

You are to carry out a small project gathering data from people around you. **Please read all guidelines before beginning your project.**

I. General Guidelines for Your Task

You are going to carry out a dialect survey. You will interview at least 12 different people asking them the questions listed in section II below and write a 2 page (minimum) report which must include the following components:

- the social characteristics of the speakers you interviewed (region, age, gender, etc.) and why you chose these individuals to interview (20 points)
- how you carried out your project: in person, over the phone, in writing, etc. (20 points)
- a hypothesis about what you expected to see from the results (10 points)
- a summary of your results (20 points)
- a discussion of what you believe your results tell you about the people you studied; What trends do you see? Do you think your data are representative of a larger population? Are they surprising in any way? Did they support or refute your hypothesis? (30 points)

Guidelines for Choosing Your Subjects:

In choosing whom you will interview, you need to decide what you are interested in knowing about. You must interview at least 12 people, but it is up to you who these people are. For example, if you want to know only about how people in Indiana speak, you can choose 12 people from Indiana. Conversely, if you want to compare people in Indiana with people from another state, you can choose 6 people from each state. You can also choose to study people from different age groups if you think age will play a role in the answers you get, for example: 4 people aged 18-25, 4 people aged 30-45, and 4 people aged 50-65. (Those age groupings are arbitrary, and you can change the age ranges if you like based on what you think will be significant). Finally, you can choose whether all your subjects are male, whether they are all female, or whether they are half and half.

In any case, it is best to balance the number of subjects you have in each group. If you think gender is important, interview 6 men and 6 women, for example, not 9 men and 3 women. If you are interested in more than one variable, make sure the numbers are balanced for each variable. For example, if you want to compare Indiana and Minnesota dialects AND gender differences in those regions, choose 3 males and 3 females from each of Indiana and Minnesota. Whatever choices you make in deciding whom to interview, you will need to justify in your report. There is not necessarily a right or wrong way to choose your subjects as long as you explain your reasoning for choosing them the way you do.

However, there are some additional guidelines you should keep in mind in choosing your subjects. It is best if you avoid interviewing subjects under the age of 18 because of ethical considerations involving informed consent, which will be

explained in section III. Also, since the goal of this study is to find out something about dialects of English, you should interview only native speakers of English. This does not mean that you can not interview bilinguals, but you should make sure that they learned English as a child from one of their parents or close family members (not in school unless they were immersed in the language at school, such as someone whose family spoke Spanish but who used only English at school their entire life).

Also, it is important that **you do not want your subjects to know what you are specifically investigating until after you have finished the study**. This is because it has been shown that people might answer differently if they know what you are looking for. For example, if you say to people, “I want to study different dialects of English,” people who are self-conscious about their English may feel that you are going to evaluate them negatively, and thus try to give what they perceive to be a “correct” answer to the question rather than what they actually say. In doing the interviews, you simply need to ask people if they would be willing to participate in a task for one of your class projects, and if they ask more pressing questions, tell them that you will explain in more detail what your project is about after they have finished participating. You can tell them it’s for an English class if they ask, but try not to be any more specific than that until the end.

Finally, some groups of people traditionally pay closer attention to language and are thus less likely to speak in a way representative of a larger population, or are more likely to guess what the purpose of your study is and thus speak differently. It is therefore best to avoid interviewing the following types of people:

- Linguists! (We always try to figure out what the interviewer is doing!)
- Language teachers (Foreign language teachers or English teachers)
- Those who are majoring in or have majored in language in college
- Speech/language pathologists and audiologists (or students of these majors)
- Professional proofreaders/editors
- Religious leaders (Pastors/Rabbis etc.; they tend to speak more formally)
- Television/radio announcers, disc jockeys, newsreaders, etc.

II. Description of Project: Dialect Survey

The purpose of this study is to take note of some of the dialectal differences within a given region. Because you are trying to get a representative sample of regional usage and are using such a small number of subjects, you will probably get better results if you restrict your dialect to a smaller area such as a single state (rather than trying to get 12 different people from 12 different parts of the United States and hoping their individual dialects are representative of a vast area). Within the region that you select, however, you will probably want to choose people from different parts of that region. For example, don’t interview 12 people from Calumet, Gary, and Valparaiso and claim that everyone from Indiana talks like those people; if you want to interview only these people and claim that this is a representative *northern* Indiana accent, however, that is all right. (You are not restricted to only American speakers of English if you have access to a substantial number of speakers from another native English-speaking country, but the questions were designed with American dialects in mind). It is best if people have spent most of their lives in one place; it is okay if they have not, but you will want to find out where they have lived, at what ages, and for how long, and choose subjects who have spent most of their life in one place.

