

Theme-goal ditransitives and spatiality: the Black Country
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Contents

1	Introduction	4
2	Literature Review.....	4
2.1	Ditransitive clauses in English.....	4
2.2	The Black Country	7
2.3	Conclusions	10
2.3.1	Hypotheses to be tested.....	10
3	Methodology.....	11
3.1	Sample.....	11
3.1.1	Sample area	11
3.1.2	Sample size and characteristics.....	16
3.2	Developing the questionnaire.....	18
3.2.1	Pronominality restrictions	19
3.2.2	Verb-class restrictions.....	19
3.2.3	Additional methodological principles	20
3.2.4	Developing primary experimental materials	21
3.2.5	Developing filler materials	26
3.2.6	Questionnaire order	28
3.2.7	Measurement scale.....	28
3.2.8	Instructions.....	30
3.2.9	Biographical questions.....	31
3.3	Data Collection	32
3.3.1	Sampling method.....	32
3.3.2	Ethical considerations	32
3.3.3	Paper and online questionnaires	33
4	Results and Analysis.....	33
4.1	Results.....	33
4.1.1	Acceptability of constructions by Postcode	33
4.1.2	Acceptability of constructions by Gender	34
4.1.3	Acceptability of constructions by Age Group	35
4.1.4	Acceptability of constructions by Black Country Index Class	36
4.1.5	Comparison with Haddican (2010).....	38
4.2	Tests for Statistical Significance.....	42

4.2.1	Mann-Whitney tests for difference.....	42
4.2.2	Logistic regression for correlation.....	45
4.2.3	Spearman's correlation coefficient (rho).....	46
4.3	Summary of findings.....	48
5	Conclusion.....	49
6	Bibliography.....	50
7	Appendices.....	53

Abstract

Haddican's (2010) study of speakers of Manchester English suggests that theme-goal ditransitives (e.g. *she gave it me*) are underlyingly double-object constructions, and that these are most acceptable with pronominal objects. This study assesses whether these judgements hold for an area of the English West Midlands whose exact geographical location is not defined, and which only exists in the minds of those who perceive it: the Black Country. To aid this investigation, I test the significance of sociolinguistic variables alongside a measurement of perceived space, and ultimately show that perceived space, while closely linked to social space, is the most significant indicator of a respondent's acceptance of TGDs in this area of the English West Midlands.

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Errors and omissions are of course my own.

1 Introduction

Adger and Trousdale (2007) discuss how dialectologists and sociolinguists have, to an extent, been reluctant to perform analyses of syntactic variation, largely due to the methodological issues in extracting such data from speakers. The morphosyntactic variables occurring most regularly in natural speech have been subject to correlation with sociolinguistic and stylistic variables, but the study of many aspects of syntactic variation which occur rarely in everyday speech is still held back by methodological and theoretical soul searching. While Adger and Trousdale (2007) offer an account of the ways in which different theoretical formalisms have and might be shown to be good partners to the analysis of syntactic variation, the study of ditransitive clauses in British English, for example, is mired by the an apparent lack of focus on the crucial dialectological aim of fully mapping the acceptability of different variants of such clauses across the UK.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Ditransitive clauses in English

Haddican's (2010) paper on theme-goal ditransitive construction (e.g. *she gave it me*; hereafter TGD) acceptability in a particular British English dialect appears to be an invitation to add to the often hazy body of knowledge about where in the country different patterns are preferred, to what extent, and what this might mean for syntactic variation in the future: this paper will be drawn on exhaustively throughout this study. Haddican's (2010) contention, on the basis of results for speakers in the north-western city of Manchester, is that TGDs are derived from ordinary double-object constructions (eg. *she gave me it*: hereafter DOC), and behave like them across a range of diagnostics. This paper stands in somewhat stark contrast to the body of literature on syntactic variation in British English, which, as a potential symptom of treating ditransitives as something of an afterthought to large projects about other syntactic features, has built up a disparate account of their usage.

Siewierska and Hollmann (2007) present an account of ditransitive clauses in English, with particular reference to Lancashire dialect. They discuss how the DOC and the prepositional dative (e.g. *she gave it to me*: hereafter PD) are two truth-conditionally synonymous patterns of encoding the transfer of possession, either actual or intended.

They differ syntactically in that the recipient is seen as being an “indirect object or under some analyses a direct object” (Siewierska and Hollmann 2007:86) in the DOC but not the PD. They differ semantically in that “the double object construction is viewed as highlighting the transfer of possession, the prepositional construction the location of the transferred item” (ibid.). They differ pragmatically in that “the double object construction is associated with topical recipients and focal themes, the prepositional construction with topical themes and focal recipients” (ibid.).

When it comes to TGDs, however, much of the literature from the last three decades appears unsure as to how to deal with them. Siewierska and Hollmann (2007:88) focus their introduction of the possibility of TGDs on pronominality restrictions. Firstly, they prevent the availability of a recipient-theme (DOC) order (e.g. **she gave (to) the man it*) where there is a pronominal theme and full NP recipient, and this has been agreed across the literature (see Quirk et al. 1985:1396, Larson 1988:364, Hughes & Trudgill 1996:16, Wales 1996:87, and Cardinaletti 1999: 61). The alternative method of encoding such information would be to use the PD or a double-object configuration where theme precedes recipient (e.g. *she gave it the man*), but its acknowledgement as a TGD across the literature has been muted: Quirk et al. (1985) discern no difference between the PD and the TGD. Secondly, when considering the transfer of possession with two pronominal objects, Quirk et al. (1985:1396) are again agnostic about how the different object orders and inclusion/deletion of the preposition might be deemed different constructions in a triumvirate of possible constructions for encoding such information. Biber et al. (1999) propose that the PD is the most common construction on the basis of extensive electronic corpora, and Huddleston and Pullum (2002:248) judge recipient-theme orders to be more common than theme-recipient ones. Hughes and Trudgill (1996:16) equate the DOC with Standard English, while the results of Cheshire’s (1993:75) Survey of British Dialect Grammar suggest that the supposedly ‘Standard’ DOC is superseding the supposedly ‘common’ PD in many urban areas. While Cheshire (1993:75) identifies a preference for DOCs in the south and Kirk (1985) attributes TGDs to the west midlands and the south, Hughes and Trudgill (1996:16) cover all bases by contending that DOC is popular in the south and TGD is acceptable in the north but “also quite acceptable to many southern speakers”.

Siewierska and Hollmann (2007:93) discuss the relatively small body of knowledge on which these assessments have been based, and the fact that they have been largely

confined to considering only the verb *give*. The results of their study in Lancashire, based on various corpora of spoken and written English and testing with many more verbs, found 83% of ditransitive clauses were DOCs, but also deduced a preference for TGDs with two pronominal arguments, and suggested that only in such circumstances these could be regarded as a constructional type independent of PDs and DOCs.

Haddican's (2010) paper acknowledges the literature's inconsistency in relation to TGDs, particularly how their acceptability varies across the UK, before setting up a methodology to study whether and how it shares characteristics of either PDs or DOCs or whether it should be classed as a third independent ditransitive frame. Despite his conclusion, on the basis of diagnostics for DOCs and PDs performed on data from his Manchester sample, that TGDs are underlyingly DOCs for most speakers, his open approach to consider the potential for TGDs to be a third acceptable ditransitive frame dependent on geographical location is something worth noting. Haddican proposes (2010:2428), presumably on the basis of the muddled literature mentioned previously in this section, that TGDs

are most readily accepted by speakers in North western and Western dialects of England from Lancashire through Gloucestershire, including parts of the midlands and West Yorkshire. They are also sometimes accepted by speakers in Wales and from dialects further South including London and Cornwall. Speakers of North eastern English dialects and Scots typically do not accept theme-goal ditransitives.

Several interesting questions arise from this brief overview of the literature on ditransitive patterns in British English. Firstly, there is no coherent account of where TGDs are possible and how this is measured. Secondly, there is no coherent account of what TGDs are; whether they are DOCs, PDs or a construction whose behaviour is significantly individual to warrant it being labelled a third class. It seems that both of these deficiencies in our knowledge of ditransitives are symptoms of each other, and for the picture to become clearer, they must be considered together. We will not have any significant idea of the status of TGDs if we do not know in which social (including geographical) circumstances they are and are not possible, and how closely to or independently of DOCs and PDs they behave in such circumstances.

Based on the problems noted in this section, any further investigation into the acceptability of different ditransitive patterns across the UK should attempt to bypass any temptation to link this to a particular formalism and concentrate on providing a strictly focused dialectological-cum-sociolinguistic account of the relevant questions at hand, and

supplementing this where relevant with innovative measurements which are likely to support any findings.

2.2 The Black Country

Considering the discussion in Section 2.1, it appears that TGDs lack a consistent definition primarily because it has not been established how acceptable they are on the basis of enough extra-linguistic information. Similarly, the Black Country is an area which lacks a consistent, formal definition but exists as a perceptual construct. The Ordnance Survey succumbed to pressure from the Black Country Chamber of Commerce in 2009 to name the Black Country on its Landranger map of the West Midlands region, but this was not defined by any corresponding boundary, as Map 1 below shows. Like the TGD, the Black Country's struggle to define itself is a symptom of being so dependent on individual perceptions for its definition; perceptions which have not yet fully been explored.



Map 1: The perceived Black Country space realised across Euclidean space without social definition¹

As has been exhaustively established in the literature on it, the Black Country is perceived by those who have an opinion of its boundaries, including but not limited to those who think they live within or outside it, to be located in the English West Midlands to the west of (and at the exclusion of) Birmingham and more or less formed from Dudley and the numerous other towns and villages which surround it (Parsons 1986:16-17; Gale 1966, Chitham 1972). Historically contentious cases of disputed inclusion include nearby towns such as Stourbridge and Halesowen, which do not lie on the former South Staffordshire coal seam that is regarded by some as an important marker of a settlement's Blackcountryness, and more distant towns which do, such as Walsall. However, despite a growing trend towards inclusivity from formal bodies, such as the Black Country Society (Hill quoted in Rhodes, undated), perhaps the most debated case of Blackcountryness is that of the City of Wolverhampton.

¹ (www.election-maps.co.uk). Mapping image produced from the Ordnance Survey electionmap service © Crown copyright and database right 2011

Gale's (1966:4) definition of the Black Country states that its extent in the County Borough of Wolverhampton is limited to only what is "south-east of the main roads to Stourbridge and Cannock", namely the A449. This road dissects the area of Penn, which is separated to the east of the A449 from Sedgley, the western urban extent of the Black Country conurbation, by the rural Penn Common area. To the west of the A449, Penn is for the most part a leafy suburb south-west of Wolverhampton. There are many interesting questions to be asked of this area and Gale's definition of the Black Country, if we are to get any closer to determining what the Black Country is. For example, what happens at this perceived boundary? Asprey's (2007) thesis on Black Country language and identity investigates the local variety of English which is said to characterise the area and is subject to a great deal of superlocal variation. The area is well served by forms of vernacular literature (see Asprey 2007:157) which attempt to illustrate the perceived distinctiveness of the area. Research has indicated that members of different communities can use linguistic resources to positively or negatively associate themselves with particular identities (cf Labov 1972, Le Page and Tabouret Keller 1985, Coupland 1985, Bucholtz 1999, Eckert 2000, Llamas 2001, Silverstein 2003). Therefore, it appears to be worth considering the extent to which Gale's (1966:4) boundary, in demarcating a particularly contentious section of the Black Country's perceived extent, is upheld by language use. Is there any sociolinguistic evidence to support the line? Do people on either side of this imaginary line use language differently, and if so does this tie in with existing assumptions about the Black Country?

