Milroy syntax

1. The main difficulty for quantitative studies of syntactic variation is the assumption that "the object of study is a set of surface variants expressing the same underlying semantic structure." Explain why this is a problem for studies of syntactic variation.
2. Why is phonology (the set of speech sounds) more closed and finite than syntax (the set of sentences)?
3. What is an example that illustrates the 'leaky' nature of syntax?
4. What difficulty was exposed by the study of subject/verb agreement in Belfast?
5. Which method of data collection did Chesire use?
6. Which method of data collection did Kallen use?
7. Explain the difference between 'linguistic constraints' and 'social constraints' on language use.
8. Which method of data collection did Coveney use?
9. Milroy describes Harris's study of the Irish English perfect. How would you use this method to study the use of the progressive with stative verbs (e.g. *want*, *know*, *believe*) in Kansas?
10. How would you use Harris's method to study the use of the *get* passive (*I got stuck*) and *be* passive (*It was cut*) in Kansas?
11. Milroy discusses the difficulty of accessing the intuitions of linguistic informants. What difficulties do you encounter accessing your own intuitions about tag questions?
12. Do you ever feel constrained by prescriptive ideologies? Can you think of an example?
13. What is the difference between a 'performance error' and an 'accidental gap'?