



FACULTAD DE FILOLOGÍA

UNIVERSIDAD DE SALAMANCA

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GRADO EN ESTUDIOS INGLESES

Trabajo de Fin de Grado

The Differences in Oral Speech  
by Working-class and Middle-class Speakers  
in Glasgow: A Case-study

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation is concerned with the analysis of the social class factor in the Scottish city of Glasgow. This city is a special case due to the traditionally stigmatised condition of its language variety at a social level as a consequence of its industrial past and the violence of the gang culture. A phonetic, lexical and syntactic analysis of the speech of working-class and middle-class speakers in the area of Glasgow will be presented, in order to show the main features and most outstanding differences between the oral speech of both groups. Ultimately, some final conclusions that reflect the results obtained will be included.

**Key words:** sociolinguistics, social class, Glasgow, Standard Scottish English, socially stigmatised accent, Scotland.

## **Resumen**

Este Trabajo de Fin de Grado analiza la variante de la clase social en la ciudad escocesa de Glasgow. Esta ciudad constituye un caso especial debido a la estigmatización social tradicional de su dialecto como consecuencia de su pasado industrial y la conflictividad de la cultura de pandillas. Se presentará un análisis a nivel fonético, léxico y sintáctico del habla de individuos de la clase social trabajadora y la clase media-alta enmarcados en la zona de Glasgow con el fin de señalar los principales rasgos y las diferencias más notables del habla de ambos grupos. Por último, se incluirán unas conclusiones finales que reflejen los resultados obtenidos.

**Palabras clave:** sociolingüística, clase social, Glasgow, inglés escocés, acento socialmente estigmatizado, Escocia.

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## 1. Introduction

Sociolinguistics is one of the central branches of Modern Linguistics which examines the interplay between language and society. Labov states that sociolinguistics considers large-scale social factors and their mutual interaction with languages and dialects (183). It studies the relationship between language and social variables, such as gender, age, ethnicity, region or class, among others. While some of these factors, including place of origin or gender, have been widely studied (Labov, Chambers, and Eckert), this dissertation will focus on the social class factor.

Milroy and Gordon argue that social stratification in sociolinguistics is broadly accepted, albeit there is a group of linguists, known as functionalist sociolinguists, who perceive classes as a continuum rather than as sharp divisions (95). They add that divisions between classes are most commonly drawn on the basis of occupation (42). These differing ideas might pose a problem when we try to analyse the differentiated speech of two distinct social classes, since we run the risk of falling into generalisations. Bernstein believes children's speech is determined by the social structure they are born into. He coined the terms *restricted* and *elaborated* linguistic codes to make a clear distinction between the speech of the working and middle classes: "It is considered that the normative systems associated with the middle-class and associated strata are likely to give rise to the modes of an elaborated code while that associated with some sections of the working class is likely to create individuals limited to a restricted code" ("Elaborated and Restricted Codes" 66). Bernstein seems to be essentially concerned with social classes as broad groups and does not consider other potential sociocultural factors which might influence one's speech. However, based on previous studies in the field, it can be inferred that social class is not only determined by occupation and income, but also by education, cultural competence, social practices and lifestyle (Milroy and Gordon 98). Besides, this is a socially mobile world and it is not

uncommon that working-class children become middle-class adults and vice versa. Therefore, special attention will be driven in this dissertation to the notion of social class and its linguistic implications.

Place of origin is another sociolinguistic factor that has recently become central in the field. Researchers study how physical environments affect linguistic patterns of variation and change and explore the construction of “place identity” (Johnstone 3). This term is defined as a “social identity ‘articulated in terms of place or a specific site’ ” (qtd. in Johnstone 16), which examines how people’s experience of place may shape their linguistic behaviour. Place of origin is therefore specially relevant for this approach, since this dissertation focuses on the local language variety of Glasgow and examines the social class differences between speakers within the area.