In the absence of a political boundary but with a wealth of perceptions, based not only on geography, of what the Black Country is, it is worth considering Britain's (2002:604) discussion of spatiality in sociolinguistics, which demarcates the three types of space which are potentially relevant for variationism and defining the Black Country:

- 1) "Euclidean space – the objective, geometric, socially divorced space of mathematics and physics."
- 2) "Social space" – shaped by social organization and human agency, linked to political organization and control of space.
- 3) "Perceived space – how civil society perceives its immediate and not so immediate environments – important given the way people's environmental perceptions and attitudes construct and are constructed by everyday practice".

2.3 Conclusions

Considering the spatiality of the Black Country, a perceived space crossing various social spaces across Euclidean space, as well as the far from complete picture of where and for whom different ditransitive patterns are acceptable, to what extent and why, across the UK, and the Black Country's perceived location somewhere in the English West Midlands which Haddican (2010:2428) suggests might be an area where TGDs are acceptable, it seems plausible to speculate that a dialectological-cum-sociolinguistic investigation into ditransitive acceptability in this area defined by perceived space, particularly at its border with what is to be perceived to be outside the Black Country, might shed some light on the failures of the literature so far to fully map TGD acceptability across the UK. An initial hypothesis (two-tailed) would be to posit that a respondent's perceived Blackcountryness (however this is defined) will impact upon their acceptance of TGDs.

Haddican's (2010:2427) 36 respondents were native speakers of Manchester English from a fairly limited age group (18 to 30 years old), an unspecified range of educational backgrounds and were evenly divided by sex. However, it was my opinion, particularly in light of the intense linguistic and non-linguistic debate about the Black Country, that a study which better lends itself to the scrutiny of factors in variationist sociolinguistics would help to provide a clearer picture of not simply what happens when ditransitives are used by speakers of English in an area of the English West Midlands that is subject to a contrasting definitions of socio-cultural identity, but also offer reasons why it might happen. Therefore, a second hypothesis (two-tailed) would be that gender will impact upon a respondent's acceptance of TGDs.

Haddican and Holmberg (2011:3) note that speakers of dialects which accept TGDs "accept these sentences most readily with pronominal objects, although full DP objects are accepted marginally by some speakers", and therefore a third hypothesis (one-tailed) would be that TGD acceptability is higher with pronominal objects than with full DP ones.

2.3.1 Hypotheses to be tested

Hypothesis	Variable	Description
	TGD acceptability	Acceptability of a TGD in various object configurations and with verbs from various classes (1 Sounds bad to me, 4 Sounds good to me)

H1	Perceived space	Whether respondent is from “Black Country” or not (1,2)
H2	Gender	Whether respondent is Male or Female (1,2)
H3	Pronominality	TGD acceptability is higher with pronominal objects than full DP ones (pro-pro, pro-DP, DP-DP, DP-pro)

Having conducted a review of the literature and developed some initial hypotheses to test with the collection and analysis of primary data, in the process of developing a methodology for doing so it became apparent that these hypotheses should be refined and added to, as will become apparent throughout Section 3.

3 Methodology

In order to explore the possible avenues of investigation highlighted by the preceding discussion of the literature on dialect syntax, the possible ditransitive patterns in varieties of English and the distinctive (see Asprey 2007) but comparatively under-researched Black Country area, with its variety of West Midlands English and its social consequences, a controlled experimental study was conducted.

3.1 Sample

3.1.1 Sample area

As has been previously discussed at length, the Black Country is an area whose definitions are not geographically defined, and subsequently any affinities to what someone may regard as the Black Country are determined by an individual’s conscious and unconscious use of social indicators of Blackcountryness. While the limitations of a Masters dissertation did not allow for me to conduct a comprehensive study of language in the Black Country, something which Asprey’s (2007) thesis comes closest to out of the relatively small body of modern dialectological work on the area (cf. Clark 2004, Higgs 2004), I was keen to approach a small section of the jigsaw puzzle of the Black Country, particularly the suggestion of its linguistic distinctiveness, through the frame of mapping ditransitive clauses in English, and developing a methodology for studying such linguistic features that would bypass much of the often hazy and impressionistic geography of the area and instead focus on Britain’s (2002) concept of spatiality. The following subsection is devoted to the intertwining factors which developed my sample area.

3.1.1.1 Linking space and socio-economic factors

When approaching the notion of social class, particularly from a linguistic point of view,

it is important to acknowledge Milroy and Gordon's (2003:41) remark that

importantly – and sometimes awkwardly – for a researcher who attempts to operationalize the concept, stratification by class is always accompanied by some degree of mobility, since an individual's class position is to some extent achieved.

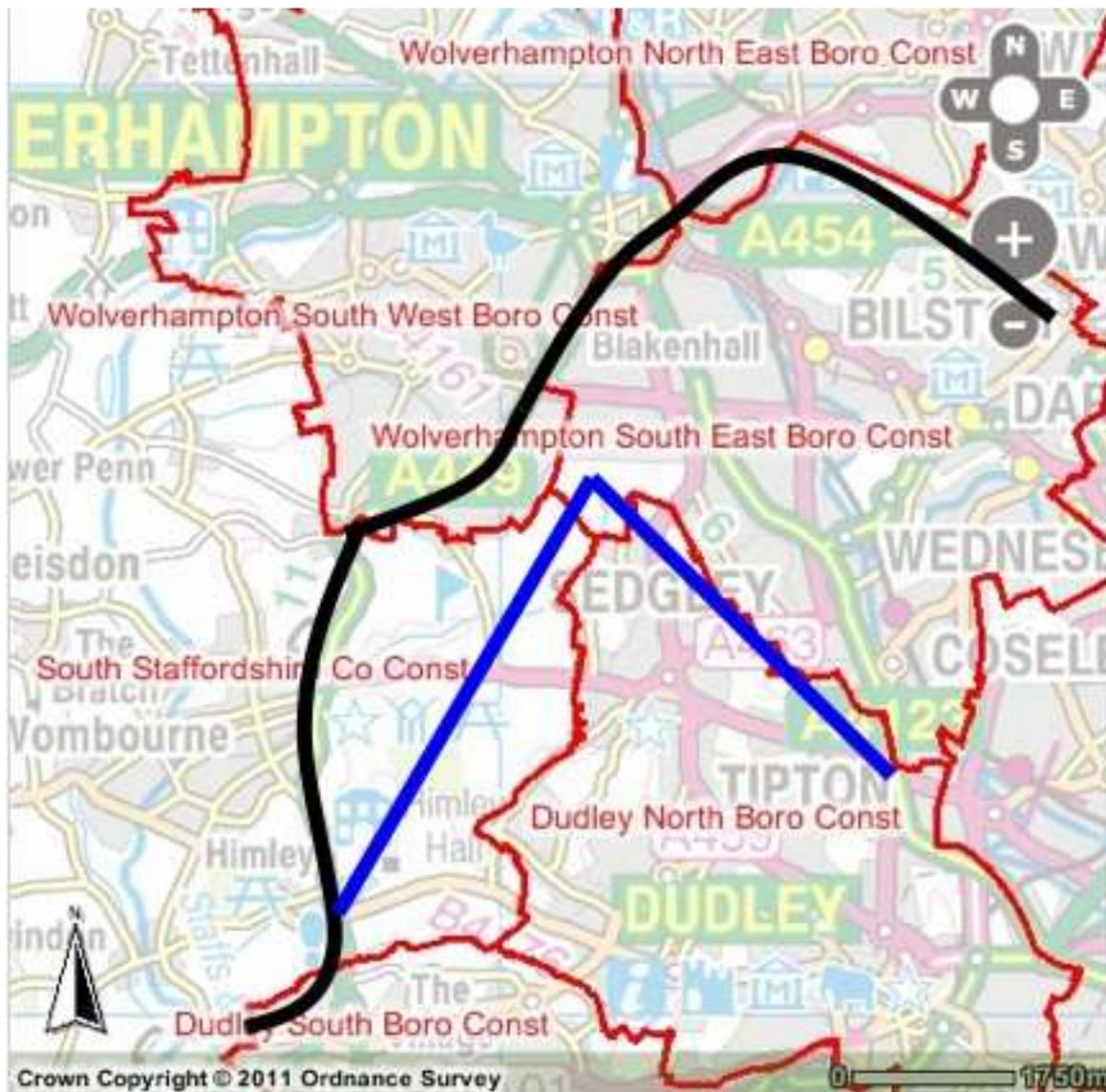
Trudgill (1974:32) sees social class not as being “organised or sharply demarcated social groups, but rather aggregates of people with similar economic characteristics”, and taking this approach into account I explored the possibility of using socio-economic factors to add weight to the geographical definitions discussed so far, and to tie in with the discussion of Britain's (2002) notion of space and spatial diffusion. Haddican (2010) offered no information about how social class impacted on the results of his work on TGDs and their acceptability in Manchester, and therefore I wanted to broaden the investigative scope of this area of research without committing to an extensive exploration of class, and in doing so, assess potential sociolinguistic reasons for the subsequent results.

In the biodata section of her questionnaire, Asprey (2007:316) offered her respondents the opportunity to give their own definition in response to the question “*Can you say which social class you belong to? If so, which?*” Rose and Prevalin (2001:4) note “the status relations of class have been more to the fore in British society than in most others. Class has perhaps been more institutionalised, visible and tangible in the UK than in other capitalist societies.” While Asprey's open-ended approach to this difficult sociological subject was an attempt to perceptually assess how class may impact on language in determining Black Country identity, it firstly led five respondents to refuse to answer the question, perhaps as a result of their apparent discomfort with the topic, and secondly it made for an unevenly stratified sample across different classes to be built up. In reaction to this, and with Trudgill's remark on shared economic characteristics, Milroy and Gordon's reminder about class mobility and the geographically abstract nature of the Black Country in mind, I decided to formulate a novel methodology for determining the spatial characteristics of my respondents.

In light of the questions posed at the end of Section 2.1, I determined the sample area for my study. While I was keen to discover to what extent Haddican's (2010:2428) assumption about the acceptability of TGDs held for the English West Midlands, I was also interested to discover whether this was affected by the super-local variation that

might be expected in an area where imaginary borders in the minds of those who perceive them separate the Black Country from neighbouring areas, and whether any linguistic behaviour upholds such borders. It became clear to me when researching how to base my study on language use on either side of Gale's (1966:4) line, allied with the Britain's (2002:604) notion of perceived space, that it closely followed two concurrent administrative boundaries, the social space, which subsequently formed the basis of my sample area. In the Euclidean space marginally to the east of Gale's line and to the west of Sedgley, the parliamentary constituencies of Dudley North and Wolverhampton South West are separated by less than 1km at the shortest distance by the intrusion of the rural Penn Common area², part of the South Staffordshire constituency. Additionally, the boundary between the Dudley (DY) and Wolverhampton (WV) postcode areas occurs where the road dissecting the Common meets Gospel End Road leading into Sedgley.

² It is interesting to note, in relation to Britain's (2002) discussion, that this small protrusion of rural space gives emphasis to the social and perceived spaces which lie north and south of it, and further belittles the pervading urbanistic portrayal of the rural as "the insular, the isolated, the static, as an idyll of peace and tranquillity rather than as composed of heterogeneous communities of contact, of change and progress, and of conflict" (2002:608). My conclusions in Section 5 will return to this topic.



Map 2: Social space (UK Parliamentary Constituencies (Red), DY/WV postcode boundary (Blue)) and perceived space (Gale's 1966:4 perceived north-western Black Country border (Black))³

By realigning these three boundaries, one perceived and two social, to coincide with each other in this Euclidean space, there is a wealth of information in the public domain that enables distinctions to be made between each side.