When you have decided whom you are going to interview and why, you can arrange how the interviews will be carried out. The questions for the interview are in section IV. The best way to get someone to respond the way they would most naturally say something is to phrase your questions in the form of, “the cast-iron cookware used for cooking food is called _____,” and let your subject fill in the blank. If you give the subjects choices, they may feel compelled to pick one of your choices even if it is not what they normally say. It is thus best that you either a) ask the questions orally (whether in person or on the phone) and write down the answers or b) give the respondents a written questionnaire with only questions and no choices on it and ask them to write in their responses. It is also best that you carry out all of your interviews the same way. You will need to explain in your report how you actually carried the interviews out and why you did it that way.

There is no right or wrong answer to the questions on the survey; thus, if a speaker gives an answer you don't see listed as an option on your sheet, that's okay. Write it down anyway. If subjects misinterpret the question and answer with something completely unrelated, try to rephrase the question in your own words, without using any of the answer choices on the survey. If that still doesn't work, make a note on your data sheet and move on to the next question.

III. Ethical Guidelines:

Normally a study involving human subjects of any kind requires approval through the university's review board (IRB) to ensure that the subjects are not being harmed. Because this is a small-scale project being used only for a class, and because that process takes a great deal of time to complete, you will not be applying for IRB approval. However, the following ethical guidelines still apply:

--Do not tape record your subjects. You need to elicit data in such a way that you can write down the relevant responses in a fast and accurate manner. While tape recording normally causes no harm to subjects, it can often produce anxiety and nervousness to know that's one voice is being preserved and “analysed.” (Tape recording can also produce more formal results as people talk differently when they know they are being recorded, and you want to obtain the most natural results possible). Likewise, don't videotape them.

--Keep records of your subjects' identities anonymous. Come up with some system of coding your results so that you can label them, for example, M1, M2, M3, F1, F2, F3 (for males and females respectively from each of three different age ranges) without writing down any names. You can make up whatever coding system you like that is relevant to the different groups of people you are interviewing. Do not store any copies of your results with the name of the subject (or any obvious identifying characteristics like “my oldest sister,” etc.), and do not share the data with anyone other than me (i.e., don't pass around a dialect survey to your friends and family and say “look at the answers this person put”).

--Obtain consent from your subjects to use their data. It is probably best that you provide them with a written document at the beginning of the elicitation to make

sure that they understand what they are being asked to do and are willing to participate. This can be something very simple, such as the following:

I am doing research for a university class and would like to ask you to participate in an interview study. You will be asked a series of 33 questions which you should answer in the way that seems most natural to you. Your responses will be kept anonymous and will not be shared with anyone other than the teacher. They will not be published or publicly presented at any point in time. You have the right to decide at any point during the task that you do not wish to continue participating.

Signed, (you the student interviewer)

In keeping with the above, be aware that you are not to use this data at any point in the future, for any other class, in any other paper (published or not), or in any presentation. It is unethical to use a subject's data for a purpose other than that for which you initially obtained consent unless your initial agreement of consent specifies that you would like to collect information for future use. Also, if someone decides in the middle of doing the interview that they don't want to continue, you are obligated to let them stop and to discard the data you have already collected from them.

IV. Questions

1. Let's say you want to offer someone something to drink and they don't want alcohol. If you decide to offer them something sweet and fizzy, you might say, "Do you want some _____?"

- a. Coke
- b. Pepsi
- c. pop
- d. soda
- e. sody
- f. soft drink
- g. other (specify)_____

2. If the informant answered #1 with a brand name (Coke, Pepsi, etc.), ask the following question: Does this word refer only to a particular kind of drink or can it refer to non-alcoholic beverages in general?

- a. to a particular kind of drink
- b. to non-alcoholic bottled drinks in general

3. What do you call an ear of corn that humans eat?

- a. corn-on-the-cob
- b. roasting ear(s)
- c. sweet corn
- d. other (specify)_____

4. Do you have another name for cottage cheese? If "no," ask if they have heard of "smear case." Write in any information on its use (who, situation) from both "yes" and "no" answers.

- a. no other expression
- b. smear case

- c. Dutch cheese
- d. clabber(ed) cheese
- e. other (specify)_____

5. What do you call the V-shaped bone of a chicken with white meat on it? It's a custom to break it apart for luck.

- a. wishbone
- b. pulley bone
- c. other (specify)_____

6. What do you call the cast-iron cookware often used for frying food?

- a. skillet
- b. frying pan
- c. fry pan
- d. spider
- e. iron skillet
- f. other (specify)_____

7. If you were to invite friends for a Sunday noon hot meal, you'd say, "Could you come over for _____?"

- a. dinner
- b. supper
- c. lunch
- d. brunch
- e. other (specify)_____

8. If you were to invite friends for a Sunday evening hot meal, you'd say, "Could you come over for _____?"

- a. dinner
- b. supper
- c. other (specify)_____

9. What do you call the thing used for drying dishes?

- a. dish rag
- b. dish towel
- c. dishcloth
- d. drying rag
- e. drying towel
- f. towel
- g. tea towel
- h. other (specify)_____