It is also particularly pertinent for this study Scotland’s sense of a distinct identity or *Scottishness*, which has increased in the last years (Braber, and Butterfint 23). The Scottish have their own language variety known as Standard Scottish English (SSE), which is defined as “a modified version of Standard English spoken in Scotland” (Neřoldová 13). It is, however, the characteristic language variety of the educated *middle class* (my emphasis), mainly spoken in Edinburgh and Glasgow (Neřoldová 14). Likewise, there is a distinctive Glaswegian linguistic variety. Glasgow as a city and Glaswegian as a linguistic variety have both long been heavily stigmatised: “whereas Edinburgh is seen to represent culture, tourism, Scottish heritage and shopping, Glasgow represents the Gorbals, tenement slums, violence and industrial corrosion” (qtd. in Braber, and Butterfint 25). There is a set of distinct linguistic features associated with Glaswegian, such as the use of /x/ in words such as *loch*; the distinction between /ʌ/ and /w/ in *whine* and *wine*; extensive use of glottal stop, specially in intervocalic position, such as in *butter*; *dark l* in coda position, such as in *feel*; *th*-fronting or /f/ for /θ/ in *think*, among others (Braber, and Butterfint 25-26).

Given the complex historical and linguistic situation in Glasgow, it is intellectually stimulating to investigate and learn more about the special case of this Scottish city. It is our aim to examine the phonetic, lexical and syntactic characteristics of Glaswegian language and to explore high and low prestige varieties as well as their perception in terms of social status.

## 2. Methodology and materials

### 2.1. Selection of participants

In order to study the differences between the speech of working and middle-class Glaswegians, we have selected four speakers based on the social class they belong to. The four of them belong to the conurbation of Greater Glasgow, and three of them are born, raised and resident to the capital city of Glasgow; the other one was born in Bishopbriggs but is a long Glasgow resident. Our sample is balanced regarding gender and age: there are two men and two women and they are all middle-aged people.

Table 1

Background details of speakers.

Social class	Working-class		Middle-class	
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male
Place of origin	Glasgow	Glasgow	Bishopbriggs	Glasgow
Occupation	Foodbank coordinator	Unemployed gardener	Singer	Actor
Age	39	Unknown (physical appearance: 40)	28	47

Regarding the criteria for the selection of the social class, their division has been solely done according to their occupation. The two middle-class informants are well-known artists whose 2014-2015 earnings are, according to Net Worth Tomb website, \$470,588 (“Amy Macdonald net worth”) and \$235,294 (“Rory McCann net worth”). It is worth noting I

have found no evidence none of them went to University. The working-class individuals are associated to Greater Maryhill Foodbank in Glasgow: one of them is its founder and coordinator, a charity worker who defines herself as working-class (Newsnet Scotland) and the other is one of its users, an unemployed gardener without professional training (Craig). From a methodological point of view, we are aware that our sample is fairly limited. In fact, our initial intention was to choose a larger number of speakers but the search for oral interviews, specially of working-class informants, from the city of Glasgow was very complicated. We will therefore approach this essay as a case study.

## 2.2. Corpus

From the methodological point of view, it is important to note that a total of 3,099 words of recording material have been transcribed for the analysis of the speech of the four speakers (see table 2). The initial intention was to transcribe the same amount of words for each speaker. Nevertheless, due to the limitation of sound recording for some of the subjects, there is one informant, the male working-class speaker, who uttered a considerably lesser amount of legible words. The possibility of replacing this subject for another working-class male individual was considered, but the search was unsuccessful.

The recording material has been personally transcribed following an acoustic examination consisting in a detailed word-by-word transcription of the oral speech contained in the video files where the four informants speak. Accuracy is guaranteed by the fact that any doubtful passage has been deleted. In some occasions, a blank for an unclear word was left in order not to suppress the whole sentence. However, this only happened five times and the word class was identified each time. Short incidental repetitions such as *I've* or tags like *umm* have been deleted and did not count as words because no evaluation on gap fillers has been carried out in this dissertation.



Table 2

Size of the corpus.

Social class	Working-class		Middle-class		Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Number of words	1,042	165	1,028	864	3,099
Blank for word	2	2	0	1	5

The source of the recordings is a series of videos found in the YouTube platform, where Glaswegian speakers give relaxed individual interviews.

### 2.3. Analytical approach

We have studied a series of phonetic, lexical and syntactic features of Glaswegian language variety, with measurements that are based both on auditory and spectrographic analysis. It is worth noting that, in all instances, the focus is placed on the differences between what we have considered working and middle-class speech, whether these differences are meaningful or statistically insignificant.

