



Abstract

Lexical variation is considered the '**Cinderella of sociolinguistics**', avoided by researchers because of methodological challenges (Durkin, 2012).

This research adapts a methodology that looks at lexical variation from a **novel perspective**, using matched-guise tests to measure perception of four lexical variables: **peak**, **bait**, **safe** and **cotch**. Aiming to contribute to the understanding of **language diffusion**, **youth culture** and **identity**, the socio-indexical meanings of these lexemes, in terms of their origins within grime music and how they relate to identities in Salisbury, will be elicited.



Hypotheses

Usage of grime lexis is a marker of belonging to a particular social network.



Grime music could be a vehicle for diffusing MLE lexis in Salisbury.



A correlation between younger speakers and grime lexis.



Background

- 'Rapidly diffusing changes are also linked by their role in carrying social meaning' (Stuart-smith, 2013:505).
- Pichler (2016) argues expressions not only index **aspects of culture**, but also carry social meanings.
- Thus, lexis is laden with **socio-indexical meanings**.
- Lexis is understudied because of a lack of **systematic** approaches to analysis (Durkin, 2012).
- Using matched-guise tests in the novel context of lexical variation, allows for a **systematic approach** to studying perception.



Methodology

- Methodologies have been developed to allow exploration of socially constructed variation
- This elicitation procedure (Robinson,2010) allows natural semantic meanings to be elicited
- Avoids direct, potentially leading questions
- Put out to the general public via online survey
- Justifications came after who/what questions to avoid knowledge of justification affecting initial answers

"It's peak when you miss the bus"

	1	2	3	4
Younger vs older	10	18	3	1
Male vs female	24	8	0	0
Listens to grime vs doesn't listen to grime	11	18	2	1

^ Matched-guise test response form 32 participants

Who or what is peak?
'Something bad, like having three essay deadlines on the same day'

Who or what else is peak?
'Being stuck in traffic'

