

isLE8

English Linguistics on the Way: Expanding Horizons



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Book of Abstracts



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PLENARY LECTURES

Unbroken sequences of language transmission and the child as ‘linguistic historian’

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“Children inherit the history of [a] language as they learn it” (Labov 1989: 85). This powerful and provocative understanding of the continuity of stable variability and stable constraints on variation over time and generations is why Labov (1989) described the child as “a perfect historian of the language.” This understanding is reflected in historical accounts more generally, such that system-internal evolution is described as the preservation of the “unbroken sequences of native-language acquisition by children” (Ringe et al. 2002: 63), resulting in the transmission of the structural detail—categorical and variable—of adult language (e.g. Labov 2007). It is therefore possible to make the claim that “all language is an historical residue” (Labov 1989: 85). At the same time, children learn language in conversation—where “language lives and breathes,” entailing that “when a language is passed down through generations, it is passed down by means of conversation” (Enfield 2017: 3). In this talk, I examine child speech in conversational data to make two broad points. The first is that ongoing language change is also historical residue with which children must not only contend but also engage as part of their linguistic mastery. And the second is that children’s unambiguous success as ‘linguistic historians’ supports an understanding of variation (and thus change) not only as a basic design feature of language but also as a feature with beneficial outcomes for language learners and users (see, for example, Gardner et al. 2022).

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Connecting the dots: Drawing children's attention to form in an EFL setting

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Grammar is crucial to language and language learning. Research into grammar instruction (i.e. interventional efforts to direct learners' attention to particular grammatical forms) has been a central topic in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) due to its importance in assisting second language (L2) learners to develop communicative competence. Over the last three decades, the role of grammar instruction in second/foreign language contexts has been reconsidered on the basis of findings in the field of L2 research with adult learners. Studies highlight the need to identify effective instructional procedures to focus on formal aspects of language, enabling learners to notice the mismatch between their interlanguage and the target language. Moreover, there is now broad consensus that pedagogical intervention is facilitative and may even be indispensable in foreign language (FL) learning contexts, where learners receive minimal L2 input- typically only a few hours per week.

Although the early learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) in school settings has grown exponentially over the past twenty years, one population that remains underexplored regarding these issues is children aged 6-12. This talk will share ways in which interactive collaborative tasks can draw children's attention to formal aspects of English. Our research, grounded within cognitive-interactionist and sociocultural frameworks, demonstrates how grammar focused tasks, input enhancement and collaborative writing – combined with the manipulation of implementation variables (task repetition, task modality) and explicit metalinguistic explanations- help children focus on formal aspects of the language. Importantly, these instructional procedures enable children to resolve problematic issues without teacher intervention. We will conclude by identifying challenges and further research directions for effective grammar pedagogy for young learners.

English linguistics in the next quarter century: Prospects, problems, promises

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As befits a Presidential address on the occasion of an ISLE conference with the ambitious umbrella theme “English Linguistics on the Way: Expanding Horizons”, I will dare a look at likely topics, approaches, practices, but also major challenges and responsibilities of the next generation of experienced and early career researchers in our thriving discipline. Issues to be addressed prominently include the following:

- The continued strengthening of the quantitative turn *vis-à-vis* qualitative approaches and its consequences for the discipline and publication practices.
- The future of usage-based CxG as leading theoretical paradigm informing research in English linguistics.
- The future directions of studies on language variation and World Englishes in exploring English as the hyper-central world language.
- The impact of AI on our discipline.
- The impact of teaching and research in English linguistics in school education and the public arena.
- The significance (and responsibility) of English linguistics for the discipline and profession of linguistics, in general.
- The future (tasks) of ISLE.

what the seid Sere Harry entendith to do therin I knowe not: Claims of no knowledge in the history of English

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Claims of no knowledge – also referred to as negative epistemics, epistemic disclaimers or epistemic hedges – are a recurrent feature of language use. As epistemic stance markers, they indicate the speaker’s lack of (sufficient) information (e.g. *I don’t know*, *I cannot say*), but they also serve interpersonal functions, such as avoiding disagreements (Tsui 1991; Diani 2004; Pichler & Hesson 2016), and interactional functions, such as yielding the floor or closing a topic (Aijmer 2009). Studies of present-day conversation have shown strong cross-linguistic parallels in the use and function of claims of no knowledge (Lindström et al. 2016). Yet, from a historical perspective, such expressions have received little attention so far.