We have first focused on phonetic characteristics. To begin with, we have analysed two particular diphthongs: /aɪ/ and /aʊ/. Centring diphthongs do not exist in SSE as it is a rhotic accent and the last sound /ə/ in Received Pronunciation is replaced by /r/. Of the remaining five closing diphthongs<sup>1</sup>, /eɪ/ and /ɔʊ/ change their quality into monophthongal in SSE (Neřoldová 24). From the other three (/aɪ/, /aʊ/ and /ɔɪ/), which constitute the diphthongs of the “basic system” (qtd. in Pukli 3), only words presenting the first two diphthongs were uttered by three or four informants and have been analysed. We have examined the spectrograms generated by Praat to check whether the words display real diphthongs or these

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<sup>1</sup> aɪ/, /eɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /ɔʊ/ and /aʊ/.

are so shortened that they become monophthongs in SSE. Another phonetic feature that has been discussed is *t*-glottaling, based on the auditory transcription of all potential sites for intervocalic *t* glottal stops, one of the most typical phonetic environments for this phenomenon (Stuart-Smith 182). The few instances when an alveolar tap [ɾ] has been detected, it has been eliminated since the aim of this phonetic section is the social stigmatisation attached to certain sounds, namely the glottal stop, and the alveolar tap realisation is not relevant for this purpose. Therefore, the alternation of the alveolar plosive and the glottal stop has been interpreted.

Concerning the lexical section, we decided to focus on the study of the use of modifiers. They have a descriptive, and grammatically unnecessary, function, hence their use denotes a wider knowledge of vocabulary. For adverbs, we have considered only those which appear in an isolated position and disregarded the ones in phrasal verbs, as these last ones hold a grammatical function and change the meaning of the word they accompany. Adverbials that adopt the form of a phrase or clause have neither been taken into account because lexical analysis requires single words. Concerning adjectives, we have analysed the use of qualitative and classifying adjectives, used to identify the qualities of a person or object or to classify them into groups. We have also considered nouns employed as adjectives but not adjectives which function as nouns, driving importance to their function rather than to the word class. Variety and frequency of these modifiers has been analysed.

Finally, we have discussed a series of syntactic elements. Sentence length was initially considered as an object of study but it was dismissed because these are oral interviews and sentences tend to be longer, in an irregular way, than in written speech. It is also important to notice that the sequences *you know* and *I mean* have been excluded from the analysis, since they do not introduce a new syntactic unit but just function as a reinforcing unit of the previous or subsequent part of the sentence. In addition, auxiliaries, modals and periphrastic

constructions count as a single verbal unit and non-finite forms have not been considered. Therefore, three syntactic features have been studied in this section. Assuming the fact that the passive voice encourages more precision and the active voice is associated with carelessness (Le Coq 118), the frequency of passive forms as opposed to active forms was thought to be a relevant indicator for social class. Regarding subordination, the amount of subordinate clauses as opposed to main and coordinated clauses is discussed, for the application of the first denotes full understanding of structural relations of dependence within the sentence and a more complex knowledge of syntax. Finally, a short annotation on left dislocation, a specific type of dislocated syntax, is made to close this section.

### 3. Results and discussion

#### A. Phonetics

##### i) Diphthongs

We will start with the analysis of the diphthong /aɪ/ to examine whether its realisation is actually a diphthong, as SSE indicates as standard, or pragmatically a monophthong, a feature associated with the working-class (Neřoldová 20-21). The words which appear in tables 3 and 4 or their lemmas have been analysed.

Table 3

The diphthong realisation of /aɪ/ as a diphthong or a monophthong.

Social class	Working-class		Middle-class	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
<i>I</i>	Monophthong	Monophthong	Monophthong	Monophthong
<i>like</i>	Diphthong	Monophthong	Diphthong	Diphthong
<i>kind</i>	Monophthong	N/A <sup>2</sup>	Monophthong	Diphthong

<sup>2</sup> Not applicable. Not all the speakers use all the words.