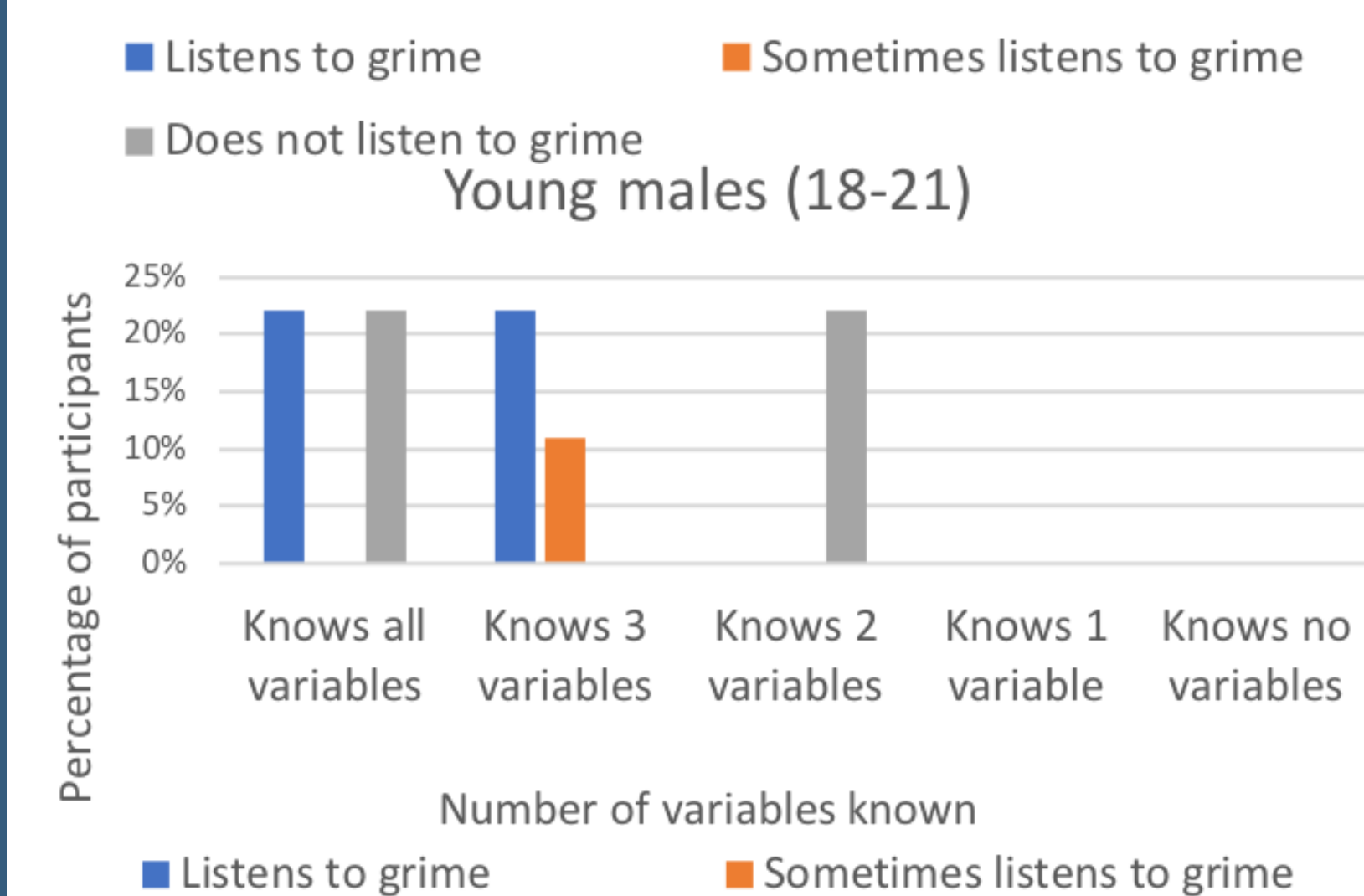
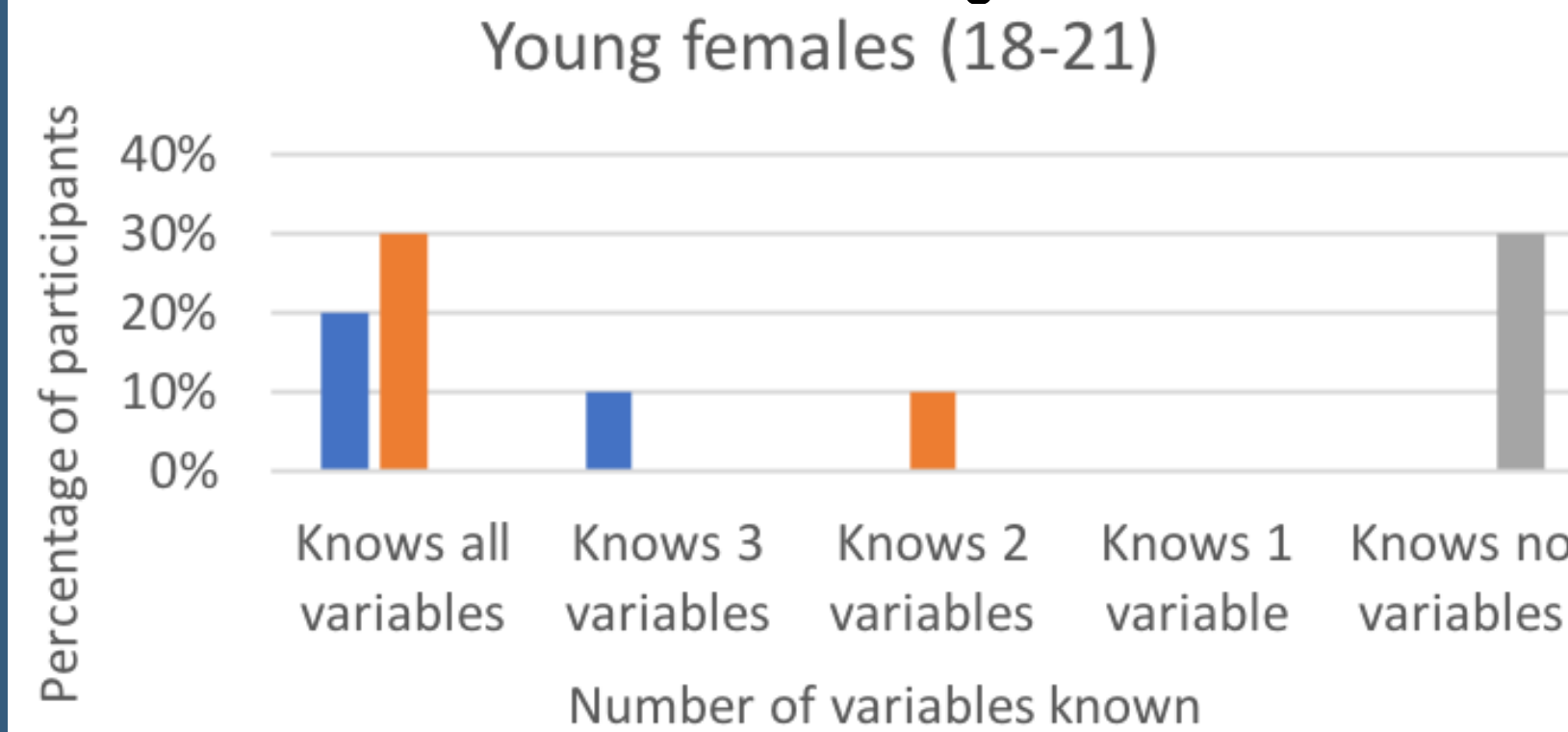
Why is having three essay deadlines on the same day peak?
'Because 'peak' can be used to indicate something bad or unwanted, such as having to work hard to produce three essays for the same deadline day'

