Second, detailed explanation at the outset of a project about what sociolinguistic features are the target of investigation may bias speakers' performance (consciously or unconsciously). For instance, suppose you are interested in the speech act of complimenting, and you tell people you want to observe as many compliments as possible. They might consciously try to produce as many compliments as possible to assist
p. 136 your research or, conversely, they might try to avoid using them because ↳ they are self-conscious. Any compliments generated under those circumstances may offer interesting insights into who stereotypically makes compliments, and about what, but they won't necessarily offer more subtle insights into how compliments oil the social wheels of daily interaction that less monitored tokens of compliments might offer. Likewise, if you are interested in the alternation between local dialect forms of Japanese honorifics and the Standard Japanese forms, telling people this may heighten speakers' awareness of the contrast, pushing them to use more forms of one or the other than they might ordinarily use.

5.4.7 Practicalities of an interview: how long, how much, how many?

Opinions vary when it comes to deciding how long the interview should be. Labov (1984) suggests that it should last from one to two hours, but again it will depend on the research question. Most pronunciation features (e.g. whether people say *dat* or *that*) are far more frequent than grammatical features (e.g. relative clauses and negation), or discourse routines (e.g. compliments and topicalization). If you're interested in syntactic and discourse features (and even some phonological features are comparatively rare—Schleef and Meyerhoff 2010), even a two-hour recording might not provide a lot of data. Milroy and Gordon (2003: 63) suggest that 'certain speech phenomena may be difficult or even impossible to study using interviews'. For example, some of the phenomena sociolinguists are interested in (e.g. style-shifting and code-switching) emerge during extended everyday social interaction or are shaped by potentially idiosyncratic relationships among the speakers.

When interviewing someone for the first time there will inevitably be a fair amount of formality; in the course of a well-conducted interview it can disappear, or at least be minimized. Some studies have documented a shift towards more frequent use of vernacular features over time (hence, differences between the end of the interview and the beginning: Douglas-Cowie 1978; Coupland 2007). How long it takes for this familiarity effect to come into play is unclear—it probably depends on the individuals, but generally it is more than a matter of minutes. Some sociolinguists prefer to conduct subsequent interviews with the same person. Extended contact and repeated recordings over a period of time create the potential for more unselfconscious talk than a one-off interview can. For this reason, many sociolinguists adopt anthropologists' longitudinal engagement with the people they are recording (e.g. Mendoza-Denton 2008, whose recordings of the same young women span years). Repeat interviews have the added benefit of more background information about the speakers, and the integration of the interviewer as a familiar guest. Cukor-Avila and Bailey's (2001) fieldwork in the same small town has been going on for decades and they
p. 137 demonstrate that the ↳ familiarity of the interviewer has a major effect on speakers' use of local vernacular features.

Having considered the sociolinguistic interview as a fieldwork methodology, and introduced some of the methods for addressing the observer's paradox in the interview, we turn to an alternative fieldwork model: interviews with groups of speakers.