This talk presents a pragmatic perspective on claims of no knowledge in the history of English, focusing on Early and Late Modern English. Empirical evidence comes from case studies of personal correspondence (PCEEC, CEECES) and trial proceedings (OBC), examining expressions such as *I don’t know*, *I know not*, *I cannot say* and *I cannot tell*. A comparison of the communicative contexts, speaker roles and activity types reveals marked differences in how claims of no knowledge are used.

The aim of the talk is to investigate in which contexts claims to no knowledge occur and how those contexts influence their pragmatic functions. In a broader perspective, I will argue for the need for a contextually grounded approach to the historical study of stance. That is, to fully understand how stance markers were used in earlier periods, we need to consider the wider social, institutional, and communicative practices in which they are embedded.

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The surprising English language

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Certain interjections, like *wow*, *blimey* and *my word*, can be used by speakers of different varieties of English to convey surprise at an unexpected event or state. In other languages, such as Turkish, it has been argued that the speaker's unpreparedness of mind can be coded in the morphology of the language (Aksu-Koç & Slobin 1986). Thus languages appear to vary to the extent to which surprise or unpreparedness of mind are grammaticalized: while all speakers are capable of expressing surprise, the extent to which the expression of surprise constitutes a grammatical category in a language is fluid. The status, nature and development of this linguistic category (mirativity) has been vigorously debated in the literature (see among others DeLancey 2001; Hill 2012; Rett & Murray 2013; Petersen 2016; Sahoo & Lemmens 2017).

In this talk, I present a discussion of the issues as they relate to the expression of mirativity in English, drawing on notions in both cognitive linguistics and historical linguistics. Three case studies form the basis of the argument put forward. These are:

- a. Modal expressions involving *go* (e.g. *They went and had a ceilidh!*)
- b. Questions involving *how come* (e.g. *How come you went to the ceilidh?*)
- c. Particular uses of scalar *even* (e.g. *What even is a ceilidh?*)

These case studies complement a range of other investigations into mirative marking in English (e.g. Celle & Lansari 2015; Kraus 2019; Serrano-Losada 2020). Together, these studies suggest that speakers of English have, over time, developed a range of mirative strategies. This leads to the final part of the talk, where I consider what linguists actually mean when they say that a certain expression is “grammatical(ized)” in English, and how this relates more broadly to theoretical positions regarding the relationship between language structure and language use.

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PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOP 1

Dialect death and rebirth: Exploring obsolescence in the traditional dialects of Britain, Ireland and Canada

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Dialectologists have documented the productivity of forms across geographical space from the late nineteenth century (Wenker 1888-1923; Orton & Dieth 1962; Barry 1981). Scholars with interests in Historical English Linguistics have produced reliable evidence that these dialects have been subject to change and decay for even longer. In explaining these developments, they have invoked a range of factors. These would include linguistic processes (e.g. the Great Vowel Shift documented and analysed in Stockwell 2002 and elsewhere) or language contact (e.g. the influence of French on Middle English articulated in Thomason & Kaufmann 1988). In the twentieth century, however, traditional dialect landscapes across the English-speaking world have been ever more radically transformed. Immigration, alongside wide-ranging socio-economic developments have accelerated speaker contacts (Clyne 2003; Kerswill 2006; Corrigan & Diskin 2020). Population mixing has generated more uniform, levelled vernaculars, on the one hand, and, on the other, it has resulted in innovative sociolects and (multi)ethnolects. Their speakers exploit traditional features for new purposes or create novel forms which likewise index ethnic and racial differences (Fought 2006; Cheshire et al. 2011; Cheshire 2013). Additionally, increased exposure to Standard English ideologies has promoted greater intolerance of dialect (Levon et al. 2021, 2022). Consequently, the traditional features that once uniquely demarcated the speech of one isolated community from another have disappeared providing evidence for ‘dissipation models’ of obsolescence such as those postulated in Corrigan (1997) with respect to a rural dialect of Northern Ireland or Schilling-Estes & Wolfram (1999) who investigated the island communities of North Carolina. In certain contexts, though, it would seem that - far from disappearing - specific features follow rather different trajectories. For example, Schilling-Estes & Wolfram (1999) found that obsolescing features may actually become ‘concentrated’. This is thought to be particularly so when they index key social characteristics embodying local distinctiveness in a process that is akin to enregisterment (Beal 2009; Johnstone 2016). Other observed pathways of change include the retention of forms so as to stave off the advance of rival features from neighbouring social and regional dialects (Moore 2010). Other outcomes include both the specialization of forms in historically favoured contexts (Jankowski & Tagliamonte 2017) as well as the instigation of truly novel uses (Rupp & Tagliamonte 2022).