<i>life</i>	Diphthong	N/A	Diphthong	Diphthong
<i>quite</i>	Diphthong	N/A	Diphthong	Monophthong
<i>time</i>	Monophthong	N/A	Monophthong	Diphthong
Total of diphthongs	3/6	0/2	3/6	4/6

The results in table 3 partially support Macaulay's claim that the usage of monophthongs increases as class decreases (*Language* 41-42). I say partially because the working-class man presents considerably fewer instances of the diphthong, circumstance that affects figures. Applied to this particular situation, Macaulay's assertion would mean that the realisation of /aɪ/ as a monophthong is prototypical of the working-class. We can observe the articulation greatly depends on the words, since some of them are pronounced with the diphthong by all the speakers, such as *life*, and others are monophthongs in all the instances, such as in *I*. Although the relationship between language and gender is not intended to be analysed in this dissertation, we can appreciate that both women, from different social classes, present exactly the same results in the same words. Besides, both middle-class speakers coincide only in half of the words analysed, indicating that the correlation between the shortening of diphthongs into monophthongs and social class is not as strong as it is claimed to be, according to these results. It is not possible to confirm Macaulay's claim above since, in none of the words, middle-class speakers perform the diphthong and working-class informants do the monophthong. It is true that for the word *time*, the working-class woman does the monophthong and the middle-class man does the diphthong; however, the opposite happens in *quite*, where she does the diphthong and he does the monophthong (see table 3). I would also like to highlight the case of the word *like*, the most volatile because it is uttered by all the speakers and only the working-class man does the monophthong, as it can be observed in figure 1.

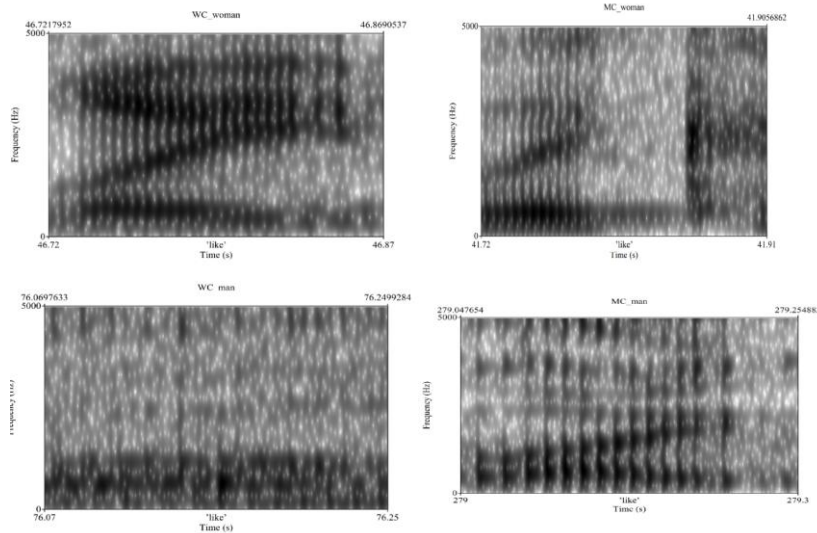


Fig. 1. Spectrogram of the word *like* by all four speakers.

Some scholars argue that the /aɪ/ diphthong may be realized in two or even three ways in SSE (Vahalíková 29; Neřoldová 24). The Scottish Vowel Length Rule plays a very important role here. As Pulki explains, the rule describes how vowel length is conditioned by the phonetic environment of the target vowel. Despite the lack of precision about the sounds it operates on, it is agreed that the /aɪ/ diphthong is affected by it (3-4). This can be confirmed in the words analysed, where the length of the first sound in the diphthong can be short and maintain the diphthongal trait or lengthen itself and turn into a monophthong. Unanimity of realisation in only two words (*I* and *life*) suggests that there is instability around the pronunciation of the diphthong and that social class might not imply significant variation.

We will now analyse the diphthong /aʊ/ to examine whether its realisation is actually a diphthong, as SSE marks as standard, or pragmatically a monophthong, a feature associated with the working-class (Neřoldová 20-21).

Table 4

The diphthong realisation of /aʊ/ as a diphthong or a monophthong.

