadvantaged pupils nationally. The evidence therefore clearly indicates that there is a significant disparity between the attainment of pupils from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds across England, and in Sandwell in particular (compared to other local authorities nationally), and in comparison to more affluent social groups/classes.

1.2.3 SNDWLLSCHOL and attainment in English

Sections 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 above drew attention to the issues arising at national level, and in Sandwell, with regards to boys' performance in English, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in English and (therefore) the attainment and progress of disadvantaged boys' in English subject areas (particularly writing, and more recently reading as well). This has also been a specific issue for SNDWLLSCHOL historically and was still an issue when I began this study.

Regarding disadvantaged pupil numbers, in 2011-12, SNDWLLSCHOL received Pupil Premium funding for 21 pupils totalling £5876. These numbers have increased year on year since then. In 2013-14, 41 pupils were eligible for Pupil Premium funding totalling £54,120, whilst in 2018 there were 52 pupils in total receiving £73,540. The performance of these disadvantaged pupils and boys in English in SNDWLLSCHOL reflects the national picture and demonstrates why it is a significant concern for this case study. For example, in 2013, in SNDWLLSCHOL's validated Reporting and Analysis for Improvement through School Self-Evaluation Online report (RAISEonline), the "Closing the Gaps with Pupil Premium at Key Stage 2" data section highlighted the disparity between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils. In reading, the 'within school' average point score gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils was -0.6 in reading, -2.3 in writing and -4.2 in English grammar, punctuation and spelling (SPAG). This same trend was demonstrated in pupils achieving the higher standard as well. The percentage 'gap' between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils achieving a level 5 was -14% in reading, -34% in writing and -49% in SPAG. This same pattern and 'gap' was reported between boys

and girls. Regarding average point scores, the gap between boys and girls was -4.2 in reading, -4.7 in writing and -2.5 in SPAG. Similarly, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher standard also highlighted a gap between boys and girls as boys were -38% behind girls in reading, -43% in writing and -22% in SPAG at level 5. Interestingly, boys were +5% ahead in mathematics.

This school data highlights the extent of the problem regarding attainment in English subject areas for disadvantaged boys. These trends do not just have an impact on pupils' futures and reporting of national data. They also have implications for SNDWLLSCHOL's external verification and Ofsted inspections.

1.2.4 External verification and inspections of the school by Ofsted

It is important to note that Ofsted inspections reported that significant areas of school leadership, management, pupil behaviour and class provision were outstanding in SNDWLLSCHOL. However, because pupil performance (for specific subgroups – boys and disadvantaged pupils) was below other core subjects (maths and science), and because it was not ahead of national pupil performance, it could not be regarded as an 'Outstanding' school.

In 2006, SNDWLLSCHOL had been rated as 'Outstanding' for personal development and well-being, with Ofsted stating that pupils "are eager to come to school, enjoy their lessons very much… (b)ehaviour is outstanding… (and pupils) are valued as individuals whilst growing in confidence and self-esteem". However, the school had been given two performance targets, which were stated as the reasons why they were

not outstanding. These included: (1) ensuring that "pupils reach higher standards in reading and writing", and (2) ensuring that more boys and disadvantaged pupils (specifically boys) were able to reach higher levels of attainment. Ofsted also commented that feedback and marking in English needed to be more effective and consistent and staff needed to "set specific targets so that pupils can carry out self-assessments in order to understand what they need to learn next".

A similar picture emerged from the 2009 Ofsted inspection. Initially, the school inspection emphasised the school's growth and improvement since its previous inspection. Ofsted commented that:

> It has gone a considerable way down the road to becoming better than good and there are already several outstanding features. For instance, pupils behave extremely well and are exceptionally polite. They develop outstandingly well into caring, responsible young citizens, keenly aware of their place in society and their responsibilities towards it (Ofsted, 2009).

However, the Ofsted report (2009) identified one major area of weakness and one major factor prohibiting the development of pupils. Ofsted noted that "(t)he standards you reach in writing are not nearly as high as they could be and, in particular, your grammar and punctuation need improving". Thus, SNDWLLSCHOL was required to "(r)aise standards in writing… particularly by improving pupils' use of grammar and punctuation". At the same time, the 2009 report specifically highlighted the "exceptionally high" standards in maths and science. The main reservation expressed by those carrying out the Ofsted inspection related to the pupils' performance in writing. They indicated that: "pupils' grammar and punctuation are not as good as one

would expect, bearing in mind the standards they reach in other subjects" (Ofsted, 2009).

1.2.5 A problem-driven case study

As Flyvbjerg (2006, p. 242) has argued: "(g)ood social science is problem driven and not methodology driven in the sense that it employs those methods that for a given problematic, best help answer the research questions at hand".

In sections 1.2.1 to 1.2.4 above, I have outlined the problem that led me to embark on this case study. The problem is a highly complex one. On the one hand, there are the demands of the National Curriculum, with its language-ideological orientation to Standard English, and there are the expectations from Ofsted that SNDWLLSCHOL will find ways of raising levels of attainment in English for disadvantaged pupils, and for boys in particular. On the other hand, there are pupils who speak the regional variety of English, long associated with Sandwell (known locally as 'Yam Yam') or other West Midlands varieties (e.g. 'Brummie'). As Clark (2013) has noted, based on her sociolinguistic research in this region of the UK, these are language varieties that have, historically, been bound up with speakers' sense of place and of identity and belonging and have been reproduced over generations in local working-class neighbourhoods.

Moreover, there are particularly negative stereotypes of the urban language varieties of the West Midlands that still circulate in the UK. This is even reflected in academic research. Take, for example, a social psychological study by Workman (2008). In this research, it was reported that: "speaking with a Birmingham accent [one local linguistic variety] can have a negative effect… on how clever you appear to other

people" (Workman, 2008, p. 1). At the heart of the problem that I am addressing lies the sociolinguistic positioning of children and young people who speak regional language varieties, such as those spoken in the West Midlands, within a national context where Standard English is imposed as the legitimate language of schooling.

By the time I had begun this study, I was already Headteacher. I was thus concerned with the question of how we could make a difference as a school. But first, I needed to build a deeper understanding, through this research, of the language attitudes, perceptions and values of the pupils themselves. I chose to focus on the boys because of the gender gap discussed and illustrated above.

1.3 The research: Aims and research questions

As stated in the opening paragraph of this chapter, my intention at the outset of this research was, firstly, to investigate the links between the language attitudes, beliefs and values of boys in Sandwell, their level of academic attainment in English subjects (e.g. reading and writing) in Key Stage 2 SATs tests, the specific requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum and the ideological framework underpinning the National Curriculum. My aim was to identify ways of changing and contributing to pedagogy, policy and the whole school curriculum in the school I was leading – SNDWLLSCHOL. To investigate the links outlined above and to address this aim, I undertook a case study in SNDWLLSCHOL, with 30 boys from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. In opting to do this study in the school where I was based, I took account of the need for reflexivity – following research by others who have conducted studies in familiar sites (e.g. Chimbutane, 2012; Marcus, 1998).

Three research questions were formulated:

1. *What are the boys' attitudes to standard and non-standard English spoken forms?*
2. *How do the boys' language attitudes, beliefs and values relate to the requirements of the National Curriculum and the language ideologies underpinning it?*
3. *What are the implications for educational practice and policy?*

Each of the research questions required different research approaches and a different focus. In order to answer question 1 and the first part of question 2, and to investigate the participants' language attitudes, I adopted a quantitative approach which involved devising an Accent Awareness Test of the type that has been developed in the study of regional language varieties (Agheyisi and Fishman, 1970). Following this approach, I also took account of both the solidarity and status dimensions of language use. The second approach was qualitative in nature. It centred on audio-recorded group discussions. Here, my aims were to gain access to the boys' emic perceptions and values related to language beyond accents and to build an account of how participants evaluated their own and others language use in different contexts. Here, I focussed on the small stories they told about their lived experiences relating to language and I drew on analytic resources from the field of narrative analysis (e.g. the works of Barkhuizen; De Fina and Georgakopoulou) and interactional sociolinguistics where the emphasis is on the ways in which meaning is constituted in and through interactions.

To address the second part of research question 2, relating to the requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum and the language ideologies underpinning it, I turned to the document itself and to associated texts (such as the Glossary, Programmes of Study and the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check test materials). In analysing these policy, curriculum and assessment documents, I built on analytic resources from critical discourse analysis (notably the work of Norman Fairclough, 2003, 2013). This part of the research also incorporated theoretical insights from the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1991a) on the discursive construction of symbolic power, and from the work of Michel Foucault (1980) on discourse, power and authority.

The third research question is addressed in the final chapter of this thesis. There, I consider the implications of the findings set out in Chapters 5 and 6 and I provide an account of the curriculum changes introduced at SNDWLLSCHOL, after the main phase of fieldwork, with a view to addressing the gender gap in attainment in the writing of English.

1.4 Outline of the thesis

Chapter 2 presents my analysis of the 2014 version of the National Curriculum. I focus on the structure, discourse and content of this educational policy document and on related texts (e.g. the Glossary, where terms are defined). I describe and analyse the specific ways in which a discourse of authority is constituted and I show how Standard English is repeatedly represented as the legitimate language of schooling, and in social domains beyond the school.

Chapter 3 reviews the different bodies of research that I have drawn on in developing this research. These include sociolinguistic studies of regional varieties of English, studies of language-in-education policies and curricula, critical discourse analysis of policy documents, and metapragmatic and narrative analysis of accounts by different social actors affected by policy changes and different regimes of language. It is customary to begin a thesis with a review of the research literature, but since the research presented in this thesis grew out of my concern with the educational challenges posed by the National Curriculum and its preoccupation with Standard English, rather than with particular theories or epistemological issues, I have chosen to take this topic as the starting point.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the ways in which this case study was designed and research methods that were employed in conducting the research. First, I describe my approach to selecting research participants and the way in which I took account of ethical considerations. I then go on to provide details of the data gathering methods: (1) The design and conduct of the Accent Awareness Test (AAT), which was carried out with 30 boys; and (2) the audio-recording of group discussions about three video clips. This data gathering activity was carried out with 26 boys.

Chapter 5 presents and discusses the quantitative findings of the Accent Awareness Test. Chapter 6 then presents my qualitative analysis of the interactional data generated by the group discussions of the three video clips. Finally, Chapter 7 provides a summary of the findings showing how I was able to address each research question. I then provide an account of curricular innovations introduced in SNDWLLSCHOL with a view to providing opportunities for students to use all linguistic resources in their

repertoire in class. I also provide details of the outcomes of the curricular intervention. The two concluding sections of the thesis consider the constraints of the study and show how I dealt with these. I also provide pointers for future research in schools such as the one in this study.

CHAPTER 2 – REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT SOCIOLINGUISTIC RESEARCH LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

In order to explore the language attitudes, beliefs and values of socio-economic boys from Sandwell in relation to the National Curriculum, it is first necessary to discuss the literature surrounding standardised languages and education. Therefore, in the review of literature, I first discuss the promotion of standardised languages in education. Next, in section 2.3, I highlight historical and current debates defining Standard English and how this definition relates to definitions found in education and the National Curriculum text. Thirdly, as socio-economically disadvantaged boys are the participants at the centre of this case study, I discuss literature surrounding social class, class structures and definitions of class in order to contextualise how the participants were identified, and come to be categorised as socio-economically disadvantaged. Following this, the literature moves to discuss the role language plays in relation to social class, specifically taking into account research conducted in the West Midlands. In section 2.6, I draw on investigations, research and theory which highlights specific examples of language variation across interactional contexts, exploring how speakers vary language resources and use when interacting with different interlocutors. Finally, I discuss the literature surrounding the relationship between language and identity. In section 2.7 the focus is on children's communicative repertoires, language resources and the construction of social meanings, before turning the discussion to language, narratives and identities in section 2.8.

2.2 The promotion of standardised languages in education

In sociolinguistics, there has been a long-established tradition of critique of the emphasis on standardised languages in educational policy and the disregard of the diverse language resources of children and from groups speaking regional language varieties. Clark (2010) has investigated educational policy and recent trends in English pedagogy in England – considering their impact on speakers of regional dialects and their sense of self. As indicated in section 2.3 of this chapter, she has argued that education systems transmit dominant social ideologies through policy – policy which has significant implications for non-standard English speakers because of the bias towards Standard English (2005, p. 44). Clark's research has been built upon the premise that language development is an important means of constructing a sense of identity and belonging. However, she has also pointed out that "language is… in the modern world, a key feature of national identity" (Clark, 2010, p. 33), and, as a result, educational practice and policy barely recognises the regional language varieties. Clark argues that the development of curricula in England, which deny space for regional dialects (treating them as "different or inferior"), maintain and reinforce a national culture in which SE is represented as the "correct" form of the English language and links SE with academic achievement (2005, p. 44). Furthermore, the notion of 'correctness' is reproduced through the teaching of decontextualised SE grammatical structures and assessment of children's knowledge of such structures and the metalanguage for talking about them (2005, p. 1).

Writing in a similar vein, and recommending ways of redirecting educational policy and practice, Rampton (1995a, p. 315) argued that educational practice should "reveal

to pupils the richness of linguistic variety represented in class by speakers of different dialects… to show the relation of that variety to standard written and spoken English without arousing feelings of antagonism or inferiority". In his view, the current "absolutist vision" of government policies and curricular developments focussed too much on prescribing grammar and not on developing language awareness. Rampton (1997, p. 321) also argued against advocating that pupils only need "one native (Standard English) language" to succeed socially and academically and against educational policies that assume that "monolingualism is the fundamental linguistic condition" of all speakers.

2.3 The debates about defining Standard English

Clark (1996) points out that contemporary sociolinguistic theory has moved away from seeing language in abstract terms. Instead, there has been movement towards locating language practices and the reproduction of language repertoire and resources within specific socio-cultural contexts. However, as Clark (1996, p. 4) argues, it is not possible to situate and frame SE within a particular socio-cultural context and this makes "a definitive definition of standard English impossible". Street (1984) also warned against defining literacy within a fixed and autonomous model. He argues that this leads to the formation of curricula whose primary concerns are with "effectiveness" "measured through statistics on skill outcomes… justified (against) correlations" (Street, 1984, p. 1). Instead, he argues that literacy is a social and cultural practice. Literacy interventions and educational curricular need to take account of students' interactions with the written word which are affected by personal experiences, belief systems and identities. Literacy strategies and educational curricula

therefore need to take into account the specific characteristics and practices of target audiences and communities. It is not enough for literacy teaching and learning to aim to equip children with generic skills (repeated for every child in every classroom - regardless of specific local conditions). Instead, as Street points out, the practice of teaching and learning literacy should offer a "more culturally sensitive view" (Street, 1984, p. 7) as literary practices vary from one setting to another.

In light of the above arguments, it is "impossible" to accurately define SE (Clark, 1996). It is therefore significant that the 2014 National Curriculum still orientates the English Programme of Study (PoS) around a formal, prescribed definition of Standard English. The 2014 version of the National Curriculum could be seen as promoting autonomous literacy practices and a view of language as deploying autonomous 'skills'. In fact, the NC states that its main aim is to provide instruction, which encourages children to become proficient in language 'skills' across a range of different contexts and subjects. The decontextualised notion of skills is given a semblance of being 'socially' embedded by resorting to terms such as 'life skills'. Moreover, specific attention is paid to spoken language 'skills' and it is assumed that written analysis is tied to spoken language in straightforward ways:

> The national curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing (DfE, 2014, p. 1).

The NC gives specific guidance regarding language development - setting out the content of different elements of English teaching for each year group in the English Programme of Study, specifying the requirements and defining the criteria that children are assessed against. Thus, to be judged to be successful speakers, readers and writers, pupils need to show achievement and success against specific nationally set targets and pre-defined age related expectations.

The debates about the feasibility, or even desirability, of defining Standard English have continued since the 1980s. Take for example this early statement by Quirk and Widdowson (1985):

> There are few enough (not least amongst professional linguists) that would claim the existence of a single standard within any one of the ENL countries: plenty that would even deny both the possibility and the desirability of such a thing. Recent emphasis has been on multiple and variable standards (insofar as the use of the word 'standard' is ventured): different standards for different occasions for different people – and each as 'correct' as any other (Quirk and Widdowson, 1985, pp. 2-3).

A decade later, The Warwick Evaluation[3] (TWE) challenged definitions of Standard English, and the focus on Standard English in national curricula. The challenge was put in the following terms:

> There is a debate in both linguistic and educational circles as to what is meant by the term 'Spoken Standard English'. Indeed, some linguists doubt the existence of such a form of English (TWE, 1994, p. 98).

[3] The Warwick Evaluation was a publication by the Research for the National Curriculum Council by the University of Warwick which evaluated the implementation of the National Curriculum at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 between 1991 and 1994. The report was written by Professor Bridie Raban, Urszula Clark and Joanna McIntyre.

More recently, sociolinguistic researchers have reiterated this standpoint emphasising that SE is difficult to define for a number of reasons. For example, Jenkins (2003, p. 30) has taken a global perspective on this topic in her research on English as a Lingue France (ELF). As she puts it: "all is less certain with Standard English, not only in terms of world-wide use but also in its Inner Circle context" - making it hard to find one set of definitions. Kerswill (2006, p. 3) has also avoided any attempt to define Standard English, indicating that any definition will be "closely related to the perspective of the particular language user or commentator". In contrast, The Committee for Linguistics in Education (CLIE, 2010)[4] has taken a different view and claims that SE is one variety of 'modern' English which can be recognised by a number of distinctive features:

Table 2.1: Features of SE according to CLIE (2010)

standard	**non-standard**
I was, we were	I/we was or I/we were
those books	them books
the house that Jack built	the house what/as Jack built
He did it.	He done it.
He came yesterday.	He come yesterday. (and likewise for thirty or so other irregular verbs)
Nobody said anything.	Nobody said nothing.
He ran really quickly.	He ran real quick.
I didn't break it.	I never broke it.

[4] The Committee for Linguistics in Education document: Linguistic Characteristics of Standard English, accessed 19 April 2012, clie.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/standard-english.doc.

However, the CLIE also acknowledges that "(w)hile it is possible to identify some linguistic characteristics of standard and non-standard varieties of English… the relationship between these varieties is more complex than the (above) list suggests" (CLIE, 2010). Thus, we see that they did qualify their assertions and acknowledged that "(v)arieties of language, therefore, do not exist as discrete, fixed, unified entities, and indeed 'SE' may be better regarded linguistically as an idealization" (CLIE, 2010).

2.4 Social class and the study of regional language varieties

The study presented in this thesis aimed to investigate the language attitudes, perceptions and values of socio-economically disadvantaged Sandwell boys. Initially, the focus was going to be on 'working class' boys, however, as Block (2015, p. 1) has argued "social class is a curious construct" and has endeavoured to clarify the categorisation of individuals across social class. For this investigation, I therefore needed to reflect on my definition of these boys and consider their relationship to social structures and social class.

The concept of class has been a focus across various sociolinguistic investigations of dialectal variation. The label 'working class' has been attributed to a variety of social groups from different regions (Ash, 2002). Trudgill claimed that "most members of our society have some kind of idea, intuitive or otherwise, of what social class is" (1974, p. 32). However, there does not appear to be a consensus regarding what factors determine individuals' class position. Many variationists appear to follow sociology and anthropology - empirical traditions using factors such as income, occupation and education to categorise individuals (Rickford, 1986, p. 220). However,

Mallinson has argued that "such measures and classification schemas may not imply a particular theory of social structures and are often more descriptive than analytical" (2007, p. 1). He goes on to note that "little consensus has been reached over how to theorize or measure class, making it both a conceptual and methodological hurdle" (Mallinson, 2007, p. 1). Writing in the same vein, Ash (2002, p. 1) has stated that, whilst social class continues to be recognised as a central concept in sociolinguistics and language research, "it is ironic… that social class is often defined in an *ad hoc* way in studies of linguistic variation and change". This scholar goes on to elaborate on this point as follows: "individuals are placed in a social hierarchy despite the lack of a consensus as to what concrete, quantifiable independent variables contribute to determining social class", and, even though it is an important concept in sociolinguistic studies, "linguists can lay little claim to understanding it" (Ash, 2002, p. 1).

The majority of existing definitions regarding class are based on Labov's (1966) notion of "life chances" relating to the production or acquisition of material goods. In contrast, Block (2012, 2014, 2015) has argued that there is more to social class than life chances and material goods. Block's definition factors in material aspects such as goods and services, but he extends the notion of class to include other "key dimensions" (, p. 3). He defines and categorises these dimensions with reference to factors which reflect the "wide range of experiences in the day to day lives" of people within different social groups (Block, 2015, p. 3). These varying experiences include factors like "social networks". As Block puts it: "middle-class people tend to socialize with middle-class people, working-class with working-class etc." (2015, p. 3). Block's (2012, 2014, 2105) remaining key dimensions are as follows:

Table 2.2: Key dimensions of social class (Block, 2012)

Dimension	Gloss
Property	Material possessions, such as land, housing, electronic devices, clothing, books, art, etc.
Wealth	Disposable income and patrimony (e.g., what owned property is worth in financial terms).
Occupation	The kind of work done: information-based or manual, specialized or unskilled, etc.
Place of residence	The type of neighborhood one lives in (poor, working class, middle class, gated community, an area in the process of gentrification) or the type of dwelling (individual house, flat, caravan).
Education	The level of schooling attained and the acquired cultural capital one has at any point in time.
Social networking	Middle-class people tend to socialize with middle-class people, working-class people with working-class people, etc.
Consumption patterns	Shopping at a supermarket that is "cost-cutting" or one that sells "healthy," organic products. Buying particular goods and brands.
Symbolic behavior	Including body movement, clothes worn, how one speaks, how one eats, pastimes engaged in, etc.
Spatial relations	The conditions in which one lives: dwelling size, bedroom size, proximity to others across day-to-day activities, etc.
Mobility	The means, disposition, time, and knowledge necessary for travel.
Life chances	Quality of life in terms of personal comfort, access to preventive medicine, life expectancy, etc.

A significant proportion of these key dimensions relate to the "distribution and redistribution of key material resources" and to individuals' "experience" (Block, 2015, p. 3). Block argues that the "real, lived class experiences such as work conditions, standard of living, financial situation, spatial relations" help categorise varying social groups into classes. Block (2015, p. 3), (citing Wright, 2005, p. 22), also argued that this "lived experience" creates a subjective awareness of the self and of people's "class interests and conditions for advancing them".

2.5 Language and social class in Sandwell, the West Midlands

The English of the West Midlands varies from region to region. Although dialects in the West Midlands carry phonic and lexical similarities, they tend to be classified under two differing colloquial labels mentioned earlier in this thesis: the Birmingham dialect, called 'Brummie', and the Black Country Dialect or 'Yam Yam'. The two varieties are often confused in the media, and some social psychological research has also misrepresented broad West Midland varieties as Black Country dialects (Workman, 2008). This literature review will focus on the language varieties that were part of the communicative repertoire of socio-economically disadvantaged Sandwell boys – such as those in my study. Sandwell shares borders with both Birmingham and the Black Country. Over the last 50 years, Sandwell's municipal boundaries have changed significantly and been altered with the changes to the city of Birmingham, Warley and the Black Country (Chinn and Thorne, 2001). Sandwell has therefore shared the same territory as Birmingham and the Black Country. Consequently, Sandwell's dialects draw from and are influenced by both Birmingham and Black Country dialects, as well as having their own distinctive features (Chinn and Thorne, 2001).

As indicated in section 2.4 above, 'class' is a complex notion; simple definitions do not reflect the variable lives of Sandwell residents. Sandwell is a hub of diversity with a net increase in migration in recent years. In 2014, Research Sandwell (2017) estimated an increase of 29,700 in the local population between 2001 and 2013 - a higher increase than neighbouring Black Country regions (e.g. Walsall, Wolverhampton and Dudley). Thus, Sandwell's net migration increase (10.4%) was higher than the average in England (8.9%) – ranking Sandwell 40/406 UK local

authorities in terms of population growth (Research Sandwell, 2014). Research Sandwell's analysis, regarding Sandwell's changing population and demographic, reveals a changing borough with growing diversity.

Because 'social class' definitions are varied and change over time, it is difficult to find an all-encompassing class 'label' to depict the background of participants in this investigation. For example, some of the boys participating in this study came from families that, in previous generations/countries/economic climates, have been classed (or identified themselves) as having social prestige. However, using the definitions currently used by official educational and social monitoring (i.e. their current socio-economic status, where they live and parental employment) – that is, the official reported data available to schools - the participants can be identified as socio-economically disadvantaged. Categorisations of socio-economic status included information from Income Deprivation Affecting Children Indices (IDACI), school census and Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) records. Thus, a full exploration of the boys' categorisation as 'socio-economically disadvantaged' can be seen in Chapter 4.

Consequently, whilst the children in this study are not identified or labelled by a traditional, relatively simple definition of 'class', the relationship between language and social structure is still an important theoretical field for this investigation. The implications of this are considered in the following chapter.

2.6 Language variation across interactional contexts

It is now recognised that speakers adapt their speech, both consciously and subconsciously, when faced with different social situations, interlocutors or sociolinguistic contexts. Crowley and Bowen argued that "probably all speakers of all languages" do this as they adapt to or shape the context they are in (2010, p. 256). Research into linguistic variation across interactional contexts, and some theory building in social psychology around notions like accommodation and convergence, began to throw more light on variation in language use.

For example, Giles et al. (1991, p. 2) developed accommodation theory as an "integrated, interdisciplinary statement of relational processes in communicative interaction". This theory drew on key theoretical frameworks in the field of social psychology. According to Giles et al. (1991, p. 4), there are five particular factors to be considered when researching the ways in which speakers communicate with different interlocutors: social consequences, ideological factors, inter-group variables and processes, discursive practices in naturalistic settings and group language shifts. For instance, Giles et al. (1991) investigated the impact of interview situations on personal accent use. Presenting the idea of "accent mobility", Giles (1973), cited in Giles et al. (1991, p. 5), demonstrated that individuals show "attention to speech" and change accents in formal contexts because of the perceived "prestigiousness of speech styles".

Coupland (1988) conducted early research of a similar nature. He studied the speech variation of a travel agent (Sue) in Cardiff. He analysed the ways Sue modified her speech when talking to different interlocutors. Focussing on linguistic variables such

as the pronunciation of intervocalic /t/ and /d/ in words such as 'ladder' and 'latter' and consonant cluster simplification (e.g. walked – walk). In this study, Coupland demonstrated that Sue's speech shifted as she interacted with different speakers with different occupations and from different social backgrounds. Coupland (1988, p. 191) noted that Sue's speech shifted so fluidly it was "almost as good a marker of the occupational status of her interlocutor as that of the interlocutor's own speech". Furthermore, he pointed out that Sue's convergent accommodative behaviour was most notable when communicating with customers from lower socio-economic classes - as she shifted consistently towards less standard phonological variants. Coupland concluded that speakers "may be motivated to shift fleetingly between more standard and less standard pronunciations as "competent" and "socially attractive" projected personas become variously salient, appropriate or desirable while speaking" (1988, p. 108). As he put it, because "speakers are routinely in the business of staging desirable self-identities for inspection and acceptance by others" (1988, p. 108).

This was an important consideration when designing my own study. Coupland was essentially claiming that individuals modify their speech and perform the particular identity they want to communicate to other interlocutors. Furthermore, according to Coupland (1988, p. 103), "(s)peakers are in a position to make (indeed cannot avoid making) acts of group-identity through dialect selection".

What we see in the research of scholars such as Giles and Coupland in the 1980s, is the beginning of a shift away from large scale sociolinguistic surveys focussing on patterns of linguistic variation across whole social groups, to a focus on speakers

agentively accommodating to their interlocutors by acquiring their accent or their style of speaking. Schilling-Estes (2002) and Eckert (2000), pay particularly close attention to speakers' style shifting. Drawing from Schilling-Estes (2002, p. 378) and Eckert (2000), I am also treating my participants as highly creative and agentive individuals who are able to vocalise their own experience - and accommodate to their interlocutors as they interact with them (especially in Chapter 6). Thus, following Schilling-Estes, I will take account of style in action, considering the Sandwell boys as speakers who may "use their speech to help shape and re-shape the external situation… as well as their interpersonal relationships and, crucially, their personal identities" (2002, p. 378).

2.7 Children's communicative repertoires, language resources and the construction of social meanings

Recent research related to regional varieties of English in the UK has focused closely on the ways in which social meanings are constructed in particular moments of interaction, and in particular kinds of speech acts, as speakers draw on different resources within their communicative repertoires (e.g. different styles of speaking, features of local accents or grammatical forms deemed to be non-standard). In a study carried out with primary school children of a similar age to those participating in my study, Snell (2008) combined linguistic ethnography with variationist sociolinguistics, in ways that enabled her to gain insights not only into patterns of variation in the use of local dialect forms, but also into the "use-value" (Snell, 2015: p. 240) of these vernacular resources for the children. Her study was based in two primary schools in Teesside, in the North East of England: one situated in a lower working-class

neighbourhood and one in a lower middle-class neighbourhood. She conducted participant observation in both schools over a seven-month period, in classrooms and playgrounds. She then spent a further period of fieldwork audio-recording spontaneous interactions in class and out of class.

Snell's quantitative analysis of the occurrence of different linguistic variants in the children's speech (e.g. resources for performing directives) revealed that the children had a wide repertoire of linguistic resources, some standardised English forms and some regional dialect forms. In discussing the resources within the children's repertoires, Snell (2015, p. 233) notes that these resources were imbued with "not just referential meaning but also with non-referential or indexical meanings and social values". She then goes on to show how the linguistic ethnographic dimension of her research, and close analysis of the use of linguistic resources used by the children, in specific moments of interaction, enabled her to build a fuller understanding of ways in which particular linguistic forms (e.g. features associated with Teesside dialect) came to have "use-value" for the children, "despite pressures from their teachers to conform instead to prestige standards" (2015, p. 242).

In addition, Snell reports that adopting a linguistic ethnographic approach contributed to a broadening of her notion of context, so as to take account of social and economic conditions on a wider scale, that were shaping the practices of schools as institutions. Drawing on the work of Bourdieu (1977, 1991), she contrasts the notion of the "use-value" of particular linguistic resources for the children with the notion of "exchange-

value" that has come to be associated with Standard English resources. As she puts it:

> For Bourdieu (1977, 1991), exchange involved different forms of capital, and this has been a useful way of thinking about the relationship between language and power. Standard English and the prestige accents (such as Received Pronunciation) are dominant or 'legitimate' ways of speaking in UK society. In Bourdieu's terms, they have 'symbolic capital' because of their association with the economic and cultural power of those who use them. Symbolic capital can be transformed into real life advantages. Speakers can 'cash in' (i.e. exchange) their prestigious language for formal educational qualifications and prestigious occupations, and thus for economic capital (Snell, 2015, p. 240).

This tension between the "use-value" and "exchange value" of the linguistic resources within the linguistic repertoires of school children was also evident in the West Midlands setting in which I conducted my study. It was most evident in the group discussion data that I present and analyse in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

2.8 Language, narratives and identities

As I showed in the previous section, adopting an ethnographic perspective in research on language in different domains of social life enables one to capture the social meanings generated in and through interaction. It also enables one to see the emic viewpoints of participants and the ways in which they articulate a sense of self, in their own words. My case study was not designed as an ethnography but, because of the nature of the data generated by the group discussions, I adopted what Maybin (2006, p. 313) has described as an "ethnographically-informed lens" on the data emerging from this part of my research. The boys participating in the group discussions told

stories, highlighting personal experiences of ways in which their language resources, and those of others, had been bound up with the construction of identities. These included stories about identities that they assumed or identities that were imposed upon them by others. They also talked about moments when they had witnessed or experienced negative evaluations of local regional language varieties by teachers or parents. Because of the prevalence of this kind of narrative data, and other interactional data that revealed their perspectives and values with regard to language, I decided to explore the potential of narrative analysis as an approach.

As Baynham and De Fina (2017, p. 21) have observed: "Narratives are fundamental means through which people make sense of and share their take on experiences, no matter how big or small, how life-changing or insignificant". Stories surface in particular moments of interaction, either in research-generated talk (as in my study) or in non-research generated everyday contexts. Moreover, due to recent theoretical shifts in sociolinguistics, described in detail by De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2008, 2012), storytelling has come to be seen as a social practice that is central to social life and to the construction of identities and relationships.

The stories told by the boys in the group discussions that I audio-recorded were often quite brief in nature. Small story analysis was developed by Bamberg (1997, 2006) and Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) to distinguish the short fragments of narrative that surface in interaction (on or offline) from the kind of longer life stories that are generated, for example, in research interviews. In addition, as Georgakopoulou (2014, p. 14) has pointed out: "Small story research has often been

combined with positioning analysis". The idea of positioning has its origins in research, in the field of discursive psychology, by Davies and Harré (1990). When applied to the study of small stories, this involves focusing on the ways in which story tellers position themselves discursively vis-à-vis their audience and vis-à-vis the wider world, as well as focusing on the content of the story and the way the characters in the story are represented.

Watson (2007) has conducted research with teachers working in different educational settings, using a small story approach. She described small stories as: "the ephemeral narratives emerging in such every day, mundane contexts" (2007, p. 371). Barkhuizen (2010) has also investigated the small stories told by teachers in the context of research interviews. He identified three levels of analysis: (1) analysis of the way in which the topics of narratives and the characters in a story are represented; (2) analysis of the interactive performance of narratives and the ways in which narrators position themselves vis-à-vis the audience; and (3) analysis of the ways in which narrators position themselves vis-à-vis wider normative discourses in particular educational contexts (e.g. dominant discourses about language).

These three levels of analysis offer the possibility of gaining insights into narrators' stances on particular topics or on wider normative discourses. They also offer a means of throwing light on the ways in which the relationship between narrators and their particular interlocutors is unfolding in and through the interaction. For these reasons, I decided to adopt Barkhuizen's (2010) approach to the analysis of the small stories that surfaced in the group discussion data presented in Chapter 6.

However, first, in Chapter 3, I take a close look at the normative discourses embedded in the National Curriculum for English, particularly the version introduced in 2014 in England. These include discourses about the role of Standard English in schooling. This chapter also makes explicit mention of the theoretical perspectives on discourse that I am drawing on.

CHAPTER 3 – THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM IN ENGLAND: THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF SYMBOLIC POWER AND LEGITIMATE LANGUAGE

3.1 Introduction

A key focus of the research presented in this study is the ideological framework of the National Curriculum (NC) – in particular the English Programmes of Study (PoS) - and the link they may have regarding Sandwell boys' language attitudes, perceptions and values. As indicated in Chapter 1, this focus is motivated by the boys 'failure' to achieve age-related expectations in English subject areas and the significant gap that lies between boys' and girls' attainment in English writing and spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG). Throughout the empirical work I carried out, participants referred to their perceptions of SE, of 'talking properly', of being told how to speak in front of teachers, and of classroom expectations of what are seen as acceptable/unacceptable language resources. It is therefore important to examine the ideological content of the National Curriculum, past and present, to build an understanding of the specific regime of language imposed in, and through, the National Curriculum. I also need to look at the original political motivations behind the creation of the National Curriculum, and the debates surrounding it. As an educational policy/text and ideological representation of language attitudes in the UK, the NC has long been the focus of extensive debate. Therefore, in this chapter, I will discuss the development of the NC and elements of the language debates surrounding it.

3.2 Imposing linguistic norms through schooling

> Pupils should be taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English (DfE, 2014, p. 5).

Here, the Key Stage 2 English PoS articulates very clear aims and expectations regarding learning of Standard English for pupils in primary education in England. This standpoint is reinforced throughout Key Stage 3 English requirements which state that pupils should be taught "to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using Standard English [in] formal and informal contexts" (DfE, 2014, p. 10). These examples, and other requirements set out in the NC, reveal a binary approach towards standard and non-standard varieties. The DfE, for example, in the Key Stage 3 National Strategy, stated that the acquisition of Standard English is key to succeeding in important social situations such as "job interviews or debates" (2002, p. 68). According to the DfE, these social situations "demand" SE use (2002, p. 68). Thus, the implication is that failing to become proficient in speaking and understanding SE leaves people disenfranchised as citizens and disadvantaged in comparison to SE speakers.

Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) have argued that questions regarding identity and group membership/acceptability immediately come into question when a dominant majority/policy/state insists on, or perpetuates the notion of, a language ideal. They argued that when a language variety or standardised spoken form is given increased social, academic or symbolic status over minority or non-standard language forms, it raises issues regarding "social justice" because "linguistic minority speakers may be excluded from access to, or membership in, the more powerful group" (Pavlenko and

Blackledge, 2004, p. 68). The NC clearly elevates the status and worth of SE in certain contexts. Standard English is given symbolic status as the most powerful of dialects through the insistence on its role in schooling and the requirement that pupils are able to use it in formal/professional contexts. It is explicitly tied to academic, social and professional success. The National Curriculum requirements, the views of language inferred and the language ideology underpinning them are completely out of step with current views in linguistics where it is acknowledged that no one form of English is linguistically 'better' than any other. Moreover, as we saw in Chapter 2, there is no fixed definition of Standard English (historically or currently). As a variety of English, SE has evolved significantly over time and continues to change.

When discussing what makes a language and language varieties standard, Crinson (1997) argued that social, political and geographical factors had more of an influence on the categorisation of languages rather than linguistic variables. Crinson argued that "as far as linguists can tell, there is nothing about the (English) language itself which makes it better suited to becoming a standard" (1997, p. 50). Regarding the origins of 'Standard English', it is a variety of English originating in the East Midlands and popularised around London law courts (Pyles and Algeo, 1982). This variety then acquired a "standard pronunciation, lexicon, grammar, literature and technical vocabulary" and became imposed as "standard" (Crinson, 1997, p. 52). There were no specific linguistic characteristics of the East Midlands variety that led to it being taken up as a standard and developing into a global language. Instead, it became associated with people from particular social classes who had considerable wealth and power. It became established as the language of schooling, and then, during the

colonial era, it was imposed in British colonies around the world (Leith, 1997). If power and wealth had continued to be invested into areas like Newcastle, it could easily have been other dialect varieties (like those in Northumbria) that came to be adopted as 'the standard' (Leith, 1997).

Cheshire and Milroy (1993) have also argued that the general population's evaluations of dialects lack consistency and consensus. Cheshire and Milroy (1993) found that, when identifying and defining standardised forms of English, the majority of individuals sampled in their investigation, referred to their own understandings and perceptions of non-standard English. Milroy (2001) threw further light on this finding in subsequent dialect evaluation research. She adopted the notion of 'standard language cultures' to capture ideological orientations to standardised languages. She also noted that: "laypersons… find it easier to specify what is *not* standard than what is" (Milroy, 2001, p. 59). Milroy (2001) also draws on the dialect research of Preston (1996, pp. 297-298) which claimed there was a striking lack of agreement on the locus of standard varieties. Milroy, discussing Preston (1996) also claimed that "even influential textbook writers do little more than present their personal beliefs (which are not necessarily shared by all linguists) as linguistic fact" (Milroy, 2001, p. 59). Evidence from dialect evaluation research such as this suggests that, although people believe that they can define SE, they find it easier to define it with reference to non-standard forms of speech.

Trudgill defined Standard English as:

> [the] variety of English which is usually used in print, and which is normally taught in schools and to non-native speakers learning the

> language. It is also the variety which is normally spoken by educated people and used in news broadcasts and other similar situations (Trudgill, 1995, pp. 6-7).