The contemporary discipline of ‘language variation and change’ has, however, rarely addressed such processes, choosing instead to focus on innovation. As Britain (2008: 1) notes, “[i]n studying language change, variationists are, naturally perhaps, more interested in the new, innovative form than in the old conservative one, and because of the actuation problem, investigations of changes in progress very rarely are able to shed light on the change in its very earliest stages.” This workshop has two major aims:

- To explore the utility of a model proposed by Rupp & Tagliamonte (2022) that uses both quantitative and qualitative methods from different subfields of linguistics to identify and analyse obsolescent features.
- To assess theories of dialect recession first mooted by Schilling-Estes & Wolfram (1999).

The workshop focuses on obsolescing traditional dialect features and sets out to document the fate of such forms in regions as diverse as Shetland, Tyneside, Mid-Ulster and Parry Sound, Ontario (amongst others). Participants will examine obsolescent forms from different areas of phonology and grammar, drawing on concepts and models in historical linguistics, variationist sociolinguistics and syntax. The workshop will offer presentations from a range of scholars at different career stages.

Topics that will be discussed in the workshop include:

- The nature of obsolescence (e.g. how do ‘obsolescent’ features differ from those that are simply ‘rare?’).
- What evolutionary pathways can obsolescent features take?
- What impact does the social history of a regional dialect have on how its features develop over time and space (e.g. do they either obsolesce or focus differently on either side of the Atlantic or even across the considerably less distant regional spaces of the British Isles?).
- The importance of research into obsolescent features for improving our understanding of the social histories of divergent local communities as well as elaborating and testing theories of language variation and change.

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Tracking obsolescence and persistence: Inversion in embedded questions in Irish English and beyond

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One common feature of World Englishes is subject-auxiliary inversion in embedded questions, as in (1)-(2) from Singapore English (SingE), in which an embedded question shows the same subject-auxiliary inversion as a matrix question would.

- (1) So, I was beginning to wonder **what would I** be doing there? (ICE-Sing-sla-047; Hilbert 2011:132)
- (2) Anyway, **I ask is** that Barry. (ICE-Sing-sla-092; Hilbert 2011: 134)

This feature has been described and studied in Englishes globally (Hilbert 2008, 2011; Kolbe & Sand 2010; Davydova et al. 2011, *inter alia*), and has been attested in 60% of the varieties documented by Kortmann & Szmrecsanyi (2004). While at first glance embedded inverted questions (EIQs) do not appear to be on an obsolescing trajectory, we contend that a closer examination of EIQ sub-types across World Englishes—and in Irish English (IrE) in particular—shows that the variants follow divergent evolutionary pathways, with conservative forms persisting in IrE but obsolescing in other varieties. We consider the socio-historical evidence that sheds light on the conditions under which different varieties of English (including IrE) arose (Corrigan 1997, 2010; Amador-Moreno 2019, 2024).