Social class	Working-class	Middle-class

Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male
<i>about</i>	Monophthong	Monophthong	Monophthong	Monophthong
<i>out</i>	Monophthong	Monophthong	Monophthong	Monophthong
<i>how</i>	Monophthong	N/A	Monophthong	Monophthong
<i>now</i>	Monophthong	Monophthong	N/A	Monophthong
Total of diphthongs	0/4	0/3	0/3	0/4

Unlike /aɪ/, the /aʊ/ diphthong is none of the times spectrographically a diphthong (see table 4). This supports the view that it depends on the words rather than on the speakers' social class the realisation of the sound. Critics argue that the diphthong /aʊ/ in SSE has two or three allophones, whose variation correlates with social class in Glasgow (Neřoldová 25; Vahálková 30). We have not analysed vowel quality but, based on spectrographic analysis, there is a clear shortening of the diphthong in all instances in both social classes (see fig. 2). As opposed to the /aɪ/ diphthong, the /aʊ/ diphthong shows consistency in its variation, but we are neither able to conclude that there is a correlation between the shortening of diphthongs and social status.

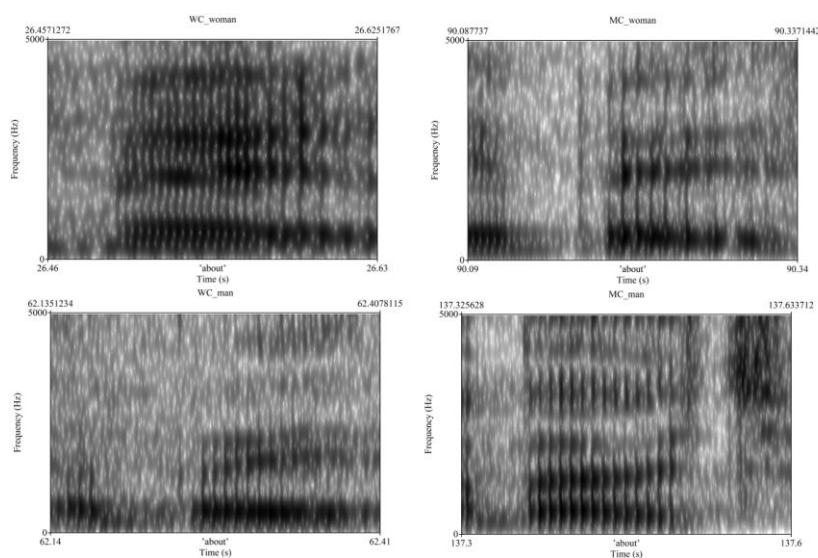


Fig. 2. Spectrogram of the word *about* by all four speakers.

## ii) Glottal stops

We will now study the glottal stop, according to Macaulay “the most highly-stigmatised feature of Glasgow speech and a common subject for overt comment and jokes” (*Language* 60), and its substitution for the alveolar plosive in intervocalic position.

Table 5

Alternation of the alveolar plosive /t/ and the glottal stop /ʔ/ in <t> instances.

Social class	Working-class		Middle-class	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
/t/	17	0	14	7
/ʔ/	5	1	3	0
Percentage of /ʔ/ ÷ <t>	22.73%	100%	17.65%	0%

We can observe significant differences between speakers of the same social class. In the case of male informants, even if they have fewer instances of potential intervocalic glottal stops, there is still a large disparity in figures. *T*-glottaling is characteristic of the Central Lowlands of Scotland (Vahalíková 45, Neřoldová 30) but, in three out of our four speakers, it does not exceed the 25% (see table 5). It seems that it entirely depends on the word, since the informants tend to pronounce the same word in a way or another, but they do not alternate /ʔ/ and /t/; only the middle-class woman pronounces the words *excited* and *exciting* once with /ʔ/ and four times with /t/.

Glasgow is reputed to be the original source of the glottal stop in urban British English (Stuart-Smith 183). It is typical for lower-class, optional for middle-class and restricted for upper-class speakers (Neřoldová 48). Besides, the use of /t/ where /ʔ/ is possible can be regarded as ‘hypercorrection’ (*Language* 60). In our case study, it is difficult to reach conclusive ideas relating glottal stops and social class, specially due to the fact that glottal

stops in prevocalic and preconsonantal positions were recognised for both classes. According to our results, there is a tendency that middle-class informants use less glottal stops than lower-class speakers, but it is necessary to consider the reduced size of the corpus.