Trudgill's definition reveals that "standard English" indexes literate culture, schooling and other institutions where power resides, and that it is associated with "educated people". Similarly, Wolfram and Fasold (1974) argued that the idea of "standard English" continues to be given considerable value by language "regulators", but that these values are not shared by the general population. They also noted that the norms of SE are imposed through "grammar and usage books, dictionaries, orthoepical guides, and language academics" (1974, p. 19). Wolfram and Fasold argued that controlling the "standard" was a means of exercising power. It restricted norms to "the most formal style of older, highly educated people" (1974, p. 19). The group is thus able to maintain its position as exclusive and separate from other groups' non-standard speaking varieties.

Discussing the effects of standard language ideologies, Milroy (2001) suggested that the standardisation of languages is socially constructed and resulted in speakers believing that varieties like standard spoken English exist as a discrete fixed form separate from its speakers, embedded in grammar books and dictionaries. Milroy claimed that "this kind of belief affects the way in which speakers think about their language and 'language' in general" (2001, p. 531). Thus, as she put it, certain types of English speakers inhabit "standard language cultures" (Milroy, 2001, p. 531). In the same vein, Sterzuk argued that "in such cultures, 'the standard language' is legitimate and other varieties are illegitimate" (2011, p. 94). This binary view of language can, according to Sterzuk, become deeply rooted in many societies without people

recognising, or being aware of, its origins. Sterzuk argued that "standard language discourses" are a reflection "of colonialist and nationalist ideologies about 'standard language'" (2011, p. 94). Furthermore, these language ideologies and standard language "messages circulate in schools and society through curricular documents, academic publications and teacher education programmes" (Sterzuk, 2011, p. 94).

Clark (2013, p. 1) takes a similar position. She argues that the presence of standard language ideologies in governmental policy derives from the idea that education, as an institution contributing to the building of national identity, should promote one "homogenous", "unvaried" and unifying correct set of language conventions to be adhered to and represented in speaking and writing. Clark (2013, p. 1) also argued that such language ideologies have perpetuated "the myth that there is one "correct" way of using language which is "fixed" and invariant" – one that is inscribed in grammars and dictionaries. In short, the concept of a standard national language is socially constructed. The prominence and position of SE in education and government policy is the outcome of social and ideological processes that have unfolded over more than a century. It clearly has no intrinsic linguistic characteristics that make it better than non-standard varieties and it is not widely spoken by all social groups within the United Kingdom. In fact, a significant number of sociolinguists have claimed that SE is predominantly considered to be a "middle class" language variety (Moss, 2003; Culpeper and Kerswill, 2009). According to Edwards (1985, p. 131), education and schools are closely aligned to the linguistic and cultural norms of middle class groups and classroom practice and educational policy reflects and promotes middle class "values and standards". In the same vein, Clark (2013, p. 1) notes that current educational practice and policy in the United Kingdom merely perpetuates standard

language cultures and "the linguistic norms associated with standard English" – encouraging perceptions that "any deviation" from standard language norms is "incorrect", "illiterate" and even "a threat to social stability" (2013, p. 1). This risks alienating working class and non-standard English speaking groups from education, as it develops perceptions that education is exclusive; it gives children of working class background the impression that neither they, nor the language resources in their communicative repertoire, belong in academic circles.

Whitfield (2004, p. 22) has also argued that "the ideological leanings of governments have worked to limit the acceptance of non-standard English in the academy and society". He points out that this particular language ideological stance was evident in the "back to basics" discourses of previous conservative regimes.

3.3 The years prior to the National Curriculum: Language, education and politics in the UK in the 1980s

Whitfield's comments above were a direct reference to the longstanding public debate, in the 1980s and prior to the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988. The debate involved researchers such as Eagleton (1983, p. 28) and Cameron (1995, p. 79) who discussed the 'crusade' on grammar. Cameron summarised this debate as follows:

> In… education, the radical Right focused on two related problems: an alleged decline in standards, and a drift away from the values education had traditionally sought to transmit. Influential conservatives… proposed to address this crisis of standards and values by instituting a 'core curriculum' - a set of skills, competencies, ideas and canonical texts, exposure to and mastery of which would

> form the common inheritance of all educated people. In each case this proposal encountered resistance from opponents who found it over-prescriptive, elitist and ethnocentric. And, in each case, questions of language played a key role in what American commentators dubbed 'the curriculum wars' (Cameron, 1995, p. 79).

Whilst it is not possible to pinpoint this debate's exact starting point, sociolinguistic researchers, like Crinson (1997, p. 4) and Clark (2013, p. 61), agree that a significant instigator of the debate on grammar and the 'crusade' led by the radical right was John Honey. His book *The Language Trap* (1983) had a significant influence on English curriculum writers, politicians and the government education department of this time. Standard English and its links to standards in literacy teaching became a prominent subject of concern. Controversially, Honey disagreed with, and argued against the idea of, bidialectalism - promoted by sociolinguists like Trudgill (1975) who had argued against 'deficit theory' which had emerged in the 1960s. For example, Trudgill (1975) argued that speaking regional language varieties was of equal worth to speaking Standard English. He said that dialects should be given equal status and respect in curricula and school. In opposition to this, Honey emphasised the importance of SE in speaking, reading and writing. He argued that schools who did not adequately educate pupils in SE conventions risked placing non-standard speaking children at a significant disadvantage - potentially alienating them from society. In his words:

> For schools to foster non-standard varieties of English is to place their pupils in a trap. To persuade such speakers that their particular non-standard variety is in no way inferior, no less efficient for purposes of communication, but simply different is to play a cruel trick (Honey, 1983, pp. 21-22).

Honey challenged principles of English teaching, making explicit links between a decline in standards with a decline in formal instruction regarding SE grammar. He also claimed that the decline in standards was not just due to poor teaching about language, but it was also linked to declining standards in behaviour. Echoing this line of discourse pursued by John Honey, Conservative government minister Norman Tebbit (1985) linked lack of formal teaching of SE with potential criminal activity. In his words:

> We've allowed so many standards to slip... teachers weren't bothering to teach kids to spell and punctuate properly ... if you allow standards to slip to the stage where good English is no better than bad English, where people can just turn up filthy... at school... all those things cause people to have no standards at all, and once you lose standards then there's no imperative to stay out of crime. (Norman Tebbit, 1985, as cited in Clark, 2013, p. 61).

In summary, "bad English" varieties were equated to declining standards and increased chances of disruptive criminal behaviour in discourses about language-in-education circulating in the late 1980s. Commenting on these discourses emanating from the right in British political discourse, Cameron and Bourne (1988) argued that there is a social significance to assertive and defensive responses about grammar. In their opinion, grammar is a rather "innocuous" concept, but it has become interwoven with less innocuous concepts like "hierarchy, tradition, order and rules" (Cameron and Bourne, 1988, p. 149). As they put it:

> Attitudes to grammar are connected with attitudes to authority; anxieties about grammar are at some deeper level anxieties about the breakdown of order and tradition, not just in language but in society at large (Cameron and Bourne, 1988, p. 150).

These anxieties regarding traditional language values and teaching were clearly manifested in the policies and decision-making of the Conservative government

following their return to power after the 1992 general election. For example, the right wing Centre for Policy Studies, in *The Case for Revising the Order* (1992), argued for a return to discrete grammar-based forms of language teaching and learning – emphasising connections between traditional SE, British values and literature. Discussing this publication, Clark (1996, p. 3) described the government's shift as a "return to teaching traditional, Latinate grammar with an emphasis on standard English… as a way of not only 'raising standards' but also re-establishing a homogenous national and cultural identity". Moreover, as Milroy (1999) observed in this period, standpoints such as those above are an example of a nation-state making direct links between moral and physical behaviour and linguistic behaviour. She also argued that such behaviour can be interpreted as a reflection of a nation's standard language ideologies which can be utilised to provide a justification for discrimination against particular social groups and their language resources. These considerations appear to be significant when read alongside the words of John Marenbon (appointed chairman of the council for the NC) who stated that teachers should "recognise the superiority of… (S.E.) and see it as… (their) task to make pupils write it well and thereby gain the ability to speak fluently in it" (Marenbon, 1994, p. 21; cited in Cameron, 1995, p. 91). Marenbon reinforced notions that SE was to have a prominent place in the NC and education, arguing that SE was superior to non-standard forms and was the key response in expressing "the highest purposes of thought, argument and aesthetic expression" (cited in Cameron, 1995, p. 99). As well as citing this statement by Marenbon, 1994, Cameron (1995) also reported that, during a period of revision of NC materials, "the (then) Secretary of State for Education had intervened

to reinstate the demand that all teachers at all times must correct nonstandard speech" (Cameron, 1995, p. 91).

As Clark (2013, p. 61) has argued, perpetuating the "notion of a single, invariate and "fixed" variety of English as a unifying agent of social stability and cultural cohesion" was the most problematic aspect of the debate in the 1980s and was increasingly challenged. Furthermore, perpetuating notions that there is "one mythical form of a standard English to which everyone should aspire" (Clark, 2013, p. 63) was highly problematic. It created the potential for discrimination and distorted educational practices.

The same arguments and concerns regarding language have also become an issue when analysing the current NC and PoS for English in the twenty first century. Thus, as Clark (2013) has emphasised, it is important to consider how debates surrounding SE influence educational policies, eventually impacting on teaching and classroom practice.

3.4 Language and learning in education: Ideological underpinnings

There is extensive research concerned with the nature of language development and its relation to a wide range of varying areas: class, social structure, political ideology or gender. This is also true for the relationship between language development and education. Halliday (1993, p. 93) argued that:

> When children learn language, they are not simply engaging in one type of learning among many; rather, they are learning the foundations of learning itself. The distinctive characteristic of human learning is that it is a process of making meaning - a semiotic process, and the prototypical form of human semiotic is

> language. Hence the ontogenesis of language is at the same time the ontogenesis of learning.

As noted by scholars, such as Halliday (1993), in statements such as that above, cultural tools and experiences, such as language and language learning, are vital components in the formation of society. Foucault (1972) has also suggested that the conditions for learning (and subsequent constraints on learning) are created within specific social environments and within institutions where discourses of power and authority are reproduced. It is therefore impossible to see children's language development and their education as separate. Formal social and educational processes of policy-making and curriculum development, like a National Curriculum, shape the way children, who are acquiring and developing language, are positioned within the educational environment around them. Such processes define what counts as 'legitimate language' (Bourdieu, 1979, 1991a). Consequently, it can be argued that the context within which socio-economically disadvantaged children develop their language repertoires has a direct impact on their academic achievement in language-based subjects. In any educational setting, pedagogic discourse is a means of appropriating and legitimising certain discourses about language and what counts as speaking and writing 'properly' (Foucault, 1972).

3.4.1 The UK National Curriculum and the legitimisation of Standard British English

As Aronowitz and Giroux (1985, p. 147) have observed, the content of a national curriculum plays an important part in the legitimisation, reproduction and reinforcement of key political ideologies, strategies and "hierarchically arranged bodies of knowledge which serve to reinforce the interests of the dominant social class".

According to Foucault, language ideologies are:

> the sets of beliefs, values and cultural frames that continually circulate in society, informing the ways in which language is conceptualised and represented as well as how it is used. Such ideologies are constructed through discourse, that is, systems of power/knowledge (Foucault, 1980 cited in Makoe and McKinney, 2014, p. 659).

The explicit ideology surrounding English language development is made obvious and clearly communicated by the United Kingdom's Department for Education (DfE) in the opening paragraph of the UK's National Curriculum. The DfE defines the "Purpose of (English) Study" and the reason for the English Programme of Study as follows:

> English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others, and through their reading and listening, others can communicate with them. All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised (DfE, 2014, p. 3).

No specific reference is made in this statement to the standardised variety of English that is associated with power and authority in the UK. The symbolic power of this variety lies in its use in public institutional settings and to its promotion as the language

of official writing – at least in England, where it is the sole official language of the nation.[5] What is not said here is that it is Standard English that "has a pre-eminent place in education and society" and that is presented as fundamental to successful communication. No mention is made here of regional varieties of English. No mention is made of the urban varieties that have been historically associated with the working-class communities of different cities in the UK – urban varieties such as those in the Midlands that form the main focus of this study. No mention is made either of the regional varieties historically associated with regional communities in the UK. The consequences for children who are speakers of these varieties, who do not speak and write fluently in Standard English, are clearly spelt out in this curriculum document. Pupils not learning English in the way outlined risk being marginalised and disenfranchised within British society. This is further reinforced in the 'Aims' section of the National Curriculum document which states that: "(t)he overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language".

Spoken language is also represented as underpinning the development of reading and writing. Furthermore, "(t)he quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing" (DfE, 2014, p. 3). The presupposition here appears to be that linguistic quality is associated primarily with Standard English. Again, no mention is made of the fact that vocabulary and grammatical forms vary across regional varieties

[5] In other nations of the British Isles, the standardised varieties of other languages (e.g. the Celtic languages) have co-official status with English.

of English. Developing a 'strong command' of the form of Standard English also means learning that those forms carry much more prestige than regional forms. The variety of language referred to here has to do with styles and genres of speaking and writing, not regional forms of speech.

3.4.2 The National Curriculum statements as requirements

A key linguistic resource used throughout the NC, and the DfE document cited above, is the modal auxiliary verb 'should'. Auxiliary verbs indicate modality and normally communicate a degree of permission, obligation or likelihood. This is dependent on whether the verb is communicating actions associated with possibility (epistemic expression) or necessity (deontic expression) (Schmied, 2006). In the NC, the modal auxiliary verb "should" is predominantly used with reference to teaching and learning, e.g. "teachers should", "pupils should" or "they should". There are 253 examples of the modal auxiliary verb "should" within the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 English Programmes of Study (PoS) alone. Furthermore, over 80% of the statements setting out the NC requirements have the illocutionary force of commands and they directly refer to "teachers" or "pupils". Take, for example, the selected statements below:

> Teachers should ensure that their teaching develops pupils' oral vocabulary as well as their ability to understand and use a variety of grammatical structures.
>
> Pupils should be taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English.
>
> Pupils should be taught to… Listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers… speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English (DfE, 2014, pp. 5-9).

It is clear that the mood of the sentences is imperative and that the text is requiring particular teaching and learning practices in order for children to succeed with reference to this curriculum framework.

The second and third examples above actually make explicit reference to Standard English as the specific language variety to be learned. Since these statements can be interpreted as commands, teachers and schools have no option but to conform to the SE model of the NC – thus establishing it as the central dialect for English language learning.

It could be argued that these kinds of statements are not unusual for a text of this nature - especially when considering its purpose and source. The NC and English PoS have been written by a government body (DfE) with a view to guiding, developing and regulating the content and 'quality' of teaching and provision in England. Arguably, the intention behind the statements and document could simply be to guide teachers and state what needs to be covered and what opportunities schools should be providing for children. Obviously, if schools are to be regulated against the content and standards of the NC, this guidance needs to be explicit. Nevertheless, the significance of the document as a whole needs to be taken into account. In the English PoS glossary, the NC clearly defines what children should be taught regarding SE – defining Standard English in opposition to regional varieties and specifying the status of SE as the official natural language and as a language of wider communication:

> Standard English can be recognised by the use of a very small range of forms such as *those books, I did it* and *I wasn't doing anything* (rather than their non-Standard equivalents)… It is the variety of English which is used, with only minor variation, as a

> major world language… The aim of the national curriculum is that everyone should be able to use Standard English as needed in writing and in relatively formal speaking. (Example): *I did it because they were not willing to undertake any more work on those houses.* [formal Standard English] (DfE, 2014, p. 84).

When considering such NC statements regarding language learning and development, and statements in the accompanying glossary, it subsequently becomes very clear, in the authors' views, that there is only one 'correct' way of speaking English. Therefore, in order to succeed within this NC framework, children must be able to learn, understand, replicate and consciously use the version of SE set out there. The document does not just exemplify what the 'correct' form of Standard English is ("those books, I did it and I wasn't doing anything"), but also defines exactly what is incorrect and, what is deemed to be 'casual' and 'non-standard English' by the NC authors. Examples of 'non-standard' forms are actually given. Take, for example, the following expression: "I done it cos they wouldn't do no more work on them houses" (DfE, 2014, p. 85). However, there is no reference to the specific version of non-standard English this expression exemplifies. Moreover, no mention is made of the fact that there are significant numbers of non-standard varieties of English used throughout England which differ systematically from each other. Thus, when put into context, the Programmes of Study do not just give directives for the teaching of spoken English, but they are very clearly identifying one specific variety - namely Standard English. This raises some significant questions when discussing the potential influence of the National Curriculum, and its content, on language ideologies in the classroom, on participants' language attitudes and choices, and on the attainment of children from working class backgrounds and of boys in particular against these NC

requirements. A number of crucial questions arise from the ways in which the teaching and learning of spoken and written English is portrayed in this NC document:

- If children are from regions and local neighbourhoods where they rarely encounter Standard English in their families, in their social circles or immediate environments, then what forms of support can be put in place to allow them to access Standard English varieties? It is not enough to simply require than SE should/has to be learnt.
- What are the consequences for children who speak these regional varieties, when Standard English is portrayed as being the only 'proper' and 'correct' form of speech?

3.5 The 2014 version of the National Curriculum: Structure, discourse and content

During the process of writing this thesis, there was a change from one National Curriculum to another (implemented by the Conservative government in 2014). There were significant changes in focus and content – triggering important considerations for teachers, schools and the teaching of English. I saw it as an essential moment to investigate these National Curriculum changes and to assess the implications they might have for teaching, for children's learning and to build an understanding of children's perceptions of Standard English.

The current NC was first published by the DfE on the 14th October 2013 and trialled in schools. Following a period of adaptation, and amendment, the final publication

appeared on 16th July 2014. It became part of the curriculum and qualifications framework for schools, colleges and children's services.

I begin by commenting on the overall text structure. As Fairclough (2001) has argued, all texts have a structure, e.g. in formatting, in ordering, and this structure carries meaning. It can also reflect, produce and reproduce the orders of discourse that underpin the text or the institutions that have created the text. Text structures are relatively stable. They include genres, paragraph structure, example texts and styles, for example. These all have a direct impact on the way a text is shaped, interpreted, and reproduced. So, as Fairclough (2001) has pointed out, the structuring of any text can provide some preliminary insights into the discourses which lie behind the text.

In the text of the NC, the English PoS is the first programme of study addressed and presented. This may be because alphabetically it comes before Maths and Science. However, it is also placed before all other subject areas (including Art and Design and Technology) and it is given more substantial weighting than other subjects. This suggests that learning English is placed as being of primary importance for all students. Reinforcing this interpretation, the Language and Literacy chapter of the NC states that "(f)luency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects" (DfE, 2014, p. 6).

The opening line of the NC is also a direct command, or directive, to the reader. No choice is given regarding the study of English in England: "All local-authority-

maintained schools in England must teach these programmes of study" (DfE, 2014, p. 1). This directive appears again on page 6 as follows, again with the verb form 'must follow': "Pupils of compulsory school age… must follow the national curriculum" (DfE, 2014, p. 6). This is a clear statement of obligation. Schools are bound to fulfil the requirements of the NC; there is no choice. This exemplifies the authoritative nature of the discourse in the document.

In the opening aims, we encounter the following declaration:

> The national curriculum provides pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge that they need to be educated citizens. It introduces pupils to the best that has been thought and said, and helps engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement (DfE, 2014, p. 6).

Here we see the NC being asserted as being the sole legitimate body of school knowledge for the nation as a whole; the knowledge required to be classed as an 'educated citizen'. There is no clear reference to the social actors who have, purportedly, produced "the best that has been thought and said", since the passive voice is used. These social actors are, however, likely to have been people vested with privilege, people within the dominant social class and people who are speakers of Standard English.

3.5.1 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), early language development and guidance on assessment

For Foucault, discourse is a means of exercising power that produces subjects, particularly "speaking subjects", who adhere to the "rules of exclusion" that regulate discourse in a given social arena (1972, p. 197). The process of the production of speaking subjects becomes apparent in the NC in the specific content and requirements for individual year groups. The first section focuses on Word Reading in Year 1 and outlines the phonic knowledge and skills needed to develop early reading and speaking skills. The guidance in this instance focuses explicitly on the Standard English skills the pupils are required to develop. No account is taken of specific accents or dialects. The text highlights the need to "decode… respond speedily" and "understand and develop(e)… knowledge" (DfE, 2014, p. 20).

The language of these early sections of the NC varies from that outlined in the initial content: it is less dictatorial. This NC section appears to require children to be investigative, work with curiosity and show independent learning behaviours (DfE, 2014, p. 20). Moreover, at this stage, no specific mention is made of the need to focus just on SE. Schools are free to teach varying sounds of spoken English according to region/pupil; teachers are also allowed to recognise children's development and attainment taking account of dialect, accent and speech variations. This is reflected in the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check test materials where guidelines allow for sociolinguistic variations. The following statement appears in the guidance:

> A pupil's accent should be taken into account when deciding whether a response is acceptable, but there must be no bias for or against pupils with a particular accent. Any pronunciation

> difficulties should be taken into account when deciding whether a response is acceptable (Standards and Testing Agency, 2016, p. 1).

The juxtaposition of "pronunciation difficulties", which could be interpreted as being linked to children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and to those with Moderate Learning Difficulties, with "accent" is problematic and appears to imply that the two fall within the same educational context/categorisation. This is neither clear, nor helpful. However, what is clear is that, in dealing with the early stages of education, the NC does not restrict children to particular language formats/spoken forms. They are free to develop, understand and decode letters, sounds, words and language following their personal linguistic repertoires. The test guidelines for the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check even directly address issues regarding regional pronunciation and variations:

> Some of the pseudo-words in the screening check contain vowel digraphs that end with 'r', such as 'ur'. In a small number of regional dialects, the 'r' in words with these vowel digraphs is voiced and pupils who speak with these dialects will be known to their teachers. For these pupils, pseudo-words with a vowel digraph ending in 'r', such as 'nurt' may be pronounced as /nɜːrt/ instead of /nɜːt/. These pronunciations are acceptable alternatives (Standards and Testing Agency, 2015, p. 1).

The screening check appears to encourage linguistic flexibility, rather than focus on a specific dialect or accent such as SE. It seems to be encouraging and seems to be allowing practical and investigative methods of learning rather than imposing norms for statutory assessment. Supporting such approaches, Bialystok (1991, p. 185) has argued there are very important moments in a child's intellectual development which are shaped by their early language development. She argues that they use language

as a "tool of thought" to "plan, guide and monitor their activity in a self-regulatory fashion".

Consequently, the most constructive developmental environments, which foster both practical and abstract forms of human intelligence, are found when language, speech, practical activity and environment are all taken into consideration. To some extent, the Year 1 section of the NC appears to work from a similar theoretical standpoint, converging the lines of language, educational and social development with practical activities. Arguably, therefore, such approaches, exemplified by the early stages of the NC, could lead to long-term positive language development for children because of the lack of constraints and rigid learning boundaries.

3.5.2 Later language development and the National Curriculum focus on language forms and Standard English

However, the more inclusive pedagogic approaches hinted at in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) do not feature in the remainder of the text. Instead, there is a significant shift in approach. In the latter Year 1 content, and in ensuing Year 2 objectives, the discourse of the NC requirements and criteria appear to become more formulaic, explicit and directive. It is specified that: "Pupils should be taught to develop their understanding of the concepts set out in English Appendix 2 by":

- joining words and joining clauses using 'and'
- beginning to punctuate sentences using a capital letter and a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark

- using a capital letter for names of people, places, the days of the week, and the personal pronoun 'I'
- learning the grammar for year 1 in Appendix 2 (DfE, 2014, p. 25).

It is also required that students should be "taught to use the grammatical terminology in Appendix 2 in discussing their writing" (DfE, 2014, p. 25).

The focus on language forms here is very specific, especially regarding grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. This represents a significant contrast with EYFS and early Year 1 curricular principles which emphasise discovering, exploring and playing with language/sounds. The implication in this text, and accompanying meta-language, is that more formalised learning is needed to ensure the development of literacy beyond early childhood.

The text also goes one step further to specify the language and grammar rules to which this language learning is to adhere: "Pupils should begin to use some of the distinctive features of Standard English in their writing. 'Standard English' is defined in the Glossary" (DfE, 2014, p. 15). This distinct move away from earlier learning styles and form, allowing space for different accents and regional varieties as well as group objectives, now frames English learning within SE rules. Moreover, the references to, and presence of, SE becomes more and more prominent throughout the text – growing in significance as the English curriculum unfolds.

This shift is evident in the curricular objectives where, for example, pupils are required to "be taught to speak clearly and convey ideas confidently using Standard English"

(DfE, 2014, pp. 15-17). Other requirements include the following: pupils should "be taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use Standard English" and "speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English" (DfE, 2014, pp. 15-17). This is a stark contrast to allowing regional variation in accent, dialect and pronunciation in the Year 1 curriculum and Phonics Screening Check assessment materials. Now, the content to be taught appears to be filtered explicitly through SE structures and rules. The assessment of children's achievement is also conducted in line with SE requirements and regulations.

To sum up, the text defines what can and cannot be learnt - what is legitimate knowledge. The NC clearly represents Standard English as the most highly valued form of linguistic capital in British society and it serves as a key resource for achieving social and institutional status. The representation of Standard English is achieved in the NC text through the use of highly authoritative discourse, including the frequent use of verb forms such as "must" and "should".

In Chapters 6 and 7 of this thesis, I will show how the boys from Sandwell participating in this study actually described, perceived and judged forms of spoken English, how they revealed their awareness of the wider social and discursive context which they found themselves in and how they represented their own identities and sense of belonging within this broader social and ideological context.

3.6 The National Curriculum and its bases of power

The NC document repeatedly states the name of the publisher (DfE). The NC website also echoes this. The DfE branding is clearly reinforced and highlighted. The name appears at the top of every title page. It is the first thing all readers see. Readers are also told that "The Secretary of State for Education is required to publish programmes of study" (DfE, 2014, p. 6) and that "(m)aintained schools in England are legally required to follow the statutory national curriculum" (DfE, 2014, p. 5). Readers are repeatedly reminded that this is a government document and that the government has a legal and political right to create a National Curriculum and the right to create, publish and enforce language and literacy policy. The NC document thus has a legal status, hence the implicit warning that schools could face legal proceedings if they do not conform.

A much-quoted observation by Foucault (1972, p. 227) is relevant here. He noted that "any education system is a political way of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourses, along with the knowledges and powers which they carry". Thus, in the UK context, the NC constitutes a means of exercising discursive power to specifically control the actions of teachers, the learning behaviours of students and the outcomes of learning in the classroom.

3.7 New capitalism and the new knowledge economy

In Foucauldian terms, the NC text is promoting and legitimising specific skills and behaviours (Foucault, 1972, p. 216). Extending this argument, Fairclough (2001, p. 6) claimed that such areas of government policy-making are a reflection of "new

capitalism". Post-war capitalism is being restructured and rescaled because of technological advances, economic restructuring and changes in global economic relations. Other researchers, such as Ball (2013), have even suggested that "new capitalism" has given rise to "eugenic modes of thought", and such modes of thought "remain thoroughly ingrained within education policy and practice" (Ball, 2013, p. 91). Arguably, therefore, the current government in the United Kingdom and its serving departments (the DfE included) are a part of, and are working within, this framework of "new capitalism". Moreover, with the advent of the knowledge economy, knowledge, discourse and "language may have a more significant role in contemporary socioeconomic changes than it has had in the past" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 6). As Fairclough has put it:

> Governments on different scales and of quite varied political complexions now take it as a mere fact of life (though a 'fact' produced in part by inter-governmental agreements) that all must bow to the emerging logic of a globalizing knowledge-driven economy (2001, p. 5).

3.8 The National Curriculum glossary: Defining Standard English and overlooking research evidence

The NC glossary acknowledges there are many different possible definitions of the term Standard English, recognising that "there are different schools of thought on grammar" and therefore, different views on what constitutes Standard English (DfE, 2014, p. 70). However, the glossary also makes the NC's position very clear stating that "the terms defined here clarify those being used in the programmes of study" (DfE, 2014, p. 70). The glossary also recommends that "teachers should consult the

many books that are available" if they need further details (DfE, 2014, p. 70). It does not specify which books these are and does not give a clear list or bibliography, thereby making explicit the reliance on key texts that have shaped the NC's definition of Standard English. Either way, this is an interesting strategy, as there is extensive research exploring the definition of SE in the late modern age showing that it is an ever-evolving entity that is hard to define and constantly being shaped by all manner of different influences. The NC document implies that SE is a distinct variety, widely recognisable and used globally. This view of SE comes over clearly in statements such as: "Standard English is the variety of English which is used, with only minor variation, as a major world language" (DfE, 2014, p. 94). This statement merely articulates a particular linguistic, ideological position. It has no empirical basis.

In contrast, drawing on extensive empirical work, Clark and Asprey (2013) have argued that a definition of SE is virtually impossible. This is because, since adoption in the 17th Century, SE has been an ever-changing variety - the literature on the virtual impossibility of defining Standard English is reviewed in more detail in Chapter 2. Nevertheless, despite the research evidence available, the NC and English Programmes of Study maintain a fixed definition regarding "Standard English" and insist that its rules and grammatical definitions must be applied throughout all year groups. A significant number of references are made to the importance of this element of learning:

> It is important that pupils learn the correct grammatical terms in English and that these terms are integrated within teaching (DfE, 2014, p. 15).
>
> Grammar should be taught explicitly: pupils should be taught the terminology and concepts set out in English Appendix 2, and be

> able to apply them correctly to examples of real language, such as their own writing (DfE, 2014, p. 40).

As we see in the two quotations above, the words "correct" or "correctly" are used with some frequency with reference to Standard English.

Again, in the glossary, the importance of SE is reinforced within the context of English learning. It is claimed that "(t)he aim of the national curriculum is that everyone should be able to use Standard English as needed in writing and in relatively formal speaking" (DfE, 2014, p. 94). The use of the word "relatively" raises the question of where the boundaries of 'formality' lie. In fact, the notion of formality is constructed in different ways across social groups, across generations and cultural contexts. The authors of the NC presumably have in mind the use of particular registers and genres of SE in institutional settings, where considerable authority and power are vested. Fairclough's observation (2013, p. 59) on the notion of formality is highly pertinent here. Fairclough states that:

> 'Formality' is one pervasive and familiar aspect of constraints on access to discourse. Formality is a common property in many societies of practices and discourses of high social prestige and restricted access. It is a contributory factor in keeping access restricted, for it makes demands on participants above and beyond those of most discourse, and the ability to meet those demands unevenly distributed. It can also serve to generate awe among those who are excluded by it and daunted by it (2013, p. 59).

3.9 Formality, 'social class', social distinctions and the National Curriculum

Clark (2013) draws attention to the fact that the making of distinctions between spoken English varieties indexes class structures. She has also argued that separations and distinctions, such as those shown in the NC glossary, serve to reinforce negative perceptions of non-Standard English as "vulgar" and subordinate to its SE counterpart (Clark, 2013, p. 15).

By defining the level of formality that pupils should aspire to, conforming with SE ideals, and by dictating that all pupils should be adhering to SE speech norms in specific settings, the current National Curriculum is clearly contributing to the reinforcement of class distinctions and social order.

So, to conclude, national curriculum documents and language-in-education policies are developed within particular social and political contexts. When introduced into national school systems, they are designed to reinforce or reshape the existing sociolinguistic order (McCarty, 2011). In the case of the 2014 National Curriculum in England, the dominant discourse is one which reinforces the sociolinguistic order; one in which social class boundaries are clearly drawn in situated ways along linguistic lines and one in which SE is discursively constructed as having greater value and legitimacy than other regional varieties of English, particularly in specialised 'formal' registers or genres associated with particular institutional settings.

National Curriculum documents and educational policies also contribute to the definition of the values associated with citizenship and are thus part of the wider body

of political discourse produced and reproduced within a nation-state, a discourse underpinned by inequalities of power. As Fairclough (1995, p. 182) has affirmed:

> Political discourse provides the clearest illustration of the constitutive power of discourse. It reproduces or changes the social world by reproducing or changing people's representations of it and the principles of classification which underlie them… it can reproduce or change the social world only in and through reproducing and changing social classes and groups – it works simultaneously on representations and classifications of people.

In the data analysis chapters in this thesis (Chapters 5 and 6), I will provide a detailed account of the way in which this sociolinguistic order looks from the vantage point of a group of boys, with working-class origins, who are enrolled in a local school in a neighbourhood in the West Midlands.

3.10 Participants' use of spoken forms associated with the West Midlands

Before moving on to the research methods employed in this study, I feel it is important to note the categorisation and selection of participants based on their language use, as discussed earlier in Chapter 2 (section 2.5) and referenced next in the research methodology (section 4.2.1). When selecting participants for the investigation, and when looking to identify their use of language resources, my observations were guided by research in this region by Clark (2013), Asprey (2007) and Clark and Asprey (2013). In the three sections below, I provide a brief overview of these features, drawing on research in Sandwell and neighbouring regions.

3.10.1 Phonetics and phonology

Painter (1963, p. 30) conducted research which identified a subtle stratification of vowels within Black Country speech. This local variety has a system of vowels including a short [i] in words such as KIT. The short [i] contrasts with the "phonetically…relatively short, lax, fairly front, and fairly close unrounded" version which Wells (1982, p. 128) claimed is found in Received Pronunciation (RP) English and realised as [ɪ].

There are also phonetic differences in the vowels. In words such as *strap* the phoneme /æ/ is traditionally used in Received Pronunciation but is characterised by [a] in West Midlands vernacular. Other identifiers or markers include phonemic differences for example in the word *mouth* where /aʊ/ is used in RP accent, [æʊ] is used in Midlands Dialects. In *goat* /əʊ/ is used in RP in comparison to Midland's dialects in which the phoneme is [ɑʊ]. Finally, zero realisation of [j] as shown by Matthiessen (1999, p.111) who argued that "J-dropping does appear (especially with new [nu:])… in teenage speech". Asprey (2007, p.98) reinforced these findings stating that "Yod-deletion is… reported as a socially significant phenomenon in Sandwell, connected to both age groups and interview style". Clark (2013, p. 69) also noted that "Yod dropping is also common in BhamEng; Tennant's (1982: 28) rendering of New Street Station as 'Noo Strate StayShun' showing this clearly".

3.10.2 Morphology

Research has also indicated that "morphology is arguably the most distinctive component" of West Midland spoken varieties, such as those found in Birmingham and Sandwell (Asprey, 2007, p. 105). According to Asprey (2007, p. 105) "the auxiliary and modal verbs in particular… differ radically from those of Standard English". Asprey (2007) highlights in particular the use of non-reflexive pronouns such as 'me' in place of 'myself' as a key marker, with 74% of test participants indicating that they were familiar with pronoun usage such as "I shall have to get me a cup of tea" within the Black Country.

3.10.3 Lexis

As Asprey (2007, p. 149) argued, the collection, analysis and use of lexis is problematic for a number of reasons and, it can be argued, lexical items can "never… be identical in truth or reference value". Therefore, when considering lexis in relation to this investigation and the participants in this study, lexis will not form a key component of the analysis. However, this investigation will share the view of Asprey (2007, p. 150) which argues, "in the Black Country, variation in lexical choice may correlate (in the Labovian sense) with extralinguistic variables such as gender and age" and therefore be a marker from which to identify West Midland spoken varieties. For example, in line with Asprey (2007, p. 158), the children in this study used terminology such as 'hit', 'lamp' and 'smack' when talking about being hit. In informal observations, I also observed the children used examples of 'grass' and 'tell tales' when referring to telling on somebody or reporting them to a teacher or a parent. In addition, in informal

observations and audio-recordings, the boys in this study used 'bostin' and 'buzzin' to describe success or something good.

Whilst not localised to the West Midland spoken varieties (and acknowledging the reported rise in usage across a variety of spoken forms and social groups), I also noted the use of the discourse participle 'like'. Asprey (2007, p. 142) also identified usage of the discourse participle 'like' in 'Black Country' varieties: uses of 'like' to "serve as a pause before new information, and utterance finally they serve as a focuser to refer the listener back to the important information which went before".

This aspect of the boys' language repertoire and language identity was an important consideration which needed to be considered during the review of literature, selecting of participants and when designing the study. However, in the following chapter, I turn next to an account of the research methodology and the design and conduct of the fieldwork.

CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research questions I am investigating are:

- What are the boys' attitudes to standard and non-standard forms of spoken English?
- How do the boys' language attitudes and perceptions relate to the requirements of the National Curriculum and the language ideologies underpinning it?
- What are the implications for educational practice and policy?

4.1 The school in this case study (SNDWLLSCHOL)

Children are the centre of the research and consequently the centre of the methodologies. The participants were 60 KS2 male pupils (10-12 years); they attended the same two-form entry Sandwell primary school. SNDWLLSCHOL was chosen because of its location and accessibility. It was chosen because I was employed as Headteacher and worked extensively with the pupils, staff and academy committee for over 11 years. I had a working knowledge of SNDWLLSCHOL, its procedures, policies and academic performance. I was also aware of issues facing pupils attending SNDWLLSCHOL and the overall attainment picture across Sandwell.

Questions could be raised regarding my role in the school as a professional and as a researcher. However, I took full account of this and other related research ethics guidelines (for example, those published online by the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL)). In Applied Linguistics and Social Sciences, those published by UCL

(University College London), and those published for people conducting research in the workplace produced at Kings College London (KCL, 2009), were considered in the design and methodologies for the investigation. I detail below how I took account of the KCL guidelines.

4.1.1 The School and my role as a researcher

As the serving Headteacher in SNDWLLSCHOL, I had to be aware that there could be "additional perceived pressure to participate on participants… as they may feel awkward in declining a request to help" (KCL, 2009, p. 2). Therefore, following the KCL ethics guidelines, I sought extra, external permission to conduct research in SNDWLLSCHOL by first allowing the governing body and academy committee to decide, without my presence, if the research would compromise my position in school or be unreasonable for children to participate in. After speaking with my supervisor, I agreed to make very clear from the beginning to the governing body and academy board that there was no pressure to participate and to make it an opt-in rather than an opt-out investigation. Therefore, I initially met with all parents of the children and held a meeting to outline the potential research focus and methodologies. I explained, as clearly as I could, what I was investigating and why I was choosing these specific participants, and I held a discussion with the parents and answered all and any questions. Once I was sure that the school and the parents were happy for me to continue, I spoke to the classes with target pupils and explained that I would be conducting an investigation, what would be involved and that I would be holding a signing up session in one week's time during break time. The boys who came to the sign up session were again briefed, told clearly what methodologies were involved and

what they would be required to do. If no one had signed up or wished to be involved, then I would have had to reconsider the methodologies and approaches. However, participants seemed keen to share their opinions and be involved.

In line with the KCL guidelines (2009), I made additional arrangements to demonstrate to my supervisor and the reviewing committee at SNDWLLSCHOL that I had created opportunities for both children and parents to choose to not be involved in the research. Thus, after the initial separate meetings with parent and pupils, letters were sent home with pupils, so that they could discuss involvement in the project in private with their parents and make their own decision about being involved. It was made very clear that involvement had absolutely no influence on school participation, assessment, grades or relationships and that this investigation was not connected to school life. The reply slips came in quickly and in number. Therefore, I agreed to meet with parents and pupils one last time to go through the investigation and explain the finer details and timelines. Again, in accordance with the KCL guidelines, I put further practical arrangements in place to ensure participants could "change their minds" and withdraw at any time "without having to give a reason even after they have participated" (KCL, 2009, p. 2). In addition, in line with KCL guidelines (2009), I gave participants the opportunity to speak to a third party (a member of the office team and a parent of pupils in the school) and provided the details of my university supervisor for all participants and parents. This was in case they felt reluctant to ask me directly, due to my position in the school and my professional relationship with the children.

The KCL guidelines also anticipated the following area of conflict of interest:

> Occasionally your professional role and your role as a researcher will come into conflict. A common conflict is where your professional role obliges you to take action following a disclosure made by a participant, which falls outside your obligations for disclosure as a researcher (2009, p. 2).