We begin by distinguishing the two sub-types of EIQ: Inversion in embedded *wh*-questions (*wh*-EIQ), (1), and inversion in embedded *yes/no* questions (yn-EIQ) (2). While both are attested in, for example, Indian English and SingE, yn-EIQs are shown to be vanishingly rare, appearing only with the verb *to be* (Hilbert 2011: 134). We take this as evidence that yn-EIQs are obsolescing in these varieties, but *wh*-EIQs are not. However, when varieties of English are compared across time and space, the productivity of yn-EIQs in IrE has an interesting profile. Far from being rare, the comparative rate of usage in contemporary IrE favours yn-EIQs over the *wh*-EIQ variant (Hilbert 2011: 133-135; Meriläinen & Paulasto 2017: 684; Corrigan & Robinson under review). By contrast, interrogating historical corpora of IrE reveals that the two sub-types were once equally productive (Amador-Moreno 2019, 2024). Additionally, Henry (1995: 106) finds that *wh*-EIQs are grammatically unacceptable to some IrE speakers in Belfast. By extension, perhaps this indicates that *wh*-EIQ is obsolescing in some IrE regiolects and sociolects, indicating that the evolutionary path – ostensibly for similar constructions – is more complex than previously conceived. These facts suggest that *wh*-EIQs and yn-EIQs should be examined independently, with the former productive across many World Englishes, and the latter productive and persistent in IrE, yet obsolescing in other varieties world-wide.

We consider two possibilities for this unique IrE characteristic. It could be due to the fact that IrE evolved much earlier than other World Englishes and so reflects Middle English's "robust verb-second properties" (Filppula 2000: 440). Alternatively, the characteristic may have developed because IrE originated in a bilingual context where English was in contact with a Celtic language so that the dynamic of how EIQs operate in contemporary IrE is actually a relic of a substrate effect (Corrigan 1997, 2010; Filppula 1999, 2000, 2024). In this way, we show that trajectories of persistence and obsolescence must be tied to the social history of the dialect under investigation.

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Obsolescence in non-standard subject-verb agreement in England: A dialectological perspective

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Many of the non-standard subject-verb agreement systems that once characterized certain regional dialects in England have obsolesced, through (i) reduction in the frequency of traditional variants in favour of more supralocal variants, and/or (ii) loss/weakening of linguistic constraints that once operated historically. This paper examines the evidence for these kinds of obsolescence in two types of non-standard agreement – the Northern Subject Rule (NSR), as in (1), and non-standard *was/were*, as in (2) – using crowd-sourced acceptability judgement data from across England.

- (1) NSR
 - a. Type of Subject Constraint: ‘marks a verb with *-s* if its subject is anything but an adjacent personal pronoun’ (e.g. *the dogs likes the sea*)
 - b. Proximity to Subject Constraint: ‘marks with *-s* any verb having a personal pronoun subject not adjacent to the verb’ (e.g. *they really likes the sea*)
- (2) Non-standard *was/were*
 - a. *Was*-levelling, e.g. *they was over there*
 - b. *Were*-levelling, e.g. *she were nice*

(Montgomery 1994: 86)

Studies of the NSR in conversational speech have found it to be obsolescing in both the aforementioned senses: it is low-frequency, and the Proximity to Subject Constraint is not applying as robustly as it did historically (Cole 2008). While non-standard *was/were* may be decreasing over time, traditional *were*-levelling communities have often experienced an addition or change of constraints rather than wholesale loss (Rupp & Britain 2019). For example, younger Leeds speakers are adopting the supralocal non-standard singular *was* in existential constructions, in a switch from the older generation’s more consistent *were*-levelling (Childs & Cole 2023). The East Anglian dialect’s traditional *were*-levelling system similarly changed, with speakers later using *was* in affirmatives and *weren’t* in negatives. This change sits within a broader context of dialect levelling, as this polarity-marking is thought to have diffused from the South East (Britain 2002; see also Cheshire & Fox 2009).