Why is being stuck in traffic peak?
'Same as above - being stuck in traffic is 'bad', therefore it is peak'
^ Online survey response

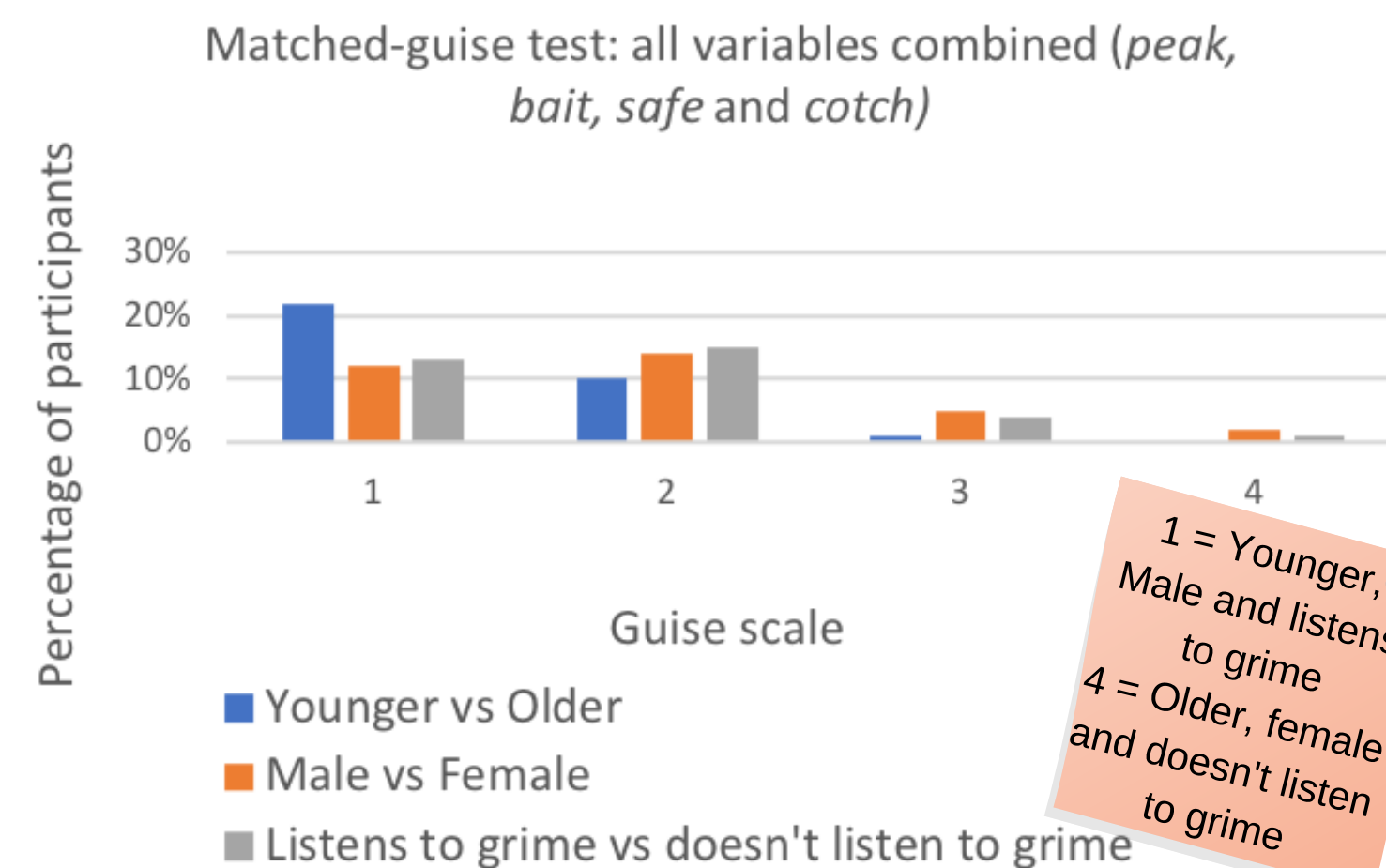
- Matched-guise** tests allow perceptions of variables to be elicited
- Usually used for phonological variables
- Guises for the test were taken from topics that arose during a preliminary focus group, these included:
 - Cool vs uncool
 - Popular vs unpopular
 - Countryside vs urban
 - Good language vs bad language
 - Listens to grime vs does not listen to grime.