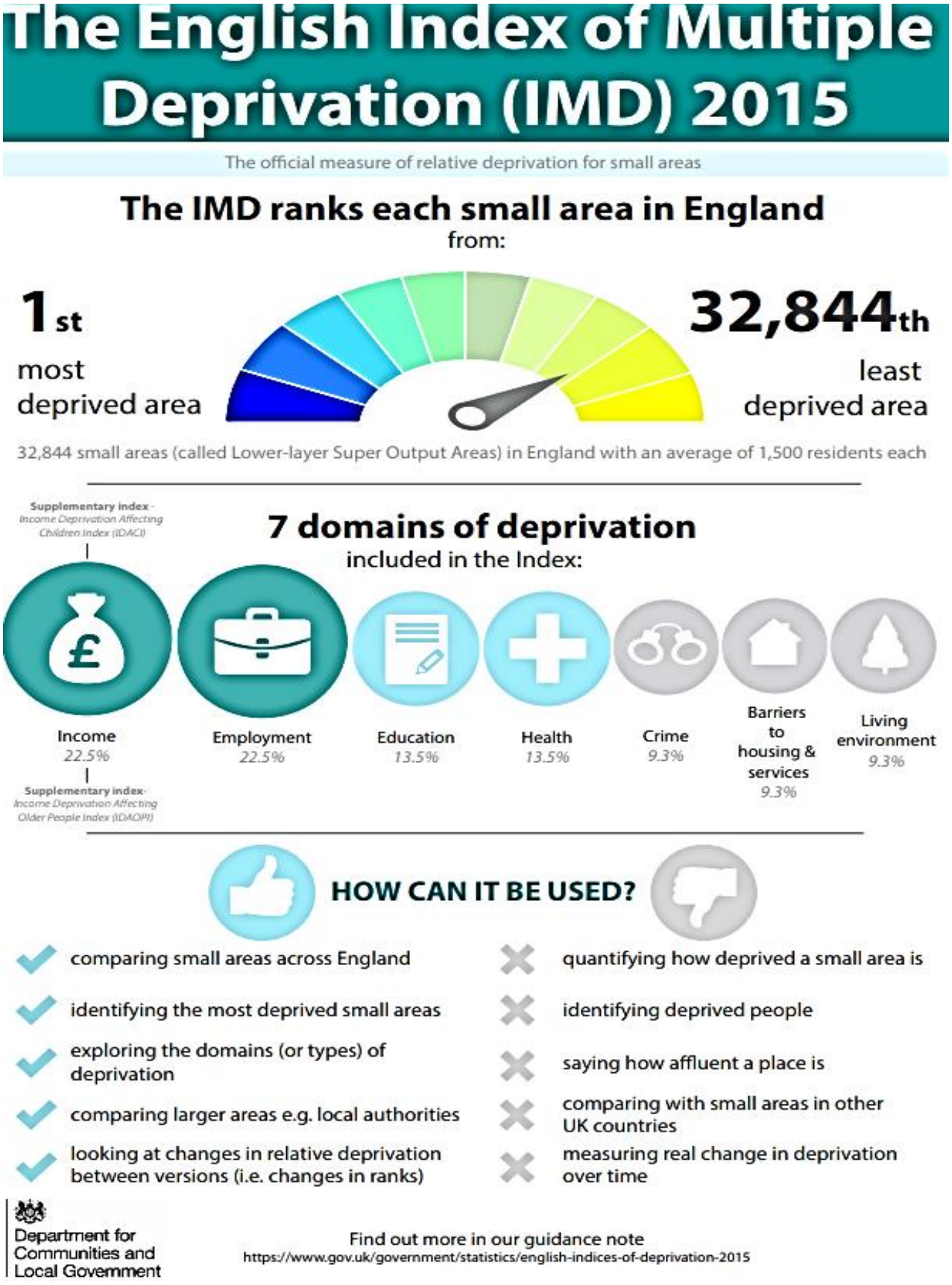
As the named person in charge of safeguarding in school, I felt that this could be an issue for participants and influence research outcomes. Therefore, a separate member of staff was appointed to the senior leadership team as Designated Safe-Guarding Lead (DSL) for the school. This individual had a high level of training and responsibility for child protection. They were fully consulted about the research design and methodologies. Participants were also very familiar with this DSL and knew they could go to them with any concerns. The DSL accompanied me at Local Academy Committee meetings, pupil briefings and at parent meetings to oversee declarations of interest, the process and provided a further point of contact should parents or participants wish to remove themselves discretely from the investigation.

4.1.2 SNDWLLSCHOL and social deprivation

SNDWLLSCHOL school was chosen as it is part of Sandwell LEA - one of the lowest attaining authorities in English KS2 reading, writing and grammar SATs. It was also chosen because of its socio-economic standing. The English Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) (DfCLG, 2015) categorise all 32,844 neighbourhoods in England according to specific measures of deprivation. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is calculated using seven categories: income, employment, health, crime, social barriers (housing and services)

and living environment and is defined by the Department for Communities and Local Government as per Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1: The English Index of Multiple Deprivation (DfCLG, 2015)



The DfCLG (2015) compares and highlights areas of deprivation in relation to all neighbourhoods across England. The 2015 IMD reveals how Sandwell and surrounding areas rank amongst the most deprived regions in England – with Sandwell being in the most deprived 10% (see Figure 4.2 below).

Figure 4.2: Deprivation ranking of neighbourhoods across England (DfCLG, 2015)

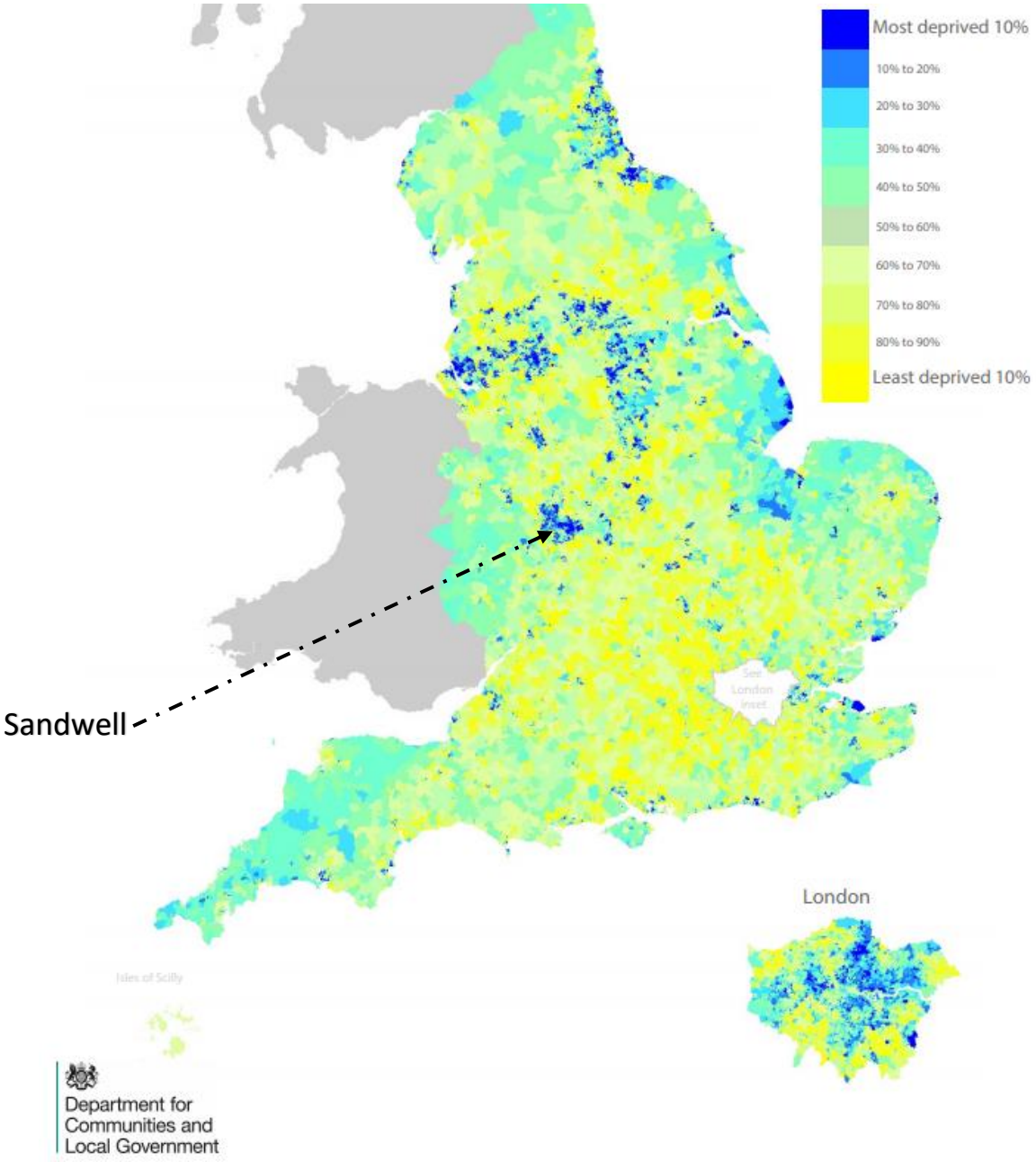


Table 4.1: Changes in neighbourhood deprivation rankings 2010-2015 (DfCLG, 2015)

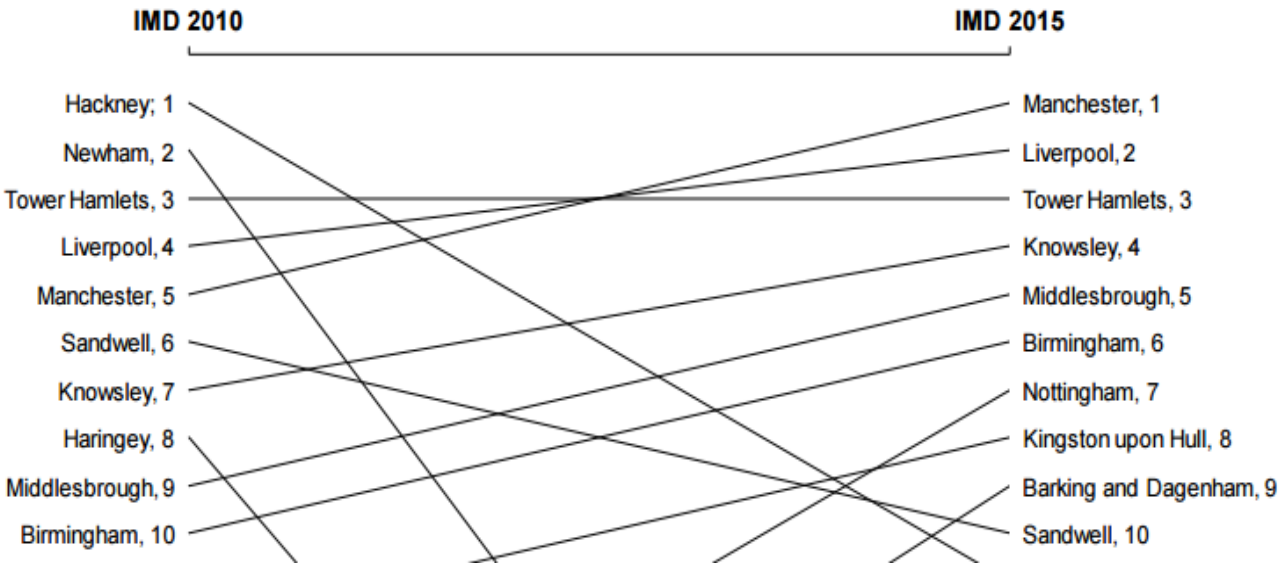


Table 4.1 above displays the most deprived neighbourhoods (2010 and 2015 indices). According to IMD, Sandwell is the 10th most deprived region in England overall. As stark as this statistic is, it is actually achieving an improvement from 2010 indices rankings where it was placed 6th/32,844 (DfCLG, 2015, p. 15).

Table 4.2: Deprivation ranking of neighbourhoods in income and employment (DfCLG, 2015)

	Income Deprivation Domain		Employment Deprivation Domain	
Rank	Local Authority District	Proportion of the population living in income deprived households	Local Authority District	Proportion of working age adults in employment deprivation
1	Knowsley	27.6%	Knowsley	23.3%
2	Middlesbrough	26.8%	Blackpool	22.8%
3	Blackpool	25.7%	Middlesbrough	21.6%
4	Kingston upon Hull	25.7%	Hartlepool	21.1%
5	Liverpool	25.6%	Liverpool	20.7%
6	Tower Hamlets	25.3%	Kingston upon Hull	20.2%
7	Manchester	24.2%	South Tyneside	19.8%
8	Birmingham	24.2%	Hastings	18.7%
9	Barking and Dagenham	24.2%	Great Yarmouth	18.7%
10	Sandwell	24.1%	Wolverhampton	18.7%
11	Hartlepool	23.9%	Thanet	18.6%
12	Wolverhampton	23.8%	Redcar and Cleveland	18.6%
13	Hackney	23.4%	Sunderland	18.5%
14	Nottingham	22.5%	Burnley	18.5%
15	South Tyneside	22.3%	Rochdale	18.5%
16	Hastings	22.2%	St. Helens	18.3%
17	Leicester	22.1%	Sandwell	18.1%

Table 4.2 above reveals some of the key issues affecting Sandwell's overall index rating including income and employment deprivation. Sandwell ranks in the top 10 poorest neighbourhoods for income and top 20 for employment (DfCLG, 2015, p. 22). These issues are further emphasised in Table 4.3 below which shows that Sandwell is ranked 18/32,844 overall for the IDACI index.

Table 4.3: Deprivation ranking of neighbourhoods in IDACI and IDAOPI (DfCLG, 2015)

	Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)		Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI)	
Rank	Local Authority District	Proportion of children living in income deprived households	Local Authority District	Proportion of older people living in income deprived households
1	Tower Hamlets	39.3%	Tower Hamlets	49.7%
2	Middlesbrough	35.7%	Hackney	43.1%
3	Islington	35.3%	Newham	41.0%
4	Nottingham	34.5%	Manchester	36.3%
5	Manchester	34.3%	Islington	36.1%
6	Kingston upon Hull	34.0%	Southwark	34.3%
7	Knowsley	33.7%	Lambeth	33.2%
8	Liverpool	33.4%	Liverpool	32.7%
9	Blackpool	32.9%	Knowsley	32.6%
10	Hackney	32.2%	Haringey	31.8%
11	Barking & Dagenham	31.9%	Leicester	31.5%
12	Wolverhampton	31.3%	Sandwell	29.2%
13	Enfield	30.7%	Kingston upon Hull	28.4%
14	Hartlepool	30.7%	Birmingham	28.2%
15	Birmingham	30.5%	Brent	28.0%
16	Lambeth	30.4%	Barking & Dagenham	27.9%
17	Southwark	30.3%	Hammersmith & Fulham	27.5%
18	Sandwell	29.9%	Nottingham	25.9%
19	Lewisham	29.6%	Lewisham	25.7%
20	Norwich	29.0%	Camden	25.4%

Table 4.3 above details important information from the IDACI index highlighting how Sandwell's general levels of deprivation involve and affect children. This table highlights how deprivation specifically affecting children is a serious issue in Sandwell with 29.9% of all Sandwell children living in income-deprived households. This information is important as it contextualises SNDWLLSCHOL and similar Sandwell schools - highlighting the daily social and economic challenges facing Sandwell pupils.

4.2 Selecting research participants

Sandwell is a diverse, multicultural borough whose children originate from a wide range of backgrounds. For this study, only boys who fit the following criteria were selected to participate. They included boys in the following categories:

i. Boys who had been born in England and who use English as their first language at home.

ii. Boys who were familiar with Midlands dialects and who used Midlands regional vernaculars themselves.

iii. Boys who were regarded as in line with or below KS2 SATs national averages in English reading, writing and grammar.

iv. Boys who were from homes below the socio-economic average/from an area where the average income is below socio-economic norms.

The central focus of the study was on those who used English as their first language. SNDWLLSCHOL had increasing numbers of English as Additional Language (EAL) pupils with increasing and varied needs. The Syrian refugee crisis, and destabilisation in the Middle East, meant that SNDWLLSCHOL and Sandwell schools had growing numbers of refugees joining late in their academic lives (some as late as Spring Term commencing in February when children take SATs tests in May and leave for secondary school in July). Thus, the decision was taken to focus on first language users of English. This was for a few reasons. One was pastoral. New-to-school Syrian children had arrived in England unsettled and with immediate needs. Participating in research projects was not a priority for these children. The other was regarding the Accent

Awareness Test. The children at the heart of this thesis are Sandwell boys. Therefore, the research needed to focus on the attitudes and perceptions of boys who had been born and brought up in the area, learned to speak in Sandwell's environment and been schooled in Sandwell. This study draws from the research of Clark (2005) and Rampton (2005a) who have argued that education, environment and experience shape language identity and attitude. New arrivals to the area/country may have had significantly contrasting experiences.

Regarding the other selection criteria, 30 ten to eleven year-old boys were selected from SNDWLLSCHOL: all came from families below the socio-economic average, as defined by the Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (2005, p. 6) and IDACI index (2015) data. The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) for SNDWLLSCHOL is compiled by the Data Intelligence Unit for SMBC. IDACI is a comprehensive breakdown of schools' children, their backgrounds and their characteristics. All IDACI information is available online at www.dfe.gov.uk. The parents of all of the Sandwell boys participating in the study had been born in England, were first language users of English and lived in Sandwell. The boys were familiar with regional dialects specific to the West Midlands including Birmingham and the Black Country. They had also lived in the local area for at least six years. According to SNDWLLSCHOL's admissions policy/criteria, the children have to have lived in the local area from the age of at least four years of age to qualify for a school place. The participants had all attended SNDWLLSCHOL for at least six academic years. Having grown up in Sandwell and neighbouring/surrounding areas, a proportion of the participants used broad regional vernaculars specific to Birmingham/Sandwell/Black

Country. Furthermore, as indicated earlier, the academic achievement of Sandwell KS2 pupils in English is below national averages – lying significantly behind Standard English speaking regions in England (DfE, 2015a). No participants had any recorded physical/emotional/behavioural disabilities.

4.2.1 Further considerations guiding selection of participants

To further categorise/choose participants against the criteria above, data was acquired from SNDWLLSCHOL's Census, IDACI, Acorn, School Information Management System, RAISE online/ASP and pupil tracker systems. This comprehensive data provided further detailed information regarding: backgrounds, children/parent ethnicities, attainment in English, areas lived in, social deprivation indicators, free school meals eligibility and IDACI information. This information is confidential and was available to me, with governor consent, as Headteacher. It cannot be published here. The main categories taken from reports, and used as indicators of social and economic deprivation, were ones in which children and/or their carers were identified as "Free School Meals Eligible", "Financially Stretched", living in "Urban Adversity", "Not in Private Households", from "Struggling Estates", living in "Difficult Circumstances" or with "Poorer Pensioners". These indicators were a means of verifying that selected participants were from below the socio-economic norm and fitted the criteria for my study.

I chose to focus on 'West Midland' vernaculars rather than on vernaculars from specific sub-regions (like the 'Black Country') after considering the research of Asprey (2005)

and Chinn and Thorne (2001). Chinn and Thorne (2001, pp. 9-10) noted as follows the difficulties involved in trying to differentiate West Midland spoken forms:

> [p]eople like to think that there are clearly discernible cultural and linguistic differences between Birmingham and the Black Country, [but] does Brummie suddenly cease being spoken somewhere along the Bearwood Road [main road between Quinton in Birmingham and Halesowen in the Black Country]? Does the Black Country dialect suddenly start just after the signs welcoming you to Sandwell? Of course not. The two dialects merge seamlessly into one another like colours in a rainbow, and we should be celebrating their close kinship, not squabbling about it like schoolchildren.

To identify which children used and were familiar with West Midland vernaculars, I spent time with the boys in person (informally monitoring their spoken language). Spending time with the children gave me opportunities to discuss the research project and potential participation. Identifying children using West Midlands spoken forms was straightforward once they began entering into discussions with classmates and myself. I was able to identify participants using West Midlands spoken vernaculars – by paying attention to the main phonetic and phonemic speech patterns, noting any grammar variations, lexical forms and/or regional specific vocabulary or accents. As I listened to participants, I recognised the main characteristics of West Midlands spoken forms outlined in Wells (1982), Asprey (2007), and Clark (2008, 2013). The list of features explored within these studies is extensive. Therefore, decisions had to be made regarding which particular features to focus on. I was not undertaking a full-scale socio-linguistic study of dialect features. Instead, this was an informal exploratory phase of the study using current research and practice to inform the process of defining the nature and scope of this case study. This process was aided by the fact I had been Headteacher and worked in SNDWLLSCHOL for over eleven years. I had

become familiar with the participants, their speech forms and individual learning trajectories during my time seeing them develop through school. The key features used to identify West Midlands speech are outlined in Chapter 6, section 6.6.

Once participants' dialect and spoken forms had been confirmed as those typically occurring in West Midlands varieties, they were given consent forms and detailed letters to take home to parents (Appendix 5). All consent forms were returned to school; parents were given my contact details to discuss any issues and I made myself available after school regularly so parents/children could discuss the study in private, so as to alleviate any concerns.

4.2.2 Ensuring anonymity

Of all the guidelines on research ethics that I consulted, the University College London Ethics Committee placed particular emphasis on the fact that children should not be used in research if the research does not intend to have a positive impact on the children or issues surrounding them (UCL, 2012, p. 1). This study aimed to research and analyse the language attitudes of Sandwell boys, and consider their significance given the National Curriculum requirements and the language ideologies underpinning the curriculum. My goal was to record their opinions and perspectives to inform classroom practice and educational policy, whilst respecting their rights and development as young pupils. Furthermore, and congruent with the principles of the Children's Rights Alliance (2000, p. 82), I take the view that children are 'expert witnesses' who have an important voice, a right to be heard and a right to participate

in processes which may affect them long term. Children also have a lot to say about "the conditions of learning at school, how regimes and relationships shape their sense of status as individual learners and as members of the community and, consequently, affect their sense of commitment to learning in school" (Rudduck and Flutter, 2000, p. 76). Thus, children's views need to be heard. They were key to this research. They provided unique and insightful perspectives on their own language use, attitudes and perceptions.

To keep children at the centre of this investigation, yet protect and preserve their rights, each child was randomly assigned a number. Children were asked to record their number and name on different sheets of paper. This number was then used/written on response and feedback sheets. Participants were therefore given complete anonymity within the investigation as the record of names and numbers were kept separate from the results. At all stages, children used their number as their identifier. The children were never seated in a particular order, they were just instructed to write their number, thus when papers were collected for analysis, it was not immediately evident which child had marked/completed each test. A decision also had to be made for the audio transcriptions: pseudonyms were used in place of participants' real names instead of codes, so that consistency could be maintained when showing who spoke during conversations.

This method was chosen in line with child protection policies/procedures - ensuring that links could not be made between school and children. It was also chosen to avoid potential stereotyping, as each child's results and comments remained anonymous.

Nobody knew which number corresponded to which child, therefore views and comments could not be immediately traced back to children. This system was employed to encourage children to speak freely and voice opinions honestly as nobody working with the children could make assumptions or predictions about their responses. It was vital for children to be allowed to speak freely/voice opinions and not be constrained by educational or research frameworks. This recognises that children are competent reporters of their own experiences, whose views should be the centre of an investigation's analysis and conclusions (Bendelow and Williams, 1998).

4.3 The research approaches and methods adopted

Milroy (1987, p. 18) argued that "it is important to be aware of the theoretical implications of adopting any given method and ultimately of the kind of claims which a given method entitles an investigator to make about results". As Milroy emphasises, the research methods must be closely linked to the aims of a study. They must directly address the aims.

The aims of this study - as reflected in the research questions at the beginning of this chapter – are as follows:

- To investigate the Sandwell boys' language attitudes to standard and non-standard forms of spoken English.
- To highlight the specific demands of the National Curriculum for English and analyse the language ideologies underpinning these demands.
- To consider the implications for educational practice and policy.

There have been no large-scale educational or linguistic studies specifically exploring socio-economically disadvantaged Sandwell boys' language use and language attitudes. There have also been few studies investigating primary school pupils' awareness and attitudes towards accents between infancy and adulthood. Thus, in designing this study, I needed to find a means of gaining insights into the language attitudes, perspectives and practices of this particular group of boys and to consider them with reference to current educational practice/policy. My plan was to set the findings against the curricular demands of the National Curriculum for English and the language ideologies underpinning it. However, I was also aware that, during the data gathering process, I might encounter attitudes or practices that I had not anticipated, so my research approach needed to be relatively flexible. As Asprey (2007, p. 24) has argued:

> Any study which does not build a degree of freedom into its methodology to allow for new evidence arising during the course of a study is short sighted, and to do so in an area where the amount of existing linguistic research is very small would constitute complete methodological failure.

Table 4.4: Overview of the three main research methods employed and participants

Methods	Details	Number of participants	Participants
1. Accent Awareness Test	Test exploring boys' attitudes to accents. Boys responded to questions using software after listening to 4 different speakers' accents.	30	The 30 boys ranking lowest on IDACI deprivation indices.
2. Group discussions based on video clips of dialect	Semi-structured group discussions which explored the boys' attitudes to language use in 3 different contexts, in 3 different video clips.	26	26 boys organised into groups (6-8 pupils). Duration: between 1 to 2 hours including time to watch video clips.

Participants whose contributions to group discussions were included in my analysis (note all names are pseudonyms):

Group discussion 1: David, Eddy, Adam, Ben, Tom and Charlie

Group discussion 2: Andy, Harley, Carl, Kenwyne, Hamish, Jonesy, Nate, Lee, Sid, Tayon, Graham, Adam and Neil

Group discussion 3: Frank, Gary, Happi, Kevin, Gerry, James and Indie

3. Close analysis of the text of the National Curriculum

4.3.1 The Accent Awareness Test (AAT)

Thirty boys, aged between 10-11, attending SNDWLLSCHOL who were all classed as 'socio-economically disadvantaged' and all fitted the investigation criteria participated in this investigation. Not all pupils from the year group and school participated in all aspects of the research. Regarding the AAT, out of all male pupils present in the school, the 30 ranking lowest on IDACI and school deprivation indicators were chosen for the AAT as they reflected the closest representation of 'socio-economically disadvantaged'. Selecting only 30 children was for practical reasons/time constraints. I was unable to test all participants and obtain audio- recordings, language observations and group discussions before they left SNDWLLSCHOL.

The AAT was designed to record participants' attitudes towards accent. When defining the term accent, the definition from Hughes et al. (2012, P. 3) was followed. Thus accent in this study is based on "variations in pronunciation such as phonetic and/or phonological distinctions which are typical of particular geographical or speech communities who are socially or regionally distinct from other speech communities". In line with Hughes et al. (2012), geographical region was the most common criteria used in the AAT development.

When deciding on the AAT, it was important to consider language attitude studies and methodological approaches. Agheyisi and Fishman (1970, p. 138) noted that the study of attitudes poses methodological problems. They asked: "(w)hat constitute(s) the right kind of data from which attitudes may be inferred?" and "(h)ow does one measure in physical terms (via observations, inquiries or quantifiable measures)

something which has no overt substance?". Regarding these 'issues', Agheyisi and Fishman discuss the "hypothetical construct" approach to defining attitude, as it characterises attitude "in more measurable terms", which are "directly related to the overt behavior or verbal responses to any given set of stimuli" (1970, p. 138). Congruently, Ajzen argued that attitudes can be recorded via subjects' responses, as attitude is "a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution or event" (Ajzen, 2005, p. 3). Consequently, the AAT was designed to collect participants' attitudes by presenting them with a stimulus and then collecting responses.

Using a piece of software specifically designed for this investigation, I aimed to collect data regarding 30 boys' immediate perceptions of different speakers – based on their accents.[6] The process was kept as simple as possible. Participants listened to four accent recordings. Immediately after listening to the recordings, they were presented with structured questions based on Verbal Guise Techniques and attitudes set against Solidarity and Status Dimensions (Kircher, 2015, p. 201) (explained in chapter section 4.4). Participants were asked to rate speakers (with Birmingham, Leeds, Oxford RP and London RP accents) according to different questions, for example:

Which speaker would be the cleverest at school?
Which speaker has the best pronunciation?
Which speaker would be the best at reading and writing English?
Which speaker speaks the clearest?

The full list of questions used in the AAT can be seen in Appendix 2.

[6] A full breakdown and detailed description of this software (how it worked, what it tested and why it was used) can be found in chapter section 4.4.3.

Finally, the specially designed software recorded participants' responses – producing data highlighting their decisions/judgements. Because the questions were presented to participants immediately after listening to the accents, the software was able to record participants' instant judgements/interpretations. The collected data was then analysed for patterns or trends.

According to Agheyisi and Fishman's (1970, p. 141) three major language attitude research categories, the AAT is also a test which deals "with language-orientated or language directed attitudes", as it has been constructed to "report primarily on evaluations or ratings of language or language varieties as 'rich' or 'poor'… 'beautiful' or 'ugly', 'smooth and sweet sounding' or 'harsh'" (1970, p. 141).

As summarised by Agheyisi and Fishman, within the language and attitude research tradition, "practically everybody agrees that attitudes are learned from previous experience, and that they are not momentary but relatively 'enduring'" (1970, p. 139). Furthermore, "(m)any theorists agree that attitudes bear some positive relation to action and behaviour" (Agheyisi and Fishman, 1970, p. 141).

A questionnaire was chosen as the means of collecting participants' attitudes towards language after referring to Agheyisi and Fishman's summary of language and attitude studies and research approaches (1970, p. 141). This study is exploring participants' language attitudes in social and educational contexts. Thus, it is relevant to topic area 3 aimed at exploring the 'significance of language varieties'. Numerous previous researchers in this area of research have employed questionnaires to collect data. As Agheyisi and Fishman (1970, p. 144) noted, questionnaires are "the most popular

instrument for collecting data", and I therefore judged that they would prove to be a reliable way of mapping the boys' language attitudes in the AAT.

4.3.2 Audio-recording of group discussions after the viewing of video clips

The data sets collected from the AAT were purely quantitative and focussed on one area of language use - accent. Therefore, to develop an understanding of participants' perceptions of language/dialect use in context, it was necessary to collect qualitative data - qualitative data which gave participants opportunities to voice opinions and speak freely in discussion groups about experiences/opinions regarding language. Consequently, group discussions were chosen and conducted as below:

1. Participants were placed into groups and encouraged to engage in a relatively free general group discussion which was guided by some pre-set questions (see Appendix 3).
2. Before group discussions, participants were shown three video clips depicting different language use in mainstream media. These clips were taken from modern television shows. The different videos (and four different accents from the AAT) acted as a stimulus and participants were encouraged to freely discuss the videos, speakers and their language experiences. Conversations were recorded and analysed. The video clip and question details are explored further in chapter section 4.5.3.

The AAT and group discussions draw from theoretical approaches linked to Matched-Guise Test techniques (which will be explored in more detail when discussing the

individual elements of the methodology). Giles and Coupland (1991, p. 35) state that the matched-guise technique is ”a rigorous and elegant method for eliciting apparently private attitudes, which at least arguably controls for extraneous variables”. Thus, utilising videos displaying different language use will contextualise participants' judgements/discussions. Respondents' responses may also be informed by social stereotypes or social expectations on language use (Bourhis, Giles and Lambert, 1975).

With the group discussions, 26 children were available for recording and grouping. The original group included one pupil who had left the school, one child who was off sick and two children who had asked to no longer be involved, as they did not want to miss their play time. Therefore, the remaining 26 available boys selected to participate in the investigation, and who all fitted the research criteria outlined earlier, were organised into groups (6-8 pupils). All remaining participants who participated in the AAT, also participated in this element of the investigation. All participants were pupils in SNDWLLSCHOL and classed as socio-economically disadvantaged according to school and government data. A mediator was present to guide groups. Discussions were recorded, transcribed and analysed alongside AAT results to investigate participants' responses to standard and non-standard forms of English. The outcomes were analysed to highlight participants' language attitudes and potential factors influencing/regarding their language choices, identities and motivations (in relation to their attitudes). The original aim was to have four separate group discussions of equal group number. However, during the group discussion section and data collection, a small group of boys from two separate groups asked if they could switch groups and

be recorded along with their friends, and boys from another group. Accommodating all of the boys' requests, and making all of the switches, would have been logistically impossible. Therefore, in order to address the boys' requests, I combined the two groups into one larger group.

4.4 Carrying out the Accent Awareness Test (AAT)

The AAT was developed to explore disadvantaged Sandwell boys' attitudes towards language variation by looking at different accents. The premise was that participants' perceptions would help form a picture regarding wider language choices - highlighting attitudes to accents, motivations to choose different forms, or links between accent awareness and repertoire development.

The AAT is not a Matched Guise Test. However, the AAT falls within "speaker evaluation paradigms" (Ryan et al., 1982) and was designed after considering the theoretical basis of traditional Matched Guise Techniques (MGT) as proposed by Lambert et al. (1960). Lambert's MGT helped to highlight individuals' attitudes towards various language varieties due to societal, geographical or cultural factors. Congruent with MGT, the 30 participants knew they were listening to a series of male speakers reading the same extract aloud in audio-recordings. To minimise the effects of the different speaker's voices, potential influencing external factors (e.g. physical appearance) and contextualising information (e.g. age/job/location), were excluded. The 30 participants then had to rate the speakers using a series of questions based on the accents and voice cues only. Lambert's MGT (1967) research was based on the principle that any differences in reactions to the different voices/recordings must

reflect the attitudes towards/perceptions of the different spoken varieties and the social groups associated with the spoken varieties. The AAT is, however, not a Matched Guise Test as it does not use the same speaker to read the extract.

For that reason, the AAT falls in line with an adaptation of the MGT known as verbal-guise technique which was employed by Trudgill (1974) in the British context. This involves informants being exposed to a variety of different speakers reading the same text before assessing the speakers according to various factors (intelligence, kindness, correctness etc.). Researchers such as Trudgill adapted MGT approaches to sample non-native English speakers' attitudes to native English standard and non-standard speakers. For example, Trudgill (1974) explored American, Canadian, English and Scottish listeners' attitudes towards different varieties of spoken English. Zhang et al. (2008) also applied verbal-guise techniques in investigations of listeners' attitudes towards three female speakers whom each read the same 69 word passage. Listeners were asked to make evaluations on the bi-polar semantic differential scales for adjectives linked to language-related qualities, person-related qualities and teaching-related qualities. In line with this research paradigm, for the ATT, and to assess accent perceptions, 30 participants were asked to listen to an extract read by four speakers from four different regions. Recordings lasted 20/25 seconds and were played twice - sufficient time "for participants to make systematic speaker evaluations" (Kircher, 2015, p. 199).

The children in my study familiarised themselves with the text - reading it before listening to the speakers. This helped participants feel comfortable with the reading

and understand that it was not complicated. This also allowed participants to engage with the text - internalising the extract and its content. The AAT thus aimed to collect evidence regarding participants' attitudes toward the four speakers' accents by recording their judgements of the speakers' using an adapted questionnaire format. Whilst Lambert's MGT helped structure AAT approaches and inform some decisions regarding text and questions, the AAT that I employed did not use the same speaker in different matched guises. Instead, the AAT included different speakers who spoke in a number of accents, including accents from Sandwell, Leeds and two different SE Received Pronunciation speakers.

4.4.1 Obtaining the recordings

For consistency and reliability, audio-recordings were obtained utilising George Mason University's Speech Accent Archive (SAA). The SAA was developed to "uniformly present a large set of speech samples from a variety of language backgrounds… The archive is used… to compare and analyze the accents of different English speakers" (Weinberger, 2015, p. 1). I was able to obtain existing, or submit new, recordings by communicating with the SAA and identifying/verifying appropriate and useable accent examples.

The extract chosen for the AAT was an elicitation paragraph read by four native English speaking males who were all selected and verified by the SAA as regional accent users for their specific regions or accents (Sandwell, Leeds, RP (London based) and RP (Oxford based)). To be selected for the Ethnologue Language Database, the four males had to produce answers to seven set demographic questions, have their

language phonetically transcribed, have their place of birth mapped and be aligned to regional phonological generalisations (Weinberger, 2015, p. 1). This particular paragraph was chosen because it was unfamiliar to participants and contains most of the consonants, vowels and clusters of the English language. The paragraph was written in English using familiar/common English words:

> *Please call Stella. Ask her to bring these things with her from the store: Six spoons of fresh snow peas, five thick slabs of blue cheese, and maybe a snack for her brother Bob. We also need a small plastic snake and a big toy frog for the kids. She can scoop these things into three red bags, and we will go meet her Wednesday at the train station* (Weinberger, 2015, p. 1).

Kircher argued that any texts selected for such investigations should be neutral, not reference/discuss "ideological or political issues" and "should not contain any lexical items that identify it as originating from" (2015, p. 199). In Kircher's terms, the above chosen text, therefore, had "as little influence as possible upon participants' evaluations of the speakers", ensuring participants' judgements were focussed on speakers' spoken form - not the text.

When obtaining the recordings, speakers familiarised themselves with the extract before recording. Speakers gathered in a quiet room. They sat approximately eight inches away from the microphone. High quality recording devices were used. To standardise recordings, all participants were asked seven demographic questions before reading:

1. Where were you born?
2. What is your native language?
3. What other languages besides English/your native language do you know?
4. How old are you?
5. How old were you when you first began to learn/study English at school?
6. How did you learn English? (academically/naturalistically)
7. How long have you lived in an English-speaking country? Which country?

Speakers were allowed one minute to ask questions; they then read the extract. Any recordings were submitted to the SAA as part of the George Mason Ethnologue Language Database.

Four male speakers were selected with different accents of spoken English. The male speakers chosen use all of the linguistic features typical of their accent and regional variety, and passed SAA Ethnologue Language Database stringent requirements.

The four chosen speakers had no connections with the pupils and were not associated with SNDWLLSCHOL. Eckert (2000) argued that power hierarchies in schools, and pupils' perceptions of adults, has a significant impact on behaviour, as teachers and adults are often the people who will correct children's behaviour and speech in schools. Choosing adults familiar to the children (e.g. parents/ teachers/volunteers) could have caused participants to adapt their thinking to a specific setting (home or classroom) and encouraged them to give a 'correct' educational response rather than a natural linguistic reaction (Eckert, 2000).

Finally, only male voices were used because these children had never had a male teacher as their main class teacher. Their responses would therefore not be influenced by experiences with previous teachers. This enhanced validity and reliability.

4.4.2 Conducting the AAT

Participants listened to four accents in turn and could listen to recordings twice. Extracts were always kept in the same order. At the start, this order was made clear to participants. Each extract was only given a number. To avoid influencing participants, all names/descriptors were omitted, so they could not pre-form judgements regarding speakers' identities. As soon as participants had finished listening to the extracts, a specially designed application took them through a series of automated questions (see Appendix 2). The application asked a question; participants responded by submitting judgements/ranking speakers in order. In contrast to traditional MGT, Likert-like scales were not used. Instead, participants were asked to rank the speakers in order of their preference. A significant factor influencing this decision was the participants' age. Likert scales often involve participants ranking speakers against questions against both the "solidarity dimension" and "status dimension" (Kircher, 2015, p. 201). These questions normally involve requiring participants to rank each speaker against each question on a scale. My personal position, knowing the boys and their working practices, was that this could be too many instructions to follow for each speaker for the entirety of the test. Furthermore, there is a potential for unrealistic judgements if children are not given very specific and clear instructions/criteria with which to grade each speaker. Therefore, I chose to

give the boys a clearer and simpler process which adapted the theory of the Coombs Unfolding Technique as it is a "mathematical method used… to analyze individual and collective preferences toward some topic of interest" and "works well when used on individuals" (Wilkerson, 2009, p. 1).