This paper presents results of quantitative variationist analysis of 2,000+ responses to an acceptability judgement survey carried out across England (Childs 2021-2023) which included sentences testing the NSR and non-standard *was/were*. Participants answered social background questions, then used a Likert Scale of 1-5 to rate sentences according to how often they thought they would use them (1=‘never’; 5=‘very frequently’). Results showed that while the Proximity to Subject Constraint had little effect on ratings, the Type of Subject Constraint is robust in the majority of postcode areas in England, including outside traditional NSR heartlands. In other areas, the adjacent NP and adjacent pronoun subjects were rated (on average) the same, and very low – i.e. the NSR was so rare in these areas that subject type made no difference. *Were*-levelling hotspots meanwhile emerge in areas such as the North West, mirroring trends in usage (Moore 2011). The paper will demonstrate the utility of crowd-sourced acceptability judgement data in the study of obsolescing features, for testing predictions in larger datasets and with broader geographical scope than is possible with traditional fieldwork methods. Analysing such data can uncover the linguistic mechanisms underlying obsolescence and show how the social demography of different areas affects the variation.

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There's a one for sale in Northumberland: Exploring the obsolescence of an indefinite marker in North-East England

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The dialects of North East England descend from Old Northumbrian, a variety of Anglo-Saxon which was productive between the seventh and tenth centuries. It shared a number of characteristics with Lowland Scots of the period given their geographical proximity straddling the border between the two present-day nations of England and Scotland (Beal 1993). In this paper we investigate an interesting grammatical feature of the contemporary variety captured in the *Diachronic Electronic Corpus of Tyneside English* (DECTE) (see Corrigan et al. 2012), namely, the indefinite marker *a one*, illustrated in (1). It is consistently mentioned as characteristic of the region but has never been explored in any depth.

- (1) My ideal job is a receptionist. I would like to be **a one** because it is a job where you meet people. (Beal 1993: 208)

This indefinite marker is not used in Standardized Englishes. Instead, either the pronoun *one* occurs without *a* (*I would like to be **o one***) or an adjective co-occurs (*I would like to be **a good one***).

In this context, we ask the following questions:

- What is the nature of *a one*, and how does it compare to an apparently similar use in northern and insular varieties of Scots (Jamieson, under review)
- Is *a one* still a productive feature or in decline, and, if so, what has been its trajectory of obsolescence?
- What insights does a study of *a one* provide into processes of obsolescence and language change more generally, in particular regarding the system of indefinite marking in English?

We took the approach developed by Tagliamonte & Rupp (under review) for identifying, establishing and analysing obsolescent grammatical features. This led us to examine the historical development of *one* in scholarly sources (Mustanoja 1960; Rissanen 1967) alongside consulting various available corpora (e.g. *Oxford English Dictionary*; FRED) and colleagues in the field who have worked on the dialects of Britain and Ireland.

We deployed the Principle of Accountability, “closing the set”, to include the range of variants that may be used as semantic equivalents in the same sense, in this case *one* (Labov 1972: 72). We extrapolated constraints from the historical development of *one* presented in Rissanen (1967), which outlines how the numeral *one* gave rise to the indefinite article (*a(n)*) and pronominal *one*, respectively. We added some potential constraints from the grammatical literature (Barbiers 2005; Kayne 2018) and others that we thought were also worthy of consideration.

We found that *a one* was never frequent historically, is rare in DECTE (N=49) and in decline across the generations in the corpus. As such, we are interested in ascertaining its trajectory of obsolescence. For example, is it used in different senses across the generations? Might *a one* prove to be a contemporary lens with which to track the historical development of indefinite marking more broadly?

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Morphosyntactic obsolescence across the Shetland Islands

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This paper investigates potential morphosyntactic obsolescence across communities in the Shetland Islands. Shetland Scots has been identified as potentially obsolescing at least since the turn of the millennium (Tait 2001; van Leyden 2004). Investigating the speech of the main town, Lerwick, Smith & Durham (2011) found that though half their younger speakers showed rates of local forms and linguistic constraints comparable to the older generations, the other half had “adopted standard forms more or less wholesale” within a generation. While Smith & Durham (2011) captured the linguistic situation in Lerwick, Tait (2005) claims “Shetlandic is... rapidly becoming a rural dialect”, only used *outside* Lerwick—where there are distinct dialect regions (Johnston 1997: 448). However, Sundkvist (2020: 171) states “present societal and linguistic changes are likely to render the micro-localized, conservative Shetland dialect less distinct, less regionally diversified”.