Firstly, the Dudley North parliamentary constituency comprises the DY1 and DY3 postcode areas, where average house prices are £131,840 and £150,154 respectively (source: zoopla.co.uk), giving Dudley North an average house price of £140,997. Wolverhampton South West parliamentary constituency comprises the WV3 and WV4 postcode areas, where average house prices are £154,404 and £165,298 respectively,

³ (www.election-maps.co.uk). Mapping image produced from the Ordnance Survey electionmap service © Crown copyright and database right 2011

giving Wolverhampton South West an average house price of £159,851. With this disparity in the average house price of £18,854, or 11.8%, it is clear that some economic meaning can be attached to Gale's distinction.

Furthermore, a report by the property website Zoopla!⁴ found that houses in parliamentary constituencies served by Conservative MPs were on average £89,406 (34.7%) more expensive than those in constituencies served by Labour MPs. Wolverhampton South West is traditionally a Conservative seat which returned a Conservative MP, Paul Uppal, at the 2010 General Election, after being held in the past by Enoch Powell but also by Labour between 1997 and 2010. Dudley North, in contrast, is traditionally a Labour seat, which has returned a Labour MP at every General Election since 1945⁵, and is currently held by Ian Austin MP. While both Dudley North and Wolverhampton South West have average house prices somewhat below the average for Labour and Conservative constituencies, at £168,112 and £257,518 respectively, it seems the comparison is a worthy one to draw in this case.

It is not the aim of this project to profile the socio-economic backgrounds of voters in two almost neighbouring parliamentary constituencies which return MPs from different parties. It is both ethically questionable and naïve to ask respondents about their voting habits and base a comparison on this, particularly as it could be the case that respondents live in a constituency where they did not vote for the candidate who won the election, if they voted at all. Bypassing all of these time-consuming assumptions, the bare statistics about Dudley North and Wolverhampton South West, both in terms of their position on either side of Gale's (1966:4) line, inside and outside his definition of the Black Country, and the corresponding disparity of house prices, seem to give credence to Trudgill's (1974:32) variationist sociolinguistic perception of class as being determined by "aggregates of economic characteristics". However, I do not wish to make an arbitrary distinction of which area is relatively "Working Class" and which relatively "Middle Class" based on these statistics. That is to say that there is some degree of socio-economic

⁴ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2010/apr/14/house-prices-highest-conservative-constituencies>

⁵ The constituency has been labelled Dudley 1832-1974, Dudley East 1974-1994, Dudley North 1994-present. Donald Williams (Con) won the Dudley seat in the 1968 by-election triggered by George Wigg's (Lab) resignation, but the seat was won back by John Gilbert (Lab) at the General Election of 1970.

evidence that illustrates the social boundaries between Dudley and Wolverhampton, and the perceived boundary of the Black Country according to Gale (1966:4), but to say this is linked with social class would require more investigation than I am able to offer within the limitations of this study.

At this point, I had split my sample area into two very distinct sections. The DY1 and DY3 postcodes of Dudley North appeared to share different economic characteristics to Wolverhampton South West's WV3 and WV4 postcodes. Owing to the near-overlap of Gale's (1966:4) perceived boundary of the Black Country and the social boundaries that currently exist, and the fact no account of the Black Country denies that any of the towns or villages in Dudley North, such as Dudley, Gornal, Sedgley and Woodsetton, are part of it, it is clear that Dudley North has a stronger argument for inclusion into the Black Country than Wolverhampton South West does, despite its close proximity to indisputably Black Country settlements and some popular and formal pressure towards its inclusion along with the whole of Wolverhampton. Somewhat pertinently for this discussion, Rose and Pevalin's (2001:4) remark that "only sociologists (and only in the last thirty years) have questioned how class arises in the first place and the nature of its dynamics" indicates how class and Blackcountryness share similarly intangible properties in perceived and social space that have only recently have begun to encourage quantification, and provides some justification for my decision not to assign any concrete values of class or Blackcountryness to any area of my sample yet. In the results of my study and their analysis provided in Section 4, I will assess how successful this was on the basis of actual linguistic data, keeping in mind Trudgill's (1974:32) opinion that "the differences between classes in income and wealth are expressed in different types of consumption, education, manners, dress, taste, speech and so on."

3.1.2 Sample size and characteristics

Considering the potential limitations of a Masters dissertation, I felt it would still be possible to match the number of respondents in Haddican's (2010) study (36), while developing a socially-stratified sample more in line with current methodologies in sociolinguistics. However, I had already decided to split my sample across the social boundary between the DY1 and DY3 and WV3 and WV4 postcode areas; more-or-less between Gale's (1966:4) perceived Black Country space and that which exists on the other side of its boundary; between an area with lower property prices and a Labour MP and an area with higher property prices and a Conservative MP. In addition, I was hoping

to expand Haddican’s (2010) methodology to give a better account of the sociolinguistic implications of language use in this area, meaning that I also wanted my sample to be divided evenly across both social spaces by gender, as Haddican’s was, but also by age. This gave me eight different categories of respondent to find, meaning that a 32-person sample would allow me to find four respondents for each of the eight categories, as demonstrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Breakdown of the sample

	Younger Male	Younger Female	Older Male	Older Female
Dudley	4	4	4	4
Wolverhampton	4	4	4	4

3.1.2.1 Apparent time

Apparent time has been used to study language in the Black Country before (Mathisen 1999, Asprey 2007). Chambers (2003:212) notes that apparent-time studies depend on the hypothesis that “the linguistic usage of a certain age group will remain essentially the same for that group as they grow older”, but if this is correct, it can “[make] information about temporal developments available in a shorter time than the developments themselves take”. Meyerhoff’s (2006) discussion of apparent time notes how Tagliamonte’s (1998) study used the method to infer whether or not non-standard local variables were remaining involved in ongoing change in the local form of Yorkshire English. The contention that “speakers are making room for some of the supra-regional changes that are taking place and accommodating them within their own vernacular” (Meyerhoff 2006:134) is of potential interest for this study, where there is the potential for interaction of many variants along the ‘local “Black Country”’ to ‘Standard West Midlands’ continuum and beyond, as proposed by Asprey (2007), and as such the ages of respondents for my study will be coordinated in order to assess change in apparent time.⁶

Considering that my social networks were likely to yield responses from people aged around 21 and their parents aged around 45, my apparent-time comparison would be

⁶ I also note Britain’s (2002) condemnation of the variationist fixation with the apparent-time method as a barrier to the increased study of spatiality in sociolinguistics. I hope that my use of apparent-time is pardoned by the attention paid to spatiality throughout this study.

based on two different age groups clustering around these ages. It was also important to maintain a sufficient age gap between the upper limit of the younger groups and the lower limit of the older groups to represent a plausible generation gap of around 20 years on average, and this will be discussed further in Section 4.1.3. I acknowledged Gordon's (2006: 2447) assertion that "to avoid potential misdiagnosis, variationists often incorporate some real-time evidence to support a claim that apparent-time distribution indicates a change in progress", but with the limitations of this project in mind, I accepted what Asprey (2007:24) called "the perils of being inflexible" and looked to obtain only quantitative data. A fourth hypothesis (two-tailed), that the age group of a respondent (Younger or Older) would affect their acceptance of TGDs, was added to the initial list from Section 2.3.1.

3.1.2.2 Determining location/spatiality

It was decided that the location restrictions on participation would be decided by postcodes instead of parliamentary constituencies, because respondents were more likely to be aware of their current postcode than their local parliamentary constituency. This had no implications for the sample area as the postcodes correlated with the parliamentary constituencies, so DY1 and DY3 (together DY) represented Dudley North and WV3 and WV4 (together WV) represented Wolverhampton South West.⁷ Respondents were required to have lived in their postcode for at least the last 5 years, and been to school in the corresponding postcode area (DY or WV). A fifth hypothesis (two-tailed), that a respondent's postcode area would affect how acceptable they found TGDs, was developed.

3.2 Developing the questionnaire

Following Haddican's (2010) study of TGD acceptability in Manchester English, I decided that a similar syntactic judgement questionnaire would be appropriate for attempting to assess the extent of their usage at the centre and north-western fringe of the perceived Black Country space within the social space of the English West Midlands, both across Euclidean space. However, the limitations of this Masters dissertation determined that Haddican's (2010) methodology of three different subdesigns of questionnaire would be too time consuming to develop, collect data for and analyse. As

⁷ When abbreviating DY1 and DY3 and WV3 and WV4 to DY and WV, it is important to remember that these abbreviations do not represent the entire DY and WV postcode areas.

such, I was aiming to fit as much experimental material into a single subdesign as Haddican had across three, which eventually necessitated some compromises that will be described and substantiated in this section.

In the initial stages of developing my questionnaire, I was keen to ensure that my data would be at least to some extent comparable with Haddican's (2010), in order to further develop the emerging picture of TGD acceptability that is posited for "North western and Western dialects of England from Lancashire through Gloucestershire, including parts of the midlands and West Yorkshire" (Haddican 2010:2428). Therefore, the following two facets of Haddican's investigation were incorporated into my methodology.

3.2.1 Pronominality restrictions

By analysing pronominality restrictions on the acceptability of TGDs, particularly for GIVE-class verbs (Haddican 2010:2430), I would be able to make an initial judgement on whether speakers from this part of the English West Midlands report this in any way similarly to how the literature suggests; namely that "speakers find theme-goal ditransitives better with pronominal objects than full DP objects" (ibid.:6; see also Bissell-Doggett 2004, Siewierska and Hollmann 2007).

3.2.2 Verb-class restrictions

Testing for the same verb-class restrictions as Haddican (2010) would enable me to find out to what extent the perceived linguistic performance of respondents from this part of the English West Midlands matches the results of various argument structure diagnostics that can help us to assess how closely or not TGDs correlate with either DOCs or PDs there.⁸

3.2.2.1 GIVE class

Firstly, Haddican (2010:2431; following Levin 1993) specifies the GIVE class of verbs; those "typically acceptable to speakers in both prepositional dative and DOC frames", such as *give*, *show*, *offer*, *lend*, *pass*, *bring*, *sell*, *send* and *take*. Having made some initial investigations into the possibility of near-synonymy of *lend* and *borrow*, as illustrated by Cheshire and Edwards (1993:39-40) for children from across Britain, and with a native-speaker intuition that this was also possible for some speakers of West Midlands English at various points along Asprey's (2007) continuum, I decided to avoid the inclusion of

⁸ As well as being able to make better predictions for the whole region on the basis of this data.

lend in the list of GIVE-class verbs to be used in my questionnaire design. The behaviour of TGDs with GIVE-class verbs would be an initial indicator of their general acceptability in comparison to DOCs in particular.

3.2.2.2 REFUSE class

In light of Levin's (1993) observation that "prevention of possession" verbs like *refuse* and *deny*, as well as *issue*, *ask* and *envy*, are acceptable in DOCs but less so in PDs, Haddican's (2010:2431) methodology grouped *refuse*, *ask* and *envy* as the REFUSE class of verbs, before noting that

if theme-goal ditransitives are underlyingly prepositional datives, then we expect them to be poor with these classes of verbs on a par with surface prepositional datives. If, on the other hand, theme-goal ditransitives are underlyingly DOCs we expect the effect of this verb class difference to be similar to that for DOCs.

With this in mind, I retained the same three verbs to form the REFUSE class in my questionnaire.