The theory of the Coombs Unfolding Model states that: "items must be ordered", "items must be equally spaced from one another with regard to the topic of interest" and "individuals can only have one preferred location along the scale at any time" (Wilkerson, 2009, p. 2). Congruently, respondents had to agree that the ranking of the speaker, against the question focus, increases from the lowest ranked to the highest ranked and report whether they preferred one speaker or another. Respondents had to map speakers to values/positions 1, 2, 3 and 4 - showing they believed a speaker was, for example, better at reading and writing in English than others. This, in my opinion, eradicated the potential issue of participants evaluating the accents "in a socially desirable and potentially dishonest manner" (Kircher, 2015, p. 203). It also suited the learning styles of the boys and ensured they could maintain concentration for the entire test. This approach also ensured there was no overlap in judgements, as no two speakers could receive the same score, thus providing a clear rank of attitudes towards speakers.

The AAT application automatically recorded all participants' responses. I designed and developed the software purely for this investigation using Microsoft computer programmes. The programme was developed for use on all platforms, so participants could easily and quickly record immediate reactions using iPads or touch screen

desktops. An overview of the programme, how it works and its importance to the testing process, is outlined below.

4.4.3 Using the App

Participants were provided with an iPad/desktop. The choice of equipment was purely for personal comfort and had no bearing on task delivery or recording of results.

Once participants had a computer, they read the start-screen instructions:



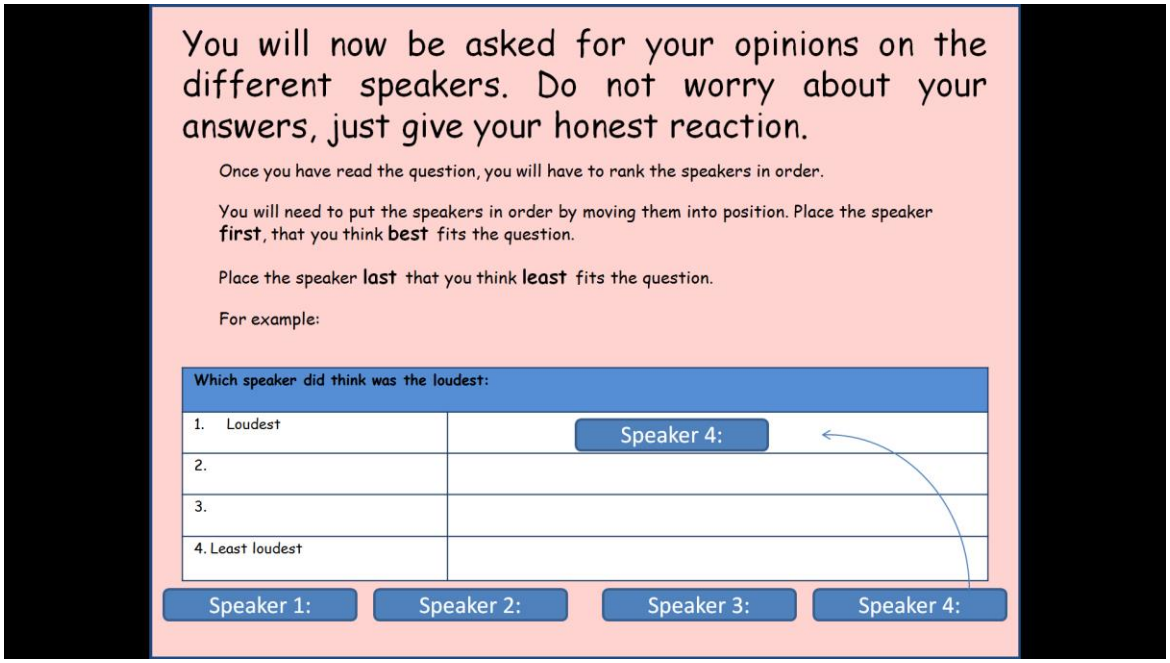
After reading the instructions, participants were asked to click start and begin. Participants could move through recordings at their pace. Once participants clicked start, they were presented with four recordings. They had to then click each recording to listen to the accents. Thus, participants could settle and click recordings when they were ready.



Once participants had listened to all accents, they were given the option to listen again or move on to answer accent awareness questions.



Participants were then presented with a series of questions. They answered by ranking the different recordings in order, according to their perception of the recording against the question.



The questions aimed at exploring participants' attitudes towards accents along the dimensions of status and solidarity. For example, questions such as "Which speaker is the nicest to listen to?" and "Which has the least annoying/irritating accent?", according to Ryan et al. (1982, p. 9) are reflective of "vital social meaning and… represent the social group with which one identifies". Kircher proposed that the "typical status-related traits used in matched-guise experiments include intelligence, education, ambition, leadership and dependability" (2015, p. 202). Therefore, questions asking participants "Which speaker would be the best teacher?" and "Which speaker speaks the best English?" were included. This was again in line with Kircher (2015, p. 202) who argued that such questions would elicit participants' attitudes associated with "power, economic opportunity and upward social mobility" and highlight their perceptions regarding spoken forms. All questions are presented in Table 4.5 below and in Appendix 2.

Table 4.5: Overview of all AAT questions

Perception test questionnaire

Questions:	Speaker A.	Speaker B.	Speaker C.	Speaker D.
Is easiest to understand:				
Would be cleverest at school:				
Speaks the best English:				
Has the best pronunciation:				
Would be the best at reading and writing English:				
Speaks the clearest:				
Is nicest to listen to:				
Has the least annoying/irritating accent:				
Would be the best teacher:				
Sounds the most educated:				

The app saved their answers once they had finished all of the questions. An electronic copy of all responses was then produced which could then be analysed.

4.5 The group discussions: Rationale

In "Research with Children: Perspectives and Practices", Christensen and James argue, "there are no well tested recipes with formulas guaranteeing successful result(s)" when it comes to research and methodologies involving children (2008, p. 18). Furthermore, children are regularly discounted from research and their "rights of participation and their voices remain unheard". They are typecast as unreliable and too complex to be involved in investigations (Christensen and James, 2008). However, with one of the main foci of this thesis being the attitudes and perceptions of socio-economic disadvantaged Sandwell boys, it would be logical and necessary to keep the boys, their views and their experiences at the heart of the research methodology.

The AAT test on its own did not provide a comprehensive picture of the boys' attitudes to language use, as the question structure utilised had obvious limitations regarding data collection: it did not, for example, allow for the participants to voice their own opinions, concerns or share experiences. Interviews were an option. They would provide an opportunity to gather qualitative data and the personal contact involved could enable me to "focus the attention of the respondent on the desired dimension" (Agheyisi and Fishman, 1970, p. 149). However, interviews can appear to be very formal and intimidating. They are a one-on-one situation and I had concerns regarding their suitability with these young pupils. I felt that they would be too rigid - potentially skewing participants' answers (feeling they may have to adapt answers and opinions to suit the research methodologies). Moreover, Agheyisi and Fishman argued that interviewers run "the risk of biasing or influencing" participants through their line of questioning or conduct (1970, p. 150). Agheyisi and Fishman also claimed "special

methodological disadvantages lie in processing and recording (of) the bulky and relatively diffuse data it yields", especially when considering that opinions, attitudes and "behavior in actual social situations (are) more complex, more variable, and less organized than in a specially created situation" (1970, p. 150). Thus, this could limit participants' opportunities to convey the full range of their attitudes and opinions regarding language.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, I wanted to build an element of freedom into the methodology allowing potential new/unpredicted evidence to arise (Asprey, 2007, p. 24). Agheyisi and Fishman (1970, p. 149) argued that interviewing is "perhaps the oldest method of data-gathering" which "has never quite attained the same level of development as the questionnaire". Designing a formal interview could therefore remove opportunities to include an element of freedom. Finally, as the serving Headteacher, I was anxious to reduce the "asymmetrical distribution of power suggested by the roles of questioner and respondent" (Milroy, 1987, p. 49) and not formalise processes by having one-on-one interviews. For these reasons, interviews were deemed not appropriate and group discussions were chosen instead. However, adaptations were made to group discussion approaches for this investigation. They will be discussed in this section. Participants watched three video clips of different speakers in different contexts before their discussions and a questionnaire was provided with basic questions beforehand for children to note responses and attitudes. Due to their age and attainment in writing, participants were not asked to provide detailed or lengthy responses on paper; however, the group discussions remained a

strong opportunity to record boys' language attitudes in discussion with each other and focussed on a stimuli/prompt.

Bowling (2002, p. 394) described group discussions as "unstructured interviews with small groups of people who interact with each other and the group leader". They make use "of group dynamics to stimulate discussion, gain insights and generate ideas to pursue a topic in greater depth" (Bowling, 2002, p. 394). In this section, I wished to explore these Sandwell boys' language perceptions and awareness. The AAT was developed to collect quantitative data regarding accent perceptions. Kitzinger argued that "(t)he idea behind the focus group method is that group processes can help people explore and clarify their views in ways that would be less easily accessible in a one to one interview" (1995, p. 299). Thus, the decision was made to utilise research methodologies which encouraged opportunities for pupils to interact with one another and discuss language use in situations which reflected their social contexts – in small groups with their peers. Wilkinson (1988, p. 333), claimed that group discussions are "an ideal method for the study of people's own meanings". The aims of this part of my study were to explore language attitudes, potential social factors influencing language usage and links between language and identity. Group discussions provided opportunities that were more conducive to eliciting opinions and experience concerning language use. Powell and Single state this is possible as discussions emerge from interactions between participants:

> Opinions are more likely to be aired frankly and critically… in a supportive group setting that is conducive to open discussion than they would otherwise in a one-to-one interview (1996, p. 196).

In contrast, Cameron and Mitchell (1993, p. 86) argued that there is potential for "contamination" in discussions, as mediators/group members could influence participants' contributions. This is a valid concern. However, the participants' age (10-11) was a key consideration. The children may also have felt intimidated by formalised individual interviews as these could heighten the frameworks/power relationships of pupil/teacher/adult (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990). Furthermore, participants were used to group discussions – experiencing them socially and in class. Therefore, in groups, pupils could feel more empowered to express opinions if alongside their peers and, as argued by Stewart and Shamdasani. (1990, p. 177), they might "provide a rich detailed set of data about (their) perceptions, thoughts, feelings and impressions… in their own words".

Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) noted that, to be successful, group discussions should consist of 6-12 participants and last until the topic of discussion has been covered to the satisfaction of participants (but kept shorter than two hours). Consequently, boys were organised into groups (6-8 pupils). Krueger (1994) argued that this number is small enough to provide participants with enough opportunity to contribute as much as they would like, but not large enough to risk fragmenting conversation or losing discussion focus. Discussions were held over lunchtime breaks, so they lasted less than two hours. During the group discussions, a group of boys from two different group discussions approached me and asked if they could swap groups and be with their friends. Facilitating all of the requests was not possible. I made the decision to merge two of the groups together, so that the boys were all with other friends who they felt comfortable with and wanted to be a part of the group discussion with. This meant there was one group of 13 during the discussions.

4.5.1 The group discussions: Data gathering strategy

The Sandwell boys were asked to watch three videos involving different uses of dialect/language and then participate in a group discussion. The videos acted as a stimulus before the group discussions. The videos showed different speakers with varying different external social factors. Using these videos would provide a contrast with the non-contextualised, non-descript AAT speakers and could elicit participants' attitudes toward language variation and different speakers, according to their social, geographical or language background.

In social psychology, Sanderson (2010, p. 191), (citing Holland et al. 2002), argued that studies which "repeatedly" ask a participant "to express his or her attitude" are likely to increase "accessibility" and the potential to record an attitude. However, Stefanowitsch (2005, p. 1) noted that participants' responses "will reflect conscious stereotypes prevalent in their community rather than their actual attitudes". Therefore, using video stimuli and a questionnaire before discussions was chosen as a means to circumvent the elicitation of just such social stereotypes, or otherwise highlight them. Either participants' views would align with AAT outcomes, highlighting deep underlying stereotypes linked to a variety of factors, or judgements would contrast with those made regarding the AAT's decontextualised speakers - highlighting social spheres and external factors as important influences.

With this in mind, participants were shown three different video clips with examples of speakers in different situations and contexts using different spoken forms (explored in detail below). Participants were then given a record sheet containing a series of

open-ended questions – encouraging them to evaluate speakers and record their opinions regarding language use. These responses were promptly brought to the discussions, which were also guided by the same open-ended questions. The children were then encouraged to refer to responses to see if they provoked or elicited different reactions/attitudes/judgements regarding language use or whether they challenged the consensus.

4.5.2 Details of the content of the video clips

1. Jasper Carrott (a stand-up comedian and television personality who is recognisable for his Birmingham dialect and accent) was talking to the audience about a number of topics on his show "Talking to Jasper". The show is predominantly a comedy show but covers serious topics of discussion such as the economic crisis.

2. Ben Fogle (a television personality who could be classed as using a SE variety and RP) was talking to The Prince's Trust about his experiences as a rainforest explorer.

3. An episode from BBC Switch's TV soap "The Cut". This episode features a young dual-heritage male and young white female talking on Brighton beach. The female speaker in "The Cut" speaks RP with a marked urban

style of speaking. The young male has a dialect which would be described as being better associated with the south London area and an urban style of speaking.

Transcriptions of all video clips are in Appendix 4.

Since the start of this study, the Jasper Carrott clip has been removed from YouTube and "The Cut" is no longer shown on television or the BBC's website. The Ben Fogle clip can be accessed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUG5Vc9lyOQ

4.5.2.1 Transcription of an extract from Jasper Carrot video clip

Jasper is wearing a suit and is sitting on a stool on a stage in front of a sign saying, "Talk to Jasper". Jasper is talking to an audience on the "Talking to Jasper" TV show. The camera pans to Jasper, and he is shown facing the camera. The audience cannot be seen.

Jasper: You see the trouble began when bankers began loaning money they hadn't got, to people they didn't know... to buy houses they couldn't afford... at interest rates that were astronomical... they paid themselves fortunes to do it... and when it went belly up they went pppfffttttt (slaps himself on the forehead) "Who could have predicted that?"

All these bankers running out of the woods going "You won't believe what the bears are doing in there!"

And do the bankers blame themselves? Nooo! They blame the PIGS. No not the police. That's Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain.

> Countries that are all going bankrupt and expecting us to get them out of the mire. Does that not worry you? Because on the horizon are Hungary, Italy, Turkey and Estonia.
>
> ...
>
> I mean it's farcical. Let's take Greece. OK! Well we could do with the amount of money we've given them. 6 Billion Euros... I mean what are they spending it on? It's not new buildings... it's not driving lessons. I tell you what they spend it on... the military.

(Appendix 4a)

4.5.2.2 Further details of the Jasper Carrott clip

As indicated above, this video was chosen because it featured a well-known speaker of a West Midlands dialect. Jasper Carrott, is known as a comedian. The nature of conversation is serious - covering topics including global banking crises, quantitative easing and the military. Jasper is wearing a suit and is dressed formally. So he is portrayed on the show as an intelligent speaker of a West Midlands dialect. This is a deliberate challenge to stereotypes as shown in socio-linguistic and social psychological research where speakers of Midlands dialects are viewed negatively and perceived as less intelligent, employable and aesthetically pleasing than all other dialects (Workman, 2008; Clark, 2014). The video shows Jasper Carrott discussing current affairs. By using a West Midlands dialect speaker, who is shown to be discussing serious affairs, and is dressed in a way which could suggest affluence and power, I aimed to find out whether participants' attitudes towards dialect were shaped

by context/dress/conversational content or whether they were related to language/dialect/accent alone.

The AAT was designed to assess perceptions of accents, including a West Midlands accent. Showing the participants this video and recording opinions in group discussions allowed me to see if there were parallels between AAT outcomes and perceptions of speakers in context. The group discussions also allowed me to see if attitudes towards language variations remained constant throughout the different methods of testing, or see if they changed when the data gathering activity changed.

4.5.2.3 Transcription of Ben Fogle's speech from an interview with The Prince's Trust

This video shows Ben Fogle (BF) discussing his recent rainforest adventures for the Prince's Trust. This clip was chosen because Ben Fogle can be defined as a Standard English speaker using Standard English dialectical forms and Received Pronunciation. This video of Ben Fogle was chosen, like the Jasper Carrott video, to see if the children would identify with a SE/RP speaker if they were in contexts that they would relate to. Alternatively, if the participants' expressed attitudes aligned with AAT outcomes, it might suggest that their perceptions of language use remained unaffected by other factors. This would then have significant implications for pedagogy and teaching practice and have implications for the boys' language attitudes and their relation to SE based requirements in the National Curriculum.

Ben is sitting in front of a wealth of trees and luscious green vegetation, which looks like a rainforest. Water (possibly from a stream or waterfall) can be heard running in the background. Ben is sitting on his own, facing the camera and talking directly to the camera.

Ben Fogle: I think it's a tragedy when you hear about the massive destruction of the rainforest. We are doing that ourselves and that's why I am so keen to support this. Because, in the same way that we are doing it, I am sure we have the ability to stop it.

I have been incredibly lucky that I've been to a number of rainforests, from Papua New Guinea to the Amazon Rainforest and indeed out in Borneo. It is one of the most beautiful, eerie, strange, wonderful environments in the world.
There's nothing more exciting than sleeping in the forest canopy in a hammock. Surrounded by the most extraordinary noises. Errm you've got animals all around you. It is a living thing. They call it the lungs of the world and it really feels like it's alive when you're in it.

I think climate change doesn't just affect me, it affects everyone and it will affect future generations, and that's why it is so important that we start to act on it now.

Please! Please! Please! From someone who's been to many rainforests and has seen their beauty and understands their importance, sign on and support the Prince's Trust Rainforest Project.

(Appendix 4b)

4.5.2.4 Transcription of the characters' speech from "The Cut"

A southern-English urban style of speaking was utilised in this video. It was not included in the AAT. This urban style of speaking is markedly different from 'traditional' West Midland vernaculars. However, throughout the research the children displayed an ability to use and shift to other forms not traditionally from their region. These shifts tended to be towards urban styles of speaking as described by Rampton (1997). As discussed later on, the group discussions provided an opportunity for the boys to discuss their attitudes and beliefs towards the different linguistic resources utilised in their local-life worlds and in their lived experiences. Therefore, including urban styles of speaking registers in discussion stimuli was a means of enabling participants to discuss personal perceptions and experiences of language resources that they felt were a part of their social and local life worlds. This could provide further evidence regarding boys' attitudes to non-standard English dialects, and this could provide insights into language ideologies circulating in and outside the classroom. This, in turn, might allow me to investigate the ways in which participants' language practices, and opinions on different spoken forms, related to NC requirements and classroom practice.

Jay and Marla are driving in a car, Marla's phone rings. Jay looks across at Marla. Jay pulls the car up at a house.

Marla: This is it.

Jay: Are you ready?

Marla: Have been for months

Jay: Ok!

The two characters then get out of the car and walk up to a house

Marla: Mum?

Jay: She could be out?

Marla: (*Marla sighs heavily and dials a number on her phone. Jay is sitting down on the house steps with his eyes closed appearing relaxed with his arms folded. A phone begins to ring inside the house.)*

Mum? I can hear you in there mum!

Jay: Marla!

Marla: Please!

Jay: Marla... Marla... come on! (*Jay grabs Marla by the arm and leads her away from the door*.) Come on!

Marla: (*Marla seems exasperated and sighs heavily*.) Ahhh!

Jay and Marla walk away from the house. They are then pictured walking down a street.

Marla: We used to come here every Easter. Until Mum and Dad started to fight. *(sighs)* Steven hated it here anyway!

Jay: Why?

Marla: He always got poo'd on by the seagulls.

Both characters laugh

Jay: Probably best you didn't bring him then.

Marla: Well I can tell him he was right. She didn't want to speak to me. He'll love that.

Jay: She probably just left her phone at home or something.

Marla: Nah! She was there.

Jay: You don't know that!

Marla: She's just like me Jay. She never goes anywhere without her phone.

Jay: So what now?

Marla: I don't know. We've come all this way for nothing.

Jay: I know...

Marla: What?

Jay: Come with me...

Jay takes Marla's hand and runs off leading her to the sea front.

(Appendix 4c)

4.5.3 Using the video clips with the participants

Whilst participants watched all three video clips, they were asked to note down important issues, questions or responses. The children were given sheets with prompts on to encourage note-making and stimulate thought. The prompt sheet included questions such as:

What did you think about the way the different people talked?

Which person do you think was the least cool or the least popular?

Which speaker would be the best at reading, writing and speaking English?

Why do you think people talk differently. Why do we have different accents?

The full set of questions is available in Appendix 3.

Open questions were utilised, as Agheyisi and Fishman (1970, p. 148) claimed that in "answering such open questions subjects may reveal other attitudes which the researcher may not have anticipated". This further aligns with Asprey (2007) regarding encouraging freedom and flexibility in data collection. Furthermore, with the young age of participants, I felt it was important not to overly scaffold the process to produce predicted or restricted outcomes.

There were, however, drawbacks to the open-ended questions and record sheets. Note-making was not an essential part of the process and the boys often showed signs of having short attention spans. They were, therefore, given short breaks between moments of data collection. Agheyisi and Fishman (1970, p. 148) argued that "the effort needed to write down the answers may make the respondent refrain from answering questions as fully as he [she] otherwise would". This was a serious consideration when deciding on the methodology, as these boys were attaining below national expectations in writing. They may therefore not have had the skills to express themselves fully. They may also not have had positive perceptions of writing, with it being an academic area that they were 'struggling' with, and were deemed to be failing. Consequently, record sheets were not employed to obtain a full record of responses, but instead, they acted as *aide memoires* supporting the participants during discussions. Participants could then refer to their sheets if needed and not miss out on stating any points or raising important questions. The idea was that they would work as helpful prompts and provide an opportunity to record immediate reactions to

the videos, rather than be a significant intended format for recording outcomes and attitudes to language.

Group discussions have a different dynamic in comparison to one-on-one interviews. Being in a group dilutes the intensity of the subject and interview process. This allows participants to discuss and explore ideas with each other rather than being under pressure to answer all questions individually. Additionally, the more relaxed nature of the group discussion could allow younger participants to speak with resources from their communication repertoires and not feel under pressure to increase formality. This would therefore remove boundaries normally set within a framework of social convention which would encourage adherence to normal politeness models (Brown and Levinson, 1978, p. 36).

In summary, video clips, showing different dialects and styles of speaking, were selected to ascertain whether the boys evaluated speakers of different language varieties in different ways. By showing participants clips of speakers of different varieties, which they had been exposed to in real life, through social interactions, formal settings, educational settings and through the media, I aimed to collect data regarding participants' judgements on spoken discourse and in context. The AAT looked purely at perceptions of accent out of context. These videos would allow participants to consider language use within specific social and cultural contexts. In addition, the spontaneous exchanges between the participants could also reveal the language resources that different participants drew on. This data could then assist in

considering the implications the language attitudes and practices of the boys had regarding National Curriculum requirements and attainment in English.

CHAPTER 5 – ACCENT AWARENESS TEST (AAT): QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

5.1 AAT data overview and summary

Below is a summary of data collected from the AAT and a brief analysis of data trends. To clarify, the 30 participants were asked to position speakers in order (1/2/3/4) according to where they felt the speaker ranked against the set question. For example, regarding the question "Who is the easiest to understand?" a child would place '1' for the speaker who was the easiest to understand and '4' for the speaker who was the most difficult. This meant that, in any one question, a speaker recording only '1s' would have a lowest score of 30. Conversely, a speaker rated consistently as the most difficult to understand would have a maximum score of 120 and receive 30 fourth placed rankings. Responses submitted for all children were collected and are presented in Appendix 2.

Once tabularised, calculations were made to look for trends and begin comparisons. These included but were not limited to:

- The total score.
- The average/mean score of each speaker.
- Standard deviation.
- How many times each speaker received each mark.
- Differences between speakers' mean scores.
- The proportion of speaker's score in relation to the maximum of 120 or the minimum of 30.

As highlighted in the methodology chapter, the AAT was designed using Matched Guise/verbal-guise theoretical models to explore these Sandwell boys' attitudes towards spoken forms. The AAT questions were adapted to take account of participants' ages and the fact that language attitudes are seen to have two evaluative dimensions – status and solidarity. These two dimensions help to highlight variation in attitudes and judgements linked to interpersonal behaviours, actions and traits. For example, attitudes orientated to status, are associated with the practical value of a language variety regarding links to power, dominance, social mobility, socio-economic opportunity and agency (Kircher, 2016). In contrast, attitudes orientated to solidarity are linked to feelings of intimacy, acceptance, friendliness, attachment, communion and belonging (Wiggins and Trobst, 1999). Thus, attitudes orientated to solidarity are linked to participants' social identities and relate to perceptions of self and to the social relationships they value and see as important.

Table 5.1: AAT mean evaluations: The overall comparison of participant judgements

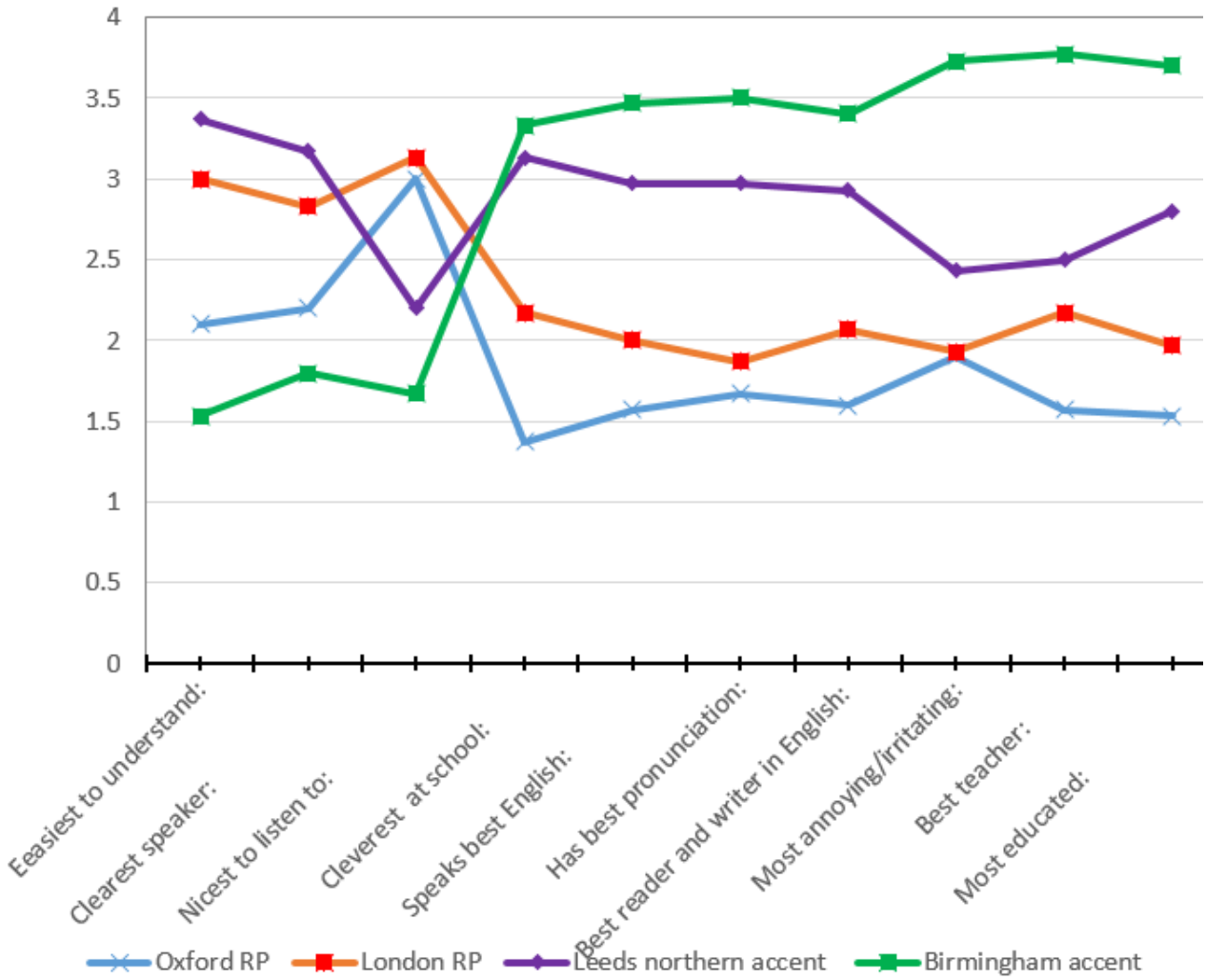
Questions:	Oxford RP	London RP	Leeds northern accent	Birmingham accent	
Is easiest to understand:	63	90	101	46	300
Would be cleverest at school:	41	65	94	100	300
Speaks the best English:	47	60	89	104	300
Has the best pronunciation:	50	56	89	105	300
Would be the best at reading and writing in English:	48	62	88	102	300
Speaks the clearest:	66	85	95	54	300
Is the nicest to listen to:	90	94	66	50	300
Has the most annoying/irritating accent:	57	58	73	112	300
Would be the best teacher:	47	65	75	113	300
Sounds the most educated:	46	59	84	111	300
Total score:	555	694	854	897	3000
Mean score:	55.5	69.4	85.4	89.7	
Standard deviation:	14.49	14.42	10.97	27.79	
Total percentage of the overall scoring:	18.50	23.13	28.47	29.90	100.00
Overall average ranking (from 1 - 4) for each speaker	1	2	3	4	

The mean ratings for each speaker are outlined in Table 5.1 above and are recorded next to their overall rating and average ranking in descending order. RP accented speakers were rated more positively overall, and their average ratings were significantly higher when asked questions regarding status or perceived success in education/learning.

Table 5.2: Average scores per question/character trait

Character trait:	Oxford RP	London RP	Leeds northern accent	Birmingham accent
Eeasiest to understand:	2.1	3	3.37	1.53
Clearest speaker:	2.2	2.83	3.17	1.8
Nicest to listen to:	3	3.13	2.2	1.67
Cleverest at school:	1.37	2.17	3.13	3.33
Speaks best English:	1.57	2	2.97	3.47
Has best pronunciation:	1.67	1.87	2.97	3.5
Best reader and writer in English:	1.6	2.07	2.93	3.4
Most annoying/irritating:	1.9	1.93	2.43	3.73
Best teacher:	1.57	2.17	2.5	3.77
Most educated:	1.53	1.97	2.8	3.7
Total score:	18.51	23.14	28.47	29.9
Mean score:	1.934666667	1.93467	1.93467	1.934666667
Standard deviation:	0.48	0.48	0.37	0.93

Figure 5.1: Mean scores per character trait



The mean scores and character trait ratings from Table 5.2 above confirm that the AAT questions represent the two different evaluative dimensions regarding solidarity and status. The different dimensions were interpreted as competence *(cleverest, speaks best English, best pronunciation, best reader and writer, best teacher and most educated)* and social appeal/attractiveness *(understandable, clearest, nicest, most irritating)*. Participants' evaluations of the four speakers, and the mean ratings in Table 5.2, show consistency across the different questions and two evaluative dimensions. Male RP speakers, regardless of their locality, were judged as the most competent in

terms of academic performance, intelligence and quality of spoken English, whilst the Birmingham accented speaker was consistently ranked as more personally relevant and socially attractive. This relationship is in keeping with language attitude research which highlighted how regional accents are consistently judged as 'lower' in status, technical accuracy and quality compared to perceived traditional, 'higher' forms of spoken English such as RP (Trudgill, 2001; Lambert et al., 1960; Milroy and McClenaghan, 1977). This also aligns with varying verbal-guise test research evaluating RP against non-standard accented forms which highlights how speakers often prefer accents closest to their own regional forms when evaluating on the solidarity dimension and attribute positive adjectives, characteristics or traits to said forms (Zhang et al., 2008).

Comparisons of pairs of speakers reveals that both RP speakers were rated as more educated/academically competent than socially attractive. Both RP speakers were clearly ranked as having the highest status when judging who was the cleverest, best at reading and writing, best speakers of English, best potential teacher and the most educated. At the same time, the trend was consistent on the solidarity dimension as both RP speakers were judged as being the most irritating and least pleasing to listen to. These stark and significant judgement ratings indicate that these Sandwell boys either found the RP accent as very academic/competent or very socially undesirable/attractive.

There was, however, a difference in the ratings between the Leeds and Birmingham accented speakers. Whilst both the Leeds and Birmingham accents were ranked as

the nicest to listen to and least annoying, there was a difference regarding clarity and understanding. The Birmingham speaker was judged to be easy to understand and clear, the Leeds speaker was ranked as being the hardest to understand. This indicates that participants' judgements were not linked to/consistent across all 'non-RP'/non-standard accents. Instead, they were a reflection of opinions towards the Birmingham accent. Thus, the Birmingham accent was clearly ranked the highest on the solidarity dimension - judged the nicest to listen to, clearest when spoken, least annoying and easiest to understand. This characterisation by the Sandwell boys confirms a clear contrast between the Birmingham accent and RP with the former being judged as low in terms of status and academic potential, whilst RP was judged in terms of solidarity. These findings align with the research of Gumperz (1964, p. 137), Trudgill (1983, p. 42) and Schiffman (2002) who highlighted how speakers of non-standard regional dialects converge to more standard forms of English in order to convey social status.

5.2 Findings from the AAT: The solidarity dimensions

As the literature review highlighted, there is a large body of research evidence acknowledging language as an important symbol of social identity. Thus, the AAT was designed on the premise that attitudes towards different spoken forms and varieties of accents are a reflection of participants' attitudes towards the speakers (Hua, 2015). Therefore, conclusions can be made along these lines when considering the results from questions such as **"which speaker is the easiest to understand?"** (Appendix 2a). Here the Birmingham accent was given an average rating 1.53 with 18/30 children ranking him above all other speakers. Furthermore, when asked: **"Who speaks the clearest?"** (Appendix 2f), participants preferred the Birmingham speaker's accent;

13/30 participants ranked it as the clearest. Hua (2016) (discussing Edwards (1982, p. 21)), argued that language attitudes cannot be said to indicate either linguistic or aesthetic quality per se. Instead, they should be considered as "expressions of social convention and preference" (Hua, 2016, p. 197 citing Edwards, 1982, p. 21). Thus, the Sandwell boys found the accent closest to their own as clearer. This finding was not unexpected. This and similar accents surrounded them during their early development; they dominated their social/family structures and were thus bound up with "different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment" (Creese and Blackledge, 2015, p. 26). Therefore, the participants' judgements indexed the relevance, value and affinity of such spoken forms for them.

Extending this idea, the disadvantaged Sandwell boys also showed a positive attitude toward the Birmingham speaker when asked: **"Who is the nicest to listen to?"** (Appendix 2g); 18/30 participants ranked him as the nicest to listen to - above all other varieties. The strong data trends provided clear evidence suggesting that the Sandwell boys preferred the regional accent closest to their variety - further highlighting their inclination to favour accents closest to their regional forms. The data also highlighted the boys' lack of affinity with distant forms they were not used to and were less likely to encounter. Creese and Blackledge (2015, p. 25) have argued that both languages and identities are "socially constructed" and language users can "hold passionate beliefs about the importance and significance of a particular language to their sense of identity".

However, it is also important to point out that there is a specific context in regions of the West Midlands in which young people build a sense of identity and develop beliefs about language (Clark, 2013, p. 7). Clark (2013) argued that perceptions of the self might have links to social conditions. Moreover, as Coupland (2010) has pointed out, a sense of self and perceptions of spoken forms are entwined with individuals' development of a sense of place and belonging.

As I have shown in this section, the findings of the Accent Awareness Test revealed that the boys made positive evaluations of the speakers with a Birmingham accent and thus appeared to express an affinity with this way of speaking. However, one implication of the findings was that this could influence how they perceived and interpreted curricula/pedagogy, which promoted particular spoken forms such as the RP accent.

5.3 Findings from the AAT: The status dimensions

As discussed earlier, there have been multiple investigations highlighting society's negative perception of West Midland accents in comparison to other standard and non-standard regional varieties. For example, in a study of attitudes to West Midland accents, Workman (2008) found that participants judged people with West Midland accents to be the least intelligent. Furthermore, the mainstream media have reported on studies where the 'Birmingham accent' is declared to be the "UK's ugliest accent".[7] Even recent YouGov polls have highlighted public opinion that "(t)he Birmingham

[7] (https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/ampp3d/what-uks-ugliest-accent-4789870)

accent is considered the least attractive accent in the British Isles".[8] Moreover, there is now ample evidence from sociolinguistics and social psychology that people rate standard varieties of English, such as RP, higher in 'status' than non-standard rural, urban accents (Giles, 1970, 1971). One particular finding of the Accent Awareness Test confirmed this general trend; 20 out of the 30 Sandwell boys, when asked: **"Who speaks the best English?",** (Appendix 2c) placed the Oxford RP speaker first and the London RP speaker second. The speaker with a Birmingham accent was firmly placed last, with 20/30 children ranking him as having the 4th 'best English'. As highlighted in the literature review, RP is not regionally specific. Kerswill (2006) argued that there is uncertainty about the geography and origins of the RP variety although "RP is phonologically a south-eastern accent". However, Kerswill also notes that it is "impossible to tell the provenance of an RP speaker" (2006, p. 12). The potential origins of the speakers with RP accents did not seem to be an affecting factor influencing the boys' judgements. When asked: **"Who sounds the most educated?"** (Appendix 2j), the Sandwell boys in my study ranked both RP speakers above other speakers with accents and 25/30 ranked the Birmingham accent as sounding the least 'educated'. Congruently, when asked: **"Who would be cleverest at school?"**, 22/30 children judged the Oxford RP speaker as the most likely to be

[8] YouGov polls (https://yougov.co.uk/topics/lifestyle/articles-reports/2014/12/09/accent-map2)

academically successful and the Birmingham accented speaker as the least likely. These outcomes confirm the general trend in language attitudes regarding spoken varieties and academic status. The AAT evidence clearly suggests that the majority of the participants in this study had positive perceptions of RP speakers and saw them as having the capacity to succeed academically. Exploring language attitudes among a group of 7-10 year old Bristol pupils, Giles and Sassoon (1983) noted that language attitudes vary as children become more aware of social stereotypes and the social status attached to specific standardised language varieties. They argued that before they are 10 years old, children tend to exhibit a generic in-group preference according to spoken forms used by parents/friends/locally (Giles and Sassoon, 1983). However, it is when they are 10 years old that children do appear to begin to make judgements based on the prestige of standard varieties and negative labels come to be associated with non-standard accents/spoken forms. In another study with children, Kinzler and DeJesus (2012) found that 5-6 year olds made positive judgements about their own spoken forms, whilst 9-10 year olds were more likely to align to social stereotypes – evaluating their own spoken forms negatively and linking more standardised forms to attributes like 'intelligence'.

5.4 Language values, Standard English and the National Curriculum

According to the English National Curriculum there is only one medium through which students can communicate most 'correct' written or verbal answers - Standard English. In the AAT, participants graded the accent closest to their own as nicest to listen to and clearest to hear. Furthermore, outcomes from group discussion revealed strong 'proud' affiliations with their 'normal' non-standard varieties. There must therefore be

affecting factors which are causing these perceptions and influencing the Sandwell boys' language attitudes and development. These influencing factors may also be due to the "intrinsic 'superiority' of RP" in society and status it holds as a social accent (Kerswill, 2006, p. 4). Arguably, participants' judgements may then be based on factors such as social stereotyping or language social categorisations/status. In line with Scott et al. (2013), with the test being conducted in a classroom, and with preceding questions being linked to education/academic achievement, it would not be implausible that external factors may influence participants' internal voice and judgements. Thus, participants could have been influenced by environment – interpreting 'best' to mean best at speaking 'classroom English' or educated English for example - therefore judging that different accents, or speech varieties, are 'better' in certain contexts. This would align with the cited socio-linguistic research claiming perceptions of class, status and prestige in language increases with children's age.