In this paper, I thus ask three questions: Is obsolescence widespread outside Lerwick? If so, does it proceed the same way across communities? How do the social histories of different communities impact on the potential obsolescence of their varieties? To address these questions, I investigate six morphosyntactic features (1-6):

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Put yon tin away. | Singular demonstrative <i>yon</i> |
| 2. They go to visit that places . | Plural demonstrative <i>this/that</i> |
| 3. I never was been south. | <i>be</i> -perfect |
| 4. The yachts all comes in. | Northern Subject Rule |
| 5. ... once du’s got dy PhD. | Informal second person <i>du/dee/dy/dine</i> |
| 6. a. They were i Suez Canal.
b. He was i wir hoose. | Reduced prepositions before definite DPs |

The data come from the *Scots Syntax Atlas Corpus* (Smith et al. 2019), which includes two older (65+) and two younger (18-25) speakers in each of four communities: Lerwick, Dunrossness (south), Northmavine (north), and the isle of Whalsay. Features (1-5) are Shetland-wide, while (6) is found in Whalsay only.

Results show older speakers across communities using (1-5) at similar, high rates. Younger speakers in Lerwick and Dunrossness show little to no usage of (1-5)—except, surprisingly, the Lerwick speakers retain (2) at a high rate. Younger speakers in Northmavine match the older Northmavine speakers on (1-2), but have reduced usage rates which nevertheless remain higher than in Lerwick and Dunrossness on (3-5). The younger Whalsay speakers match the older Whalsay speakers on features (2-5), and exhibit hyperdialectal usage of (1). However, for Whalsay-specific feature (6), the younger speakers show a dramatic decrease in usage rates, and a constraining of usage contexts to only the preposition *in* before possessive determiners *my* or *wir* (6b).

The primary result is thus one of dissipation. I discuss this result in terms of the social histories of the communities, as well as the communities of practice of young speakers in Shetland (e.g. Moore 2011). However, we also see concentration and specialization of features (1, 2, 6) for certain discourse-pragmatic purposes (e.g. Rupp & Tagliamonte 2022). Thus, we see both of Schilling-Estes & Wolfram’s (1999) models of obsolescence playing out for the same speakers, in the same communities, depending on the feature.

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Phonological variation and change in the MEAT and FOOT lexical sets in Northern Irish English

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A number of ongoing trends have been identified in phonological variation and change in Northern Irish English (NIE), including levelling of traditional features (e.g. Harris 1985), survival of traditional variants amongst certain kinds of speaker (e.g. Maclaran 1976; Maguire 2023), and spread of supralocal features (e.g. Kingsmore 1995), all against a backdrop of class and ethno-religious differences (McCafferty 2001). But studies of phonological variation and change in NIE have been sporadic and have largely concentrated on urban centres, despite much of the province being rural.

This paper investigates two phonological features in order to explore the nature of phonological variation in change, especially with regard to traditional features, across Northern Ireland in the second half of the twentieth century, using data from the *Tape-recorded Survey of Hiberno-English Speech* (TRSHES; Barry 1981). These features are:

- 1) The vowel in the MEAT lexical set, e.g. *beak*, *meat*, *tea*, which shows variation between traditional /e/ and modern /i/ (Milroy & Harris 1980);
- 2) The vowel in the FOOT lexical set (Wells 1982); words in this set either have the vowel typical of the STRUT lexical set (/ʌ/) or the vowel typical of the GOOSE lexical set (/u/) (Maclaran 1976; Harris 1985; Maguire 2020); although some FOOT words are invariant, most words in the set show variation, and this has been shown to correlate with a range of sociolinguistic factors, with /ʌ/ being characteristic of rural, working-class, older and male speech and /u/ being characteristic of urban, middle-class, younger and female speech.