3.2.2.3 DONATE class

For the next verb class constraint, Haddican (2010:2432) grouped together the latinate verbs *donate* and *contribute*, the "manner of communication" verbs *mutter*, *whisper* and *scream*, and the "verbs of continuous imparting force" *haul*, *lift* and *pull* to form the DONATE class of verbs, which are "typically degraded in DOCs but fine in prepositional dative constructions", and, following this,

if theme-goal ditransitives are underlyingly prepositional datives, we expect them to be sensitive to these verb class restrictions in a way similar to (surface) prepositional datives; if they are DOCs or some third configuration, then we expect no such effect" (Haddican 2010:2433).

3.2.3 Additional methodological principles

In addition, there were some important principles from Haddican's (2010) methodology which I initially attempted to uphold. Firstly, the idea that that "each subject judged each sentence type three times" (Haddican 2010:2428) seemed to be a worthy aim that would contribute towards reducing the impact on the data of any potential misreporting, which must always be considered.

Secondly, across each of his three questionnaire subdesigns, Haddican (2010:2428) ensured that each script followed a roughly similar pattern: "(i) a short description of the task followed by three training examples; (ii) the experimental materials and fillers

(approximately 100 questions; this varied by subdesign); and (iii) a final set of questions asking for biographical details.” Having previously conducted a dialectological study in the English West Midlands, and with the time limitations of the project in mind, I felt that the assurance that questionnaires of this structure “took between ten and fifteen minutes to complete” would make it worthwhile to follow in order to successfully obtain data from the specific groups of respondents that I had targeted for this study.

Thirdly, and linked to the previous point, Haddican (2010:2428) ensured that “the ratio of fillers to experimental sentences was 1.5:1, for subdesign 1, and 2:1 for subdesigns 2 and 3 [and] experimental sentences and fillers were pseudorandomised and counterbalanced”. This average ratio across all three subdesigns of between 1.5:1 and 2:1 was something which I was keen to replicate, as was the commitment to managing the order of materials so as to reduce neighbourhood effects.

3.2.4 Developing primary experimental materials

These factors led me to draw up an initial body of experimental materials which consisted of each of the four possible object configurations for ditransitive clauses – pro-pro, pro-DP, DP-pro and DP-DP –repeated three times so that “each subject judged each sentence type three times” (Haddican 2010:2428), and repeated three more times for the different constructional possibilities (PD, DOC and TGD).

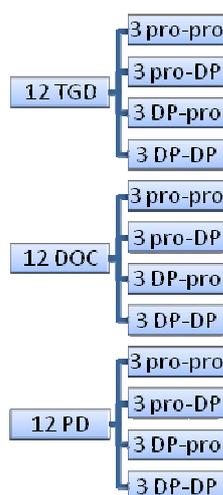


Figure 1: Initial organisation of experimental materials (to be repeated for each of the three verb classes)

This framework, shown in Figure 1 above, would then be repeated three more times, once for each different verb class, with as much variation in the actual verbs from each class as the size of each class allowed. For example, while both the GIVE class and DONATE

class contained eight different verbs, the REFUSE class only contained three, so it was not possible to distribute verbs in each class evenly across different constructional frames. At this point, I considered the possibility of using electronic corpora to determine the most frequently used verbs from each class, and use a consistent number of the most frequent across each class. However, when I considered that this project aimed to investigate non-standard syntactic formations in an area supposedly on the fringe of an imagined socio-cultural entity which may be subject to supra-local linguistic variation, I questioned the value of using corpora of Standard English to determine usage frequencies of verbs. While avoiding the use of corpora for this purpose disallows any discussion of the frequency effects of these particular verbs, which would follow a rigorously usage-based, cognitive linguistics approach to any findings, I decided it would be more fruitful to follow Haddican's verb classes as closely as possible, even though there is this disparity in the numerical values of each verb class.

Taking into consideration all of the points discussed so far, I developed an initial plan for the experimental sentences included in the questionnaire. This would have meant that each respondent saw a total of 36 experimental sentences for each of the three verb classes, giving a total of 108 experimental judgements to be made. By adhering to Haddican's ratio of filler to experimental materials, which averaged around 2:1, this would have required respondents to make judgements on a total of 324 sentences, with 216 filler sentences.

It became clear that balancing the need to collect data from enough respondents to meet my target sample with following Haddican's (2010) methodology was not possible, and some compromises were required. In order to keep the number of sentences to be judged in my questionnaire around 100, including both experimental materials and fillers, and ensure that the questionnaire would be short enough to encourage and maintain sufficient participation, I refined my methodology at the cost of some factors which I had previously considered important.

Firstly, considering that Haddican (2010:2439) found that most respondents in his sample gave evidence to suggest that TGDs were derived from ordinary DOCs, and that much of the literature (see Section 2.1), particularly Levin (1993) but also Haddican (2010), has documented the behaviour of PD constructions with verbs from each of the three classes, I decided to remove any test materials for the PD construction from my study. Given that

the PD, among the vast confusion previously discussed in Section 2.1, is regarded by many as the most common pattern for indicating transfer of possession in written English (Biber et al. 1999:929, Siewierska and Hollmann 2007:91), and that it is linked by Hughes and Trudgill (1996:16) to Standard English, it could be assumed that its prevalence in written English might remain fairly constant. However, that is not to say this might not be affected by, for example, a respondent's preference for a non-standard regional variety of English when speaking. Indeed, as Siewierska and Hollmann (2007) point out, there is a growing trend in the literature, based on various corpora, towards the suggestion that the DOC is overtaking the PD as the most regularly used ditransitive frame, at least in urban areas (Cheshire 1993:75). There is also the possibility that when a respondent was presented with a questionnaire with sentences written on a page, even if they prefer non-standard forms of speech, their natural tendency would have been to favour the PD as a convention of Standard English, thereby indicating their capacity to move along the continuum of 'local "Black Country" variety' to 'Standard West Midlands variety' (Asprey 2007:63). By removing the PD, such respondents may have then negatively evaluated the acceptability of a DOC or TGD even though they may instinctively favour them in speech, simply because they expected to be given the opportunity to positively evaluate a PD later in the questionnaire. I was aware of these potential flaws in removing the PD test materials, but the necessity to reduce the amount of experimental materials left me no option. In addition, as Haddican's (2010) data for the PD in each verb class matched the expectations put forward in the literature about their acceptability, it was reasonable to assume this would remain constant for another area where TGDs are reportedly acceptable. Also, by reducing the total amount of experimental materials, I hoped to both reduce the potential tiredness effects of a longer questionnaire, and maintain a filler to experimental materials ratio between 1.5/2:1 in order to reduce neighbourhood effects and the possibility of a respondent becoming conscious of the type of sentence being scrutinised, so that their immediate natural reaction to a sentence would be the judgement that they recorded.

Having reduced the amount of experimental materials by a third from 108 to 72, this still left me with a projected total of between 180 and 216 sentences including fillers, and therefore further compromise was required to bring this closer to Haddican's suggested total of around 100 questions per subdesign, and keep the running length of the questionnaire around ten to fifteen minutes. This compromise came in the form of

loosening my adherence to Haddican’s (2010:2428) principle that “each subject judged each sentence type three times”. In the previous projection of my experimental materials, I had taken this to mean that each of the four different object configurations for each of the three (now two) constructional types for each of the three verb classes needed to be repeated three times. However, by reducing this to two times, and taking Haddican’s suggestion to refer to the constructional type, which would still be repeated three times, I was able to reduce the amount of experimental materials by a third again to 48. By accepting the lower ratio of filler to experimental materials of 1.5:1 that Haddican used, this gave me a possible total of 120 sentences to be judged; much closer to the optimum of 100 and a number which I felt would be manageable considering the project’s time limitations. Figure 2 below illustrates the organisation of experimental materials after these revisions.

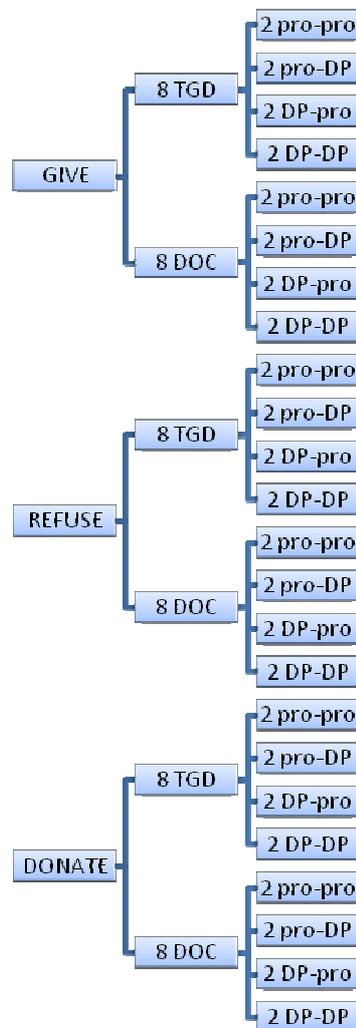


Figure 1: Final organisation of ditransitive experimental materials (showing all verb classes).

Having established how the experimental materials in this study would be organised, it was then necessary to create the 48 corresponding test sentences, using the eight verbs from each of the GIVE and DONATE classes and the three verbs from the REFUSE class, as well as the constructional frames and object configurations as specified.

For the GIVE and DONATE classes, I randomly assigned verbs to object configurations for both the TGDs and DOCs so that each verb was used once for each constructional type but not in the same object configuration. For example, while *whisper* appeared in the configuration (pro-pro) in the TGD frame, it appeared in the configuration (DP-pro) in the DOC frame.

For the REFUSE class verbs, I randomised the order so that no verb appeared twice in the same object configuration in the same construction frame, and because three verbs were being used to fill eight sentences, one different verb for each construction type was only used twice. For TGDs, this was *ask* and for DOCs this was *envy*.

In terms of drawing up the remaining parts of the experimental sentences, I compiled one list of personal names and pronouns and another of determiner phrases, and randomly selected these to fill each corresponding part of the sentence according to the requirements of the plan. These were specified by the semantics of the verb in the sentence, and were checked by someone who did not take part in the study itself to ensure that their combination could, irrespective of the constructional frame or object configuration, lead to a semantically plausible sentence in English. For example, the sentence *The man refused the dog the treat*, a REFUSE-class DOC with the object configuration (DP-DP), was checked to ensure a possible semantic relationship between the direct and indirect object.

Having created the 48 experimental sentences, I developed a randomisation order to ensure that neighbourhood effects would impact less on a respondent's answers than if the sentences had been in the sequential order set out in Figure 2. This ensured that no experimental sentence followed one which had the same class of verb or the same object configuration. For the most part this also allowed me to alternate between TGDs and DOCs, until the randomisation method necessitated one sequence of four DOCs following on from one another. However, I was still able to ensure that no sentences with the same verb class and object configuration followed one another in the order.

3.2.5 Developing filler materials

With my experimental materials drawn up and randomised, I began to compile the list of filler sentences, which would be included between experimental materials in the questionnaire order at a ratio of 1.5:1. After contacting Bill Haddican by email about his study, with particular reference to his use of filler materials, I became aware that some of these additional sentences could be used to conduct further analysis on the linguistic patterns of people living on either side of the social space boundary of Dudley North and Wolverhampton South West, or rather Gale's (1966:4) perceived Black Country and beyond. I decided that it would be worthwhile devoting a percentage of the filler materials to sentences that would enable me to perform a short test to work alongside the main experiment, which could use a different set of linguistic variables to potentially further tease out differences on either side of the social and perceived boundary.