Lloyd and Fernyhough (1999, p. 6) argued children, as they develop, absorb information from the world around them. This information is processed on "inter-psychological" "planes" and becomes an important function in children's "cultural development" (Lloyd and Fernyhough, 1999, p. 6). Consequently, factors surrounding children during development directly influence their language attitudes. These Sandwell boys have been educated within the English education system – a system which follows the standardised National Curriculum. Therefore, participants' educational experience/schooling may be a factor influencing language attitudes. These participants attend schools which adhere to and teach the NC, meaning their education has centred on NC aims and requirements. It is then important to note that

the NC directly emphasises the use and importance of standardised forms of English. For example, guidance on spelling rules and sounds utilises RP as its standard:

> The pronunciations in the (definition of sounds and spelling) table are, by convention, based on Received Pronunciation and could be significantly different in other accents (DfE, 2014, p. 63).

The rationale given in this NC for the use of RP is that it has "regional neutrality, it is the accent which is generally shown in dictionaries in the UK" (DfE, 2014, p. 83). However, because of its status in education, the NC inevitably promotes RP as the prestigious form of spoken English and a template from which to teach letter sounds and spelling rules for English. Lambert et al. (1960) found that speakers were rated highest in status traits when using prestige accents even when the content of what they were saying varied considerably. Irvine and Gal (2000, p. 37) have also argued that language variables such as accent are "somehow depicted or displayed as a social group's inherent nature or essence". Extending this theme, Milroy and McClenaghan (1977, p. 9) found participants could not identify the locality of various accents including RP, Northern Irish, English and Scottish. However, listeners still consciously applied social stereotypes when judging and ranking accents for prestige. Drawing on her own research, Julia Snell, cited in Hough (2011), has also observed that "everyone judges people according to their speech… (and) when people evaluate how we are speaking, these are social, rather than linguistic judgements". There is now general consensus in the present literature that participants perceive RP speakers to be 'cleverest' at school because, as Trudgill (2001) put it, schools attach a form of social and academic significance to 'higher' forms of spoken English. Moreover, children's perceptions of accents is influenced by media and stereotyping (Rampton, 2005a).

The AAT results from this study also suggest that the Sandwell boys had an awareness of the relationship between accent and achievement in school. They appeared to be aware of the ideological link between accent, prestige and schooling.

Moreover, despite ranking the Birmingham accent as having the most favourable and least annoying features, the boys did not judge it to be a good resource for educational practitioners; 24/30 judged it to be the worst communication resource for potential teachers. Thus, despite having positive perceptions of the Birmingham accent, these Sandwell boys did not see it as fitting well with teaching and with education. And, as I have already noted, both RP speakers from Oxford (16/30) and London (10/30) were rated as the best potential teachers, strongly suggesting that the boys associated the qualities of RP as being appropriate for professional use in classrooms.

Arguably, these results are unsurprising when considering other judgements made on the status dimension. They are also contextualised by the research of Clark (2013) who argued that the weighting and importance placed on standardised forms in schools alters children's perceptions regarding the linguistic value of regional forms in educational contexts. Educational policy documents regularly reinforce adherence to linguistic norms, with some making explicit reference to the communicative resources of teachers. Four years ago, a document published by the Department for Education (2015a) made the following statement regarding teachers' professional standards: "teachers must demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy… whatever the teacher's specialist subject" (DfE, 2015a, p. 1). The following year the Cabinet Office's 2016 English language Code of

Practice specified that schools now have a "statutory duty under Part 7 of the Immigration Act 2016" to only hire "public facing staff members" who can speak "fluently", "confidently and accurately" in English under the "fluency duty" (2016, p. 3). Clark (2013) claims that such 'rules' regarding spoken forms in educational contexts perpetuates the notion that there are correct and incorrect ways to speak English. According to Clark (2013), policy strategies like these adopted by government departments and local authorities, reinforce the dominant ideology. The construction of RP accents and Standard English as the legitimate form of speech in schools perpetuates class hierarchies and cultural hegemony. The frameworks and policies underpinning teaching and teaching standards in the United Kingdom openly declare that certain forms of spoken English are more appropriate in educational contexts and could lead to higher attainment in reading, writing and spoken language. In the light of this, it would appear logical for the boys to associate RP with teachers, as it is closer to the standardised norms which have become normalised, and expected, in classrooms.

CHAPTER 6 – GROUP DISCUSSIONS: INSIGHTS INTO THE SANDWELL BOYS' ATTITUDES TO, AND PERCEPTIONS OF, DIFFERENT LANGUAGE VARIETIES AND INTO THEIR LIVED EXPERIENCES OF LANGUAGE-IN-ACTION

6.1 Introduction

Moving on from the outcomes of the Accent Awareness Test (AAT), this investigation's central aim was to explore how these disadvantaged boys' attitudes towards, and perceptions of, standard and non-standard English language forms related to the NC requirements and the educational demands they pose. The AAT helped to collect quantitative data on attitude to accents. In this chapter, I will now move on from the AAT and begin analysing the qualitative data, namely the audio-recorded group discussions. I show the ways in which the boys revealed their perceptions and awareness of language varieties in their interactions with each other and with me. I also show how these boys evaluated and represented different varieties in their talk, often taking a clear stance on particular varieties. My aim is to identify the ways in which language ideologies were expressed in these Sandwell classrooms, along with the participants' attitudes towards specific dialects and accents.

In section 6.2, I will explore how the boys' responses in the group discussions indexed different social identities and how they indicated a sense of belonging to certain groups. The boys' use of language provided evidence of different aspects of social belonging. In 6.2.1, I explore how these boys orientated to local life worlds – referencing the people and the places. In 6.2.2, I explore how the boys used language to orientate to the people and places in institutional worlds – exemplifying their

connections, or disconnect, with particular people and places in academia, or the workplace. In section 6.3, I turn to the boys' negative evaluations of RP and SE, how they portrayed 'posh' people through their discussions and the stances they took regarding 'talking posh', and people who use certain 'posh' speech forms. Section 6.4 shows how, in contrast, in their interactions with each other, they indexed considerable respect towards each other. In this section, I use evidence from the group discussions to exemplify the mutual solidarity and respect that these boys demonstrated through their own, and others', use of specific language varieties. Finally, in section 6.5, I focus in on some of the small stories that emerged in the boys' audio-recorded talk and how these indexed identities.

6.2 The boys' perceptions of the 'use-value' of language, as a marker of social identity and belonging

The group discussions were the part of this research where 26 boys were placed into groups of 6-13 – taking into account patterns of friendship. They were shown three video clips from the mainstream media in which people were using different spoken varieties of English. After the video clips, they were encouraged to discuss the language use they had heard. Questions were used as a guide to stimulate responses and conversation. I took part in the group discussions, and since the boys knew me quite well by this time, they conversed quite freely. As outlined in section 4.1, I took full account of this and utilised the guidelines of research ethics from the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL), those published by UCL (University College London), and those published for people conducting research in the workplace produced at Kings College London (KCL, 2009). Thus, I made considerable efforts to

minimise any potential influence my role may have had in the group discussions. I engaged in participant observation in ways that were as reflexive as possible. I also took measures which allowed for external verification by the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, as well as meetings with families and providing full opportunities for pupils to voice concerns or remove themselves from the process. The full arrangements were outlined in section 4.1.

6.2.1 Orienting to local life worlds

Throughout all of the group discussions, a common theme could be seen in the boys' responses and contributions. When discussing the different speakers from the video clips, participants referred explicitly to local life worlds as they expressed their opinions, attitudes and perceptions. For example, during one group discussion (Appendix 3a), participants began to comment on whether or not they would be happy to speak like different speakers if they found themselves 'somewhere else' (i.e. not in Sandwell). Discussing the Standard English of Ben Fogle, Frank commented on whether or not he would be happy to speak Standard English:

> **Extract 1:**
>
> The question that was posed was: **What if you were somewhere else?**
>
> **Frank:** Errm I wouldn't mind if there were a few posh people coz then it would be alright to be posh. I wouldn't like wanna go where it's somewhere like another country. They would think… wow you sound stupid coz they'd say "You" like that.
> **Happi:** I wouldn't like to speak um um another accent coz I wanna be myself like not try and be someone else.

> **Gary:** I agree with Happi coz I don't wanna be no one else just yourself. I'd prefer to speak like I do now.
> **Kevin:** Errm yeh you know on 6 I aint really got an answer for that coz I am who I am aren't I, an I am who I chose.
> **Indie:** I agree with Gary an that coz I want to be who I am not like anyone else.
>
> (Appendix 3a)

Within the same discussion, and responding to Frank, Kevin commented: "I don't really understand posh people very well… the kind of Queen Elizabeth accent I don't understand it". He also added that "(m)ost posh people take the mick out of Brummies and Yam Yams, so I'm not very keen on them". In this extract, Frank and Kevin's comments highlight how these boys associate the different dialects with different speakers inhabiting different worlds. For example, Frank's comments in the opening three lines suggest that there are no "posh" people where he lives. He also notes that outside of his social area, and in other regions, he is perceived as "stupid" because of the way he speaks. One implication is that he is considered not stupid in his area and in his life world. This is reinforced by Kevin who claims that "posh" people take the "mick" out of Brummies and Yam Yams so he is not very keen on "them". Again, this suggests the boys orientate towards certain social circles and social worlds when discussing identity and language use.

I have selected this and other extracts from the transcripts in Appendix 3 since they provide particularly revealing insights into the boys' perceptions of different language varieties and the social meanings that they attribute to them. Firstly, the boys articulate a keen sense of place (in Sandwell or nearby). Secondly, their sense of

place, belonging and identity is associated with particular linguistic norms. Take for example Frank's response to question 4 (Appendix 3c): "we just speak normally". Thirdly, places are often represented as strange and unfamiliar where their linguistic norms would not be recognised (or even derided). This is conveyed in Frank's words in extract 1 above (lines 2-4): "I wouldn't like wanna go where it's somewhere like another country. They would think… wow you sound stupid coz they'd say "you" like that". Fourthly, Kevin reveals his awareness that these boys' perceptions of language varieties and ways of speaking are bound up with social class. For example, in response to question 4, he mentions his inability to understand the Queen's English: "I don't really understand posh people very well… the kind of Queen Elizabeth accent I don't understand it" (Appendix 3c).

According to Clark (2013), current curricular formats and approaches to language and literacy education serve to the notion of… language use (being) "fixed" and… that any deviation is… "incorrect only reinforce class stereotypes, heighten insecurities surrounding language use and create perceptions of there being a 'correct' and incorrect way to speak. Clark argued that "(t)he ways in which literacy in English is taught in school generally subscribe to and perpetuate" or "illiterate" and at worst, a threat to social stability" (2013, p. 1). These observations are relevant in the light of Kevin's statements in response to question 9 (Appendix 3c), as he comments that: "most posh people take the mick out of Brummies and Yam Yams, so I'm not very keen on them". He argues that people who speak with regional accents are derided and looked down upon. In his words, "they're from Birmingham and they're useless, so I don't like… really like them or that accent".

Kevin is clearly aware that SE speakers would be likely to negatively evaluate his dialect and his accent. He states that if he were to meet people who speak 'posh', they would categorise him as being subordinate and 'stupid' because of the way he speaks. His remarks support Clark's (2013) argument that educational and social practices could be reinforcing negative opinions regarding regional non-standard varieties and representing learners who speak these varieties as 'less educated'.

6.2.1.1 The people

In the group discussions, the boys did not just refer to the absence of 'posh' people from their local life worlds, but referred to the people whom they do encounter and identify within their local life worlds. In the following extracts, I explore how these boys link the use of language with different aspects of social belonging – referencing the people they identify within their local life world. Initially, the boys orientated their discussion around Ben Fogle's 'posh' use of Standard English and discussed how they felt it was uncommon and unusual to use and hear such forms in their local life world. What is more, these boys again indicated how people would find their use of language to be rather 'strange':

Extract 2:

The question posed was: **What do other people think about your dialect?**

Charlie: I think that **they** would find it quite funny like how **we** talk and **they** talked and errm… quite strange coz **we** don't really talk about… like **them** and **we** don't really talk posh **we**

talk quite like slang.
Ben: I'm ok with it coz most people know that most people have got a different accent and errm everything's just... I'm ok coz it's a normal accent like other people's is a normal accent it's just how **we** talk.

(Appendix 3a)

Commenting on how the boys in his group speak, Charlie used "we" – identifying himself with the group, and the group as a collective who do not talk "posh". The pronouns "they" and "them" are then used to refer to those who speak SE in a posh way. Later in this conversation, in response to question 12, he notes that the group "talk quite like slang" - in contrast to Ben Fogle's Standard English. At the same time, the boys described how the speaker Jay (in the video clip) would not be uncommon or unwelcome in their local life world because of his use of language:

Extract 3:

Danny: So, you think he talks normally for you guys now?
Kenwyne: Nah just the way he spoke coz most of us people here have got like an accent but he just spoke he didn't seem to have like an accent. If you talked to him you probably couldn't tell where he came from like what place he came from. He just talks like everyone else would talk really.
Danny: Would anyone else like to add anything? Why do you think he was the coolest?
Hamish: Because his language seemed more up to date compared to the others, his accent was cooler.

PAUSE

> It's more fashionable. Every generation has their own way of speaking and that's what our generation talks like.
>
> (Appendix 3b)

Here, Kenwyne indexes how he responds to Jay's speech, and says that Jay speaks in a way which fits with this group of boys. Kenwyne says: "(h)e just talks like everyone else would talk really". Hamish, commenting directly on Jay's accent and language, builds on this concept as he evaluates Jay's language use as "more up to date", "cooler" and "more fashionable". This example of boys indexing social belonging relates primarily to a generation rather than social class and geography. This view is summarised by Hamish in the words: "Every generation has their own way of speaking and that's what our generation talks like".

The boys also continue to orientate their talk around their life worlds by again discussing what language use is, and how particluar accents are acquired within local life worlds.

Extract 4:

Danny: Why do you think people talk differently. Why do we have different accents?
Adam: Because we are unique... too
Nate: Because of our parents and you learn to talk like them. But then you can talk differently with your friends and you catch on with other people and their accents.

PAUSE

> The parents and the way they talk because like me they get used to their accents. With the parents they kind of create it and it's natural.
>
> **Charlie:** Like where you live and who you're with. I say your parents and you get it off them like if your parents are posh then you'd be very posh because that's how you'm brought up.
>
> (Appendix 3b)

In Extract 4 above, Nate elaborates on why he feels their parents disapprove of them talking in colloquial, slang forms such as those known as 'chav'. He starts by showing that he understands that children learn to speak by reproducing the way that their parents talk, building on this own experience and saying that you learn to "talk like them". However, he also reveals that he is aware that children also learn to utilise different spoken forms with different groups of people and learn to acquire different language resources to communicate and gain access to different social circles. He says: "you can talk differently with your friends and you catch on with other people and their accents". This shows that he and the other boys are aware of the need to switch between different spoken forms and use different linguistic resources when talking to people in different worlds, especially as there are consequences for using 'inappropriate' forms in interactions with particular people.

The main picture that emerges from Extract 4 is one in which, for the Sandwell boys, specific people of their class and generation are "unique", "natural" and "normal" like them and are therefore accepted and seen as part of their local life world. At the same time, certain 'posh' and 'snobby' individuals are described negatively based on their language use and spoken variety. These people are viewed warily and are not seen

as part of their world, especially since they might be critical of the boys and think they are superior to them. These exchanges indicate that there are complex relationships between the boys' attitudes towards language, their language use and their local life worlds. Firstly, the boys' discussion reveals a link between language use and identity – highlighting the way an individual speaks indexes a particular social identity. Secondly, the boys' comments index their awareness of the need to change how they talk, and use different spoken forms, when interacting with people from different social groups - for example when speaking with their friends or in the home.

6.2.1.2 The places and linguistic boundaries

Later in the group discussion, we gain further insights into the complexities involved for some children in the negotiation of what counts as 'local' identities. In the example below, Kevin provides a brief narrative about his own lived experience when moving back to the West Midlands, from Ireland, and settling into life in Sandwell with his family:

Extract 5:

Kevin: Can I say something please…? I feel left out being a Yam Yam but I'm happy with the way I speak coz like I, I, I was Irish I had a pretty Irish accent like Happi said when I… coz at some point when I, I was three I went to Dublin but when I got back that's when my mom said "You were born in England you were born in Sandwell so you're Yam Yam". When she said that I started hearing Yam Yam accents like I started talking like "yam ay got my bag aint ya, an all tha" and I still talk a bit of Yam Yam now coz I say "ay am an all tha".

> I have the mick took out of me for my accent when I go out to places like… Once my dad was in a fight an the cops had to get involved coz there was a few people pushing me round taking the mick out of me saying "You're a Yam Yam you don't belong round this sort of places", so the cops ended up getting involved an I just wish that I was never a Yam Yam but I still like my accent and I'm proud of it.
>
> (Appendix 3c)

First, he recounts that, although his family had been resident in Sandwell for several generations, during a period of residence in Dublin with his family, he had begun to acquire an Irish accent, which he liked. But, on their return to Sandwell, his mother made an explicit statement to him about place and identity: "You were born in England you were born in Sandwell so you're Yam Yam". This statement drew his attention to the features of the Sandwell dialect used by the people in his immediate neighbourhood, which he then went on to acquire. Kevin then went on to recall another incident. He and his father were threatened by people when they were in another area of Birmingham where people spoke differently. Through these two brief narratives, Kevin reveals how he became aware of linguistic boundaries and of the ways in which language varieties are associated with social groups. (I will return to an extended discussion of this narrative in section 6.5).

According to Holt and Gubbins (2002, p. 112), anthropologists have long argued that the focus of research on language and cultural identity should be on the construction of cultural boundaries, rather than just on cultural practices, artefacts and so on. Kevin's brief narratives show how his views about language, the places associated with spoken forms, and the place where he is currently geographically located, are

intimately linked to his idea of 'self' as a language user within different contexts: family, diverse urban spaces and educational settings. Kevin gives a poignant account of the type of linguistic discrimination he experiences: "I have the mick took out of me for my accent when I go out to places like…. an I just wish that I was never a Yam Yam". He nevertheless goes on to assert: "but I still like my accent and I'm proud of it".

There were further examples of the boys orientating themselves to local life worlds based on geographical boundaries and location. The following extract from the group discussion in Appendix 3a generated a rich set of insights into the boys' perception of the link between language and place. The discussion began when the boys were asked which speaker sounded the most like them:

Extract 6:

Danny: Which speaker do you feel spoke the most like you? How do you feel about this?

Dave: Errm it's the third one because he talked about… like he's from the same area as me. I've lived here quite a bit coz I'm closer to being a Brummie than anything else. Coz I was born round Birmingham and I live round in Birmingham and so that's… I talk like people from Birmingham so that's probably why.

Ben: I'm not really… I don't think any of them coz the posh one is a bit posh… really posh, the second one I'm nowhere near that, the third one is really strong… too strong to be me and the fourth one is no… so…

Eddy: Like he said I don't think any of them bec… like if I was

asked to talk like the other people it would be weird for… it's weird… as I might try and speak like that accent (in 1) but it's too posh and the second. The third is more from round here and I don't think I could do the fourth.

Charlie: Errm I think number three coz its that's Brummie and I was born a Brummie and I used to live there and I'm West Brom fan now but my dad's a Brummie as well so I talk like him.

Adam: Like everybody else the third one because I was born in Sandwell hospital and I'm from round Birmingham and it's the closest one ever so I'm going to go for three.

(Appendix 3a)

I have selected this particular extract (from Appendix 3a) since it provides clear evidence of the participants orientating to local places, geography and boundaries in responding to the video clips. Firstly, the boys all refer to their local area when revealing who they felt spoke the most like them. Charlie said "that's Brummie and I was born a Brummie" referring to lifelong residence in Birmingham. All of the boys made reference to a physical place, or particular landmark (e.g. a city or hospital) mentioning where they were born or where they grew up, and used labels of identity such as a Brummie or Yam Yam. David said: "he's from the same area as me"; "I've lived here quite a bit"; "I was born round Birmingham and I live round in Birmingham". Adam said: "(l)ike everybody else the third one because I was born in Sandwell hospital and I'm from round Birmingham". They identified themselves or others in their cohort as Brummies citing specific places – being born in Birmingham, or in a particular hospital in Sandwell. They also referred to particular moments in their lives in those places (e.g. their births, length of residence), tying a sense of place to time.

In addition, these boys also revealed their understanding of place and identity with reference to certain local emblems of identity. For example, in lines 18-20, Charlie said: "I was born a Brummie and I used to live there and I'm West Brom fan now but my dad's a Brummie as well so I talk like him". Thus, following a football team from the local area also constituted a means of marking local identity and categorising or labelling different speakers.

6.2.2 Orienting to institutional worlds

6.2.2.1 The people

The group discussions also provided evidence of the boys' attitudes towards people in different institutional worlds. In Extract 7 below, the boys made clear links between particular spoken forms and the professions, and types of professionals they associated with them:

Extract 7:

Danny: Do you think you could speak like this person
with practice?
Dave: Errm because it… I started off with the posh one because
that's what you can understand and it's… nearly everyone can
do a posh accent and you do it quite often if you, if you like
want to speak formal or if you're meeting some important person.
Danny: So, you would try to speak more formally if you
were meeting somebody you thought was important?
Dave: Coz like, I usually talk shorter coz errm I don't really
talk like formally when I'm talking to my friends but I have to
be posh when I'm talking to adults or important people.

Eddy: Errm like I think that I could try and do that accent because the first one is kinda posh and in like other places I could talk like that when I'm older like a higher person like a business man so I could talk like that more often… more correctly.
Ben: I don't think I could that much coz I'm not that posh and I'm not from where all the posh people are from and I can't do it and hardly none of my family are.
Charlie: I think I could coz I have some family who live in posh places and have posh things and they talk posh so I think I could talk posh.
Adam: Yeh because, coz I wanna be a doctor you have to speak posh, it depends how long it is… how long it is till then but I'll probably get it.
Danny: So, do you think what job you have affects how you have to speak?
Adam: Yeh!
Eddy: Yeh!

(Appendix 3a)

This particular exchange, taken from the group discussion transcript in Appendix 3a, was chosen because it provided insights into how the boys classified, categorised, described or orientated to individuals who use particular spoken language forms in institutional or professional worlds. Firstly, they articulated a clear distinction between different spoken forms and degrees of formality. They also mentioned different professional identities and different professional circumstances. They also echoed dominant discourses about speaking 'correctly' or 'properly' in the workplace. Dave notes that he needs to "talk formally" and "be posh" when talking to "important people". Eddy states that he would need to speak "kinda posh" to take on the identity of a "higher person like a business man". This is reiterated by Adam who states that

he would "have" to speak "posh", as he has ambitions to become a doctor. These boys made clear links between needing to use particular standardised forms of speech in specific jobs, in front of certain people (like adults) or to achieve a "higher" social, or professional status. They were in agreement that the type of job you have is bound up with the way you speak.

In further group discussions, other participants also suggested an individual's language use has a direct relation to employment or occupation. They indicated that they perceived certain people and certain professionals as typically using SE and that certain jobs and forms of professional status are only accessible to people with the appropriate communication repertoires.

In Extract 8 below, taken from Appendix 3b, in response to my explicit reference to institutional spaces, the boys showed a clear understanding of the link between social status and different forms of linguistic resources:

Extract 8:

Danny: Why would you speak formally in a job or school?
Sid: It depends what job. If it's a job where you have to speak to people every day but then you errm they wouldn't take you on if you came in there and started talking like that.
Danny: So you think they wouldn't give you a job if you spoke like that?
Jonesy: If you're a bin man then people don't expect you to be a bin man and talk all posh.
Jonesy: I think we'll collect this rubbish today. (Mocking)
Harley: I don't know why I do this job I find it quite shallow and pedantic. (Mock posh SE accent)

Danny: So how would a bin man speak?
Nate: Like normally.
Lee: Normal
Jonesy: Yeh normally.
Danny: What job would require people to speak differently.
Harley: Like a doctor. They speak sophisticated.
Danny: How would you feel if your doctor spoke street then.
Nate: Quite confused because you wouldn't understand him.
Jonesy: He might not know what he's doing. He wouldn't be talking like he knows what he's doing.
Harley: I wouldn't mind because that's how he wanted to speak, but I'd feel quite errm unsafe. You'd look at him and feel unsafe.
Sid: When you talk formal it sounds more intelligent. They aren't saying random things.

(Appendix 3b)

In answers to my questions, Sid and Jonesy state categorically that not everyone has to speak SE and that it depends on the job. The example he gives sounds like that of a receptionist or someone who deals with the public. Jonesy and Harley reinforce this idea, bringing some humour into the situation by doing an imaginary conversation between two bin men about their work using a 'posh' accent. Here, their use of stylised 'posh' Received Pronunciation accents – with SE features (e.g. not using any contracted forms) – has a ludic quality. Their point is reinforced by their mockery and joviality. The above example reveals the Sandwell boys' clear understanding of how language resources are bound up with upbringing and social positioning and how

different linguistic repertoires get evaluated within different institutional worlds, in education and the workplace.

In discussing workplaces, the boys showed a clear understanding of the link between social status and different forms of linguistic resources and forms of linguistic capital. When Harley was asked for an example, he stated "a doctor… (t)hey speak sophisticated". Sid agreed stating that "(w)hen you talk formal it sounds more intelligent. They aren't saying random things". Harley recognises that, if a doctor spoke street, it is his right to speak how he wishes. However, he also shows a clear awareness that there will be consequences for this, saying: "(y)ou would look at him and feel unsafe". Thus, he is implying that a doctor speaking non-standard spoken forms would make you question his/her ability to do his/her job – that he/she was not competent or trustworthy.

This is supported by James' comments who echoes Harley's line of argument, saying that a doctor's use of street would suggest that he/she might not know how to do his/her job. James' comment specifically links spoken form and professional capacity as he states "he wouldn't be talking like he knows what he is doing". James' is putting forward the widely held view that a doctor must select the right language resources and speak in a certain way in order to appear to have the ability and competency to hold a position in an institutional world (such as medicine). Nate concurs with this and argues that a doctor speaking street would confuse him and he would not be able to understand him. These views are all put forward although they have all previously claimed that they identify with street, that they speak it in their social groups and that it is their generation's way of speaking and it reflects their "unique" identity.

6.2.2.2 The places

The boys' group discussions also showed their awareness of the situated nature of language use, in institutional contexts and in specific places such as in the home, in school or work and in constructing different kinds of relationships. For example, in Extract 9 (from Appendix 3b), the boys in this particular group discussion began talking about the language resources they use with their friendship groups and in their own social circles, but then referred to the boundaries they had to observe, e.g. when talking to adults at home. They also made reference to the penalties they incurred if they crossed those boundaries:

Extract 9:

Danny: Do you use the same accent in front of your friends?
Hamish: If you talk to your parents like they're your friends then you'd get in trouble and when my brother talks like that in front of my mum she'd probably hit him.

(The boys all laugh)

Hamish: Coz that's the way of him showing he's unique but at the same time it's more respectful to not do it in front of mom. Errm I don't think I sound different I think my accents normal. I use different types of words.

(Appendix 3b)

In this extract, it was Hamish who made specific reference to the boundaries between talk with his friends indexing their "unique identity" and talk with parents and of the consequences of crossing this linguistic boundary. Referencing to the way he talks to his friends, he says: "at the same time it's more respectful to not do it in front of mom" and when "my brother talks like that in front of my mum she'd probably hit

him". These statements prompted a lot of laughter and spontaneous conversation from participants who clearly recognised this parental reaction.

In Extract 10 below, we see a brief narrative fragment about one boy's use of talk known as 'chav' at home, and another parental response. This time from a father:

Extract 10:

Harley: Sometimes I joke around with my friends and pretend to talk like a chav but I don't talk like it in front of my dad coz he goes "Ahh why are you talking like a chav for?"

(Appendix 3b)

Hamish and the other boys appeared to be keenly aware of sociolinguistic norms and how different language resources were evaluated in their local life worlds. In addition, they showed a clear understanding of how 'street' and 'chav' (familiar local, social vernaculars) were evaluated in other environments, e.g. in public spaces like shops and hairdressers.

For example, in the extract below, Kenwyne shared a small story about a time when he and his dad had gone to a barber's shop and when Kenwyne had noticed his dad's negative reaction to the way the barber had greeted him (using a typical local dialect term):

Extract 11:

(A)t the barbers when my dad went to the barbers and the barber went to him "safe" and my dad went (throws a strange disapproving look) and looked at him like that when the barber said "safe".

(Appendix 3b)

His father did not approve of being greeted with the word "safe" – a word used only in close social circles, as 'street talk', and as part of the local urban repertoire. It is mainly used as a greeting but also means that someone thinks a person is cool, or it can signify agreement or indicate that something is good (Urban Dictionary, 2018)[9].

Later in the discussion, in response to my question about language use in schools, Kenwyne shared a longer narrative about an incident on his transition day to his new secondary school:

Extract 12:

Danny: What about in school?
Neil: I'd be fine.
Hamish: You have to change it sort of then. Because you're not going to talk street to the teachers. Because its kind of disrespectful.
Charlie: I agreee with Hamish because it would be inappropriate because I'd be used to speaking to the teacher like I normally speak and changing to speak street would be weird.
Kenwyne: When I went to my new school the other day, there was this person... I didn't know him... and he came across all posh and I thought he was going to be all funny and snobby... but when he started talking to the teacher it wasn't what he looked like and it was all street and the teacher said "I beg your pardon, I don't think we'll be speaking like that in this class." And yeh it was just a bit weird because

[9] https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=safe

> teachers don't understand and talk like that and you can't talk like that in my school.
> **Danny:** How do teachers talk?
> **Neil:** You may speak to a teacher formally and they'll speak to you formally but outside of school they may talk more informally.
>
> (Appendix 3b)

This extract is also about the consequences of crossing linguistic boundaries but in an educational setting. Kenwyne's small story reveals an awareness of spoken forms that are 'appropriate' in classrooms and in front of teachers, whilst Neil refers to the need for children to speak "formally" to teachers, inside of school. In these brief exchanges, Neil, Carl and Hamish show their understanding that teachers will not tolerate certain spoken forms within the classroom, and that they have to negotiate clearly defined boundaries at home and school, and within lived friendship networks, when choosing how to speak and what spoken forms to use.

When engaging with the multidimensional world around them, they had become socialised into particular language practices as they moved across different social spaces. The above exchanges suggest that boys such as Kenwyne and Hamish have developed an awareness of how different forms of linguistic capital are evaluated and what forms count in institutional domains (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 90). Kenwyne and Hamish, like other Sandwell boys from other group discussions, showed that they had access to, and an understanding of, different standard and non-standard dialect forms, and had developed a conscious awareness of which forms are appropriate in which contexts, and which forms carry more authority.

6.3 The boys' representations and evaluations of RP and SE speakers

6.3.1 Articulating dominant discourses about the 'exchange-value' of SE

There is evidence from this group discussion data that the boys' language values were class-based and linked to their interpretations and understanding of social structure. The boys are clearly aware of the ways in which RP and SE have come to be associated with the way in which different groups of people are positioned within class hierarchies. At the extreme end, they make frequent references to the monarchy – these are from references in their discussions to "the Queen's English". Middle class speakers of Standardised English are also represented as sounding more educated and authoritative. Thus, in Extract 13 below, we see their response to my question about "which speaker would write the best?":

Extract 13:

Danny: So which speaker would write the best:
Jonesy: Ben. He uses a lot of Standard English and that makes it seem like he's a well educated person.
Nate: Yeh errm, for the same reasons he is more educated than us and uses Standard English and he's like posh as well and posh people speak more well and with like that "Accent"
Lee: He sounds really clever.
Sid: He uses proper grammar.
Charlie: He seems very educated and he looks like he knows what he's saying. He doesn't like talk strange.
Harley: I think he's very confident... a bit too confident. And then he's confident in like what he says so you believe him and what he says.

(Appendix 3b)

In this extract, and in describing Ben Fogle, we see them rehearsing the qualities that speakers of Standard English are supposed to possess: As Jonesy observes: "He uses a lot of Standard English and that makes it seem like he's a well-educated person"; as Lee says: "he sounds really clever", and as Sid points out, "He uses proper grammar". Charlie and Harley concur with this, in lines 9-13, saying "he seems very educated and he looks like he knows what he is saying" and "I think he's very confident… like… in what he says so you believe him and what he says".

However, as they are rehearsing an orthodox account of the qualities of an SE speaker, Harley also reveals his stance on these qualities, by qualifying his utterance with the words "I think he's very confident… a bit too confident". He clearly does not feel comfortable with the authoritative style assumed by Ben Fogle. There is an element of critique in his reaction to Ben.

Later, in response to my second question about Jasper Carrott, a speaker in these videos with a Midlands' dialect, we see the following exchanges:

Extract 14:

Danny: Ok, do you think the other speakers would be confident at, say for example, writing?
Tayon: I think he'd be ok, like not too bad but like normal.
Nate: Not as good as the man who's more educated but like on the video he (the Midland dialect speaker) repeats himself often and doesn't sound as clever.

> **Graham:** Errm it would be ok but errm say there was a Brummie and a posh person and they write the same thing and you compared it they would be completely different things like the way they write and use punctuation.
>
> (Appendix 3b)

This evaluation of Jasper Carrott (and by association, all 'Brummies') is more negative, particularly since it anticipates the quality of his literacy practices. Graham makes an explicit reference to mastery of punctuation in writing as a way of distinguishing poor writers versus competent SE writers.

With the exception of Harley's remark about Ben Fogle being "too confident", what we see in Extracts 13 and 14 are examples of these boys articulating dominant discourses about SE, about writing in SE and about the authority that underpins the use of standardised spoken and written English. However, as we see in the next section (6.3.2), the boys also have an explicit critique of people who sound "posh".

6.3.2 The boys' representations of 'posh' people

Blommaert and Rampton (2012, p. 18) have argued that all speakers naturally evaluate and reflect on "the cultural images of people and activities conjured by particular forms of speech". From the opening exchanges in the group discussions, it was evident that the Sandwell boys often hard harsh words to say about people who spoke Standard English. They interpreted the use of SE as a means of asserting superiority over those who have regional accents and of looking down on people with working class origins. Through their negative evaluations of Ben Fogle, they showed

their class background and speaker status. In response to my question about how they evaluated speakers in the video, four boys said the following:

Extract 15:

Danny: Which person do you prefer the least or would be the least popular?
Andy: Ben, because he was all like all snobby.
Harley: The Brummie because he sounds stupid and if people saw them on the street they'd think that they speak stupid.
Carl: Ben because he seemed a bit posh and like he was too clever.
Kenwyne: Ben too, because he was too "I'm better than you", my opinions don't count and like because he'd been to the rainforest so like and you haven't so whatever you've done he thinks he's better.

(Appendix 3b)

In this exchange, there are some very critical judgements being made about Ben Fogle. The four boys' opinions are explicit and categorical. For example, Andy, Carl and Kenwyne classify Ben Fogle (the SE speaker) as being "snobby", "posh", "too clever" and say that "he thinks he's better". Some scholars have argued that the prominence of class may be diminishing in everyday speech and that young people in modern society have a declining awareness of class and social status when it comes to interpreting language usage (Coggle, 1993 and Honey, 1991). The comments captured here, however, stand in stark contrast to this claim.

As well as evaluating the personal qualities of individual speakers of SE, such as Ben Fogle, the boys generated a good deal of mirth in their group by exemplifying and

mocking SE. Take for example, the switch to SE by Harley in Extract 16 below, where he impersonates an imaginary professional footballer who speaks "posh":

Extract 16:

Danny: Very interesting. So when you think of a person with a high earning job what accent do you see them as having?
Charlie: Like posh and educated.
Harley: I don't think all people who have a high quality job need to be posh and educated. Say if you were a footballer you wouldn't say "Oooh look at me" (mock SE).
(The boys all laugh)
Kenwyne: Yeh like Steven Gerard he can't speak. He earns lots of money but his accent's horrible.

(Appendix 3b)

The humour here resides in the fact that footballers are not usually SE speakers, even if they have had considerable success. Harley's class-based critique is understood by all of the boys, and they laugh. Kenwyne then makes this point explicit by citing the example of Steven Gerard, but his second point is underpinned by dominant discourses about "horrible accents" and about people of working class origin being inarticulate.

In this group discussion, it is also possible to identify some slight differences between the boys' in their perceptions and evaluations of RP and SE. As we see in Extract 17 below, James ventures the view that it might "sound nice" if one spoke "posh":

Extract 17:

James: ...and yes, I'm confident with my English … thank you for that Kevin!

Kevin: He uses that Queen Elizabeth accent.
James: But now that we talk like a normal person if you learnt to talk posh then it would sound nice.
Frank: No not really coz he speaks posh but if you went to where we live round here you'd get bullied.

(Appendix 3c)

However, Frank rejects this line of argument, and he refers specifically to the consequences of attempting to speak "posh" within friendship networks, noting that there is bullying by people within their networks. Here, we see Frank alluding to the policing of language boundaries within their friendship group and, at the same time, a deep rooted fear of being ridiculed or being laughed at by speakers of SE. As Kevin puts it, in the group discussion in Appendix 3c:

Extract 18:

Kevin: people who are posh they take the mick… most posh people take the mick out of Brummies and Yam Yams and that so I'm not very keen on them.
Danny: Why do you think that is?
Kevin: Coz coz they are like from, they're like from Southampton and they think "they're from Birmingham and they're useless" so I don't like… really like them or that accent?
Danny: So, you think that if someone hears our accent they will think we are useless?
Kevin: Or like think that's a weird accent that's very funny I never heard that.
Frank: You know Kevin thinks that they take the mick out of us. Well, we might take the mick out of them coz we find theirs funny!

(Appendix 3c)

This extract provides insights into the tensions felt by boys such as this group in Sandwell in navigating the boundaries between SE and their local accent and dialects. They are clearly aware of the language ideologies and values bound up with different ways of speaking and with the consequences of boundary crossing.

6.4 'Normal' language, group identity, solidarity and mutual respect among the boys

In the group discussions, the boys indexed a mutual solidarity and respect and aligned to a shared identity through language. Firstly, as I showed in section 6.2.1.1, the boys orientated to particular people in their life worlds, those in their friendship networks and their family members, and indexed their networks and family members through this use of the personal pronoun 'we'. As in short Extract 2, 'we' was contrasted with 'they' – people beyond these life worlds. The extract below shows the fuller discourse context for Extract 2 and shows how Charlie's use of the 'we' and 'they' distinction is taken up by other boys in this group, in response to my question:

Extract 19:

Danny: Finally, what do other people think about your dialect?
Danny: You asked an important question earlier Eddy asking "would other people laugh at our accent if they heard it?" So do you think it affects what people think about your dialect?
Eddy: I think people will think the exact same thing as what we think of their dialect. Coz this isn't the same accent as theirs. Theirs is a suitable accent for them so they would laugh at us.
David: We can't tell people how… what to think of your dialect errm of your accent… errm

> **Charlie**: I think that they would find it quite funny like how we talk and they talked and errm… quite strange coz we don't really talk about…like them and we don't really talk posh we talk quite like slang
> **Ben**: I'm ok with it coz most people know that most people have got a different accent and errm everything's just... I'm ok coz it's a normal accent like other people's is a normal accent it's just how we talk.
>
> (Appendix 3a)

In this part of this conversation, 'we' is used to refer to the group, as a collective, and their accent is described as "normal". This trope about the local accent being 'normal' comes up repeatedly in the group discussions in Appendix 3a-3c. In this exchange, Ben makes the point that there are other language varieties 'out there' that other people see as "normal". He is responding to Charlie who has partly discredited the group's language variety as "slang" – using a label from dominant discourses about regional language varieties and the language resources of people of working class origin.

