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# INVESTIGATING WHAT TYNESIDE ENGLISH MEANS TO ITS SPEAKERS, HOW IT DOES IT AND WHY

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*Empirical Linguistics*

School PGR Research Conference 2012

## OVERVIEW

- INVESTIGATING WHAT TYNESIDE ENGLISH MEANS TO ITS SPEAKERS,  
**HOW** IT DOES IT  
AND WHY

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- INVESTIGATING WHAT TYNESIDE ENGLISH MEANS TO ITS SPEAKERS, HOW IT DOES IT AND **WHY**

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- INVESTIGATING **WHAT** TYNESIDE ENGLISH MEANS TO ITS SPEAKERS, HOW IT DOES IT AND WHY

# HOW LANGUAGE MEANS

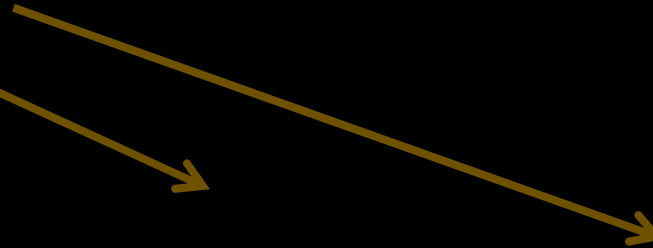
- Human language is unique
  - Hockett's 16 design features of language:
    - 1.Vocal-auditory channel
    - 2.Broadcast transmission and directional reception
    - 3.Rapid fading
    - 4.Interchangeability.
    - 5.Total feedback
    - 6.Semanticity
    - **7.Arbitrariness**
    - 8.Discreteness
    - 9.Specialization
    - 10.Displacement
    - 11.Productivity
    - 12.Traditional transmission
    - **13.Duality of patterning**
      - Sounds > words > sentences
      - Infinite number of combinations!
    - 14.Prevarication
    - 15.Reflexiveness
    - 16.Learnability

# HOW LANGUAGE MEANS

- Linguistic form > < linguistic meaning
- Linguistic form: arbitrary, does not carry (lexical) meaning
- Linguistic form (from a socio-psychological and socio-cognitive perspective): *sociolinguistic* meaning (the indexing of social characteristics of the speaker)

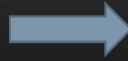
English: *chair*  
Danish: *stol*  
Arabic: كرسي

- The additional social message conveys information about the person speaking → *what* language means.
- (Non-standard) spoken language is a bit like clothing – the way you dress sends signals about who you are.





- For most people clothing is easier to manipulate than language.



- People sometimes talk about having a 'telephone voice' etc. but when we are just casually conversing with friends, our 'true' identity comes out.



- So, language also means something from a social point of view.

# WHY DOES LANGUAGE MEAN MORE?

- **Socio-cognitive framework:**
- Language processing (in Cognitive Linguistics) is no different than and not separate from processing of other input
- Tajfel (1969, 1981), Social Identity Theory: *stereotyping constitutes an inevitable and natural side-effect of the general process of categorization.*
- Le Page (1980): *speech is not just a reflection of identity, but a projection of it.*
- Eckert (2004): *style does not just reflect social meaning, but actively construes it.*
- Kristiansen (2006, 2008): *Language stands for social identities, language is a tool for conveying social meaning and expressing social identities.*

- **Exemplar theory:**
- Hay, Warren and Drager (2006): *social information affects speech processing – social indexing of exemplars.*
- Foulkes and Docherty (2006): *exemplar-based model of phonological knowledge offers the most productive means of modelling socio-phonetic variation.*
  
- **Enregisterment / social indexicality**
- **Enregisterment:** the identification of a set of linguistic norms as a linguistic repertoire differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register which has come to index speaker status linked to a specific scheme of cultural values (Agha 2003, Beal 2009).
- **Commodification:** social and linguistic stereotype of 'Geordie' entrenched in the community.
  - Embrace of 'commodified' dialect by Tyneside speakers (Beal 2009).
  - Enregisterment of stereotypical linguistic features which become meaningful to the vernacular speakers → performance of local identity.

# WHAT DOES TYNESIDE ENGLISH MEAN TO ITS SPEAKERS?

- **Cultural re-generation**: Major social changes in the region in recent years: change from coal mines and ship yards to 'cultural capital of the North' (Miles 2005)
- Urban development and "culture-led regeneration" emphasising middle class values and a lack (or loss) of what (used to?) characterise Newcastle.
- Revival of vernacular morphosyntactic forms and construction of Tyneside linguistic identity in the face of external changes
- 'Culture-led regeneration' of the urban townscape → 'linguistic regeneration' of local vernacular forms (through processes of enregisterment of commodified forms)

# STUDY 1

- **Corpus study investigating diachronic change in 7 morphosyntactic variables using corpus data.**
- **Corpora:**
  - TLS (1960s) - 37 speakers
  - PVC (1990s) - 36 speakers
  - NECTE2 (2007-2009) - 48 speakers

<b>Corpus and years collected</b>	<b>Younger speaker birthdates (age 17-34)</b>	<b>Older speaker birthdates (age 35+)</b>
<b>TLS 1965-1970</b>	<b>1925- 1968</b>	<b>1895- 1934</b>
<b>PVC 1991-1994</b>	<b>1954- 1977</b>	<b>1911- 1953</b>
<b>NECTE2 2007-2009</b>	<b>1967- 1990</b>	<b>1923- 1966</b>

# STUDY 1

- **7 variables in 3 categories**
  - **Category 1:** sentential negation with *do* (do + NEG)
    - you know and I divn't **suppose** he ever come back I don't **suppose** he ever showed his face in Newcastle again (PVC02b, male, old, MC)
  - **Category 2:** personal pronouns (1<sup>st</sup> pers) and (2<sup>nd</sup> pers)
    - Keeps us on my toes (NECTE2, 07-08/G/DM/456, young, male, MC)
    - it's just yous were good weren't you oh apart from that time yous collapsed (PVC09a, male, young, MC)
  - **Category 3:** verbal constructions (can + NEG), (go), (throw), (told)
    - it canna be doing you no good (PVC18b, old, female, WC)
    - we often gan on about it now (TLS03, old, female, WC)
    - you have to hoy the boxes though you see (TLS37, old, female, WC)
    - but you telt me it was a fact (PVC06b, young, male, WC)

# STUDY 1

- Tokens were extracted from the corpus using R.
- Coding was done manually in excel
- Statistical analyses carried out in SPSS 19.0
  - Category 1+2: ANOVA
  - Category 3: non-parametric tests (chi-square and Kruskal-Wallis)

	(do+NEG)	(1 <sup>st</sup> pers pronoun)	(2 <sup>nd</sup> pers pronoun)	(can+NEG)	(go)	(throw)	(told)
Significant ANOVA	NO	NO	YES				
Significant Chi sq				YES	YES	NO	NO
Significant K-W				YES	NO	YES	NO

## STUDY 2

- Interviewer-led questionnaire study
  - Aim of study: to investigate the salience of the morphosyntactic variables tested in the corpus study
  - Structure of study: questionnaires, interviews
- Speaker awareness of forms (salience) and its role in language change: does language change lead to forms becoming salient or does salience of forms lead to language change?



# THANK YOU!!

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