3.2.5.1 Filler materials working as secondary experimental materials

Asprey's (2007:105) thesis makes significant observations of various aspects of the grammatical system of English in the Black Country, where speakers have "to varying degrees, access to a range of structures along both sides of what we have termed a continuum, with the Black Country local variety at one end and standard West Midlands English at the other". While she exhaustively documents the morphology, "arguably the most distinctive component of the Black Country linguistic system [where] many morphological structures (those of the auxiliary and modal verbs in particular) differ radically from those of Standard English, and some differ from any other variety of English spoken" (ibid.), there are two particular aspects of grammar in the Black Country which I felt worthy of more examination under the banner of my filler materials.

On the basis of both historical accounts and her modern qualitative data, Asprey (2007:117-8) gives a brief account of preposition and conjunction usage in the Black Country, both of which exhibit "large-scale difference from West Midlands standard English". Taking into account Gale's (1966:4) attempt to define the Black Country's extent into the area of Wolverhampton from which I would now be finding 16 respondents, and the hypothesis that such a line based on socio-economic differences did indicate the end of the Black Country, I decided that it would be interesting to test the hypothesis that respondents from outside the perceived Black Country space would be less likely to use the preposition and conjunction systems associated with the Black Country as much as respondents from within it. Table 2 below draws on those provided

by Asprey (2007:117-8) showing the preposition and conjunction systems of English in the Black Country, which illustrates the six features which I, as a native speaker of BCWME, intuitively recognised as being integral to both systems, and therefore worthy of investigation.

Table 2: The preposition and conjunction system in the Black Country adapted from Asprey (2007: 117-8)

Standard English	Black Country English	Example
Prepositions		
<i>at+ ø</i>	<i>of a</i>	Bill used to go out of a night time
<i>with</i>	<i>of</i>	The plate was that high of pancakes
Conjunctions		
<i>otherwise</i>	<i>else</i>	Hold still, else you'll have to go to the hospital
<i>so that</i>	<i>so as</i>	It got so as you couldn't move for rubbish
<i>but</i>	<i>only</i>	'I'm sorry I'm late, only I fell over' (Rock 1974:15)
<i>except</i>	<i>only</i>	'You never had a cup of tea, only when it was tea time' (Rock 1974:15)

In order to be able to incorporate these additional experimental materials into the filler material for my main experimental materials, I needed to offer respondents the opportunity to rate the acceptability of both the Standard English and Black Country English examples, but again ensure that neighbourhood effects were reduced by randomising their order of appearance in the questionnaire sequence and randomly organising the main experimental sentences and other filler sentences around them. By returning to Haddican's (2010:2428) principle, which was refined for my main experimental materials, that "each subject judged each sentence type three times", and applying this equally to the six types of Black Country prepositions and conjunctions and their Standard English counterparts, I looked to create a total of 36 sentences. All of the examples from Table 2 above were used as one example for each of the Black Country prepositions and conjunctions. The remaining two Black Country examples for each preposition and conjunction, as well as the three corresponding Standard English examples, were randomly created and then verified for their semantic similarity to each other by another native speaker of BCWME who did not take part in the study.

As will be discussed further in Section 4.1.4, the mean acceptability scores for perceived Black Country prepositions and conjunctions for each respondent would give a BC Index

Score, which would be a second DV and be analysed in relation to the aforementioned IVs (see Section 2.3.1).

With 36 secondary experimental materials, which acted as filler for the primary experimental materials, I was well within the ratio of 2:1 when considering that the study's main experimental materials acted as filler for these secondary materials.

3.2.5.2 Other filler materials

With a total of 84 primary and secondary experimental materials, I needed to source the remaining 36 filler sentences before I reached the 1.5:1 ratio of filler to primary experimental materials and the 2:1 ratio of filler to secondary experimental materials. These were drawn, with permission, from the filler materials used by Haddican (2010), and verified to ensure that none of them contained either a ditransitive or one of the prepositions or conjunctions that were under scrutiny as part of the primary and secondary experimental materials, so as to avoid any interference with the carefully planned ratios and any accidental neighbourhood effects arising from including conflicting materials. Cowart (1997:52) showed that the filler materials are most successful if they range from acceptable to completely ungrammatical in approximately equal measure, and this was also taken into account in selecting the filler materials.

3.2.6 Questionnaire order

Having already established the order of appearance for the primary experimental materials through a randomisation process, I inserted both types of filler materials, firstly the other filler materials and then the secondary experimental materials, into the running order of the questionnaire at random. This task was completed so that every primary and secondary experimental sentence was separated from another of the same variety by at least one filler sentence of some kind. Because of the different ratios of filler to experimental materials for the primary and secondary experimental materials, this meant that primary experimental sentences were separated from another primary experimental sentence by only one filler more often than secondary experimental sentences were, but less often than they were separated from another primary experimental sentence by two fillers.

3.2.7 Measurement scale

With all of the sentences in my questionnaire in a randomised order and checked to confirm that at least one filler sentence separated any experimental sentences from

another of the same kind, I developed a scale, informed by the literature, for respondents to use to indicate their perception of the acceptability of the 120 sentences in the script.

Haddican (2010:2427; following Bard et al 1996, Fasold 2005, McDaniel and Cowart 2001) asked his respondents “to represent the relative acceptability of different sentence types by shading in a bar in proportion to the perceived well-formedness of a stimulus sentence”. However, I was wary of how much time data achieved by this method would take to analyse, and although I was encouraged by how it allowed respondents to make judgements more independently of those around it than other methods, I was also keen to allay “continuing doubts about the empirical reliability and theoretical interpretation of judgement data” (Cowart 1997:2) and use a numerical scale in accordance with developing trends in testing and analysing syntactic microvariation.

Buchstaller and Corrigan (2011) illustrate how the various methods in this field match the analytical goals of different studies, and I decided to most closely follow their concept of the indirect grammaticality judgement for my study. This is where “informants do not have to declare whether or not they personally use a certain variant” and “the task asks informants to rate individual sentences by assigning them a number which is associated with a corresponding verbal descriptor” (Buchstaller and Corrigan 2011:34; see Labov 1975, 1996). Because “it is simple for the informant to understand and [...] produces results which are readily quantifiable” (Cowart 1997:72), I decided that this would be suitable for my study’s needs. Buchstaller and Corrigan (2011:35) illustrate an example question which uses a four-point Likert scale, whose numbers correspond to four values described in notes above the task itself. With comparability to Haddican’s (2010) methodology in mind, where he labelled the lowest end of his shading scale “Sounds bad to me” and the highest end “Sounds good to me”, I decided to unite both approaches as in the example below:

	Sounds bad to me			Sounds good to me
(1) There are a few dogs in the garden.	1	2	3	④

Buchstaller and Corrigan (2011:34-5) emphasise how “the indirect grammaticality judgement task exerts considerably less prescriptive pressure on the informant”, and while their discussion of verbal descriptors where the stress is on what might be heard

“locally” is valid, the potential for confusion about what is meant by “locally” in my sample area, which is dissected by both social and perceived (not to mention potentially linguistic) boundaries, was something which I wanted to avoid. Therefore, the “Sounds bad/good to me” values were retained, and while this may exert more prescriptive pressure on the informant than Buchstaller and Corrigan’s (2011:35) method, this should be counterbalanced to some extent by not directly asking if the respondent uses the syntactic feature in question, but merely how acceptable it sounds to them.

3.2.8 Instructions

I followed Haddican’s (2010:2428) lead by including a page of instructions at the start of the script, which gave “a short description of the task followed by three training examples”, and this can be found at Appendix 1. It gives the name and contact details of the researcher, stating that “this questionnaire is part of a study at the University of Edinburgh on sentence judgements”. It also gives an estimate of how long the questionnaire could take based on both Haddican’s (2010:2428) note that “subjects reported that the questionnaires took between ten and fifteen minutes to complete” and a pilot questionnaire which confirmed this time estimate was completed by someone who did not then take part in the actual study. Additionally, there is an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity for responses and respondents.

Subjects were told that the researcher was “interested in how natural the following sentences seem to you in your everyday English”, that there were 120 sentences to judge, and that they were to circle the number on the scale of 1 to 4 which “best reflects how natural or comfortable the sentence sounds to you in your everyday English.” Several other key points were stressed:

- “PLEASE DO NOT CIRCLE BETWEEN NUMBERS ON THE SCALE.” This was included to ensure that each respondent only had four possible options for each sentence and that all data was based on the availability and choice of one of these four options.
- “We are interested in your first reaction to these sentences, so please don’t spend more than a few seconds on each of these, and please don’t go back to change a previous completed answer.” This was included firstly to keep the length of the questionnaire to a minimum and reduce tiredness effects, and secondly to discourage respondents trying to either rationalise sentences that they didn’t

initially accept or find reasons to put a lower score for something with which they were initially happy.

- “PLEASE NOTE, also, that we are interested in what sounds natural to you in your EVERYDAY ENGLISH, not what you think you should say, and definitely not what you think other people think you should say. There is no right or wrong answer; it is your intuitions about your everyday English that are important.” This was included to make respondents aware that we were interested in their perceptions of the sentences from their most natural way of speaking, without overtly mentioning any potentially loaded terminology such as dialect, which could have triggered artificially inflated or deflated conceptions of their socio-cultural identity. Added to the initial assurance of anonymity and confidentiality, it was hoped that this would encourage respondents to draw on their most natural concept of language. In addition, as an attempt to ameliorate some of the downgrading of the naturalness of a respondent’s perception of their language use that arises from Labov’s (1966) concept of word-list style, which is mainly rooted in the fact that non-standard forms are less common in written English, we asked “what sounds natural” in order to trigger respondents into thinking briefly about how such a sentence might sound in their natural, everyday English.

As well as these instructions, I also provided a walkthrough of three sentences for which I provided notes on why I had chosen to circle particular numbers on the scale in each case. At the end, I provided three further sentences for the respondents to test themselves with, which did not conflict with the actual experimental materials of the study, before inviting them to begin the questionnaire itself (Appendix 2).

3.2.9 Biographical questions

After the 120 sentence judgements, I included four biographical questions entitled “Background information”, where respondents were asked to note their age, gender, place of birth and the first three digits of their current postcode.⁹

⁹ Because of the complex distribution of maternity services in the area covered by the study, including the fact that some respondents may have been born at home, and the various generations of respondent being surveyed, I did not discount data from respondents who were born, for example, in Wolverhampton but lived in Dudley, and vice versa. The “place of birth” question was merely to ensure that the respondent was born in the area covered by the present-day local authorities of Dudley (Wordsley Hospital), Wolverhampton (New Cross Hospital), Sandwell (Rowley Regis Hospital) and Birmingham (City Hospital), where a respondent from Wolverhampton or Dudley could

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Sampling method

Milroy and Gordon's (2003:30) discussion of judgement sampling, as determined by a researcher's rational identification of required categories of respondents and illustrated by their seeking out of people who fit the specified quotas, informed my sampling method, which used a snowball technique to exploit the social networks of participants to meet the requirements of my sample as determined in Section 3.1.2.

I used telephone calls to establish initial contact with respondents from my own social networks with a view to arranging a time to complete the questionnaire, and also advertised the need for respondents through my online social networks. I asked willing respondents who replied to my online advertisement to confirm that their biographical details correlated with the requirements of my sample before arranging their participation. In line with Hammersley and Atkinson's (1995: 135) concept of network sampling, I asked respondents to put me into contact with people from their social networks who met the criteria to fill the remaining gaps in the sample. Milroy and Gordon (2003:32) note that "the technique serves to reduce the rate at which potential subjects decline to participate" and this was true in practice. As such, there were no problems meeting the age, gender and location requirements of the sample.