What we see in this conversational extract is a language ideological tension between dominant discourse representations of Brummie or Yam Yam as forms of speech diverting from the norms of Standard English, and a counter discourse of identity solidarity and belonging which represents the language varieties as normal and as unique markers of local identities.

The links between language varieties and identities are reinforced later in the same conversation when Eddy introduces the notion of embodiment. This is shown in Extract 20 below:

Extract 20:

Eddy: Our voices and our accents are just like something …a part of our… they're in our bodies like our eyes or our hearts. If somebody asked you "can you talk like me?" or something it's probably just a harder way of living if you have three accents if you use one thing of your voice or your accent that's like your heart. Like if you disabled that's how you live

Adam: It's like Eddy said people can't take your voice away unless you're disabled.

David: Coz my cousin he used to couldn't talk properly and people was laughing at him at school and he went to the doctors and got it fixed then everyone was his friend. People can take the mick out of you for what you speak. If people take the mick out of the way you speak then they're not your friend but if they treat you the same all the way then they are your friend.

(Appendix 3a)

Adam and David concur with Eddy, and David concludes with a small story about the ways in which language ideologies are connected with the development of friendship networks. I return to David's story in section 6.5.1.

Secondly, mutual solidarity and respect were indexed through these boys' use of preferred responses with each other and their avoidance of opportunities for engaging in Face Threatening Acts (Mills, 2003). For example, in Extract 21 below, it was evident

in James and Happi's interactions with Kevin that they were keen to minimise offence caused by their individual language-related judgements and statements. The boys were addressing the question that I asked about how easy or difficult it was to understand the speech of the different speakers they had heard in the videos. The second speaker had a northern accent and the third speaker had a Midlands accent like Kevin:

Extract 21:

Danny: Who was the hardest to understand and why?
Kevin: Was the Northern man the second?
Indie: Yeh he's kinda hard but he speaks like me he speaks fast.
James: I actually find three the hardest because… I'm sorry Kevin…
Kevin: Yum saying I'm the hardest to understand in this class?
James: I think that because of where I'm from I've never heard people speak like that before. The pronunciation wasn't clear to me so I couldn't understand it
Kevin: But now you get it every day off me?
Frank: Errm I said 4 coz he was a bit like he'd speak but kinda like a sore throat. I didn't understand it.
Happi: Am sorry Kevin I'm going to have to say 3 coz I couldn't understand him and he was just saying random words so we was just laughing so we didn't understand him.

(Appendix 3c)

In this example, we see how James and Happi both were categorising the Midlands dialect speaker as being the most difficult to understand. Whilst the boys seemed to be clear in their judgement, as they showed no hesitation or confusion before speaking, both seemed to feel the need to apologise to Kevin before sharing their

opinion and causing any potential offence. It is evident in this exchange that these two boys felt their language judgements were very sensitive and they apologised to Kevin for their judgements in advance, using negative politeness and a strategy for reducing any face threatening impact. This is evidence of the boys choosing ways to interact with each other that indexed mutual respect and reduced offence despite having differing opinions. This episode provides revealing insights into the respectful ways in which these boys crafted the relationships they had with each other.

6.5 Small stories: The boys' perspectives on language identities and language ideologies

Throughout the group discussions these boys utilised a number of different language resources when conveying their opinions and sharing their responses. On five occasions, they also told small stories. These small stories gave deeper insights into their understanding of different ways in which language resources were bound up with the enactment of identities, how language resources were evaluated by different social actors and they also give in to their own lived-experiences of language practices and ideologies.

My analysis will draw on the three levels of narrative analysis identified by Barkhuizen (2010), which were outlined in Chapter 2. The first level relates to the context of the story and the characters involved. The second level relates to the interactive performance of the story. The third level relates to the positioning agentively assumed by the narrator vis-à-vis normative discourses and particular groups of social actors. Some of the small stories analysed here have already appeared in extracts that I have

discussed above. However, here, I am considering each of the narratives (and the meaning generated by them) in greater depth.

6.5.1 David's story

The first narrative, told by David, appeared as part of Extract 20 above. Since the discourse context for his small story is relevant, I reproduce Extract 20 here:

> **Extract 22 (part of Extract 20 above):**
>
> **Eddy**: Our voices and our accents are just like something a part of our… they're in our bodies like our eyes or our hearts. If somebody asked you "can you talk like me?" or something it's probably just a harder way of living if you have three accents if you use one thing of your voice or your accent that's like your heart. Like if you disabled that's how you live
>
> **Adam**: It's like Eddy said people can't take your voice away unless you're disabled.
>
> **David**: Coz my cousin he used to couldn't talk properly and people was laughing at him at school and he went to the doctors and got it fixed then everyone was his friend. People can take the mick out of you for what you speak. If people take the mick out of the way you speak then they're not your friend but if they treat you the same all the way then they are your friend.
>
> (Appendix 3a)

6.5.1.1 The story context and the characters

David's story is about a cousin of his who had a disability – a speech impediment – which made him sound different from other boys. David recounts how this led to him being the target of teasing and mockery, thereby demonstrating the consequences of

'being different' and how being different takes on even greater significance when it is linked to a physical disability. David then describes the change in the ways in which other children related to his cousin once his speech impediment had been overcome through a medical intervention.

The characters in this story are David's cousin, his doctor and "people" / "everyone" [not referenced], presumably other children in the same age group as his cousin who became "his friend" after his medical intervention.

6.5.1.2 David's interactive performance of the story

As narrator, David was orientating to an audience that included the other boys in this group discussion and he was reacting to Eddy's point about the embodiment of difference in a person's "voice" and "accent" and, in particular, to Adam's reference to disability. It is clear from David's opening word, "Coz", that he was constructing the story as a means of supporting the point made earlier. Here the boys appeared to be thinking aloud together revealing their perspectives on these issues. The first point of David's story was told in the past tense, as a bare account of events in the past. He then turned to the present tense to reveal what he had learned from this episode. While he was speaking in his dialect, using dialect forms such as "people was laughing", his style was authoritative and he spoke with conviction, making statements in the simple present tense about who counted as a friend.

6.5.1.3 David's agentive self-positioning vis-à-vis normative discourses

In his opening gambit, David uses the normative term "speaking properly". Here, he is simply reiterating dominant discourses that assume that there is only one appropriate way of speaking. He does not appear to be questioning this. In the second part of his contribution, he focuses on the penalties of sounding different when you speak, using the vernacular term "take the mick out of you" to refer to the mockery and teasing. At the same time, he alludes to the way in which language resources serve as means of making boundaries between social groups, in this case friendship groups. David's story provides poignant insights into his perspectives on language in social life and into the ways in which language ideologies about differences can shape young people's lives.

6.5.2 Kenwyne's first story

Kenwyne's first small story was cited in Extract 11. I reproduce this whole small extract here:

Extract 23: (from Extract 11)

> (A)t the barbers when my dad went to the barbers and the barber went to him "safe" and my dad went (throws a strange disapproving look) and looked at him like that when the barber said "safe".
>
> (Appendix 3b)

6.5.2.1 The story content and the characters

Kenwyne's first story is about an exchange between a local barber and his father in a barber's shop. During this exchange, his father reacted in a disapproving manner to

the barber's use of his word "safe" from the local dialect in a public place like the barber's shop. The term 'safe' was clearly considered to be a 'rough' and 'inappropriate' term to use in a public place. The characters in the story were his father (who presumably told the original story), the barber and, by implication, other people (overhearers) in the shop at this time.

6.5.2.2 Kenwyne's interactive performance of the story

This story was told in response to the listing of dialect words by the boys during an exchange – words that were equally 'rough' in nature. 'Safe' was one of the words listed. The process of listing these words gave rise to a good deal of laughter and discussion amongst the boys. The main audience was them and the other boys, and me (who had originally prompted the listing of the words). As he told his dad's story, Kenwyne made use of non-verbal resources, mimicking his dad's look of disapproval, adding to the general mirth. He also used a particular linguistic resource associated with the narrative genre, that is the use of the word 'went' to describe one character's response to another character's action. His dad's response was then performed non-verbally.

6.5.2.3 Kenwyne's self-positioning vis-a-vis normative discourses

Kenwyne's story appears to serve the purpose of reminding the boys in this group of the wider normative discourses 'out there' and about the use of some of the words that had caused amusement in the group. The opening words "Yeh, but…" index this wider order of normative discourses about the roughness and inappropriacy signalled by the use of certain dialect words.

6.5.3 Kenwyne's second story

Kenwyne's second story appeared at the end of the longer Extract 12. Again, the discourse content is relevant to my analysis of this story, so I will reproduce the full extract here:

Extract 24 (Extract 12 reproduced):

Danny: What about in school?
Neil: I'd be fine.
Hamish: You have to change it sort of then. Because you're not going to talk street to the teachers. Because its kind of disrespectful.
Charlie: I agreee with Hamish because it would be inappropriate because I'd be used to speaking to the teacher like I normally speak and changing to speak street would be weird.
Kenwyne: When I went to my new school the other day, there was this person... I didn't know him... and he came across all posh and I thought he was going to be all funny and snobby... but when he started talking to the teacher it wasn't what he looked like and it was all street and the teacher said "I beg your pardon, I don't think we'll be speaking like that in this class." And yeh it was just a bit weird because teachers don't understand and talk like that and you can't talk like that in my school.
Danny: How do teachers talk?
Neil: You may speak to a teacher formally and they'll speak to you formally but outside of school they may talk more informally.

(Appendix 3b)

6.5.3.1 The content and characters in this story

This story was about a boy whom Kenwyne met at his new school and about the boy's communicative repertoire. Kenwyne's first impression was that this boy only spoke "all posh" and Kenwyne interpreted this as snobbishness. Later, in class, in the presence of a teacher, the boy revealed that "street" was also part of his repertoire. However, the boy was then reprimanded for using 'street' in class. Through this story, Kenwyne reveals how his expectations regarding language practices in school, and his assumptions about boys who speak "posh", were disrupted by this episode. This disruption is expressed through his use of the words "it was just a bit weird". Kenwyne included himself as one of the characters in this story. The other characters were the boy with the broad communication repertoire, the teacher and, presumably, the other pupils in the class who heard the teacher's remark.

6.5.3.2 Kenwyne's interactive performance of this story

This story was told to other boys and to me in response to the ongoing discussion of 'speaking street' in school and the social meanings associated with this. The story was made more vivid through Kenwyne's use of direct speech to represent the voice of the teacher, through his representation of the genre of a teacherly reprimand and through the use of a very formal term of apology to this boy. The language of the teacher came in marked contrast to the language Kenwyne used to narrate his story to the boys in his group; turns of phrase like "it was well street" and "he came across all posh".

6.5.3.3 Kenwyne's self-positioning vis-a-vis normative discourses

Kenwyne's story added further evidence to the account of the sociolinguistic environment of schools that was being built up collectively by the boys in Extract 11. The boys all indexed an institutional order where the norm is to use Standard English. Kenwyne simply stated in the present tense at the end of his story that teachers set the agenda and that the style of speaking that prevailed was that which everyone should use, namely, standardised forms of English. His explanation was that teachers do not understand 'street' and so "you can't talk like that in school". There is no questioning of this language regime.

6.5.4 The stories told by Happi and Kevin

Both of the stories included here relate to the boys' experiences of geographical mobility with their families. Happi's story is shown below in a new extract, Extract 25. It emerged in response to my question about how he felt about the regional accent and dialect:

Extract 25:

Danny: How do you feel about your regional dialect (accent)? Are you happy with your accent?
Happi: No I wanna have an Irish accent coz when I lived with my Nan and Granddad they sounded Irish and when I came back I used to have an Irish accent a bad Irish accent but now it's English again.

(Appendix 3c)

The story by Kevin was then told soon afterwards. Kevin alluded to Happi's earlier contribution. Kevin's story appeared earlier in this chapter in Extract 5 and I reproduce it here:

Extract 26 (Extract 5 reproduced)

Kevin: Can I say something please…? I feel left out being a Yam Yam but I'm happy with the way I speak coz like I, I, I was Irish I had a pretty Irish accent like Happi said when I… coz at some point when I, I was three I went to Dublin but when I got back that's when my mom said "You were born in England you were born in Sandwell so you're Yam Yam". When she said that I started hearing Yam Yam accents like I started talking like "yam ay got my bag aint ya, an all tha" and I still talk a bit of Yam Yam now coz I say "ay am an all tha".
I have the mick took out of me for my accent when I go out to places like… Once my dad was in a fight an the cops had to get involved coz there was a few people pushing me round taking the mick out of me saying "You're a Yam Yam you don't belong round this sort of places", so the cops ended up getting involved an I just wish that I was never a Yam Yam but I still like my accent and I'm proud of it.

(Appendix 3c)

6.5.4.1 The content and characters of the stories

As indicated above, both stories relate to the lived experiences of Happi and Kevin of spending time with family members in Ireland and the acquiring of an Irish accent, only to move back to Sandwell where they had to learn how to speak Yam Yam, so as to fit in with local youth networks. Kevin adds an additional narrative about linguistic

boundaries and language regimes in different areas of the Midlands and of the risks involved in crossing linguistic boundaries.

The characters in Happi's story are him and his grandparents. There is a hint of affection for them in his statement that his nan and grandad had Irish accents and "sounded Irish". The characters in Kevin's first story are him and his mother. The characters in his second story are Kevin, his father, "people" (acting aggressively towards Kevin) and the "cops".

6.5.4.2 The interactive performances in the telling of the stories

Happi tells his story as a means of explaining why he wants to have an Irish accent. He simply tells it as a sequence of events in the past tense. The only hint that the experience of learning to speak with an "English" accent might have been a difficult one lies in his use of the phrase "bad Irish accent". However, it is not clear if this was his evaluation of, more likely, those around him on returning to the West Midlands.

Kevin's first story was told as a response to the fact that most of the other boys in the group self-declared as having Brummie accents, so he tells his story of how he came to have a Yam Yam accent. His story line unfolds in a vivid manner through his use of direct speech. He imitates his mother's voice telling him that he was born in Sandwell so he is a Yam Yam, showing how he was positioned by his mother on his return. He then rehearses some ways he talks in Yam Yam. The second story then recalls an incident where he and his father crossed a linguistic boundary, that exists in the Midlands, and where he was mocked for speaking Yam Yam. Here again, different

speech is used to represent the voices of his aggressors. At the end of the story, he says with emotion: "I just wish I was never a Yam Yam", following the experience of being positioned in this threatening way. He nevertheless concludes with a positive take on his accent – revealing an ambivalence about how his accent indexes his identity.

6.5.4.3 The boys' self-positioning vis-à-vis normative discourses

The normative discourses in both these stories relate to local life worlds and to discourses about language and belonging that these boys encountered within local family and neighbourhood contexts. They give poignant accounts of the consequences of family mobility over time and of the burden of being positioned and having to adapt to different local dialects; from Irish and back to Yam Yam. In the accounts of their lived experiences, we see an ambivalence; the nostalgia for Irish expressed by Happi and mixed feelings regarding linguistic allegiances on Kevin's part. Through their stories, we are reminded that language regimes and ideologies about identity prevail in local life worlds as well as institutional worlds such as schools.

CHAPTER 7 – SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The case study presented in this thesis focussed on socio-economically disadvantaged boys in Sandwell. It has drawn attention to the language attitudes, perceptions and values of a specific group of boys and has considered these in relation to the NC requirements in England and to the ways in which Standard English is currently privileged and legitimised as the language of schooling. Socio-economically disadvantaged boys in my school were the main focus of this case study because their level of attainment and progress in English subject areas remained significantly lower than that of SE-speaking pupils, and also below that of girls. Because of the more general pattern of below average attainment of boys in this group, in other urban settings beyond my school, there has been significant public and professional discussion about the growing significance of SE in the NC, and about the possible impact on socio-disadvantaged pupils. To build a deeper understanding of these issues, I focused on the research questions listed below (and in Chapter 1):

1. *What are the boys' attitudes to standard and non-standard English forms?*
2. *How do the boys' language attitudes, beliefs and values relate to the requirements of the National Curriculum, and the language ideologies underpinning it?*
3. *What are the implications for educational practice and policy?*

As indicated in Chapter 4, the research methods that I employed to respond to these questions included the following: Firstly, I carried out an Accent Awareness Test (AAT) with the thirty most socio-economically disadvantaged boys in SNDWLLSCHOL, with a

view to eliciting their awareness of different accents and their attitudes to them. Secondly, I organised group discussions based on the viewing of three video clips. The video clips involved different speakers, speaking different varieties of English, in different contexts. The 26 boys participating formed groups of 6-12. This data was audio-recorded. It included talk-in-interaction and small stories told by some of the boys. I chose to undertake a qualitative analysis of this data. This type of analysis gave me further insights into: (1) the boys' language attitudes and values; (2) the social meanings generated in their interactions with each other and, occasionally, with me; (3) their emic perspectives on the social implications of linguistic difference; and (4) their lived experiences of crossing linguistic boundaries or breaking social norms of language use.

Thirdly, close analysis of the text, discourse and structure of the 2014 version of the National Curriculum document in English. The aim of the analysis was to investigate the specific language ideologies underpinning the document and to identify the ways in which the authoritative nature of the text was discursively constructed. As indicated in Chapter 2, this part of the research drew on analysis and resources from the field of critical discourse analysis and incorporated insights from the work of social theorists such as Bourdieu (1991a) and Foucault (1980).

7.1 Research question 1: What are the boys' attitudes to standard and non-standard English spoken forms?

7.1.1 The findings of the Accent Awareness Test

The AAT revealed that the boys' judgements of different speakers altered depending on whether they were judging speakers along solidarity or status dimensions. The quantitative findings reported in Chapter 5 demonstrated that the boys valued West Midlands based accents in both social and aesthetical terms and, when asked who was the easiest to listen to, who was the clearest speaker and who was nicest to listen to, the boys clearly and consistently placed the Birmingham-accented speaker first. The Birmingham accent was clearly being evaluated on a solidarity dimension, with accessibility and social worth being key criteria. Ryan et al. (1982, p. 9) argued such behaviours and judgements hold "vital social meaning" regarding individuals' relationships/identification with social groups. Wiggins and Trobst (1999) have also noted that research of this kind does elicit attitudes of acceptance, friendliness, attachment, communion and belonging with regards to speakers with regional accents that are familiar to participants and to accents that are associated with local surrounding areas.

In contrast, the boys judged accents differently when considering them on the status dimension and taking account of institutional settings and the language ideologies circulating within them. For example, they judged the Birmingham-accented speaker as the worst potential teacher, poorest reader/writer and least likely to succeed in education. Thus, the boys' attitudes to accent, according to the AAT findings, differed depending on the context. The AAT results revealed that they had positive perceptions

of particular accents, such as Received Pronunciation, when considering educational settings. They judged RP speakers as: academically superior, better at reading and writing, sounding more educated and as better teachers than speakers of regional varieties. The AAT also demonstrated that the boys perceived RP speakers as having better pronunciation, better spoken English and as sounding more academic.

7.1.2 Analysis of the group discussion data

Chapter 6 sets out the findings of the qualitative analysis of the group discussion data. Here, since the focus of the analysis is on the boys' own words - on the ways in which they represented their responses to the video clips and on the ways in which they talked about their own views of language and their own lived experience – we get deeper insights into their language values.

In the first part of this chapter, we see the boys' representations of their local West Midlands varieties of English as emblems of social identity and belonging, casting further light on the solidarity dimension of their language attitudes identified through the AAT. These varieties are described as 'natural' or 'normal' and are a valued cultural resource in their local life worlds. In the boys' accounts, we see the use of local dialects indexing their links with family members and friends. The emphasis appears to be on what Snell (2015) has called 'use-value' of these linguistic resources as markers of local identity and belonging. They illustrate their own use of Brummie or Yam Yam by orientating to local people, local activities (such as supporting a local football team) and to local places, such as their homes or even their place of birth (e.g. Sandwell local hospital). In describing their local ways of speaking, they use a range of terms,

including the local names of regional language varieties (e.g. Brummie or Yam Yam), or words to describe colloquial urban forms of speech, such as 'street' or 'talking chav'. There is even one reference to generalised differences, implying that their local speech styles differ from those of their parents.

However, even in their accounts of the language practice and values of people they engage within their local life worlds, we begin to see normative discourses creeping in. We see parental disapproval being expressed at the use of 'chav' or at the use of local dialect features used within their own networks. In one instance, the penalty was physical punishment. We also see the consequences of crossing linguistic boundaries. There are individual stories about the linguistic consequences for two boys moving from Ireland to the West Midlands and the need to adapt, fit in and learn to speak like the locals. There is also one story about threatening behaviour in speaking Yam Yam outside of Sandwell and to the penalties incurred when crossing linguistic boundaries. In the second part of the chapter, we see the ways in which the boys represent and evaluate the use of Standard English. Again, here, a range of terms are used to describe this variety of English. These include Queen's English, "speaking posh" and Standard English. In this part of the group discussion data, we see the spoken language styles of Standard English speakers being described in a variety of ways, as "authoritative", "educated", "confident" and "clever". There is agreement among the boys that people with these voices are likely to be heard in institutional worlds, and the speakers are likely to be people in professional positions, such as doctors or teachers. In fact, as one boy suggests, their credibility in acting out their roles depends on being able to "speak posh".

What is clear from these accounts by the boys is that they are fully aware of: (1) the social meanings associated with different ways of speaking; (2) the language ideologies about "speaking proper" that dominate in institutional worlds; and (3) the ways in which the use of Standard English makes a difference within their worlds. Thus, in the boys' accounts, it is clear that they are aware of what Snell (2015) calls the "exchange value" of Standard English, drawing on the work of Bourdieu (1991a).

Two other insights emerge from the analysis of the interactions between the boys and the stories told by them during the group discussions: Firstly, they joke with each other and mock speakers of Standard English in a spirit of solidarity. For example, they act out a mock dialogue between two bin men, or imagine footballers speaking in Standard English. This gives rise to considerate mirth within the group. One boy also criticises a speaker of SE for sounding "too confident".

Secondly, at the root of their mocking and joking lies a deep-rooted fear of being criticised, put down or mocked themselves for speaking their local language variety. Frequent reference is made to the ways in which speakers of Standard English "take the mick" out of speakers of local dialects and to representations of dialect speakers as being uneducated or lacking in intelligence. A particular sense of vulnerability is expressed by Eddy in Extract 20 when he says: "Our voices and our accents are just like something… a part of our… they're in our bodies like our eyes or our hearts". This view of the embodiment of local ways of speaking, accompanied by a sense of vulnerability, needs to be understood within the wider social circumstances in which the boys find themselves. They come from homes that are socio-economically

disadvantaged and, at school, they encounter class-based distinctions between language varieties, with Standard English being represented as having greater cultural value than their own way of speaking. Also, at the same time, these language values are reinforced through the language requirements of the National Curriculum.

7.2 Research question 2: How do boys' language attitudes, beliefs and values relate to the requirements of the National Curriculum, and the language ideologies underpinning it?

In Chapter 3, my analysis of the 2014 version of the National Curriculum, and associate documents for the teaching of English (reading, speaking, writing, spelling punctuation and grammar) in schools drew attention to the prevalence of the following strategic and ideological standpoints underpinning the text.

1. Marginalisation and even recommended avoidance of non-standard forms in the teaching of writing and grammar.
2. An emphasis on SE (with strict, set rules) as the prime legitimised language in the English Programme of Study.
3. Treatment of non-standard and standard varieties as linguistically separate forms.
4. Representation of the use of Standard English as deploying decontextualised 'skills'.
5. An expectation that should be fluent in "relatively formal" SE rules and forms to teach and identify "correct" language usage and to assess pupil progress and attainment towards prescribed norms. At the same time, an assumption that

teachers should also have awareness of non-standard forms to recognise and correct them.

6. An emphasis on discrete learning of standardised forms - the curriculum moves from exploring and playing with phonetic variations in Year 1, to formal grammar and punctuation teaching and assessment for Years 2-6.
7. Pupils having to show an increasing command and conscious control of SE over time to succeed in the classroom (DfE, 2014, p. 84).
8. An emphasis on the consequences for pupils who do not conform to, or develop 'competence' in, SE rules and conventions. They risk becoming "disenfranchised" and not being able to participate "fully as a member of society" (DfE, 2014, p. 3).
9. Repeated use of the auxiliary verb "must" in the text of the curriculum document indexing obligation, showing that schools are bound to fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum and pupils have to develop fluency in Standard English.

The analysis in Chapter 3 showed how the ideological standpoint and approaches of the NC constitute an example of the exercise of discursive power. By defining "who can speak and (how to) act", the curriculum is controlling knowledge and behaviour - stating what can be learnt and what cannot (Fairclough, 1992, p. 103). This raises key questions regarding the curriculum's influence/effect on socio-economically disadvantaged boys from non-standard speaking backgrounds/cultures/regions. Giving standardised forms of English greater social, professional and academic status over regional varieties, is a form of social injustice. The boys showed that, to a degree,

they choose agentively to manipulate and adapt language to make connections to social groups and environments. They also assert the use-value of their own language varieties in building friendships. Whilst these particular boys are not achieving in the current English assessment system, and against NC requirements in writing, grammar or reading, they showed no limitations when it came to practical use of language to communicate meaning and negotiate identity. They were versatile and adaptable. At the same time, as indicated above, in section 7.1.2, they are keenly aware of the wider ideologies about 'speaking proper' that exist beyond their local life worlds – in school and in different domains such as the workplace. In their group discussions, they also expressed concerns about being ridiculed or dismissed because of the way they speak.

The tensions between the narrowly conceived requirements of the National Curriculum (and ideologies about Standard English that underpin it) and the language values and disposition of the boys, such as those in this study, are played out in the daily rounds of life in schools and classrooms. It is in this context that the boys' capacity for learning can be fostered, that space can be made for their voices to be heard, as they navigate the constraints of the National Curriculum. These constraints, the narrowly conceived requirements and the excessive focus on SE have been widely critiqued by sociolinguists concerned with regional language varieties. Moreover, there is a strong case to claim that the NC, which is rigid in its content, expectations and forms of assessment, stands in contrast to contemporary language attitudes and practices, including those of the socio-economic disadvantaged Sandwell boys in this study. The narrow focus on SE structures and rules is likely to be the underlying factor regarding the national attainment data for disadvantaged boys' in English subject areas. The

insights gleaned from the research presented in Chapter 6 show that boys do not have restricted language codes. Instead, they have restricted opportunities to utilise their existing linguistic capacity in the classroom, and limited opportunities to develop a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between different spoken forms.

7.3 Research question 3: What are the implications for educational practice and policy?

Language based research in education, such as that presented in this thesis, allows us to investigate the language attitudes and values of children. Narrowing our research lenses and doing more qualitative research also allows us to gain insights into their emic perspective, to hear their 'story' and build an understanding of their 'lived experience' in different language environments. The research methods utilised in this case study, such as the AAT and the audio-recorded group discussions, helped to capture some dimensions of the language worlds of these boys.

As I indicated in section 7.2, the boys in my study had considerable awareness of the sociolinguistic circumstances in which they found themselves and of the ways in which they were often discursively positioned by some speakers of English. Therefore, at the end of the section relating to the second research question addressed in this case study, I suggested that there might be scope for creating space in schools, such as SNDWLLSCHOL, to support boys, such as those I have been working with, as they navigate the narrow requirements of the National Curriculum, to provide space for their voices and further their learning as they address the challenges of incorporating some of the linguistic resources of SE into their communicative repertoires, especially in writing.

With this in mind, I led on the introduction of new curriculum approaches at SNDWLLSCHOL. An account of these approaches is provided in the following sections and details are presented in the form of tables in Appendix 6.

7.4 New school-based curriculum approaches

As stated in the section above, my colleagues and I at SNDWLLSCHOL committed ourselves to design curriculum approaches which contrasted with the rigid Standard English based curriculum. We felt that our pupils needed opportunities to develop language - their repertoires and their resources for communication - within a broad and relevant curriculum. We also felt that the current curriculum requirements enshrined in the National Curriculum were too constraining for the children, and did not enable them to develop their confidence in using language for different purposes, in life worlds and in different institutional worlds in the future. Therefore, we made some adaptations:

1. We changed the curriculum. Instead of following traditional history and topic-based approaches, SNDWLLSCHOL developed its own version of the New Pedagogies for Deep Learning 6Cs curriculum (NPDL, 2016), which would be taught through the pedagogy of Project Based Learning and included the strand "communication". Thus, SNDWLLSCHOL began designing and implementing a curriculum focussed on oracy and communication - moving away from formal study of Standard English, in spoken and written modes.
2. We reformed the approach to assessment, so that it centred on the characteristics of learning, rather than discrete 'skills'. These characteristics

were: showing character, citizenship, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and **communication.** We ensured that assessment for the "C" communication did not centre around Standard English. Instead, all forms of language use and linguistic versatility were valued and the specific "communication" assessment objectives focussed on a child's ability to manipulate a wide variety of linguistic and language resources, in a wide variety of different contexts, for a wide variety of different audiences, to create a wide variety of different outcomes and effects (NPDL, 2016).

3. We built our whole school curriculum around purposeful, well-planned English units which were, in turn, structured around the development of children's language resources through oral rehearsal and talking about texts.
4. We wrote our own contextualised curriculum for the study of grammar which took account of Standard English, but also allowed free exploration of grammar topics and requirements – taking account of the children's home language varieties.
5. We developed a *Teaching Reading Intervention* that linked exploration of language, grammar and texts, with learning to read as a reader and as a writer. This introduced elements of oral performance and communication, so children had opportunities to utilise their wide range of language resources.

In sum, instead of focussing on teaching discrete SE rules and grammar skills, we decided to focus pupils' learning on addressing real life problems which needed real life solutions and action. Teaching and assessment of all of the above focussed on "communication" criteria, rather than on specific spoken language varieties (NPDL, 2016).

The New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL) is an international initiative founded and directed by Michael Fullan, Joanne Quinn and Joanne McEachen. The approaches utilised in SNDWLLSCHOL are an adapted format which have been influenced and informed by the NPDL, but ladders and assessment criteria have been rewritten by SNDWLLSCHOL for SNDWLLSCHOL. Details of the progression assessment ladders that we have written for the children of SNDWLLSCHOL, and which are embedded throughout their curriculum teaching and Project Based Learning, are provided in the tables in Appendix 6. The new approach was organised around a series of Learning Progressions set out in Table 3b in Appendix 6.

Firstly, the individual year group objectives for the "Communication" strand (Appendix 6, Table 3a), map onto the 6Cs progression scale (Appendix 6, Tables 3a-3e). The 6Cs framework does not assess pupils according to their year group. Instead, these are overarching progression rubrics which track children's progress over time. This means a child is not limited to just their year group curriculum and age-related expectations overall. A child can be graded as being **"proficient"** in communication at any stage of their schooling in SNDWLLSCHOL, if they show the right application and breadth of understanding regarding communication, the role it plays in their project (or line of enquiry) and its influence on audiences.

Secondly, the accompanying year group skills (Appendix 6, Table 3a) break down the overarching assessment rubric to guide the progression of pupils as they move through school and acquire and develop their communication skills. This provides teachers with guidance on what specific teaching and assessment practice they can

embed in their classrooms, depending on the pupils' needs, proficiency and current communication strengths.

Thirdly, as shown in Tables 3a, 3d and 3e, pupil learner goals are given to children for each year group, so that they have specific milestones and goals to focus on in their projects and each year. These rubrics and example tables in Appendix 6 highlight the key aims of the Communication strand of the 6Cs in SNDWLLSCHOL – showing they were specifically designed to support pupils to:

- Develop language flexibility, so that children are confident utilising a range of different spoken forms in different contexts to create different effects and outcomes.
- Create thoughtful and considered language choices, so that children make considered, appropriate, justifiable and respectful choices about which communication mode, linguistic tools or language varieties they should use to get their message across.
- Develop an awareness of the audience and be able to synthesise and weave interconnected ideas, spoken forms and communication modes into a coherent and integrated presentation or message.
- Develop forms of communication and language usage so that messages, presentations or communication challenge the audience's perspective and encourage them to think beyond the status quo.
- Become self-aware as communicators – understanding the impact their language choices have on audiences and the effects their language choices have in relation to their end goal or project.

7.5 Outcomes

Whilst I cannot conclusively argue, or empirically prove, that these changes have any direct relationship to boys' academic achievement and attainment in English-based subjects, there has been significant progress since this curriculum intervention and some remarkable results.

As highlighted in Chapter 1, disadvantaged pupils' attainment and English in Sandwell and in SNDWLLSCHOL was below national expectations and below non-disadvantaged pupils in English-based subjects. However, the data summary for 2017 and 2018 highlights a very different picture for socio-economically disadvantaged boys in SNDWLLSCHOL:

- In 2017, English Reading KS2 SATs tests, progress in reading improved dramatically. Disadvantaged pupils achieved over double 2015 and 2016 progress outcomes. In total, disadvantaged children achieved a progress score of 1.7 compared to the national average of 0.3.
- In 2017, English Writing KS2 SATs outcomes continued this positive trend. Here, in writing, disadvantaged pupils achieved a combined average progress score of 4.9. This is compared to the national average of 0.2.
- In 2018, English Reading KS2 SATs outcomes saw pupil progress continue its improving positive trend. Here, disadvantaged pupils achieved a combined average progress score of 2.14. This significantly exceeded the national average for disadvantaged pupils (-0.59) and even the national average progress of non-disadvantaged pupils (0.31).

- In 2018, English Writing KS2 outcomes produced a similar picture for SNDWLLSCHOL. However, national averages lowered to -0.44 for disadvantaged pupils, and 0.24 for non-disadvantaged pupils. SNDWLLSCHOL disadvantaged pupils achieved a combined average progress score of 1.15.

Progress scores were not available for either the 2017 or 2018 cohorts in SPAG, as the SPAG test had not been introduced in KS1. However, combined results for all pupils in SPAG (2018) saw 83% achieve Age Related Expectation attainment and 50% achieved at the higher standard. This was compared to 82% at ARE and 39% at the higher standard nationally for all pupils.

This positive trend was the same for all pupils – disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged. Despite not teaching discrete SE, and forcing conformity to one set language system in class, over 50% of all pupils achieved the "higher standard" in 2018 KS2 writing assessments and 58% of children achieved the "higher standard" in 2018 KS2 grammar tests. That means over half of the class were achieving the higher standard and were working significantly above national averages in SPAG and writing.

Again, these successful attainment and progress outcomes draw no clear links to this thesis, and I am not making any direct empirical links between the school's results and these approaches. However, the above data does indicate that taking into account the boys' language attitudes and perspectives in the curriculum could have a positive influence on attainment. This attainment and progress data suggests that we should be focussing on communication, rather than the discrete, decontextualised adherence to SE grammar rules. This can be a means of fostering learning and, in this instance,

appears to have had a significant, positive influence on boys' attainment in English-based subjects. The approaches utilised in SNDWLLSCHOL, which take account of boys' language attitudes and perspectives in attempting to enhance academic attainment, is an area of key interest for me as a serving Executive Headteacher, and I am now keen to explore this in more detail in future research.

Acknowledging children's naturally developed speech resources in our school curriculum and actively encouraging their use in classroom communication also appears to have had a positive impact on pupil self-esteem and their engagement in lessons. Furthermore, utilising these approaches across SNDWLLSCHOL's classrooms, while also fostering a critical awareness of the sociolinguistic conditions in which students find themselves, could potentially help children develop as confident users of different language varieties. Our curricular intervention made it possible for pupils to draw on the diverse language resources within their linguistic repertoires to communicate meaning, negotiate relationships and develop their knowledge, rather than restricting them to a narrow agenda underpinned by strict adherence to Standard English. As part of this curricular intervention, SNDWLLSCHOL was able to develop teaching strategies that focused on contextualised grammar teaching (built on a curriculum of communication/talk), thereby allowing boys opportunities to communicate what they were learning in their chosen spoken language variety. They had a wealth of opportunities throughout their curriculum activities to utilise standard and non-standard varieties at different times and to use them when they chose to do so. They were also asked to evaluate the effectiveness - taking account of their audience.

I am not making any explicit links between the outcomes of the curricular intervention and the attainment and progress of boys in English-based KS2 assessments. However, it is clear that the current approaches in SNDWLLSCHOL are allowing disadvantaged boys to succeed. It is also clear, as national statistics have shown for decades, and have continued to show throughout the development of this thesis, that approaches nationally are not working. Disadvantaged pupils continue to be left behind and pupils from non-standard English speaking regions continue to be among the poorest performing regions in England. What is more, recent and ongoing changes to the National Curriculum and SATs testing have certainly not 'fixed' the 'problem' of disadvantaged boys' and non-standard speaking regions' writing attainment nationally, and have proved to be no solution.

Finally, and as Eddy noted in one of our discussion groups:

> Our voices and our accents are just like something… a part of our…
> they're in our bodies like our eyes or our hearts.

For the children in this case study, their ways of speaking in non-standard varieties of English are a very 'natural' part of their communication repertoires; they are embodied – and are as important as their sight or their hearts. This stands in stark contrast to the ideological construction of SE in the National Curriculum as a decontextualised set of language 'skills'. Instead of declaring pupils to be disenfranchised if they cannot acquire SE, their local vernacular varieties for making social connections and indexing identity need to be acknowledged. Sandwell boys expressed pride in their local identity

to assert the spoken form. There is a defiance in their commentary – as Eddy put it - "people can't take away your voice".

The boys' own words and perspectives prompt important considerations for classrooms and for pedagogical approaches to teaching English and Standard English based elements of the curriculum. With their perspectives, values and defiance so deeply embedded within their life world, we must ask what good there is in continuing to marginalise or eliminate their language varieties.

7.6 Constraints on the research carried out in this case study

There were a number of constraints on the research presented in this thesis. One constraint was time. I was a PhD student at the University of Birmingham whilst acting as Headteacher at SNDWLLSCHOL. The data gathering and data analysis were carried out as I was serving in this role.

My original intention was to work across all four schools within SNDWLLSCHOL's academy. However, because of time constraints, the sample could not be too large. Analysing the data sets from four schools would have become an impossible task for a sole researcher with a full time post and major responsibilities. Moving forward, I opted to carry out a single case study of SNDWLLSCHOL.

Instead of attempting to capture general patterns across four schools in Sandwell, focussing on the language attitudes and perceptions of boys aged 10 and 11, I chose to focus on one school and on a group of circa 30 boys. In this way, I was able to achieve greater depth of insight into the specific issues raised by this group of boys.

Moreover, over the two year period involved in the data collection and analysis, I came to know the individual boys quite well, especially during the phase based on group discussion. Given that the research reported here was designed as a case study, it is not possible to generalise from a specific insight generated by it. However, there may be resonances in my account which are familiar with the situations in similar schools, in Sandwell or elsewhere. Moreover, as I showed in sections 7.4 and 7.5 above, the findings of the AAT and the analysis of the group discussion data prompted me and my colleagues to engage in curricular innovation work which has had positive results.