## B. Lexicon: Modifiers

### i) Adverbs

Tables 6 and 7 allow the study of the weight of adverbs within the different participants' discourse and their originality, which can be a reliable indicator of a richer employment of vocabulary.

Table 6

Amount of adverbs in relation to all words uttered.

Social class	Working-class		Middle-class	
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male
Adverbs ÷ total words per participant	4.41%	4.91%	8.58%	7.35%
	4.66%		7.97%	

Table 7

Amount of unreported adverbs in relation to all adverbs uttered.

Social class	Working-class		Middle-class	
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male
Unreported adverbs ÷ total adverbs per participant	58.70%	87.50%	63.64%	50%
	73.10%		56.82%	

The results show that the use of adverbs is higher in the middle-class than in the working-class (see table 6). Regarding the variety of adverbs employed, there are important



differences between each person. First of all, we should notice that the greatest figure (87.5%) belongs to the working-class man (see table 7), but it is only due to the small size of his speech. Therefore, the working-class in general uses more original adverbs, but only thanks to the working-class male informant. Furthermore, the working-class woman places herself between both of the middle-class speakers, yet closer to the highest figure. In a study with secondary schoolboys in the London area, Lawton concluded that “middle-class boys used not only more adverbs but also a wider variety” (110). Ohmann also observed that working-class individuals used fewer adverbs, mainly of degree, while middle-class used “many and various” (4). We can agree that, in this case, middle-class speakers use a greater amount of adverbs in their speech. However, the idea that their range is wider is misleading here due to the bias of the working-class man’s data.

## ii) Adjectives

Similar to tables 6 and 7 with adverbs, tables 8 and 9 show the weight of adjectives within the different participants’ discourse and their originality, which can be a good indicator of a richer employment of vocabulary.

Table 8

Amount of adjectives in relation to all words uttered.

Social class	Working-class		Middle-class	
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male
Adjectives ÷ total words per participant	4.51%	3.68%	4.48%	5.15%
	3.74%		4.62%	

Table 9

Amount of unrepeatd adjectives in relation to all adjectives uttered.

Social class	Working-class		Middle-class	
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male
Unrepeated adjectives ÷ total adjectives per participant	86.96%	100%	68.89%	81.82%
	93.48%		75.36%	

The results show a slightly higher use of adjectives by the middle-class than the working-class, still the difference is less than a point (from 3.74% to 4.62%; see table 8). On the other hand, interesting results are found when we look at the variety of adjectives. Leaving apart the fact that the working-class man's discourse is fairly reduced, the following highest score (86.96%) belongs to the working-class female (see table 9). The results in our case study are not in line with Lawton's claim that there is a "clear tendency" for the middle-class boys to use a wider variety of adjectives (110). The same as with adverbs, working-class uses fewer adjectives but they are more varied.

### C. Syntax

#### i) Passive voice

We will now analyse the amount of passive forms to total finite verbs (active and passive) per participant to discuss the complexity of the passive voice as a feature associated with the middle-class.

Table 10

Amount of passive verbs in relation to all finite verbs.

Social class	Working-class		Middle-class	
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male
Passive verbs ÷ total	1.08%	3.13%	1.70%	6.52%

finite verbs per participant	2.11%	4.11%
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The total number of passive verbs used by any group is fairly low. Nonetheless, we can identify considerable differences between individuals. As we mentioned before, the working-class man's figure might be considerably higher to that of her female partner due to his meagre speech. There is also a significant gap between the female and male middle-class individuals, who score 1.70% and 6.52%, respectively (see table 10). However, it is possible that the choice between the active or passive voice depends on the nature of the verbs. The middle-class man uses a greater amount of transitive verbs such as *bruise*, *destroy*, *kill*, *bully*, *need* or *take*, which explains why his figure for the passive form is higher. The passive voice structure has been associated to a less concrete kind of writing employed by the middle-class speakers (Lawton 109). Bernstein stated that the middle-class uses a greater proportion of passive verbs (*Class 78*), which on average is true but there are always exceptions. For example, the middle-class woman uses 1.70% of passives, a figure lower than the working-class average (see table 10).<sup>3</sup>

## ii) Subordination

We will comment on the structural complexity of sentences, assuming that the use of subordinate clauses denotes a more laborious application of syntax than main and coordinated clauses.