3.3.2 Ethical considerations

The anonymity of the questionnaire was stressed to respondents in the questionnaire's instructions. Respondents were informed directly that by completing the questionnaire and returning it to the researcher they were giving their permission for their responses to be included anonymously and collated with other responses as part of a dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree MSc English Language at the University of Edinburgh. All respondents were aged 18 and above and none were considered to be members of any vulnerable group, and thus ethical approval forms signed by guardians were not required, thereby reducing the amount of additional questions at the end of the

potentially have been born. One respondent noted that they were born in "Enfield, London", but they were known to the researcher to have lived in their specified postcode since an early age. Another respondent initially gave a Birmingham postcode on account of living in student accommodation there, while their permanent home address was within the sample area and had been since birth. Neither of these respondents were disallowed from taking part.

questionnaire. For safety reasons, all arranged meetings took place indoors at locations which were known to both researcher and respondent with at least one observer present.

3.3.3 Paper and online questionnaires

19 paper questionnaires were filled in by respondents after having had the procedure explained to them by the researcher, but no respondent was supervised or timed as they completed the questionnaire. From both face-to-face meetings and online contact I received requests from potential respondents who wanted to complete an online version of the questionnaire, and therefore I uploaded the questionnaire in its entirety, with all of my instructions and questions in precisely the same order, to an online survey hosted by surveygizmo.com¹⁰, and sent a link to the URL to them directly, after having confirmed their biographical details beforehand. This yielded the final 13 responses which made up the fully stratified 32-person sample, evenly split by location, age and gender as shown in Table 1 (Section 3.1.2).

4 Results and Analysis

The following section will be divided into the following subsections. Section 4.1 will present the basic results of the study, presenting graphs and analysis based on averages across the DVs and IVs. Section 4.2 will go on to present the results of various statistical tests performed on the data in order to illustrate underlying trends which were not evident from the analysis of Section 4.1. Discussion of results will be ongoing throughout these sections. Section 4.3 will then draw all of these findings together and discuss them in the context of the study's aims and research context.

4.1 Results

Each respondent's responses were manually transferred to SPSS/PASW, where the data was analysed at various levels.

4.1.1 Acceptability of constructions by Postcode

Appendix 3 shows the acceptability ranking of each primary experimental sentence (hereafter *construction*) by postcode (social space), averaged across each individual construction's two instances¹¹. It shows that of the 24 construction types, DY respondents

¹⁰ <http://edu.surveymoz.com/s3/584945/Sentence-Judgement-Questionnaire>

¹¹ Recall Fig. 3.2, Section 3.2.4, which showed the 24 individual types of primary experimental sentences across verb classes (GIVE, REFUSE, DONATE), construction type (TGD, DOC) and object

(averaged across age group and gender) have higher mean acceptability scores than WV respondents for 20 of them, while WV respondents only accept three constructions (give_doc_DPpro, donate_tgd_DPDP, donate_doc_propro) more than DY respondents. Acceptability of refuse_tgd_DPDP was equal across postcodes*. Scrutinising this further, and as shown in Table 3 below, DY respondents found 10 out of 12 TGDs and 10 out of 12 DOCs more acceptable than WV respondents did.

Table 3: Tally chart showing acceptability of construction types across age group (see Appendix 3 (REF))

Construction	DY	WV
GIVE_tgd	4	0
GIVE_doc	3	1
REFUSE_tgd	3 *	0 *
REFUSE_doc	4	0
DONATE_tgd	3	1
DONATE_doc	3	1

At this basic level, it appears that postcode does have an effect on a respondent's acceptability rating for TGDs, but also, and somewhat interestingly, this is replicated for the (assumed) more standard DOCs. One drawback emanating from the compromises made in my methodology is that I will not be able to see whether this was because any group of speakers favoured PDs and therefore downgraded both TGDs and DOCs accordingly. This will be discussed further in Section 4.3.

4.1.2 Acceptability of constructions by Gender

Appendix 4 shows the ranks for acceptability of each construction by gender, across postcodes. Table 4 below summarises this to show that for each verb class and object configuration, Male respondents on either side of the DY/WV boundary were 100% more likely to give higher acceptability scores to TGDs than Females. This is much the same

configuration (pro-pro, pro-DP, DP-pro, DP-DP), and indicated that they would be duplicated in the study to give a total of 48, instead of trebled as was the initial intention as per Haddican's (2010:4) principle that "each subject judged each sentence type three times".

for DOCs, although for the GIVE and REFUSE classes this was reduced to 75% in favour of Males: Female respondents preferred these constructions with the object configuration pro-DP more than Males did.¹²

Table 4: Tally chart showing acceptability of construction types across gender (see Appendix 4)

Construction	Male	Female
GIVE_tgd	4	0
GIVE_doc	3	1
REFUSE_tgd	4	0
REFUSE_doc	3	1
DONATE_tgd	4	0
DONATE_doc	4	0

4.1.3 Acceptability of constructions by Age Group

Appendix 5 shows the ranks for acceptability of each construction by age group, across postcodes. Table 5 below summarises this to show that Younger respondents (range 18 to 23 years, average 21.5 years) had higher acceptability scores for TGDs than Older respondents (range 40 to 65 years, average 49.2 years) in 83.33% of their 12 cases and higher acceptability scores for DOCs in 75% of their 12 cases. There was no pattern in terms of object configuration and construction type to the instances where Older respondents gave higher average acceptability scores to constructions.

¹² The experimental sentences relating to these results were:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 105) Helen showed him the teapot. | (give_doc_proDP) |
| 114) Janet offered them the cake. | (give_doc_proDP) |
| 117) Simon refused us the tickets. | (refuse_doc_proDP) |
| 53) Kenneth envied him the laptop. | (refuse_doc_proDP) |

Table 5: Tally chart showing acceptability of construction types across age group (see Appendix 5)

Construction	Younger	Older
GIVE_tgd	3	1
GIVE_doc	3	1
REFUSE_tgd	4	0
REFUSE_doc	3	1
DONATE_tgd	3	1
DONATE_doc	3	1

4.1.4 Acceptability of constructions by Black Country Index Class

Appendix 6 shows the ranks for acceptability of each construction by Black Country index class, across postcodes. Before further discussion, it is important to clarify how this was calculated. Firstly, as the secondary experimental sentences regarding Black Country prepositions and conjunctions (Asprey 2007) were judged on the same 1-4 scale as the other DV, construction type, the average results were scalar. I disregarded the results for the Standard equivalent sentences and concentrated on the Black Country variants, and calculated the mean acceptability score across all 18 relevant sentences for each respondent, and the subsequent mean acceptability score across all respondents, which was 2.9392 (range 1.67 minimum to 4 maximum). I divided the sample into those below the mean (Lower BC index class = 15 respondents) and those at the mean and above (Higher BC index class = 17 respondents), thereby allowing me to assess BC index class as an IV against construction acceptability scores, and as a DV against the IVs postcode, age group and gender, providing a secondary set of hypotheses of these variables in relation to BC index class. This also became the realisation of H1 (see Section 2.3.1) as it provided a measure of perceived space. The hypotheses as have been developed so far are summarised in Table 5.25 below.

Table 5.25: Revised hypotheses

Hypothesis	Variable	Description
	TGD acceptability (DV1)	Acceptability of a TGD in various object configurations and with verbs from various classes (1 Sounds bad to me, 4 Sounds good to me)
	BC index class (DV2)	Acceptability of BC prepositions and conjunctions (see Asprey 2007:117-8) (1 Sounds bad to me, 4 Sounds good to me)
H1	Perceived space	BC index class (1 = Lower, 2 = Higher)
H2	Social space	Postcode (1 = DY, 2 = WV)
H3	Gender	Whether respondent is Male or Female (1,2)
H4	Age group	Whether respondent is Younger or Older (1,2)
H5	Pronominality	TGD acceptability is higher with pronominal objects than full DP ones (pro-pro, pro-DP, DP-DP, DP-pro)

Table 5.5 below shows the respondents whose average BC index score qualified them for membership in the Higher BC index class.

Table 5.5: Higher BC index class membership from sample

	Younger Male	Younger Female	Older Male	Older Female
Dudley	3/4	4/4	3/4	3/4
Wolverhampton	1/4	2/4	1/4	0/4

The most interesting statistic to point out here is that younger females not only had the highest membership of the Higher BC index class of Dudley respondents but also of Wolverhampton respondents. However, this does not show whether or not their BC index scores were high or low within the Higher class in relation to other members. This will be something worth discussing further in Section 4.2 and 4.3, as will the higher concentration of Younger compared to Older members of the class. In 100% of cases, across verb class and object configuration, Higher BC index class respondents found both TGDs and DOCs more acceptable than Lower BC index class respondents did, as Table 6 below shows.

Table 6: Tally chart showing acceptability of construction types across age group (see Appendix 6)

Construction	Lower	Higher
GIVE_tgd	0	4
GIVE_doc	0	4
REFUSE_tgd	0	4
REFUSE_doc	0	4
DONATE_tgd	0	4
DONATE_doc	0	4

On this initial evidence, it seems that BC index class, as an extension of BC index score, makes a significant difference to a respondent’s acceptability score for both TGDs and DOCs. However, whether this difference is statistically significant is something which will be discussed in Section 4.2, in light of more rigorous testing of the data.

4.1.5 Comparison with Haddican (2010)

One of the central initial aims of this study was to assess the extent to which Haddican’s (2010) predictions, that TGDs were underlyingly DOCs and that they were acceptable to speakers across the west of England from Gloucestershire northwards to Lancashire, based on his Manchester data and the often confusing literature (recall Section 2.1), held for an area of the English West Midlands covering the DY1, DY3, WV3 and WV4 postcode areas which was subject to intertwining spatial, socio-economic and potentially linguistic differences. As such, I now provide some initial comparative data, enriched by my extended sociolinguistic and spatial scope, to approach this aim. Tests for statistical significance were conducted using SPSS/PASW with guidance from Bryman and Cramer (1999), from which all subsequent statistical terminology and calculation methods are derived unless specified.

4.1.5.1 Pronominality restrictions

Throughout this study, I have made reference to the object configurations of ditransitives in English which are often seen as an initial indicator of the potential acceptability of a TGD, which speakers find “better with pronominal objects than full DP objects” (Haddican 2010:2430; see also Bissell-Doggett 2004, Siewierska and Hollmann 2007).

Haddican (2010:2430) gave evidence in the form of Wilcoxon signed-rank tests for paired samples to suggest that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean acceptability score for GIVE-class verbs between the object types pro-pro and pro-DP ($p < .001$) and proDP and DPDP ($p = .037$) and a difference between DP-DP and DP-pro ($p = .193$) that was not statistically significant. In order to compare this with the results of my study, I conducted five different Wilcoxon signed rank tests on the same set of paired samples for GIVE-class TGDs. Firstly, Figure 3 below shows a different set of statistical differences for my sample overall (not split by postcode, BC index class or any other IV) in comparison to Haddican's data.