7.7 Directions for future research

Regarding future research, I am still, as an educational professional, deeply concerned by the increasing gap between boys' and girls' attainment in writing and grammar. I am also concerned that the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils continues to remain, despite significant funding and attention. This case study has lifted the veil a bit and raised some important concerns surrounding the ways in which boys from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds are positioned by the demands of the National Curriculum. Moreover, it is the first study to be conducted in Sandwell on the attitudes and lived experiences of boys in this age group. There needs to be further research with other groups of boys in the West Midlands. We need to develop a fuller picture of the impact of the National Curriculum and explore the implications for the classroom, teachers and English pedagogy. It is only in this way that we can refine our approaches to curricular innovation and work for change.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1a - Table 1a: Summary table of changes in primary education (2006-2016)

Educational policy and name of policy making national body	Date	Context: Background, details and recommendations
Primary National Strategy (PNS) launched to replace the 1998 National Literacy Strategy. Department for Education and Skills (DfES).	2006	The PNS was released because "national tests show progress is not being sustained across the board" in literacy and numeracy. The PNS was therefore renewed and released in 2006 to "raise standards and personalise learning" (DfES, 2006, p. ii)
Children, Schools and Families Committee releases a Testing and Assessment report having investigated whether standardised testing remained a valid way of maintaining control of the education system and measuring performance of schools.	7th May 2008	The report found that the current system of testing was not the most productive or valid approach as it "has resulted in some schools emphasising the maximisation of test results at the expense of a more rounded education for their pupils" (2008, p. 3). The committee concluded that an extensive high stakes national testing system "can only test a limited range of the skills and activities" and inevitably leads to schools narrowing the curriculum and teaching to the test (Ibid.) They therefore recommended a complete reform of the national testing system.
Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator launched (OFQUAL).	16th May 2008	OFQUAL was established to review, develop and regulate the qualifications, examinations and assessments used in education across England.
Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) CA chief executive Ken Boston resigns when KS2 SATs testing encounters significant problems.	June 2008	Widespread problems with systems, IT, data processing meant schools receive delayed and inaccurate information regarding Key Stage 2 (KS2) Standardised Assessments Tests (SATs).
Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum (IRPC) release interim report insisting that "literacy, numeracy and ICT must be prioritised. Primary schools must make sure that the best professional practice is brought to bear on teaching these essential skills directly, with ample opportunities for children to use and apply them across the curriculum. Discussion of reading, writing and numeracy in primary	December 2008	Part of the IRPC recommendations included that the National Curriculum (NC) should be retained and reviewed regularly and that "Primary schools must continue to give priority to literacy and numeracy, whilst making sure that serious attention is paid to developing spoken language intensively as an attribute in its own right and essential for the development of reading and writing" (IRPC, 2008, p. 8).

education often fails to recognise the central importance of developing children's spoken communication" (IRPC, 2008, p. 6)		
Children, Schools and Families Committee releases National Curriculum report	11th March 2009	The report proposed: - Further reforms to the NC which empowered teachers to make professional choices in the classroom rather than follow the prescribed "recipes" of the National Strategies. - Recommended increase in the flexibility given to schools, so their approaches and provision were not overly influenced by inspection and testing. - Scaling down of the NC. - Recommended review and reassess some Early Learning Goals in EYFS reading, writing and punctuation as deemed appropriate for all children. - The emphasis in early learning should be on developing speaking, listening and social skills.
Department for Education (DfE)	July 2011 *(released) September 2012*	Teachers' Standards released and brought in by DfE. Standards included a necessity to "demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject" (DfE, 2012, p. 1).
DfE releases The Framework for the National Curriculum	December 2011	National Curriculum review highlighted that the current NC had created uncertainty within the teaching profession and needed reforming. Amongst a range of recommendations, the review stated that "There is a compelling body of evidence that highlights a connection between oral development, cognitive development and educational attainment. We are strongly of the view that the development of oral language should be a particular feature of the new National Curriculum" (DfE, 2011, p. 9).

Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) release *Moving English Forward* to answer questions regarding raising attainment in English to move English learning forward in schools.	March 2012	Based on school inspections between April 2008 and March 2011, Ofsted provided examples of good practice where "excellence in English" teaching had been exemplified in schools. *Moving English Forward* was published to address the failure to improve standards in Key Stage 2 and also the issue that "too many pupils" were failing to "secure basic reading and writing skills at the end of Key Stage 1". Problems highlighted included teachers' limited knowledge of writing and poets led to limited effectiveness explaining, teaching and describing the differences between standard and non-standard English, teaching grammar and modelling writing (DfE, 2012, p. 41)
Introduction of the Phonics Screening Check	March 2012	Statutory assessments introduced to measure pupils' knowledge and understanding of synthetic phonics against the levels set by the NC.
DfE revision of National Curriculum	July 2013	Revision and publication of National Curriculum content and programmes of study.
DfE revision of Key Stage 2 assessments	May 2013	Test format changed to move away from a short writing task, which tested contextualised use of grammar, to the introduction of a discrete grammar, punctuation and spelling test.
DfE launches a new version of the National Curriculum	July 2014	After a period of review, and a year where schools could trial and begin implementing the revised NC, the new format was finalised and launched nationwide as statutory policy for all maintained schools.
DfE revision of Key Stage 1 assessments	May 2016	Test format changed to now include a discrete grammar, punctuation and spelling test in Key Stage 1.

APPENDIX 1b - Table 1b: Summary overview of methodologies and participants

Methods	Details	Number of participants	Participants
1. Accent Awareness Test	Test exploring boys' attitudes to accents. Boys responded to questions using software after listening to 4 different speakers' accents.	30	The 30 boys ranking lowest on IDACI deprivation indices.
2. Group discussions based on video clips of dialect	Semi-structured group discussions which explored the boys' attitudes to language use in 3 different contexts, in 3 different video clips.	26	26 boys organised into groups (6-8 pupils). Duration: between 1 to 2 hours including time to watch video clips.
Participants whose contributions to group discussions were included in my analysis (note all names are pseudonyms): Group discussion 1: David, Eddy, Adam, Ben, Tom and Charlie Group discussion 2: Andy, Harley, Carl, Kenwyne, Hamish, Jonesy, Nate, Lee, Sid, Tayon, Graham, Adam and Neil Group discussion 3: Frank, Gary, Happi, Kevin, Gerry, James and Indie			
3. Close analysis of the text of the National Curriculum			

APPENDIX 2 – Accent Awareness Test (AAT) participant responses/data

AAT guidance questions

Perception test questionnaire

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Questions:	Speaker A.	Speaker B.	Speaker C.	Speaker D.
Is easiest to understand:				
Would be cleverest at school:				
Speaks the best English:				
Has the best pronunciation:				
Would be the best at reading and writing English:				
Speaks the clearest:				
Is nicest to listen to:				
Has the least annoying/irritating accent:				
Would be the best teacher:				
Sounds the most educated:				

APPENDIX 2a - Accent Awareness Test data: "Is the easiest to understand"

Is easiest to understand:				
Pupil:	**Oxford RP**	**London RP**	**Leeds northern accent**	**Birmingham accent**
1	**1**	**3**	**4**	**2**
2	**3**	**2**	**4**	**1**
3	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
4	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
5	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
6	**4**	**3**	**1**	**2**
7	**4**	**1**	**2**	**3**
8	**3**	**4**	**2**	**1**
9	**3**	**4**	**2**	**1**
10	**3**	**4**	**2**	**1**
11	**3**	**4**	**2**	**1**
12	**3**	**4**	**2**	**1**
13	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
14	**4**	**2**	**3**	**1**
15	**1**	**4**	**3**	**2**
16	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
17	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
18	**1**	**3**	**4**	**2**
19	**3**	**2**	**4**	**1**
20	**1**	**4**	**3**	**2**
21	**1**	**3**	**4**	**2**
22	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
23	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
24	**1**	**4**	**3**	**2**
25	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
26	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
2	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
28	**1**	**3**	**4**	**2**
29	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
30	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
Total:	**63**	**90**	**101**	**46**
Mean score:	**2.10**	**3.00**	**3.37**	**1.53**

APPENDIX 2b - Accent Awareness Test data: "Would be cleverest at school"

Would be cleverest at school:

Pupil:	Oxford RP	London RP	Leeds northern accent	Birmingham accent
1	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
2	**2**	**3**	**1**	**4**
3	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
4	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
5	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
6	**2**	**3**	**1**	**4**
7	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
8	**4**	**2**	**3**	**1**
9	**1**	**3**	**2**	**4**
10	**2**	**3**	**1**	**4**
11	**1**	**3**	**4**	**2**
12	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
13	**1**	**3**	**4**	**2**
14	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
15	**1**	**3**	**2**	**4**
16	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
17	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
18	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
19	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
20	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
21	**3**	**1**	**4**	**2**
22	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
23	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
24	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
25	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
26	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
2	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
28	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
29	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
30	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
Total:	41	65	94	100
Mean score:	1.37	2.17	3.13	3.33

APPENDIX 2c - Accent Awareness Test data: "Speaks the best English"

Speaks the best English:				
Pupil:	**Oxford RP**	**London RP**	**Leeds northern accent**	**Birmingham accent**
1	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
2	**4**	**1**	**2**	**3**
3	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
4	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
5	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
6	**4**	**3**	**1**	**2**
7	**1**	**3**	**2**	**4**
8	**3**	**1**	**2**	**4**
9	**1**	**4**	**3**	**2**
10	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
11	**1**	**3**	**2**	**4**
12	**3**	**2**	**3**	**4**
13	**1**	**1**	**2**	**4**
14	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
15	**1**	**3**	**2**	**4**
16	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
17	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
18	**2**	**1**	**4**	**3**
19	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
20	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
21	**3**	**1**	**4**	**2**
22	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
23	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
24	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
25	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
26	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
2	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
28	**1**	**3**	**4**	**2**
29	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
30	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Total:	47	60	89	104
Mean score:	1.57	2.00	2.97	3.47

APPENDIX 2d - Accent Awareness Test data: "Has the best pronunciation"

Has the best pronunciation:				
Pupil:	**Oxford RP**	**London RP**	**Leeds northern accent**	**Birmingham accent**
1	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
2	**4**	**1**	**2**	**3**
3	**3**	**2**	**1**	**4**
4	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
5	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
6	**3**	**1**	**2**	**4**
7	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
8	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
9	**3**	**1**	**2**	**4**
10	**1**	**4**	**2**	**3**
11	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
12	**1**	**3**	**2**	**4**
13	**3**	**2**	**1**	**4**
14	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
15	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
16	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
17	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
18	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
19	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
20	**3**	**2**	**4**	**1**
21	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
22	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
23	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
24	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
25	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
26	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
2	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
28	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
29	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
30	**1**	**3**	**4**	**2**
Total:	50	56	89	105
Mean score:	1.67	1.87	2.97	3.50

APPENDIX 2e - Accent Awareness Test data: "Would be the best at reading and writing in English"

Would be the best at reading and writing English:				
Pupil:	**Oxford RP**	**London RP**	**Leeds northern accent**	**Birmingham accent**
1	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
2	**4**	**1**	**3**	**2**
3	**4**	**3**	**1**	**2**
4	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
5	**1**	**4**	**2**	**3**
6	**2**	**1**	**4**	**3**
7	**4**	**2**	**1**	**3**
8	**1**	**3**	**2**	**4**
9	**1**	**4**	**2**	**3**
10	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
11	**3**	**1**	**2**	**4**
12	**1**	**4**	**2**	**3**
13	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
14	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
15	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
16	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
17	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
18	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
19	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
20	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
21	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
22	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
23	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
24	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
25	**3**	**1**	**4**	**2**
26	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
2	**1**	**4**	**3**	**2**
28	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
29	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
30	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
Total:	48	62	88	102
Mean score:	1.6	2.07	2.93	3.4

APPENDIX 2f - Accent Awareness Test data: "Speaks the clearest"

Speaks the clearest:				
Pupil:	**Oxford RP**	**London RP**	**Leeds northern accent**	**Birmingham accent**
1	**4**	**3**	**1**	**2**
2	**2**	**1**	**4**	**3**
3	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
4	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
5	**1**	**4**	**3**	**2**
6	**4**	**3**	**1**	**2**
7	**4**	**1**	**3**	**2**
8	**3**	**2**	**4**	**1**
9	**3**	**4**	**1**	**2**
10	**2**	**1**	**4**	**3**
11	**4**	**3**	**1**	**2**
12	**2**	**4**	**3**	**1**
13	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
14	**3**	**4**	**1**	**2**
15	**3**	**2**	**4**	**1**
16	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
17	**3**	**4**	**2**	**1**
18	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
19	**1**	**4**	**3**	**2**
20	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
21	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
22	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
23	**2**	**4**	**3**	**1**
24	**3**	**4**	**2**	**1**
25	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
26	**1**	**3**	**4**	**2**
2	**1**	**3**	**4**	**2**
28	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
29	**2**	**4**	**3**	**1**
30	**2**	**1**	**4**	**3**
Total:	**66**	**85**	**95**	**54**
Mean score:	**2.2**	**2.83**	**3.17**	**1.8**

APPENDIX 2g - Accent Awareness Test data: "Is the nicest to listen to"

Is the nicest to listen to:				
Pupil:	**Oxford RP**	**London RP**	**Leeds northern accent**	**Birmingham accent**
1	**3**	**1**	**2**	**4**
2	**3**	**2**	**1**	**4**
3	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
4	**3**	**4**	**2**	**1**
5	**2**	**1**	**4**	**3**
6	**2**	**4**	**3**	**1**
7	**3**	**4**	**1**	**2**
8	**3**	**4**	**2**	**1**
9	**3**	**4**	**1**	**2**
10	**2**	**4**	**1**	**3**
11	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
12	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
13	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
14	**4**	**1**	**2**	**3**
15	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
16	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
17	**2**	**4**	**3**	**1**
18	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
19	**2**	**4**	**1**	**3**
20	**4**	**3**	**1**	**2**
21	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
22	**3**	**2**	**4**	**1**
23	**4**	**3**	**1**	**2**
24	**3**	**4**	**1**	**2**
25	**3**	**4**	**2**	**1**
26	**3**	**4**	**2**	**1**
2	**2**	**3**	**4**	**1**
28	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
29	**4**	**3**	**1**	**2**
30	**2**	**4**	**3**	**1**
Total:	**90**	**94**	**66**	**50**
Mean score:	**3.00**	**3.13**	**2.20**	**1.67**

APPENDIX 2h - Accent Awareness Test data: "Has the most annoying/irritating accent"

Has the most annoying/irritating accent:				
Pupil:	**Oxford RP**	**London RP**	**Leeds northern accent**	**Birmingham accent**
1	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
2	**4**	**1**	**2**	**3**
3	**3**	**2**	**1**	**4**
4	**3**	**1**	**2**	**4**
5	**3**	**1**	**2**	**4**
6	**1**	**4**	**2**	**3**
7	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
8	**1**	**3**	**2**	**4**
9	**2**	**4**	**1**	**3**
10	**2**	**1**	**4**	**3**
11	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
12	**1**	**3**	**2**	**4**
13	**3**	**1**	**2**	**4**
14	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
15	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
16	**1**	**3**	**2**	**4**
17	**1**	**3**	**2**	**4**
18	**2**	**1**	**4**	**3**
19	**2**	**3**	**1**	**4**
20	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
21	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
22	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
23	**3**	**1**	**2**	**4**
24	**4**	**1**	**2**	**3**
25	**1**	**3**	**2**	**4**
26	**2**	**3**	**1**	**4**
2	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
28	**3**	**1**	**2**	**4**
29	**2**	**1**	**4**	**3**
30	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Total:	**57**	**58**	**73**	**112**
Mean score:	**1.9**	**1.93**	**2.43**	**3.73**

APPENDIX 2i - Accent Awareness Test data: "Would be the best teacher"

Would be the best teacher:				
Pupil:	**Oxford RP**	**London RP**	**Leeds northern accent**	**Birmingham accent**
1	**3**	**1**	**2**	**4**
2	**2**	**3**	**1**	**4**
3	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
4	**1**	**4**	**2**	**3**
5	**3**	**1**	**2**	**4**
6	**3**	**1**	**2**	**4**
7	**1**	**3**	**2**	**4**
8	**2**	**3**	**1**	**4**
9	**1**	**4**	**3**	**2**
10	**1**	**3**	**2**	**4**
11	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
12	**1**	**4**	**2**	**3**
13	**1**	**3**	**2**	**4**
14	**2**	**3**	**1**	**4**
15	**2**	**3**	**1**	**4**
16	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
17	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
18	**2**	**1**	**4**	**3**
19	**2**	**1**	**4**	**3**
20	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
21	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
22	**1**	**3**	**2**	**4**
23	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
24	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
25	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**
26	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
2	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
28	**1**	**3**	**2**	**4**
29	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
30	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Total:	**47**	**65**	**75**	**113**
Mean score:	**1.57**	**2.17**	**2.5**	**3.77**

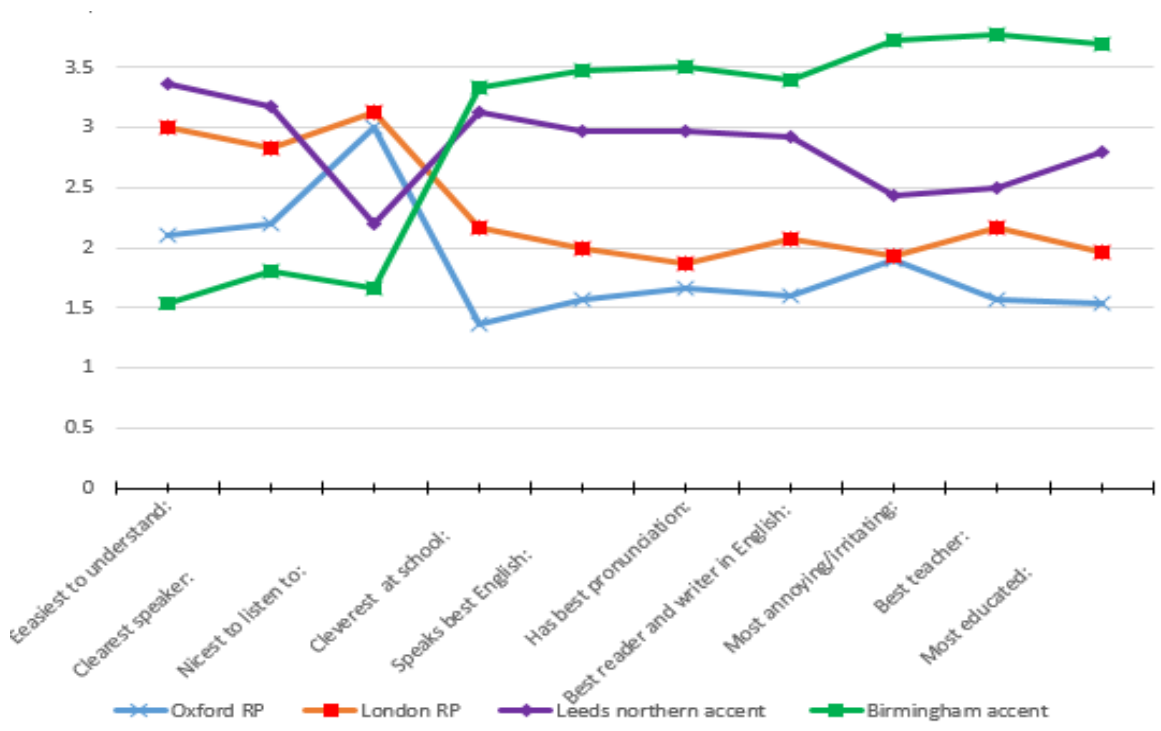
APPENDIX 2j - Accent Awareness Test data: "Sounds the most educated"

Sounds the most educated:				
Pupil:	**Oxford RP**	**London RP**	**Leeds northern accent**	**Birmingham accent**
1	**3**	**2**	**1**	**4**
2	**2**	**3**	**1**	**4**
3	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
4	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
5	**3**	**2**	**1**	**4**
6	**3**	**1**	**2**	**4**
7	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
8	**2**	**1**	**4**	**3**
9	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
10	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
11	**1**	**4**	**2**	**3**
12	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
13	**3**	**4**	**2**	**1**
14	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
15	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
16	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
17	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
18	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
19	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
20	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
21	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
22	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
23	**2**	**1**	**3**	**4**
24	**3**	**1**	**4**	**2**
25	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
26	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
2	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
28	**1**	**3**	**4**	**2**
29	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
30	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Total:	46	59	84	111
Mean score:	1.53	1.97	2.8	3.7

APPENDIX 2k - Accent Awareness Test data summary and overview

Data summary

Questions:	Oxford RP	London RP	Leeds northern accent	Birmingham accent	
Is easiest to understand:	63	90	101	46	300
Would be cleverest at school:	41	65	94	100	300
Speaks the best English:	47	60	89	104	300
Has the best pronunciation:	50	56	89	105	300
Would be the best at reading and writing in English:	48	62	88	102	300
Speaks the clearest:	66	85	95	54	300
Is the nicest to listen to:	90	94	66	50	300
Has the most annoying/irritating accent:	57	58	73	112	300
Would be the best teacher:	47	65	75	113	300
Sounds the most educated:	46	59	84	111	300
Total score:	555	694	854	897	3000
Mean score:	55.5	69.4	85.4	89.7	
Standard deviation:	14.49	14.42	10.97	27.79	
Total percentage of the overall scoring:	18.50	23.13	28.47	29.90	100.00
Overall average ranking (from 1 - 4) for each speaker	1	2	3	4	



APPENDIX 3 - Group discussion guidance questions

Group discussion guidance questions

1. Which of the speakers from the recordings did you think was easiest to understand?
2. Why did you find this the easiest to understand?
3. Which speaker did you like the most?
4. Why?
5. Do you think you could speak like this person with practise?
6. Would you like to sound like this speaker?
7. Who was the hardest to understand?
8. Why?
9. Which speaker do you feel spoke the most like you?
10. How do you feel about this?
11. How do you feel about your regional dialect (accent)? Are you happy with your accent?
12. Finally, what do other people think about your accent?

Thank you very much for your time. Your participation in this research is greatly appreciated.

Transcription of group discussions

Pseudonyms are used throughout to represent the boys - for anonymity and to protect their identity.

As outlined in Chapter 4, in the research methodology, the group discussions were planned to be organised into smaller groups. However, during the group discussion section and data collection, a small group of boys from two separate groups asked if they could switch groups and be recorded along with their friends, and boys from another group. Accommodating all of the boys' requests, and making all of the switches, would have been logistically impossible. Therefore, in order to address the boys' requests, I combined the two groups into one larger group.

The interviewer and facilitator of the group discussions was myself and is shown as **Danny**. To differentiate the semi-structured, pre-planned questions, from the questions added during the discussions, as a result of the boys' contributions, the pre-planned questions, which link to Appendix 3 above and the Accent Awareness Test are numbered separately in bold and do not have "Danny" before them. The questions which I asked during the discussions, to explore participants' contributions further, are shown in the transcript, unnumbered and with "Danny" before them.

APPENDIX 3a - Transcription of group discussion 1

1. Which of the speakers from the recordings did you think was easiest to understand?

2. Why did you find this the easiest to understand?

David: Errm I think it was the first one he had really… he spoke clearly and had good pronunciation and he wasn't… you could understand him.

Eddy: I think the first one coz he… coz he was talking very steady and there wasn't that much humour and… and he was talking different to how we talk.

Adam: I think number 1 yeh coz when he spoke he was like fluent in his language and I could understand every word what he was speaking.

Ben: Errm I th… I think it was the third one coz he was… coz he was sort of around from here and so I knew the accent.

Charlie: Number 4 because I could hear him clearly and he's a bit like around from here and my uncle speaks like him and I could understand him better.

3. Which speaker did you like the most?

4. Why?

Dave: Errm, the third one because he was a Brummie so he was from around here. I know what he talks like and I talk to a lot of Brummies and I go to Birmingham a lot… quite a bit.

Adam: I like… I like the fourth one coz he was… he was, errm he was like, he was very posh and I liked the way he speaks, sometimes I like posh people.

Ben: I like the first one coz he was like quite posh but like people laughed at him coz they found it funny at first but he got serious and people could understand it properly.

Charlie: I think the third one coz my whole family are Brummies, so I like that and that's how my family talks so I could understand it easily.

Eddy: I like the third one coz around here it's all kinda the same people and like people in shops and people shouting and speak like that. At first, people were laughing at it but when they stopped I started hearing it seriously.

5. Do you think you could speak like this person with practice?

Dave: Errm because it… I started off with the posh one because that's what you can understand and it's… nearly everyone can do a posh accent and you do it quite often if you, if you like want to speak formal or if you're meeting some important person.

Danny: So, you would try to speak more formally if you were meeting somebody you thought was important?

Dave: Coz like, I usually talk shorter coz errm I don't really talk like formally when I'm talking to my friends but I have to be posh when I'm talking to adults or important people.

Eddy: Errm like I think that I could try and do that accent because the first one is kinda posh and in like other places I could talk like that when I'm older like a higher person like a businessman so I could talk like that more often… more correctly.

Ben: I don't think I could that much coz I'm not that posh and I'm not from where all the posh people are from and I can't do it and hardly none of my family are.

Charlie: I think I could coz I have some family who live in posh places and have posh things and they talk posh so I think I could talk posh.

Adam: Yeh because, coz I wanna be a doctor you have to speak posh, it depends how long it is… how long it is till then but I'll probably get it.

Danny: So, do you think what job you have affects how you have to speak?

Adam: Yeh!

Eddy: Yeh!

6. Would you like to sound like this speaker?

Charlie: Errm no not really coz I think that like I'd like to speak a bit more so that people can understand me so not talk too fast.

David: Errm not really coz I don't want to talk posh all the time coz like errm if I have friends and I talk posh then they might not follow it so I need a social voice.

Danny: would you like to sound like speaker 3?

Ben: No, just coz of the way it is. It's a bit too strong... just I like the way it is now instead.

Eddy: Yes and No because like I might travel somewhere else and so for a time and go to live for… in Newcastle or something and I'll have to act and say… need to talk in that accent. No, because I might stay here for quite a long time and come back and talk in the same accent that I do here.

Adam: Like Eddy said, Yes and No coz if I ever went to the Queen's house, which I probably won't, she wouldn't exactly understand your language she might only understand posh so yeh, and like no because if you're like here and you speak posh then no one is going to understand you properly. Unless they like, talk to you how to speak so if posh people come to you like come to your house then you'll speak posh to them but no coz you're going to stay here and hopefully, you'll stay here for a while.

7. Who was the hardest to understand?

8. Why?

Dave: Errm it… the hardest to understand was the second one coz… coz it was really hard to understand coz it was quite foreign coz I thought he was from Leeds yeh or near Leeds which is quite far away from where we live innit and it was hard to understand coz they talk a bit too quickly and errm not as fluently as like… errm a posh person or something like that.

Eddy: Like all the others I think the second one was the most different out of the first third and fourth coz he the second dint talk as naturally as the other people. The second one talks quite fast and isn't steady enough errm… err that's probably it

Ben: I think the second coz he's from a bit further away than us and we're not really used to that accent of where he's from

Charlie: I think the second one coz he doesn't really come from around here and he's quite far away and he talks a bit too fast and like he doesn't pronounce his words very well.

Adam: Like everybody says it's the second one coz he came from far away and you know he's like near Leeds, and when you're near Leeds it's like you're your Newcastle and they have a way different accent.

9. Which speaker do you feel spoke the most like you?

10. How do you feel about this?

Dave: Errm it's the third one because he talked about… like he's from the same area as me. I've lived here quite a bit coz I'm closer to being a Brummie than anything else. Coz I was born round Birmingham and I live round in Birmingham and so that's… I talk like people from Birmingham so that's probably why.

Ben: I'm not really… I don't think any of them coz the posh one is a bit posh… really posh, the second one I'm nowhere near that, the third one is really strong and the fourth one is still posh so…

Eddy: Like he said I don't think any of them bec… like if I was asked to talk like the other people it would be weird for… it weird… as I might try and speak like that accent (in 1) but not the second, I don't think so, or third I don't think I could do that or the fourth.

Charlie: Errm I think number three coz its that's Brummie and I was born a Brummie and I used to live there and I'm West Brom fan now but my dad's a Brummie as well so I talk like him.

Adam: Like everybody else the third one because I was born in Sandwell hospital and I'm from round Birmingham and it's the closest one ever so I'm going to go for three.

Danny: Anything else you want to add?

Adam: I just feel… just normal if I pick number three… it doesn't mean… like if I pick number 4 it means I really hate it just means I've picked 4 coz I like it or something so really, I'm alright about it.

David: You can't choose how you talk coz it's where you're born coz errm you can't say how… I can't really talk Brummie or anything like that coz I can't choose to talk like number 2 or choose to be 1 or number 3 or number 4. I don't feel anything from this coz it's just how I talk no different.

Eddy: Like you said it's their accent so we can't just copy it and like have the same accent as theirs coz if we kind of say the same things all over again and learn that accent in 5 years you'd waste that time for nothing.

11. How do you feel about your regional dialect (accent)? Are you happy with your accent?

David: I'm really fine with it coz like I said before you can't choose what you talk about and everything and I like where I'm born coz Birmingham is a good city and it's got like a quite an old piece which is quiet and its quite close to Birmingham and its mixed and it's got more countryside and that… really I don't have much of an accent at the moment because not much of my family are Brummie. Some of them are but I don't meet them very much.

Eddy: I mean you can't actually have an accent it's just how you talk… it's like you're how you talk. Kind of like everyone can't speak the same accent in the whole world they talk different languages. Coz my mom and dad have to speak two languages when they go to Vietnam.

Tom: Errm I don't really know… nothing really… like nah not…

Ben: Errm I'm ok with it coz like I'm from around here so I know lots of people who speak like me so it's just ok with it.

Adam: I'm fine coz I like England and India as a home. So, I'm ok really coz my grandma was from India and maybe my granddad and they both speak Indian to me and I don't mind people speaking different languages and people just have to tell me a word and then tell me what it means. I don't mind if people ask me that if I don't know coz I don't know then I just say give me a different word.

Eddy: Coz the original accent was different from mine it's hard to learn two different languages at the same time but I still sound the same as everyone else.

12. Finally, what do other people think about your dialect?

Danny: You asked an important question earlier Eddy asking "would other people laugh at our accent if they heard it?" So do you think it affects what people think about your dialect?

Eddy: I think people will think the exact same thing as what we think of their dialect. Coz this isn't the same accent as theirs. Theirs is suitable for them so they would laugh at us.

David: We can't tell people how… what to think of your dialect errm of your accent… errm

Charlie: I think that they would find it quite funny like how we talk and they talked and errm… quite strange coz we don't really talk about…like them and we don't really talk posh we talk quite like slang.

Ben: I'm ok with it coz most people know that most people have got a different accent and errm everything's just... I'm ok coz it's a normal accent like other peoples is a normal accent it's just how we talk.

David: I've got it back now… its errm coz if you laugh at somebody else for how they talk then you're not much different coz they will laugh at you coz they're completely different accents.

Adam: Like everybody else, I think people from other places are ok coz everybody speaks at least a little English at least one word. That's my opinion in my mind.

Eddy: Our voices and our accents are just like something a part of our… they're in our bodies like our eyes or our hearts. If somebody asked you "can you talk like me?" or something it's probably just a harder way of living if you have three accents if you use one thing of your voice or your accent that's like your heart. Like if you disabled that's how you live

Adam: It's like Eddy said people can't take your voice away unless you're disabled.

David: Coz my cousin he used to couldn't talk properly and people was laughing at him at school and he went to the doctors and got it fixed then everyone was his friend. People can take the mick out of you for what you speak. If people take the mick out of the way you speak then they're not your friend but if they treat you the same all the way then they are your friend.

APPENDIX 3b - Transcription of group discussions 2

Danny: Which person do you prefer the least or would be the least popular?

Andy: Ben, because he was all like all snobby.

Harley: The Brummie because he sounds stupid and if people saw them on the street they'd think that they speak stupid.

Carl: Ben because he seemed a bit posh and like he was too clever.

Kenwyne: Ben too, because he was too "I'm better than you", my opinions don't count and like because he'd been to the rainforest so like and you haven't so whatever you've done he thinks he's better.

Danny: Which one do you prefer? Hamish?

Hamish: Jay.

Danny: Why do you think Jay?

Harley: You might not have him as a friend but today he's the most coolest. I wouldn't like to talk to him but you might think he's popular and would fit in.

Kenwyne: It doesn't really matter how he talks, he just talks... normal.

Danny: So, you think he talks normally for you guys now?

Kenwyne: Nah just the way he spoke coz most of us people here have got like an accent but he just spoke he didn't seem to have like an accent. If you talked to him you probably couldn't tell where he came from like what place he came from. He just talks like everyone else would talk really.

Danny: Would anyone else like to add anything? Why do you think he was the coolest?

Hamish: Because his language seemed more up-to-date compared to the others, his accent was cooler.

...

It's more fashionable. Every generation has their own way of speaking and that's what our generation talks like.

Danny: Great, so that's what you think your generation talks like?

Hamish: Yeh.

Harley: Errm I think because like one person would start saying it and then everyone else would start saying it like that.

Danny: So which speaker would write the best?

Jonesy: Ben. He uses a lot of Standard English and that makes it seem like he's a well-educated person.

Nate: Yeh errm, for the same reasons he is more educated than us and uses Standard English and he's like posh as well and posh people speak more well and with like that "Accent".

Lee: He sounds really clever.

Sid: He uses proper grammar.

Carl: He seems very educated and he looks like he knows what he's saying. He doesn't like talk strange.

Harley: I think he's very confident... a bit too confident. And then he's confident in like what he says so you believe him and what he says.

Danny: Ok, do you think the other speakers would be confident at, say for example, writing?

Tayon: I think he'd be ok, like not too bad but like normal.

Nate: Not as good as the man who's more educated but like on the video he (the Midland dialect speaker) repeats himself often and doesn't sound as clever.

Graham: Errm it would be ok but errm say there was a Brummie and a posh person and they write the same thing and you compared it they would be completely different things like the way they write and use punctuation.

Danny: Why do you think people talk differently. Why do we have different accents?

Adam: Because we are unique... to

Nate: Because of our parents and you learn to talk like them. But then you can talk differently with your friends and you catch on with other people and their accents.

...

The parents and the way they talk because like me they get used to their accents. With the parents, they kind of create it and its natural.

Carl: Like where you live and who you're with. I say your parents and you get it off them like if your parents are posh then you'd be very posh because that's how you'm brought up.

Danny: Do you use the same accent in front of your friends?

Hamish: If you talk to your parents like they're your friends then you'd get in trouble and when my brother talks like that in front of my mum she'd probably hit him.

(The boys all laugh)

Danny: Coz that's the way of him showing he's unique but at the same time it's more respectful to not do it in front of mom.

Errm I don't think I sound different I think my accent's normal. I use different types of words.

Danny: Have you got any examples of that?

Hamish: Lol, ROFL... I'm not going to say the other one.

Kenwyne: LMAO.

Carl: Wagwan.

Harley: Wablo.

Lee: Blood.

Hamish: Ennit.

Hamish: Safe.

Adam: Yeh man.

Harley: My dad says safe to me.

Graham: Sound.

Nate: Sad

Hamish: Bredrin.

(Laughing and lots of discussion ensues between the group.)

Kenwyne: Yeh but at the barber's when my dad went to the barbers and the barber went to him "safe" and my dad went (throws a strange disapproving look) and looked at him like that when the barber said safe.

Danny: So, does the way someone talks matter?

Sid: It does matter because it determines what job you might get because if someone talks like they're educated then they'll be like that when they talk to people they are associated with.

Adam: I don't think it matters because it doesn't matter because not everyone speaks the same way as you.

Carl: Occasionally with certain things, you have to speak formally in front of people but when you're with your friends you can speak how you want.

Nate: I agree because someone might act completely different but their accent will show if they are really the opposite to that.

Kenwyne: If you don't mind me saying it's like Carl. He's got a Brummie accent but he doesn't come across as a thick Brummie.

Harley: Sometimes I joke around with my friends and pretend to talk like a chav but I don't talk like it in front of my dad coz he goes "Ahh why are you talking like a chav for?"

Lee: Errm no because like Adam's opinion if you speak proper Brummie errm I'm sure their accent would get them, it doesn't mean they can't get a job. Say you're a Brummie and went to speak to a man that talked different they had a different accent but the words came out the same.

Andy: I agree. You may get a job but it wouldn't be high class.

Very interesting. So, when you think of a high earning job what accent do you see them as having?

Carl: Like posh and educated.

Harley: I don't think all people who have a high quality job need to be posh and educated. Say if you were a footballer you wouldn't say "Oooh look at me" (Hamish uses a mock SE dialect).

(The boys all laugh)

Kenwyne: Yeh like Steven Gerard he can't speak. He earns lots of money but his accent's horrible.

How do you feel about your accent?

Nate: I'm used to speaking like that and I really wouldn't want to change because it would be too confusing and I'd get mixed up between the two.

Neil: Quite happy because I wouldn't have to change for someone else I could keep it how I wanted it.

Andy: I don't really know because if you talk you want it to sound different but you don't know what it sounds like to other people.

Harley: Proud. Coz it's a unique way. Only people who live round this area talk like this.

Nate: Really happy. It's how I want it so I can understand it easier.

Danny: What about in school?

Neil: I'd be fine.

Hamish: You have to change it sort of then. Because you're not going to talk street to the teachers. Because it's kind of disrespectful.

Carl: I agree with Hamish because it would be inappropriate because I'd be used to speaking to the teacher like I normally speak and changing to speak street would be weird.

Kenwyne: When I went to my new school the other day. There was this person I didn't know him and he came across all posh and I thought he was going to be all funny and snobby... but when he started talking to the teacher it wasn't what he looked like and it was all street and the teacher said "I beg your pardon, I don't think we'll be speaking like that in this class." And yeh it was just a bit weird because teachers don't understand and talk like that and you can't talk like that in my school.

Danny: How do teachers talk?

Neil: You may speak to a teacher formally and they'll speak to you formally but outside of school they may talk more informally.

Danny: So why do you think in jobs and school you talk formally, but outside of your job or school, you talk informally?

Jonesy: You know I think it's because they wanna be like your friend. Someone in your group of friends might have started talking like it and he might have been like and they might want to talk like him. So, they don't talk like him but they want to sound like him to seem cool.

Why would you speak formally in a job or school?

Sid: It depends what job. If it's a job where you have to speak to people every day but then you errm they wouldn't take you on if you came in there and started talking like that.

Danny: So, you think they wouldn't give you a job if you spoke like that?

Jonesy: If you're a bin man then people don't expect you to be a bin man and talk all posh.

Jonesy: I think we'll collect this rubbish today. (Mock posh SE accent)

Harley: I don't know why I do this job I find it quite shallow and pedantic. (Mock posh SE accent)

Danny: So, how would a bin man speak?

Nate: Like normally.

Lee: Normal

Jonesy: Yeh normally.

Danny: What job would speak differently?

Harley: Like a doctor. They speak sophisticated.

Danny: How would you feel if your doctor spoke street then?

Nate: Quite confused because you wouldn't understand him.

Jonesy: He might not know what he's doing. He wouldn't be talking like he knows what he's doing.

Harley: I wouldn't mind because that's how he wanted to speak, but I'd feel quite errm unsafe. You'd look at him and feel unsafe.

Sid: When you talk formal it sounds more intelligent. They aren't saying random things.

Danny: How do people view your accent?

Jonesy: Like in America they think British people speak all posh yeh and errm we don't so... They'd probably laugh at ours.

Kenwyne: When we're in different areas they'd look weirdly at our accent. We'd use our accent like we do in our area but in another area some people wouldn't appreciate it.

Lee: Like if you're from London and the person from Birmingham was speaking they'd think... if they hadn't been anywhere they might think it's a bit strange.

Andy: Errm I think they think it's quite... not unintelligent but not intelligent. Like average.

Carl: So, if you dressed in a tracksuit but spoke like the queen people would find it very strange.

APPENDIX 3c - Transcription of group discussions 3

1. Which of the speakers from the recordings did you think was easiest to understand?

2. Why did you find this the easiest to understand?

Frank: Do you have to circle it?

Gerry: Do you put it as the number

Happi: I forgot what order they were in

Frank: 1...2...3...4

Kevin: was the Yam Yam the third one?

