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Marie Møller Jensen, Northumbria University

The repercussions of (sociolinguistic) meaning:
defining what Tyneside English means to its speakers

Individuals must increasingly construct their identity in the face of changing communities and a globalizing world. The north of England, and Newcastle as a case in point, is often thought of and portrayed in mainstream media as backwards and working-class (Lancaster 1995). However, The Quayside of Newcastle has in recent years been witness to a transformation, a so-called 'culture-led regeneration'. But is there any room in the developed Newcastle for the working-class Northerner? With a commodified dialect for sale at the local tourist office (Beal 2009) and increasing developments focusing on more 'middle-class values' such as modern art and classical music (Miles 2005), where is the vernacular Tyneside speaker meant to find their identity?

This paper will present the findings of a quantitative corpus study of diachronic change in Tyneside English morphosyntax (sentential negation with *do*, 2 personal pronouns, and 4 verbal constructions). The results will be linked to an interviewer-led questionnaire study which investigates Tyneside speakers' awareness of and attitudes to these particular local vernacular forms. These two studies form part of an investigation into the notion of *salience* and its role in language change from the point of view of the individual (rather than the speech community). However, this investigation also raises issues of the indexicality (Silverstein 2003) and enregisterment (Agha 2003) of forms and local identity formation through language (Beal 2009). The working assumption of this investigation is that Tyneside speakers are increasingly defining themselves through the use of local language forms rather than through identification with the town itself. As the urban landscape of the town is changing speakers are increasingly looking for other ways to anchor their identity and signify local identity. One way to do this is through the use of local vernacular forms.

This paper argues that both social and cognitive factors are at work in the construction of salience and that an approach to studying language variation and change and "language in the mind" more generally benefits from being informed by theories and insights from socio-cognitive psychology.

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