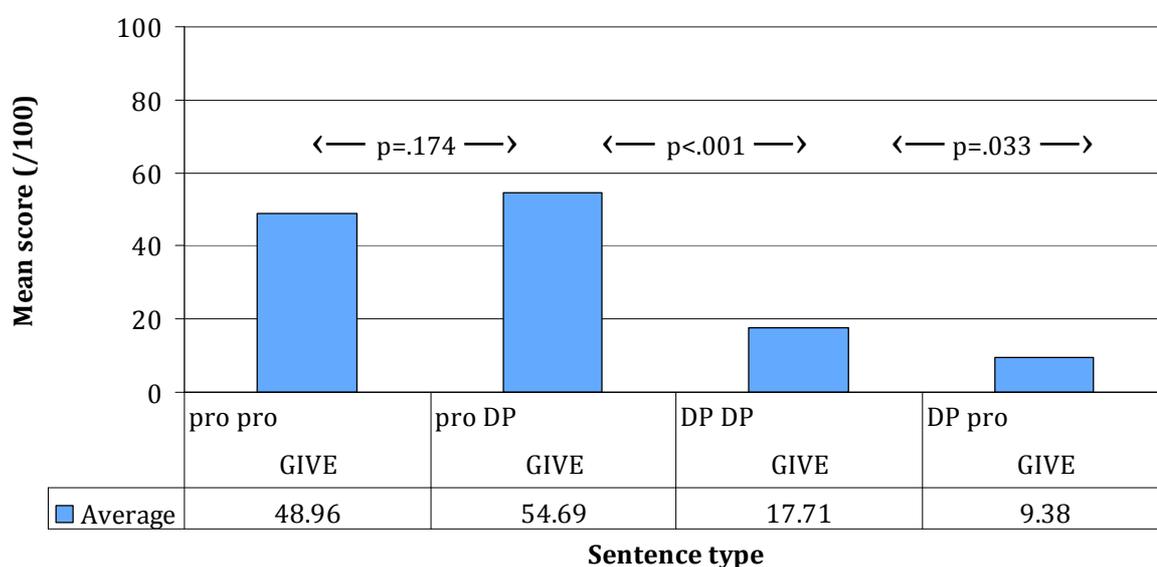


Figure 3: Mean acceptability score by object types (significance levels drawn from on Appendix 7: Table 7)

Interestingly, while Haddican's (2010:2430) graph (supported in the literature by Hughes and Trudgill 1996) showed a scale decreasing in acceptability from left to right, where statistically significant differences existed between the pro-pro, pro-DP and DP-DP, my results indicate that

- pro-DPs are more acceptable across the whole sample than pro-pros for GIVE class TGDs;
- the rate of acceptability of pro-pro is diminished in comparison to Haddican's pro-pro (c.75% for Haddican, 48.96% for my data) but, as the second most acceptable object configuration, increased from the mean score for Haddican's second most acceptable object configuration, the pro-DP (c.40% for Haddican, 54.69% for my data), which, although the most acceptable object configuration

across my sample, has a lower acceptability score than Haddican’s most acceptable configuration, pro-pro.

In the interest of brevity, Table 7.5 below draws on Tables 8-11 (see Appendix 7) to present the full picture of the statistical relationships between the mean acceptability scores of GIVE-class TGDs with different object types.

Table 7.5: Significance of difference between object types across different samples (drawn from Appendix 7: Tables 8-11. Highlighted numbers indicate significance at the 95% confidence level)

Sample	give_tgd_proDP_ave - give_tgd_propro_ave	give_tgd_DPDP_ave - give_tgd_proDP_ave	give_tgd_DPpro_ave - give_tgd_DPDP_ave
DY Sig.	.974	.002	.306
High BC Sig.	.974	.001	.120
WV Sig.	.043	.001	.024
Low BC Sig.	.043	.001	.129

This table shows that there looks to be a strong correlation between the statistical significance scores for pro-pro to pro-DP for DY postcodes and High BC index class together and WV postcodes and Low BC index class together. While DY respondents and High BC index class members discern an equally low difference between pro-pro and pro-DP, WV respondents and Low BC index class members discern equally significant difference between them, putting them on par with Haddican’s (2010:2430) results in this respect. All samples discern a significant difference at the 99.98% confidence level ($p \leq .002$) and above for pro-DP to DPDP, more significantly than Haddican’s results showed ($p = .037$) but still in line with the general trend he proposed. While WV respondents discerned a significant difference between DP-DP and DP-pro ($p = .024$), all of the other samples found the difference to be not statistically significant, putting them more in line with Haddican’s findings ($p = .193$). Of all the samples, Low BC index score was the closest to the picture of significant difference which Haddican described for Manchester speakers, while DY respondents were least similar. However, DY respondents followed Haddican’s overall trend of left-to-right descending acceptability most closely in that their mean score for pro-pros was 62.5%, only marginally ($p = .974$)

higher than the 60.4% score for pro-DPs. The fact that the whole sample, averaged across postcode and BC index class, does not follow Haddican’s results calls into question the assertion made in the literature that “speakers find theme-goal ditransitives better with pronominal objects than full DP objects” (Haddican 2010:2430, Bissell-Doggett 2004, Siewierska 2007 and Hollmann). In this area of the English West Midlands, particularly thanks to respondents in WV postcodes, TGDs are most acceptable on average with a pronominal theme and a full DP goal, and therefore H5 can be rejected.

4.1.5.2 Verb-class restrictions

Table 12 below summarises the basic interpretation of verb-class restrictions on acceptability of TGDs and DOCs across the sample area.

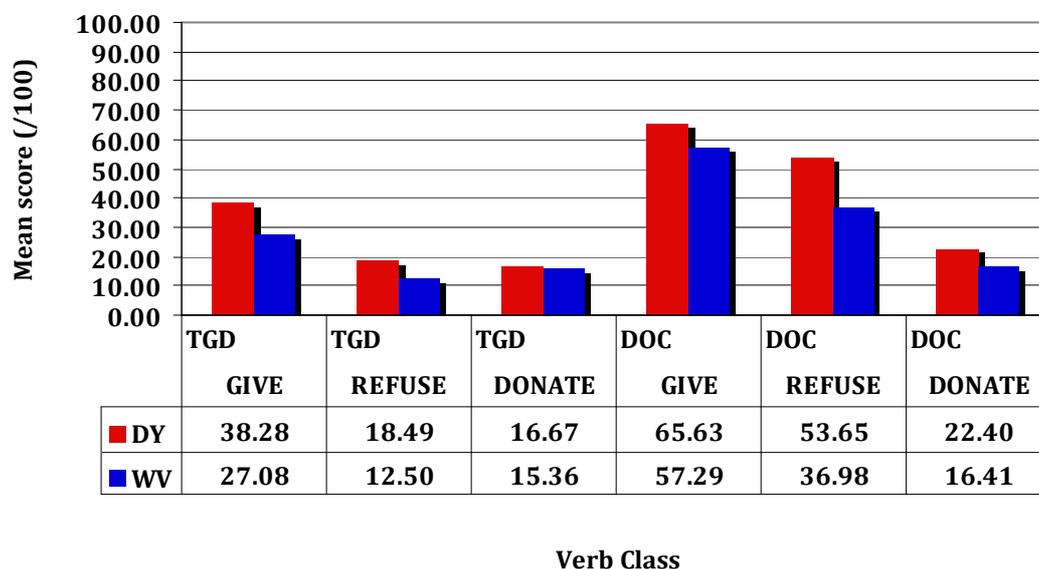
Table 12: Comparison with Haddican’s (2010) average acceptability of construction by verb class

Verb Class	DOC		TGD	
	Manc. DOC	EWM DOC	Manc. TGD	EWM TGD
GIVE	60%	61% (Higher)	55%	33% (Lower)
REFUSE	15%	45% (Higher)	13%	15% (Higher)
DONATE	15%	19% (Higher)	25%	16% (Lower)

This table shows that my sample area (EWM) as a whole returned higher average acceptability scores to DOCs across object configurations than Haddican’s respondents from Manchester (Manc.) did, and lower acceptance of TGDs. The picture is not much different when split by postcode, as Figure 4 below shows. One factor which must always be borne in mind when analysing these data is the absence of results for PDs in my study. Of course, I can only speculate how its inclusion may have affected the acceptability of other constructions, but one assessment of what I have might be that the increased average acceptability of DOCs across the sample is indicative of a shift of the value of Standardness from the absent PD to the DOC, which some of the literature (Cheshire 1993:75) speculates is an existing change in progress. In addition, the exceptionally increased acceptability of DOCs with REFUSE-class verbs, where they are expected to be weak and only moderately stronger than very weak PDs, could indicate that for my overall sample, TGDs are underlyingly PDs with REFUSE-class verbs. However, for

DONATE-class verbs, neither DOCs nor TGDs are elevated to the high levels of acceptability of PDs shown in Haddican’s (2010:2433) results.

Figure 4: Average acceptability of construction by verb class and postcode



4.2 Tests for Statistical Significance

I will now present the findings of numerous tests for statistical significance of various parts of my data, conducted using SPSS/PASW with guidance from Bryman and Cramer (1999), in order to facilitate discussion of the hypotheses proposed in Section 2.3.¹³

4.2.1 Mann-Whitney tests for difference

4.2.1.1 Age Group

Following on from Section 4.1.3, the highlighted significance figures in Appendix 3 show Younger respondents across postcodes and BC index classes accept four different constructions significantly more than Older respondents. However, when the sample is split firstly by postcode and then by BC index class, as shown in Table 13 below, it is clear that Younger respondents with a Higher BC index class are much more likely to find more constructions, particularly GIVE-class DOCs with pronominal goals,

¹³ As the most economical way of presenting these data for tests of difference for independent or dependent variables, I refer the reader to the relevant Appendices where the rank tables for each test have had the statistical significances of 90% and above included and highlighted. Further tables have been drawn up to show how samples have been split and how such splits have brought about difference statistical differences to the differences shown for the sample as a whole divided by each IV.

significantly more acceptable than Older respondents in the Lower BC index class. BC index class can therefore be said to have a significant impact on the significance of age group as an independent variable.

Table 13: Statistically significant differences in constructional acceptability by age group and sample split

Sample split	Constructions where age group makes significant difference to acceptability at 95% level and above [* = 90% - 94-9%]	
Not	give_doc_propro .015 give_doc_proDP .012 ref_tgd_proDP .079 * ref_doc_propro .060 *	
Postcode (DY/WV)	give_doc_propro .007 ref_tgd_proDP .081 * don_tgd_DPpro .027 don_tgd_DPDP .073 *	give_tgd_proDP .025 give_doc_proDP .009 ref_doc_propro .084 *
BC index class (High, Low)	give_tgd_DPpro .054 * give_doc_propro .033 give_doc_proDP .081 *	No significant differences

4.2.1.2 Gender

Following Section 4.1.2, the highlighted significance figures in Appendix 4 show that Male respondents across postcodes and BC index scores accept three different constructions significantly more than Female respondents. However, as Table 14 shows below, WV postcodes were where the most significant gender differences in acceptability of constructions were concentrated. Six out of the eight Female respondents in Wolverhampton featured in the Lower BC index class, but interestingly an Older male from Wolverhampton actually recorded the lowest BC index score of 1.67 (out of 4). The Younger WV Male in the Higher BC index class had the lowest Higher BC index score (17th out of 17), while the Older Male in the Higher BC index class had the 14th highest BC index score. The two Younger WV Females in the Higher BC index class (ninth and 15th out of 17) could not prevent the significant differences at the 90% confidence level and above in the acceptability of six constructions by gender in WV. Overall, the amount of significant differences between the acceptability of constructions as determined by gender was constant across both the postcode (3+6=9) and BC index class (4+5=9) splits in the sample, and in both cases greater than the whole sample (3).