Data: Listening to grime music and knowledge of grime meanings



Matched guise tests: aggregated data for all variables



Discussion of initial results

- Girls are more likely to know grime meanings from listening to grime music
- 3 participants do not listen to grime & do not know any of the variables
- Participants who do listen know predominately over half
- Young males know the majority of variables regardless of listening habits.
- 'Working-class speech has favourable connotations for male speakers' (Trudgill, 1972:179).
- Non-standard forms act as a form of covert prestige indexing masculine identity.
- This supports previous sociolinguistic literature.

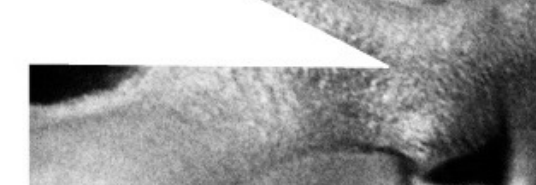
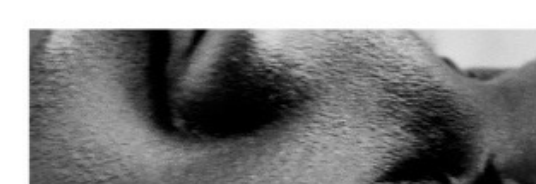


^ Focus group quotes regarding social networks and group identity

- Lack of correlation between knowledge of grime meanings and listening could suggest social networks play a key role in diffusion of lexis for male speakers
- Lexis therefore marks social group belonging
- Which is a key concept that was identified in a preliminary focus group

Initial conclusions

- Data currently shows grime music is more likely to be a vehicle for diffusion for women.
- Men are more likely to know grime meanings through social networks.
- Cotch* spread to the social network through a kind of linguistic brokering (Cheshire et al. 2008)
- Cotch* indexes belonging to the Salisbury social network through being an 'in-joke'.
- Data will be looked at from a variationist perspective, specifically at age and gender.
- Data will be further analysed from a social network perspective.



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