Kevin: Could you write like… coz he's one of my own kind?

Gary: He was very fluent

Frank: I'd say number one coz he was… err, he was speaking quite slowly and taking his time so you could hear him… and I like that coz you… I can take it in and think about it and errm… he was quite clear. Clear but err… the bad thing about his speaking was that he was a bit stuttery.

Gary: I think that the fourth recording was the easiest to understand because he spoke clearly and he spoke at the right speed at quite slow.

Gerry: Well even though he was posh he spoke really well and very slow and I understood it all the way through.

Happi: Errm the speaker that was easiest to understand was the first one because err he spoke very posh and err he spoke very slowly so we could understand the words.

Kevin: I think it was the Yam Yam coz he was one of my own kind and like I can understand yam yams coz they're like from my sort of place where I was born and have my sort of way of talking so I like the third one the Yam Yam.

James: I like the first one the best coz it had the best pronunciation I thought and the timing was perfect and like it was posh and it was clear and like you could understand what he was saying and nothing was confusing.

Danny: You all keep using the word posh! Would that be what you describe someone who spoke like that?

All: Yeh!

Kevin: Very posh!

Danny: So, do you think posh people speak clearer?

All: Yeh

Frank: He probably wouldn't have been so posh when he was younger, he would probably have talked normally.

Gary: Posh people talk quite slow don't they!

Kevin: I don't really understand posh people very well… the kind of Queen Elizabeth accent I don't understand it.

Danny: That's fine; the rest of you feel that the "posh" accent is easier to understand?

All: Yeh!

3. Which speaker did you like the most?

4. Why?

Happi: Could you have the same opinion?

Gary: Which one was the Brummie?

Kevin: Nah he was a Yam Yam?

Danny: Number 3 had the Midlands dialect

Kevin: He's like Yam Yam.

Danny: The "Brummie" as you would call him was number 3!

Kevin: If you're Brummie, you're from Birmingham if you're a Yam Yam you're from Sandwell.

Happi: I'm a Brummie!

Kevin: I'm not I'm a Yam Yam.

Frank: Errm I like number 2 coz he's, errm, accent was funny but he'd probably find our accent funny. Coz he comes from a different place and so they would probably find ours funny. They could be from another place and speak posh but we don't speak posh we just speak normally. Then they'd find think that's funny coz we don't speak posh.

Gary: I think the third recording… I like that one the most becoz he couldn't pronounce stuff that well but, like, I speak Brummie and he did.

Happi: He was the funniest and I really enjoyed it. He was hard to understand a couple of times but I got to like used to it like am… am number 3.

Indie: Errm I think still the first one because posh people are easier to understand and then like other people.

Kevin: I think number three becoz he was clear, responsive, he's got the same accent as me so I can understand him clearly coz he's like a Yam Yam and I like… and it's easier to understand him. When it comes to number 1 and like people who are posh they take the mick… most posh people take the mick out of Brummies and Yam Yams and that so I'm not very keen on them.

Danny: Why do you think that is?

Kevin: Coz coz they are like from, they're like from Southampton and they think "they're from Birmingham and they're useless" so I don't like… really like them or that accent?

Danny: So, you think that if someone hears our accent they will think we're useless?

Kevin: Or like think that's a weird accent that's very funny I never heard that.

Frank: You know Hayden thinks that they take the mick out of us. Well we might take the mick out of them coz we find theirs funny!

5. Do you think you could speak like this person with practice?

Kevin: To be honest I don't need to pretend coz I already speak like him!

I don't think I could speak like the Irish.

Happi: (in a mock Scots accent) Ya'll right their laddie?

Indie: Yeh yeh I think so I need a bit to speak slower and use more emotion.

James: Yeh I think I could. After we heard the recordings yesterday in the playground we started sounding like other people. Errm you know but if you practise you could sound like them.

6. Would you like to sound like this speaker?

James: Yes, I would actually it would be kind of nice now that… it would be nice I wasn't very good at English like Adam but now I'm good at English.

Kevin: And confident!

James: …and yes I'm confident with my English … thank you for that Kevin!

Kevin: He uses that Queen Elizabeth accent.

James: But now that we talk like a normal person if you learnt to talk posh then it would sound nice.

Frank: No not really coz he speaks posh but if you went to where we live round here you'd get bullied.

Danny: What if you were somewhere else?

Frank: Errm I wouldn't mind if there were a few posh people coz then it would be alright to be posh. I wouldn't like wanna go where it's somewhere like another country. They would think… wow, you sound stupid coz they'd say "You" like that.

Happi: I wouldn't like to speak um um another accent coz I wanna be myself like not try and be someone else.

Gary: I agree with Happi coz I don't wanna be no one else just yourself. I'd prefer to speak like I do now.

Kevin: Errm yeh you know on 6 I ain't really got an answer for that coz I am who I am aren't I an I am who I chose.

Indie: I agree with Gary an that coz I want to be who I am not like anyone else.

7. Who was the hardest to understand?

8. Why?

Kevin: Was the Northern man the second?

Indie: Yeh he's kinda hard but he speaks like me he speaks fast.

James: I actually find three the hardest because… I'm sorry Kevin…

Kevin: You'm saying I'm the hardest to understand in this class?

James: I think that because of where I'm from I've never heard people speak like that before. The pronunciation wasn't clear to me so I couldn't understand it

Kevin: But now you get it every day off me?

Frank: Errm I said 4 coz he was a bit like he'd speak but kinda like a sore throat. I didn't understand it.

Happi: Am sorry Kevin I'm going to have to say 3 coz I couldn't understand him and he was just saying random words so we was just laughing so we dint understand him

Gary: I think the second one coz he got his words in a muddle and he said like he swapped em around on accident.

9. Which speaker do you feel spoke the most like you?

10. How do you feel about this?

All the boys practise saying "hello" in a posh accent.

Indie: He was speaking slow and we could hear it

Frank: I would say 2 coz I've got a bit of Irish in me

Kevin: But that's a Northern accent

Frank: But it sounds Irish

Gary: I thought like number 3 was most like me coz like he was from my area so he was like spoke like me.

Happi: I would have said the same what he said coz I'm Irish but I'm more like a Brummie.

Indie: I found mostly like 2 coz he's a little bit more slow so everyone could hear it

Kevin: I'd say 3 coz he's my sort a person a Yam Yam

Happi: We all know you'd say three Kevin

James: I couldn't really… There wasn't anyone who really sounded like me but I'd have to say… (pauses) errm 1. (looks embarrassed)

Danny: Why did you get embarrassed when you said that?

James: Because he sounded quite posh!

Danny: So, do you not want to sound posh around these?

James: No not really (boys laugh in the background). I think I'm not exactly posh but I can speak clearly and I can pronounce good.

Kevin: He does pronounce posh coz instead of car he says caar!

James: It's just that's coz that's the nearest to me

Frank: I feel quite happy about it coz now I know there are more people who sound like me.

Gerry: Nothing really.

11. How do you feel about your regional dialect (accent)? Are you happy with your accent?

Happi: No, I wanna have an Irish accent coz when I lived with my Nan and Granddad they sounded Irish and when I came back I used to have an Irish accent a bad Irish accent but now it's English again.

James: About my accent, I'm happy with it it's just that it happens like in school in school grounds people can be racist coz sometimes it's quite hard where we live and stuff coz there are people who don't care about anyone else and coz we have a different skin colour.

(The other boys repeat the way he says colour)

Happi: Colour

Frank: Colour like colour

James: Coz maybe they think we have different skin colour we will sound different so we can get bullied but I'm still happy with it.

Kevin: I feel left out in class 5 coz I'm the only Yam Yam in the class most…

Frank: No, you're not

Kevin: Mostly everyone else is a Brummie so I feel left out

Indie: I do feel ok with my accent because everyone needs an accent coz it would be weird if everyone had the same really I just want to be myself.

Gerry: I think mine is fine.

Gary: I feel happy with my accent coz I'm happy being a Brummie so I'm glad I speak like that.

Frank: I'm happy with how my accent is I like who I am and I like being like this but you know Kevin says he feels left out he can't really say that coz I live near Kevin an all I have to do is drive down the road and I'm probably bout half Yam Yam.

Kevin: Can I say something please…? I feel left out being a Yam Yam but I'm happy with the way I speak coz like I, I, I was Irish I had a pretty Irish accent like Happi said when I… coz at some point when I, I was three I went to Dublin but when I got back that's when my mom said you were born in England you were born in Sandwell so you're Yam Yam. When she said that I started hearing Yam Yam accents like I started talking like "yam ay got my bag ain't ya, an all tha" and I still talk a bit of Yam Yam now coz I say " ay am an all tha".

I have the mick took out of me for my accent when I go out places like. Once my dad was in a fight an the cops had to get involved coz there was a few people pushing me round taking the mick out of me saying you're a Yam Yam you don't belong round this sort of places so the cops ended up getting involved an I just wish that I was never a Yam Yam but I still like my accent and I'm proud of it.

Happi: Errm I get the mick taken out of me for my accent and they call me mop head.

Frank: That's coz of your hair

Indie: About peoples, other people's accents it's not really bad coz enjoy what you've got really.

Frank: I'm gonna say that I fink people like my accent coz like errm I don't really say things funny but they just laff just find me funny. I don't know why they find me funny I think its coz of my accent but I don't know. I'm happy about it coz I like people finding me funny.

APPENDIX 4 – Transcriptions of video clips

APPENDIX 4a - Transcription of Jasper Carrott video clip

Jasper is wearing a suit and is sitting on a stool on a stage in front of a sign saying, "Talk to Jasper". Jasper is talking to an audience on the "Talking to Jasper" TV show. The camera pans to Jasper, and he is shown facing the camera. The audience cannot be seen.

Jasper: You see the trouble began when bankers began loaning money they hadn't got, to people they didn't know... to buy houses they couldn't afford... at interest rates that were astronomical... they paid themselves fortunes to do it... and when it went belly up they went pppfffttttt (slaps himself on the forehead) "Who could have predicted that?"

All these bankers running out of the woods going "You won't believe what the bears are doing in there!"

And do the bankers blame themselves? Nooo! They blame the PIGS. No not the police. That's Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain.

Countries that are all going bankrupt and expecting us to get them out of the mire. Does that not worry you? Because on the horizon are Hungary, Italy, Turkey and Estonia.

...

I mean it's farcical. Let's take Greece. OK! Well we could do with the amount of money we've given them. 6 Billion Euros... I mean what are they spending it on? It's not new buildings... it's not driving lessons. I tell you what they spend it on... the military.

APPENDIX 4b - Transcription of Ben Fogle's interview

Ben is sitting in front of a wealth of trees and luscious green vegetation, which looks like a rainforest. Water (possibly from a stream or waterfall) can be heard running in the background. Ben is sitting on his own, facing the camera and talking directly to the camera.

Ben Fogle: I think it's a tragedy when you hear about the massive destruction of the rainforest. We are doing that ourselves and that's why I am so keen to support this. Because, in the same way that we are doing it, I am sure we have the ability to stop it.

I have been incredibly lucky that I've been to a number of rainforests, from Papua New Guinea to the Amazon Rainforest and indeed out in Borneo. It is one of the most beautiful, eerie, strange, wonderful environments in the world.

There's nothing more exciting than sleeping in the forest canopy in a hammock. Surrounded by the most extraordinary noises. Errm you've got animals all around you. It is a living thing. They call it the lungs of the world and it really feels like it's alive when you're in it.

I think climate change doesn't just affect me, it affects everyone and it will affect future generations, and that's why it is so important that we start to act on it now.

Please! Please! Please! From someone who's been to many rainforests and has seen their beauty and understands their importance, sign on and support the Prince's Trust Rainforest Project.

APPENDIX 4c - Transcript from "The Cut"

Jay and Marla are driving in a car, Marla's phone rings. Jay looks across at Marla. Jay pulls the car up at a house.

Marla: This is it.

Jay: Are you ready?

Marla: Have been for months.

Jay: Ok!

The two characters then get out of the car and walk up to a house

Marla: Mum?

Jay: She could be out?

Marla: (*Marla sighs heavily and dials a number on her phone. Jay is sitting down on the house steps with his eyes closed appearing relaxed with his arms folded. A phone begins to ring inside the house.)* Mum? I can hear you in there mum!

Jay: Marla!

Marla: Please!

Jay: Marla... Marla... come on! (*Jay grabs Marla by the arm and leads her away from the door*.) Come on!

Marla: (*Marla seems exasperated and sighs heavily*.) Ahhh!

Jay and Marla walk away from the house. They are then pictured walking down a street.

Marla: We used to come here every Easter. Until Mum and Dad started to fight. *(sighs)* Steven hated it here anyway!

Jay: Why?

Marla: He always got poo'd on by the seagulls.

Both characters laugh

Jay: Probably best you didn't bring him then.

Marla: Well I can tell him he was right. She didn't want to speak to me. He'll love that.

Jay: She probably just left her phone at home or something.

Marla: Nah! She was there.

Jay: You don't know that!

Marla: She's just like me Jay. She never goes anywhere without her phone.

Jay: So what now?

Marla: I don't know. We've come all this way for nothing.

Jay: I know...

Marla: What?

Jay: Come with me...

Jay takes Marla's hand and runs off leading her to the sea front.

APPENDIX 5 - Information for parents/participants and consent forms

APPENDIX 5a - Information fact sheet for parents

Information fact sheet for parent meeting regarding PhD research in school:

Title of the proposed study:

Can linguistic insecurity lead to language counter-cultures in primary school boys?

Investigating:
- Boys' perceptions of different dialects
- Boys' use of language in different contexts
- Boys' attainment in writing

Description of the proposed study

The main elements of the thesis involve:
1. All boys participating in an investigation to explore their opinions and perceptions of 4 male speakers with different accents.
2. All boys watching 3 video clips involving different speakers with different accents. The same boys will participate in group discussions to give their opinions on the speakers in the videos and discuss their perceptions of language and dialect in society.
3. 2 boys will be asked to volunteer to have their speech recorded at break time and during a citizenship lesson in the classroom. Their speech will be transcribed and compared to see if their language in the classroom is different to their language in the playground.

The purpose of this study is to explore the reasons behind boys' attainment in writing and why it is behind girls. This study is aiming to look at the focus of the national curriculum and how it requires a fluent and comprehensive understanding of Standard English – and how boys' who do not speak Standard English may need alternate provision to access the national curriculum and succeed in writing.

Invitation to participate and explanation of what participation entails

Your participation in the study is entirely voluntary and the thesis and success of the research relies upon your child's voluntary participation.

It is important to note that you do have the right to withdraw your child from the testing element of the study and your child has the right to withdraw themselves. The testing process will last until the end of the academic year (July 2014). Before this time the parents/guardians have the right to remove their child if they do not wish them to participate. Children themselves have the right to remove themselves from the study if they are uncomfortable or do not wish to participate. After this period the testing process will have finished and children's data will be used for analysis.

The boys will be working alongside myself, Mr. Doyle, and will take part in the above elements of the investigation. The whole process is non-invasive and will be conducted in a relaxed and open atmosphere. Children will, at all times, be able to ask questions and talk about the processes they are involved in. The study should have no adverse effects on the boys as it is looking at their perceptions and opinions of dialects and these should already be pre-formed due to experience.

Parents and participants are free to seek further clarification from myself at any stage. I can be contacted via email: or an appointment can be made to see me before or after school by contacting . These meetings can be used to discuss any elements of the study, discuss the data that has been collected on your child or to discuss how the data will be used.

If you wish to speak to someone other than myself regarding the research and have any queries or concerns you wish to raise confidentially, then please contact Adrian Blackledge on .

Confidentiality/anonymity and data security

All data collected from the children will be reported anonymously and will be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

The data will be backed up and stored on a secure server that only myself, the headteacher of the school and the ICT technician have access to. The information therefore, will be stored securely and kept for ten years, so parents and children can request to see the data at any stage during or after the testing process.

Results of the study

The results of the study will be published in my PhD thesis and submitted to the University of Birmingham.

APPENDIX 5b - General letter inviting parents to meeting

Dear parents and guardians,

As you are aware, action research will be conducted in Years 5 and 6 during this academic school year. Your child has been selected to take part in the project and has been asked to join me on _____ in order to discuss the research project and the activities they will be asked to do as part of the project.

The discussion will be informal and the boys will be told that they will be taking part in:

- A specially designed app on the I Pads which gets them to listen to different accents and answer questions based on different types of accents.
- Watch three videos of different speakers in different scenarios and situations including: Jasper Carrott, Ben Fogle and two teenagers from the BBC children's series The Switch!
- Take part in group discussions to discuss the video clips, the accents on the I Pad app and give their opinions on accents dialect and how we talk in today's world and in school.

Your child will be asked to then come home and speak to his parents and guardians to decide if he is happy to take part in the research.

If your child is happy to take part, I will then hold a second meeting on the _____ to speak to them about times, dates and when research will begin.

Thank you for you cooperation. If you have any queries at any stage, I am available after school, via email and the school telephone and will answer any questions or go through any stage of the process with you.

Regards,

Danny Doyle.

APPENDIX 5c - Participant/parent Consent form

Dear parents and guardians,

I would like to formally request your child's involvement in the PhD doctoral research project, which will be conducted during school hours. The activities are light, fun and will look to explore the boy's opinions of different accents.

Your child will take part in the activities that are outlined below:

- The language processing test (where the children use the I Pad app to make judgments on different dialects and accents).
- Watch three videos relating to different speakers and discuss the different accents.
- Take part in group discussions which will be supported by Mr. Doyle.

Your child will remain anonymous **at all times** during the final written research thesis and will only be able to be identified by Mr. Doyle and the secure records he will keep on the school's server.

Your child and you retain the right **at any time** during the research process to see the data/information that has been produced by your child. You also retain the right to remove your child from the research hat any stage.

I will be available after school days to meet with you if you have any concerns, questions or queries regarding the research.

I look forward to working with yourselves and the children.

Regards,

Danny Doyle
Deputy Head teacher
Doctor of Research Birmingham University

I am aware of the research taking place in school and give consent for my child _____ to take part in all areas of the research project named above.

Signed: _____

APPENDIX 5d - Specific consent for audio recording

Consent for child involvement with recording dialect exercise:

I formally give consent for my child _____ to take part in the recording exercise and am fully aware of the procedures and am happy for Mr. Daniel Doyle to conduct the research in accordance with the University of Birmingham's ethic guidelines.

Signed: _____

_____

APPENDIX 5e - School letter to parents informing them of research

[redacted]

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As you are aware, action research has been a part of St. Hubert's classrooms for many years.

As part of his final PhD Doctoral thesis, Danny Doyle will be conducting research with specific children in years 5 and 6.

The research involves looking at boys' opinions of different accents and dialects. Danny will also be examining the boys' use of dialect and language within the classroom and during playtimes. As well as informing his thesis, the research will be used to inform and evaluate school provision.

All participants taking part in the research will have been contacted directly and the project will be fully explained to both parents and pupils.

The final doctoral thesis will not include any personal information relating to the school or the pupils. Any children participating in the study will be referred to via a pseudonym or as a number or a letter (child A).

If you have any queries regarding the research, feel free to contact Mr. Doyle in school.

Regards,

[redacted]

APPENDIX 5f - School consent letter for research to be carried out

[redacted]

To whom it may concern,

Following detailed discussions outlining the research project, I give consent for the research project to be carried out in [redacted] in accordance with the Universities ethic guidelines.

Danny will conduct research and use the data collected to inform his thesis.

Regards,

[redacted]

APPENDIX 6 - Tables exemplifying the 6Cs and communication assessment criteria utilised at SNDWLLSCHOL

APPENDIX 6a - Table 3a: The breakdown of the individual "Communication" year group assessment criteria and learner goals

Communication:		
Year Group:	**Learner Goals:**	**Teacher Objectives/Assessment Criteria:**
EYFS	I can speak clearly to people I know	Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using new vocabulary.
	I can ask questions to help me understand	Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding. This can be in a range of contexts, not just through project work.
	I can share my thinking and ideas to my friends and teachers	Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers to communicate their thoughts and ideas?
	I can use technology to communicate my thoughts and ideas	Can children use a variety of different technologies to communicate their thoughts and idea – e.g. voice recorders, iPad apps, or video recording?
	I can explore different ways to share my ideas	Can children select/choose from a range of materials/modes/approaches to create and communicate their ideas?
Year 1	I can follow a discussion and summarise what it was about	Can children actively participate in a discussion, following others' points and summarise the key outcomes/points of discussion?
	I can speak clearly to a group of people and explain my ideas	Can children communicate their ideas clearly (in a logical order) and follow good communication protocols for working together?
	I can make points in an order that makes sense when I am communicating/speaking	When children communicate, do they follow a logical order and include relevant detail?
	I can explore different ways to share my ideas	Do children understand that there are different ways to communicate, that different ways have different effects on the audience and do children understand why they have chosen a mode/language style?

	I can use technology to share my thoughts and ideas	With support, and in small groups, can children use digital elements to present findings – these are surface level and mainly focus on use of technology? Children may not yet understand why they are using different forms and their effects.
Year 2	I can create and choose an order for my points so that the different audiences can understand me	Can children choose and follow a logical order so that a variety of different audiences can track and follow their points/process (one-to-one, small group or presentations)? Can the children communicate clearly?
	I can change my language and tone depending on the audience	Can children vary levels of formality, tone and expression depending on the purpose, audience and presentation? Can children, with teaching and support, select, understand and use different types of language (e.g. slang, Standard English) and modes for different audiences?
	I can use technology to share my ideas to an audience	Can children, with specific teaching and guidance, use digital elements to deliver key messages to an intended audience that could not have been done otherwise (e.g. PPT's, animations, apps, Computer Aided Design, artwork/ posters/design work)? This may be reliant on one way.
	I can understand and analyse how people use language and gesture to engage audiences	Can children look at a range of presentation styles, evaluate them and make judgements about their own presentations and language choices?
Year 3	I can structure my language in a way which engages my audience but still communicates a coherent message	Can children manipulate and change language choices/orders to engage the audience, but still maintain a coherent message? E.g. can children change the order of their points, use explanations, varied openers, styles and vocabulary to engage their audience? Horrible Histories – using raps, rhymes, alliteration or clever word choices to change their presentations and effects on the audience. Can the children communicate clearly?
	I can explain my communication and language choices	Can children begin to give justifications and reasons for their communication modes and language choices understanding the similarities, differences and effects?
	I can explore how other speakers adapt their language to create different effects	Can children listen to, compare and explore how different speakers adapt their language to suit different purposes or audiences, e.g. persuasive, explanations, instructions, descriptions etc?

	I can change my language or communication modes for different audiences	Can children adapt and manipulate communication and language for a particular audience. Making choices to achieve maximum understanding, relevance and meaning for their chosen audience?
	I can ensure my ideas, projects and main points reach different and appropriate audiences	Learners are building a better understanding of the different audiences they need to reach. Can children choose and vary their audiences dependent on their projects and their outcomes?
	I can use technology to present my ideas to an audience in different ways	Can children, with specific teaching and guidance, use digital elements to deliver key messages to an intended audience that could not have been done otherwise (e.g. animations, apps, Computer Aided Design, artwork/posters/design work)?
Year 4	I can make considered choices about language and presentation style to engage a specific audience	Are children manipulating language choices to engage the audience? This will mainly focus on style, tone and vocabulary. Children will have the opportunity to present/design for different age ranges and professional bodies.
	I can analyse how other speakers adapt **their** language and make language choices to create different effects	Can children analyse, compare and understand how and why different speakers adapt their language to suit different purposes or audiences, e.g. persuasive, explanations, instructions, descriptions etc? Can they use what they have learnt to impact on their own communication style?
	I can make choices regarding what technology I want to use to communicate my point	Learners use digital aspects to improve the efficiency and quality of communication. E.g. children make deliberate choices regarding technology and communication. Are they starting to be able to justify their choices?
	I am becoming skilled at explaining and justifying my communication and language choices	Can children give explanations for communication modes and language choices and show adaptability for different contexts, audiences and projects?
	I understand that messages are heard differently depending on my language and communication choices. I can adapt and adjust my communication choices to have maximum impact on my audience.	Learners are building an understanding of how different audiences hear messages differently depending on their experiences. Can children consciously vary their language and communication choices dependent on their audience and to achieve intended outcomes?

Year 5	I can make considered choices about my presentation style to engage a given audience	**Without prompting, children should be considering their given audience** when deciding on their presentation and language style. Children must have the opportunity to present/design for different age ranges and professional bodies. Children may be starting to suggest audiences relevant to the project. When is it appropriate to use slang/formal language etc?
	I can communicate a message clearly to a range of audiences	This may be within a small group, to adults, to their peers during group decision-making. Think about how they make their point heard.
	I can describe how technology has helped my audience understand my points	Learners use digital aspects to improve the quality of communication. E.g. children make deliberate choices regarding technology and communication, and are beginning to understand why it was a good choice.
	I understand the link between my communication choices and the different emotional responses different audiences would give	Can children identify what an audience's emotions and reactions would be for different language and communication choices?
	I can adapt and change my communication to challenge people's thinking, and seek feedback on my chosen styles and modes	Learners know how, and why, they need to tailor communication for a range of audiences so that it is heard, understood, and achieves their goal. Learners seek feedback, alter and tailor their communication.
Year 6	I can make considered choices about my presentation style to engage **my chosen** audience	Children should now be **choosing** appropriate audiences and be considering this when deciding on their presentation style and language used. Children must have the opportunity to present/design for different age ranges and professional bodies. Children must make sure that this is varied throughout the year if they are choosing the audience. When is it appropriate to use slang/formal language etc?
	I can express myself in different ways, depending on the situation	Is their communication clear and connected? Can a variety of audiences understand them easily? Are they making their voice heard clearly within their small group?
	I can explain how technology has enhanced my ability to communicate my message to my audience	Children have made considered choices about the technology used and how it has enhanced their ability to get their message across appropriately.
	I understand my audience and my communication choices are suited to achieving my intended outcomes	Can children identify what would trigger an audience's emotions and reactions and manipulate/change their language and communication choices accordingly?

	My communication is flexible, adaptable and connected, and can be used to challenge people's thinking and actions	Learners are skilled at communicating in a variety of connected and coherent ways. Children can use language and communication modes to alter audience's thinking and challenge the status quo, create memorable messages or change the way people act/think. Learners are becoming highly reflective communicators who consider and monitor the effectiveness of their communication – showing understanding from a variety of perspectives.

APPENDIX 6b - Table 3b: The overarching "Communication" assessment rubric – the objectives and dimensions of learning

Communication Deep Learning Progression

Communicating effectively with a variety of styles, modes, and tools (including digital tools), tailored for a range of audiences.

Dimension	Limited Evidence	Emerging	Developing	Accelerating	Proficient
Coherent communication using a range of communication modes	Learners' skills in communication require significant development. They may struggle with incoherence and/or tend to restrict their communication to one particular mode (e.g., written, texting, verbal, visual).	Learners are starting to understand, select and use a range of communication modes and tools, but still need significant guidance in this area. Their communication makes reasonable sense and uses more than one mode, but some of the ideas may still be lacking in coherence.	Learners understand, select and use a range of communication modes and tools to produce coherent communication i.e. communication that makes sense and reflects coherent and connected ideas, not a single simple thought.	Learners are becoming skilled choosing a range of communication modes and tools to get their messages across. Connected and coherent thought is evident across the full range of communication modes used.	Learners are able to clearly articulate how and why they make smart choices about communication modes and tools to get their message across. They are highly skilled in communicating in a coherent and connected way.
Communication designed for particular audiences	Learners still struggle to put themselves in the shoes of the intended audience. They tend to use styles, modes and tools of communication that are most familiar and comfortable to themselves.	Learners are starting to develop the skills to select the content, communication style, language, modes and tools they will use to tailor their communication to the needs, preferences and context of that specific audience. At this level a lot of guidance is still required, and the design process is quite formalized.	Learners are building a better understanding of the different types of audiences they need to reach. They have good skills to compose and produce communication for a particular audience, designing it appropriately to achieve maximum understanding, relevance and meaning for that audience.	Learners take the time to get to know the audience prior to designing their communication. Learners understand that messages are 'heard' differently depending on the life experiences people bring to the message. They have a good understanding of how to tailor communication for a range of audiences so that it is heard, understood, and adds value to each audience. They seek feedback, alter and tailor their communication.	Learners are highly skilled at identifying what excites, motivates, or worries a particular audience, so that they can make the audience care about the message. At this level, they use their knowledge and intuition to work out when and how to challenge the audience to think beyond the status quo. Learners have a range of strategies to create memorable messages that will 'stick' in the minds of the audience and change the way they think and/or act.
Substantive, multi-modal communication	Learners are struggling to effectively communicate the findings and implications of their tasks. Communications are likely to be fragmented rather than woven, coherent, and substantive.	Learners are beginning to weave different elements of their thinking and turn them into a more coherent message. They are starting to use more than one mode of communication, such as visual images, soundtracks and spoken word, for example, in film or digital presentations.	Learners are considering and integrating multiple issues, components or perspectives into their content. Their thinking is becoming more substantive because they have to analyze, synthesize and integrate multiple ideas into a coherent whole. They regularly use several modes of communication to get the messages across in the best way.	Learners are skilled at using multiple strategies to weave diverse threads of information together to create an integrated whole that makes sense to their audiences. They leverage the right mix of appropriate tools that will best communicate each kind of idea, designed in ways that will connect with their audience, capture their attention, and leave them with the important messages.	Learners understand the communication task as a synthesis and weaving of interconnected ideas into a coherent and integrated whole. They know what the big idea is and the best way to convey it, utilizing the right mix of tools and ways of communicating. They skilfully blend a mix of surprise, intrigue, fact, humor, and practical elements to connect with, hook, and retain the audience's attention, and deliver a clear and compelling call to action.
Leveraging Digital	Although learners used some digital elements for communication during the learning process or to present findings, these were very 'surface level' and did not substantially contribute to the quality, reach or speed of communication either within the team or with the audience.	Learners used digital opportunities for communication during the learning process and/or to deliver the key messages to intended audiences in ways that could not have been done otherwise. They may have made communication more efficient, broader or faster, but are unlikely to have significantly enhanced the *quality* of communication.	Learners used digital aspects effectively to improve both the efficiency and quality of communication during the learning process. Digital opportunities were also used to tailor communication of key concepts to different audiences, in ways that enhanced their understanding and retention of key ideas and concepts.	Learners can clearly articulate how infusing a digital element has enhanced the communication aspects of the learning process as well as the quality and value of how key learnings were communicated to specific audiences. Digital was used to create a more memorable message likely to 'stick' in the minds of the audience and lead them to take action.	Learners used digital elements ubiquitously throughout the task in powerful ways to deepen the efficiency, reach, quality and value of communication throughout the learning process, both within the team and with other audiences. Learners can articulate in detail how each digital element has enhanced communication in ways that increase the likelihood that the audience would take action and apply the team's learnings, and be able to apply that understanding to new and different contexts.
Reflection on and use of the process of learning to further develop and improve communication	Learners work together with little or no conscious reflection about their communication and how well it is working. At this level, they are unlikely to use clear protocols for communicating with each other, but rather let the communication process emerge naturally.	Learners are starting to establish and follow good communication protocols for working together. With guidance, they are learning to reflect on their communication processes, learn from what worked well and what didn't, and make improvements.	Learners are developing the ability to monitor, manage, and improve their communication throughout each task. These learnings result in better and more effective communication as tasks progress, and in successive tasks.	Learners are skilled at monitoring, managing, reflecting on and improving their communication capabilities and skills. At this level, they are able to use multiple perspectives to anticipate and manage for communication challenges before they occur and finding ways to improve the team's functioning, including diverse and multidisciplinary teams.	Learners are highly skilled and reflective communicators who proactively monitor the effectiveness of communication and reflect on it carefully from multiple perspectives. They find powerful ways to maximize the effectiveness of their communication, especially in diverse and multidisciplinary teams. At this level, teams are skilled and intuitive in finding a synergistic way of working together that helps ideas flow and minimizes communication-related disruptions.

APPENDIX 6c - Table 3c: Learning progressions accompanying the assessment rubric in Table 3b for "Communication"

Communication

Learning Progressions

Leveraging Digital

Communication

Communicating effectively with a variety of styles, modes, and tools (including digital tools), tailored for a range of audiences.

Limited Evidence

- Learners struggle with incoherence and restrict communication to one mode
- Learners struggle to tailor a message to a particular audience
- Learners have difficulty in communicating the findings and expectations of their tasks
- Communication is not woven, coherent or substantive
- Learners use little/no conscious reflection in their communication
- Learners do not exhibit the use of Communication protocols

Emerging

- Learners make reasonable sense and use more than one mode of communication
- With guidance, learners can begin to select context, communication style, language and modes to tailor their communication
- Learners 'message reflects different elements of thinking and is more coherent using more than one mode of communication
- Learners are starting to establish and follow good communication protocols
- Learners reflect on their communication process what worked and what didn't

Developing

- Learners understand, select and use a range of communication modes and tools to produce coherent communication (connected ideas)
- Learners have a developing understanding of the different types of audiences they need to reach
- Learners display good skills in producing and delivering a message for a particular audience designing for understanding, relevance and meaning
- Learners integrate multiple issues, components, arguments and perspectives into their content, making communication more substantive through analysing, synthesising and integrating multiple ideas into a whole
- Learners are developing ability to monitor, manage, and improve their communication

Accelerating

- Learners are becoming skilled at choosing a range of communication modes and tools to deliver a coherent message
- Learners understand and can tailor message and tools to a range of audiences so the message is heard and adds value
- Learners seek feedback and alter and tailor their communication
- Learners use multiple strategies and diverse threads for information to formulate important messages and connect with audiences
- Learners are skilled at monitoring, managing and reflecting on their communication, can anticipate challenges/risks, and/or find ways to improve the team's functioning

Proficient

- Learners are highly skilled at articulating and delivering a connected and coherent message with smart choices of communication modes and tools
- Learners are skilled at identifying what excites, motivates/worries particular audiences and how to engage/challenge others to think and act differently
- Learners know the big idea, how to synthesise a coherent message by skilfully blending surprise, intrigue, fact, humour and practical elements being able to hook and retain an audience's attention and deliver a clear and compelling call to action
- Teams are highly skilled and reflective communicators who proactively monitor their messages from multiple perspectives and are able to identify powerful ways to strengthen its impact

APPENDIX 6d - Table 3d: Example of requirements in Communication strand and different dimensions of learning

Dimension	Developing	Accelerating	Proficient
Communicating clearly (Coherent communication using a range of communication modes)	I can make myself clear to others when sharing my thoughts. I can connect and communicate more than a single idea, and in more ways than one.	I can use different tools and processes to express myself clearly in multiple ways. The way I choose to communicate makes sense to others.	I can express myself in different ways depending on the situation, and can clearly communicate why I chose to express myself in that way. My communication is clear and connected, and makes it easy for audiences to understand what I am trying to express.
Communicating to particular audiences (Communication designed for particular audiences)	I understand that the way I communicate should depend on the type of audience I am hoping to reach. I can design effective ways of communicating with specific audiences. My communication is relevant to my audience and allows them to understand my points.	I think about and research my audiences' needs before designing my communication. I understand that messages are "heard differently" depending on audience members' life experiences. I know how to design communication that is relevant and adds value for my audience. I seek feedback that allows me to make my communication even more effective.	I can excite and motivate my audience in ways that make them care about my message. I use my knowledge and intuition to challenge audiences beyond what they already think, know or feel. I know how to create messages that will "stick" in the minds of my audience and change the way they think and act.
Communicating in different ways (Substantive, multimodal communication)	I am beginning to integrate multiple issues and perspectives into my message. I regularly use several modes of communication to get my message across in the best way.	I am comfortable using multiple modes of communication to share complex messages with my audience. I can use specific tools for specific purposes, and to connect with the audience, capture their attention, and leave them with the important messages.	I understand how to bring a number of ideas together into a clear message. I can use the right mix of tools to reach my audience, keep their attention, and inspire them to act on the message.

APPENDIX 6e - Table 3e: All requirements in Communication strand and different dimensions of learning

Dimension	Limited Evidence 	Emerging 	Developing 	Accelerating 	Proficient 
Communicating clearly (Coherent communication using a range of communication modes)	I find it difficult to express myself clearly through talking or writing. I am not comfortable communicating in multiple ways.	I am starting to understand different ways to communicate. I need help to present my thoughts in a way others can understand.	I can make myself clear to others when sharing my thoughts. I can connect and communicate more than a single idea, and in more ways than one.	I can use different tools and processes to express myself clearly in multiple ways. The way I choose to communicate makes sense to others.	I can express myself in different ways depending on the situation, and can clearly communicate why I chose to express myself in that way. My communication is clear and connected, and makes it easy for audiences to understand what I am trying to express.
Communicating to particular audiences (Communication designed for particular audiences)	I communicate in ways that I am comfortable with, but that don't always make sense to my audience. I have trouble understanding what and how to communicate to some audiences.	I am starting to select what I express and how I do it, considering who needs to understand my message. I need some help to make sure my communication choices are suitable.	I understand that the way I communicate should depend on the type of audience I am hoping to reach. I can design effective ways of communicating with specific audiences. My communication is relevant to my audience and allows them to understand my points.	I think about and research my audiences' needs before designing my communication. I understand that messages are "heard differently" depending on audience members' life experiences. I know how to design communication that is relevant and adds value for my audience. I seek feedback that allows me to make my communication even more effective.	I can excite and motivate my audience in ways that make them care about my message. I use my knowledge and intuition to challenge audiences beyond what they already think, know or feel. I know how to create messages that will "stick" in the minds of my audience and change the way they think and act.
Communicating in different ways (Substantive, multimodal communication)	I need help to communicate what I found and learned in my task. I have trouble communicating my learning in a clear and substantive way.	I am beginning to put together different pieces of my thinking into one clear message. I am beginning to express my thinking and learning in different ways, such as through images and other visuals, music, and spoken words, for example in film or digital presentations.	I am beginning to integrate multiple issues and perspectives into my message. I regularly use several modes of communication to get my message across in the best way.	I am comfortable using multiple modes of communication to share complex messages with my audience. I can use specific tools for specific purposes, and to connect with the audience, capture their attention, and leave them with the important messages.	I understand how to bring a number of ideas together into a clear message. I can use the right mix of tools to reach my audience, keep their attention, and inspire them to act on the message.
Using Technology for Learning (Leveraging Digital)	I can use some technologies to help communicate or share what I am learning.	I can use technology as a tool to communicate what I am learning or to give key messages. Technology allows me to reach new audiences in ways that I could not have done without it.	I use technology to communicate efficiently. Technology allows me to create high quality products. I can use technology to adapt my presentations for different audiences so that they can each understand and remember my key ideas.	I can describe how technology improves the way I communicate and helps me learn. Technology allows me to communicate with others in ways that are memorable and stimulates them to take action.	I effortlessly use technology to work efficiently, create high quality products and communicate effectively with others. I can clearly describe how technology enhances my ability to communicate, and how it influences others to take action. I am comfortable using technologies that are new to me to communicate with others, and can do so effectively.
Reflecting on and improving my communication (Reflection on and use of the process of learning to further develop and improve communication)	I communicate with others without thinking much about how well I am getting my message across.	I am beginning to understand that the way I communicate matters, and that clear communication helps me work better with others. With some help, I am starting to think about how to improve my communication based on my experiences.	I am beginning to monitor, manage and improve my communication throughout each task. I see that this has resulted in more effective group communication and outcomes.	I am able to monitor, manage, reflect on, and improve my communication abilities. I can use what I have learned to know and prepare for what challenges may lie ahead. I can communicate in a way that improves how my team works.	I am a highly skilled and reflective communicator. I am aware of how I communicate, and can review and change how I communicate from moment to moment. I find ways to work with others that maximise individual and group effectiveness.