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<sup>3</sup> *Get*-passives have also been included as part of the syntactic analysis. Macaulay claims that lower-class speakers have a higher frequency of *get*-passives ("Syntactic Variation" 91). In our case study there are no *get*-passives in the working-class but there is one in the middle-class man's speech (*get bruised*) and two in the middle-class woman (*get anxious* and *get excited*), a result not in line with Macaulay's findings.

Table 11

Amount of main, coordinating and subordinating verbs in relation to the total number of verbs.

Social class	Working-class		Middle-class	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Main ÷ total verbs per participant	28.26%	23.33%	15.82%	33.59%
Coordinating ÷ total verbs per participant	30.44%	23.33%	35.59%	29.69%
Subordinating ÷ total verbs per participant	41.30%	53.33%	48.59%	36.72%
	47.32%		42.66%	

In their respective research, Bernstein (*Class 77*) and Ohmann (4) determined that there are significant differences in subordination between the working and middle-classes, with a greater utilisation by the higher class. They concluded therefore that this type of structure entails a higher complexity. In our study, there is not such disparity. In all cases, subordinated clauses are the most used type of clause (see table 11). However, which social class employs more subordinated sentences is not clear, as the average of the working-class is higher than that of the middle-class (47.32% opposed to 42.66%). Besides, the difference between both is minimal. Our opinion is closer to Macaulay, who agrees that there are slight but not statistically significant differences between the working and middle-class (“Syntactic Variation” 88). Nevertheless, Lawton argues that it is the degree of subordination what makes the difference, since the working-class uses a narrow range of types of subordinate clauses, mainly adverbial clauses of time and noun clauses as objects (107-109). It is also worth noting that main and coordinated clauses represent a similar percent for all individuals, except for the middle-class woman, who scores more than double in coordinating than in main verbs (see table 11), which suggests a higher complexity of speech.

### iii) Left dislocation

Finally, a specific type of dislocated syntax, left dislocation, will be examined. The fact that both of the working-class individuals had one instance each of this construction, which might be considered a mistake, was noteworthy. Macaulay states that it has the purpose of intensifying effect and these constructions would be considered more complex than simple SVO sentences (“Syntactic Variation” 94). We could argue therefore that working-class individuals use, if not more complex syntax, a wider variety of constructions.

## 4. Conclusion

This study aimed to analyse the differences in oral speech by working-class and middle-class speakers in Glasgow. Throughout the process, some of the results were in line with research in the field, while other findings oppose the outcome of sociolinguistic studies.

We first started analysing phonetics, the field of linguistics that shows the greatest instability. This was appreciated in the study of diphthongs, which were frequently transformed into monophthongs in opposition to SSE. Glottal stops were most widely used by working-class, which endorses the social stigmatisation attached to this sound. Concerning lexicon, researchers claim that middle-class speakers employ a greater amount of adjectives and adverbs, and that they are more varied. In this case study, it was found out that, in effect, working-class uses fewer modifiers but the range is wider. At a syntactic level, the results could be anticipated through research in the field: both indicators of passive voice and subordinated clauses are predominantly used by the middle-class. Nevertheless, differences are not statistically significant.

The process of writing this dissertation was relatively complex and tedious. The main limitation it poses is that the corpus analysed is fairly small and data might be distorted due to the reduced speech of the speakers. Besides, the recording material was entirely personally

transcribed and, despite the intentional accuracy, it is possible that involuntary misunderstandings have taken place.

In addition to the conclusions drawn by this small-scale study, and with the aim to shed more light on this issue, it would be desirable to carry out further studies with an increasing number of participants. It would also be advisable to incorporate intonation to the object of analysis, as well as to explore other relevant phonemes such as rhotic r or *dark l*, and to distinguish different types of subordinate clauses.

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