Table 14: Statistically significant differences in constructional acceptability by gender and sample split

Sample split	Constructions where gender makes significant difference to acceptability at 95% level and above [* = 90% - 94-9%]	
Not	ref_tgd_proDP .098 * don_tgd_DPpro .053 * don_doc_propro .005	
Postcode (DY/WV)	give_tgd_DPDP .042 give_doc_proDP .064 * ref_doc_DPpro .016	ref_tgd_DPpro .099 * ref_doc_propro .059 * ref_doc_DPpro .031 don_tgd_DPpro .063 * don_doc_propro .009 don_doc_proDP .067 *
BC index class (High, Low)	give_tgd_DPDP .008 ref_tgd_proDP .016 ref_tgd_DPDP .035 don_tgd_DPpro .069 * don_doc_propro .046	ref_tgd_DPpro .049 ref_doc_propro .063 * ref_doc_DPpro .095 * don_doc_propro .042

4.2.1.3 Postcode and Black Country Index Class

Considering Appendices 5 and 6, as well as the summary of this in Table 15 below, it appears that there are fewer (5 out of 24) statistically significant differences (at the 90% confidence level and above) between postcodes in determining constructional acceptability than there are between Higher and Lower BC index classes (12 out of 24).

Table 15: Statistically significant differences in constructional acceptability by postcode and BC index class split

Sample split	Constructions where IV (left column) makes significant difference to acceptability at 95% level and above [* = 90% - 94-9%]
Postcode	give_tgd_propro give_tgd_proDP refuse_doc_propro refuse_doc_proDP refuse_doc_DPDP
BC index class	give_tgd_propro give_tgd_proDP give_doc_proDP refuse_tgd_proDP refuse_tgd_DPDP refuse_doc_propro refuse_doc_proDP refuse_doc_DPDP donate_tgd_proDP donate_tgd_DPpro donate_doc_proDP donate_doc_DPDP

On the basis of this information we might propose that BC index class membership (Higher/Lower) is a better judge of the degree of acceptability of ditransitives in the English West Midlands than postcode boundaries.

4.2.2 Logistic regression for correlation

4.2.2.1 Black Country index class as DV/Outcome Variable

Section 4.2.1.3 showed the relationship between postcode and BC index class to be very interesting: in terms of Britain's (2002) discussion of spatiality, it indicates that alliance to perceived space, judged by one set of linguistic data, may in fact triumph over definitions of social space in giving the strongest indication of an individual's likely acceptance of another linguistic phenomenon, namely TGDs and DOCs. However, I felt that this relationship needed more discussion, and therefore conducted a test of logistic regression for correlation, "a form of multiple regression that is used where the dependent variable is a dummy variable and one or more of the independent variables are continuous quantitative variables" (Collis and Hussey 2009:274; see also Bryman and Cramer 1999 for further discussion of multiple regression). In this case, I made BC index class the DV/outcome variable, and judged its correlation with age group, gender and postcode, the other IVs/predictor variables. Appendix 8 shows the relevant tables for the following discussion.

In the Model Summary table, the Nagelkerke R Square indicates that the model including the predictor variables explains .437 or 44% of the variance in the two groups of the outcome variable (whether respondents have a Higher or Lower BC index class). The hypothesis for the Hosmer and Lemeshow test is that the expected frequencies (theoretical counts) are not associated with the observed frequencies (actual counts). The probability statistic (Sig.) for this is .841, which is not significant. This means we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a good fit between the actual data and the model. The final table shows the results for the Variables in the Equation. The highest Wald value (8.659) and lowest probability statistic (Sig.) ($p=.003$) for postcode indicates that it is the most statistically significant and, therefore, influential variable in determining BC index class, while age group and gender are not. The factor coefficients (B) for age group and postcode indicate the expected negative relationship with BC index class; namely that the Younger age group correlates with Higher BC index class and

Lower (DY) postcode¹⁴ correlates with Higher BC index class. On the basis of this test, we can reject the null hypotheses for Hypotheses 1, 3 and 4 in relation to BC index class as a secondary DV but not for postcode (H2).

4.2.2.2 Theme-goal ditransitive acceptability as DV/Outcome Variable

Having tested my secondary hypotheses in Section 4.2.2.1, I conducted a further test of logistic regression for correlation with TGD acceptability as the outcome variable, with age group, gender, postcode and BC index class as predictor variables, in order to test my primary set of hypotheses, initially noted in Section 2.3.1 and further developed throughout this study. For this, the average acceptability of all TGDs for each respondent was calculated, and the sample was divided either side of the mean score (1.654063) to give the outcome variable TGD accept class (≤ 1.654062 = Lower, 18 respondents, ≥ 1.654063 = Higher, 14 respondents). Appendix 9 shows the relevant tables for this discussion.

For this test, the probability statistics show that the results for the predictor values BC index class ($p=.015$) and gender ($p=.070$) are significant. The factor coefficients (B) for gender ($p=.115$), and to a lesser degree postcode ($p=.589$) and age group ($p=.728$), show the expected negative relationship with TGD accept class, in that Male respondents especially, but also those in DY postcodes and the Younger age group, are more likely to be in the Higher TGD accept class. The higher values of the Wald statistic for BC index class (5.913) and gender (3.274) and their corresponding lower probability statistics indicate that these are the two most influential factors in determining TGD accept class. This provides enough evidence to reject the primary null hypotheses with TGD acceptability as DV for H1 (BC index class) and H3 (gender), but not for H4 (age group) and H2 (postcode).

4.2.3 Spearman's correlation coefficient (rho)

Returning to Section 4.1.5, where I made some initial comparisons with Haddican's (2010) data, I conducted a Spearman's correlation test to assess the relationship between TGDs and DOCs across verb classes, to fully explore the verb-class restrictions noted in the literature and discussed in Section 3.2.2. As always, the absence of data for PDs in my study must be considered, but as I set out to judge how far Haddican's (2010) suggestion,

¹⁴ This reflects the fact that DY postcodes were given the value 1 and WV postcodes were given the value 2 when the data was compiled in SPSS/PASW.

that TGDs were underlyingly DOCs for most speakers, held in the English West Midlands, my focus on TGDs and DOCs seemed worthy.

Appendices 10-12 provide the results for the table below, which notes the amount of significant correlations between TGDs and DOCs across verb classes.

Table 16: Spearman's correlation results for TGDs and DOCs in each verb class

	GIVE DOCs
GIVE TGDs	5/16 total correlations are significant at 99.5% level and above
	REFUSE DOCs
REFUSE TGDs	6/16 total correlations are significant at 99.5% level and above
	DONATE DOCs
DONATE TGDs	16/16 total correlations are significant at 99.5% level and above

This suggests that, for speakers across my sample in the English West Midlands, regardless of any IVs or the secondary DV (BC index class), TGDs behave like DOCs at a statistically significant level in 100% of object configurations for DONATE-class verbs. However, this is not the case with GIVE- and REFUSE-class verbs, as the TGDs containing these correlate significantly for five and six out of 16 constructions. Table 12 in Section 4.1.5.2 appeared to predict this, where REFUSE-class English West Midlands DOCs appeared much higher and GIVE-class English West Midlands TGDs appeared much lower than Haddican's results.

In addition, Appendices 13-17 show the correlations between constructions and verb classes for the whole sample and for the sample split by the two most significant factors in determining TGD acceptability; namely BC index class and gender. Appendices 14 and 15 show that while Higher BC index class respondents don't discern a significant positive correlation between GIVE-class DOCs and any REFUSE- or DONATE-class constructions, Lower BC index class respondents don't discern a significant relationship between DONATE-class TGDs and any other construction, not even DONATE-class DOCs. Also, Appendices 16 and 17 show that while Male respondents perceive significant positive correlations between all verb classes and constructions except

DONATE-class TGDs and GIVE-class DOCs, Female respondents discern fewer significant correlations (7/16).

4.3 Summary of findings

BC index class (perceived space) and gender are the most statistically significant variables for predicting TGD acceptability (Section 4.2.2.2) in this part of the English West Midlands. Higher BC index class Males accept TGDs more than any other group. Male, DY-dwelling Younger respondents (in that descending order of significance) are more likely to be in the Higher TGD acceptability class than any anyone else. Table 5.5 (Section 4.1.4) also showed that the group with the highest BC index class membership was Younger, DY-dwelling Females, but this was not linked to the strength of their membership (BC index score) within the Higher class. Nevertheless, the reasonably strong uptake of BC prepositions and conjunctions by Younger Females is worthy of note, and perhaps indicative of these particular superlocal features gaining prestige in apparent time potentially in opposition to the findings of Milroy et al. (1994) and Britain's (2010) discussion of supralocal regional dialect levelling. However, as this study's primary focus was TGD acceptability, I do not have enough evidence to contend that this is either a case of change in progress or age grading (Meyerhoff 2006). This certainly leaves opportunities for further studies to continue this line of enquiry with Britain's (2002) concept of spatiality and the perceived Black Country space in mind.

Postcode (social space) is the most statistically significant variable for predicting BC index class (perceived space) membership (Section 4.2.2.1). Younger respondents are more likely to be in the Higher BC index class than Older ones. Again, this has potential implications for the literature's discussion of supralocal regional dialect levelling, and while I don't have enough evidence to support any firm claims, I would like to contend that my results for TGD acceptability and BC index class show that some Younger respondents (largely determined by the overlap of social and perceived space boundaries) are becoming more comfortable with the notion of the perceived Black Country space, and are using linguistic behaviour (TGD acceptability, BC prepositions and conjunctions) to illustrate their perceived distinctiveness from those outside their perception of the Black Country. On the other hand, mostly Older respondents whose social space and perceived space allegiances leave them outside the Black Country seem to be illustrating their difference from it through linguistic behaviour: returning to Trudgill's (1974:32) remarks about how socio-economic differences "are expressed in different types of

consumption, education, manners, dress, taste, speech and so on”. If, as Pred (1985:361) notes, social spaces are always in a state of “becoming”, it is possible that the Dudley North social space is currently in a state of becoming increasingly influenced by the social practices aligned with the perceived space of the Black Country.

TGDs behave significantly like DOCs in DONATE-class verbs across the sample area, while GIVE- and REFUSE-class TGDs share fewer statistically significant correlations with DOCs than might have been expected from Haddican’s (2010) data and much of the literature. The compromise of removing test sentences for PDs means that the ditransitive architecture of the English West Midlands is incomplete, leaving the opportunity to fully map this to a future study. As a boundary of a perceived space across Euclidean space which closely follows social space boundaries, Gale’s (1966:4) definition of the Black Country’s extent as far as the A449 as it cuts through Penn is a good indicator of the subsequent acceptability of TGDs. However, a better but significantly linked factor for deciding TGD acceptability is BC index score/class, based on the acceptability of perceived and noted prepositions and conjunctions related to the Black Country perceived space, which itself is closely linked to social space boundaries.

5 Conclusion

I have, in accordance with my initial aims, provided an account of how TGDs are accepted by speakers in a part of the English West Midlands which is covered by some of the perceived Black Country. Across the sample, respondents did not provide as much significant evidence to prove that TGDs behave like DOCs with GIVE- and REFUSE-class verbs than they did for DONATE-class verbs, and they also indicated a preference for TGDs with the object configuration pro-DP: in both cases my results appear to contradict Haddican’s (2010) assumptions, but the potential effects of the removal of PD test materials on these statistics must be borne in mind. Speakers who aligned themselves with the perceived Black Country space by strongly accepting BC prepositions and conjunctions were more likely to accept TGDs in any circumstance than those who did not. This adds an extra dimension to the reporting of ditransitive acceptability in the literature, in that it is not merely social factors that should be assessed when considering reasons for syntactic microvariation, but also perceptual factors, and Britain’s (2002) emphasis on the importance of spatiality in variationist sociolinguistics, while it has been previously ignored, should be considered in future studies.

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7 Appendices

Appendix 1 (overleaf) – Instructions for sentence judgement questionnaire

Appendix 2 (following) – Sample questionnaire paper

Appendices 3-17 – Individually labelled