S: that's right…

In Example 2, evidence that conversation with a friend rather than an interviewer produces more casual norms can be seen in Mayuko's switch from Standard Japanese *da* (when replying to Anna) to the local Osaka Japanese *ya* (when talking to Shun, and Shun's reciprocal use of *ya*). Other cues that the young women are more relaxed in their conversation include the latching between Shun and Mayuko's turns, their rapid setup of shared knowledge (e.g. Shun 'Well, she said, but' Mayuko 'Well, yeah, the things she says and the things she does'), and the fact that Mayuko doesn't need to finish the proposition opened by 'the things she says and the things she does' for Shun to agree with her. These are all cues of a close and casual relationship (cf. Wenger's 1998 cues for identifying co-membership in a community of practice).

Another strategy for addressing the observer's paradox in interviews is to increase the number of interviewers. This may seem counterintuitive, but Wolfram (1998) reports that the dynamics of a recording session can be changed in a very natural way by having two interviewers—for example, it reframes the event as two friends or a couple having a conversation not an interview. Wolfram suggests that the presence of two interviewers also allows the conversation to naturally develop with a wider range of ideas and topics.

A third strategy involves removing the interviewer altogether. This has the benefit of minimizing the effect of outsider presence, but it also means we have no control over the recording. In research on adolescent speech in Glasgow, Macaulay (2002) recorded pairs of same-sex adolescents without an interviewer present. This seems like a good cross between the sociolinguistic interview and a natural conversation—the setting was quiet and the conversations were somewhat structured, so a lot of data could be gathered quickly from a range of speakers. At the same time, leaving the teenagers to talk on their own produced more relaxed conversations than a classic interview might have (perhaps especially an interview with an older academic). Fieldwork that is based on group recordings where the sociolinguist is more or less removed from the flow of conversation has its own methodological issues, which we discuss in more detail shortly.

5.4.4 Questions: what to ask, how to ask?

The questions we ask are, of course, a crucial part in conducting a good sociolinguistic interview. Since the
p. 134 interview should resemble as much as possible a natural ↳ conversation, the interviewer has to keep in mind that he or she is not only a fieldworker and a researcher, but also a speaker and a hearer in a conversation. Tagliamonte (2006: 39) suggests three tricks that will improve an interview: (i) volunteer your own experiences, (ii) react and respond when new issues arise, and (iii) follow the conversation wherever your interviewee wishes to take you. Since this is what we normally do when having a conversation over coffee, these are skills that most people already have in some measure.

The questions we ask are an important factor in establishing the interaction as casual, but they are also key to getting the interviewees talking. There are some questions that are likely to be suitable for most people in any community (family, childhood, dreams, etc.), but there are other questions whose appropriateness will depend greatly on where and whom you are interviewing.

Some topics have proved to be better for eliciting more natural speech. These include topics where speakers can get emotionally involved, for example when talking about their childhood or life history, and this topic has the added advantage of eliciting information about a speaker's biography which may be very useful for adding a qualitative interpretive component to any subsequent analysis. Storytelling recalling personal experiences has also proven to be a great way of eliciting casual speech.