10. What do you call the long piece of furniture in the living room that seats at least three people?

- a. sofa
- b. couch
- c. davenport
- d. divan
- e. other (specify)_____

11. Do you know another name for a matching set of bedroom furniture? “Bedroom _____.”
- “sweet”
 - “suit”
 - no other expression
 - set
 - other (specify)_____
12. What is the machine used for cleaning the carpet?
- sweep(er)
 - vacuum (cleaner)
 - other (specify)_____
13. What do you call the metal at the edge of the roof that catches rainwater?
- gutter
 - spout(s)
 - spouting(s)
 - down spout
 - eave(s)
 - eaves trough
 - other (specify)_____
14. What do you call the small, fenced place surrounding a barn?
- barnyard
 - barn lot(s)
 - (cow, sheep, horse) lot
 - corral
 - farm yard
 - (cow, sheep, horse) pen
 - pasture
 - other (specify)_____
15. What do you call the big room at the top of the barn?
- scaffold
 - (hay) loft
 - (hay) mow
 - other (specify)_____
16. What do you call the piles of hay in the fields of a farm?
- corn shock
 - hay shock(s)
 - (hay) stacks
 - bales
 - no expression for this
 - other (specify)_____
17. What’s another way of saying “It’s four forty-five?” “It’s (a) _____.”
- quarter till five
 - quarter to five
 - quarter of five

18. Other than “reception,” do you have any other name for a noisy celebration after a wedding? If “no,” ask if they have heard of “belling,” “shivaree.” Write in any information on its use (who, context).

- a. no other expression
- b. belling
- c. shivaree
- d. party
- e. other (specify)_____

19. Imagine that you are hanging out with several of your friends and you want to go out with them later. So to find out if they’re busy you ask, “Hey, what are _____ doing later?”

- a. you
- b. you-all
- c. y’all
- d. you guys
- e. you-uns
- f. you’ns
- g. other (specify)_____

20. What do (did) you call your grandfather(s)?

- a. grandfather, grandpa, grampa, granddad, gramps, or anything similar to this
- b. opa
- c. other (specify)_____

21. What do (did) you call your grandmother(s)?

- a. grandmother, grandma, granny, grammy, gram, or anything similar to this
- b. oma
- c. other (specify)_____

22. Do you have a special name for the common worm used as fishing bait?

- a. night crawler
- b. angler
- c. angleworm
- d. earthworm
- e. fish(ing) worm
- f. rainworm
- g. worm
- h. other (specify)_____

23. What do you call a flying insect that glows at night?

- a. lightning bug
- b. fire bug
- c. firefly
- d. glow worm
- e. other (specify)_____

24. What is the name for a long, thin-bodied, flying insect with four large, transparent wings that feeds on mosquitoes and is often found around stagnant water?

- a. dragon fly
- b. snake feeder
- c. mosquito hawk
- d. sewing needle
- e. (devil's) darning needle
- f. don't know
- g. other (specify)_____

25. When you buy groceries at the store, the grocer might put them in a _____.

- a. (paper) bag
- b. (paper) sack
- c. (paper) poke
- d. other (specify)_____

26. What do you call the machine that you drink from that's found in public buildings?

- a. water fountain
- b. bubbler
- c. drinking fountain
- d. other (specify)_____

27. What do you call the electrically operated device of coloured lights that controls cars at intersections?

- a. red light
- b. stop light
- c. traffic light
- d. traffic signal
- e. other (specify)_____

28. What do you call the indoor place where cars are put while people are at work?

- a. parking garage
- b. parking structure
- c. parking ramp
- d. car park
- e. other (specify)_____

29. What do you call the grassy area between the sidewalk and the curb?

- a. berm
- b. tree lawn
- c. tree belt
- d. devil's strip
- e. no expression for this
- f. other (specify)_____

30. What do you call the large vehicle used for public transportation in and around town?

- a. bus
- b. metro
- c. coach
- d. other (specify)_____

31. If you notice your car tank is nearly empty, you could pull into a _____ to refuel your car.

- a. filling station
- b. gas station
- c. service station
- d. other (specify)_____

32. What do you call a four-lane road that you travel on between major cities?

- a. interstate
- b. highway
- c. freeway
- d. bypass
- e. other (specify)_____

33. What do you call the road that runs along the freeway and often has motels, restaurants, and gas stations along it?

- a. feeder road
- b. frontage road
- c. access road
- d. service road
- e. exit
- f. side road
- g. no expression
- h. other (specify)_____