The TRSHES is a collection of audio-recordings of questionnaire answers and conversational interviews provided by older, middle-aged and younger speakers from across Ireland in the 1970s. The survey was designed to capture phonological variation in particular, but has largely remained unanalysed. The TRSHES provides comparable data for three age groups from locations across Northern Ireland and it thus provides a unique (though not always straightforward) opportunity to investigate phonological variation, change and obsolescence in apparent time in NIE in the second half of the twentieth century.

Analysis of the Northern Irish TRSHES data for MEAT shows that /e/ is indeed recessive, by the 1970s being most characteristic of the informal speech of older male farmers in the west of the province (cf. Maguire 2023). The analysis of FOOT, on the other hand, reveals that /ʌ/ was still common in the 1970s, though /u/ was increasing, being most characteristic of formal speech, younger and female speakers, and locations in the east of the province. Furthermore, /ʌ/ and /u/ have complex lexical and geographical patterning (e.g. *could*, *should* and *took* typically have /u/ rather than /ʌ/ even amongst older speakers in areas with significant historical Scottish settlement), revealing that variation in the set is not just a matter of change from a traditional to a supralocal form. These analyses show not only the value of the TRSHES data for understanding phonological variation and change in NIE but also the complexities of the relationship between traditional and supralocal variants across Northern Ireland.

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Obsolescence in Ontario: A twentieth-century watershed in Canada

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The study of obsolescence is not only a critical documentation enterprise, but also an important endeavour for the theory of natural language, universals, and the range of possible variation. The discipline of ‘language variation and change’ has been “more interested in the new, innovative form than in the old conservative one” (Britain 2008: 1); however, dialectology embraces the study of obscure words, remnant dialects and regional varieties (see *American Speech*) and a special session on obsolescence in 1995 (Wolfram 1995). Extant studies show that there is no single regularity to obsolescence; however a building repertoire of studies now affords comparison across countries, types of variables and findings to the point where important generalizations can be made.

A case in point are studies arising from the Ontario Dialects Project (ODP), spoken dialect materials from the late 1800’s to the 2020’s, from 21 communities in Ontario. They comprise a range of population sizes and types from an expansive industrial conurbation in the south (the Greater Toronto area) to sparsely settled, hamlets and small cities of the near north (e.g. Tagliamonte, 2013-2018; Tagliamonte 2014). These materials offer a unique testing ground for studying the mechanisms underlying obsolescence and known trajectories of change. In comparison with UK materials (Tagliamonte 2013; 2023-2024) they also demonstrate how obsolescence offers insight into the social histories and characteristics of different places that would not be discernible otherwise.

In this presentation, I will summarize findings drawn from multiple large-scale studies of Ontario English that have accumulated in the last ten years, each one providing a documentation of receding dialect features. For example, the phonological alternation between [w] and [x], (1), has a classic dialect recession trajectory (Needle & Tagliamonte 2024). Lexical variation in euphemisms for *God*, (2), shows concentration of a single form (Tagliamonte & Jankowski 2018). The morphological alternates -s and zero on 3rd plural verbs reveal a lingering specialization in historically dominant contexts (Jankowski & Tagliamonte 2017). However, the perspective of multiple studies from the same broad territory uncovers certain constants, in particular a watershed of loss — the 1960’s. By the time of the generation born in the 1960’s Ontario’s quintessential ‘dialect’ features are gone. In contrast, the same features endure in the UK (Manzella et al. 2025).

In summary, extant theories have provided an invaluable roadmap to identify, analyse and explain obsolescent features (Corrigan 1997; Schilling-Estes & Wolfram 1999; Rupp & Tagliamonte 2022; Tagliamonte & Rupp under review). Comparative analysis of the ODP and UK adds to this building enterprise by demonstrating that the social and cultural context in which language change is taking place has an overarching influence. I suggest that in Ontario, different dialects and languages were in contact at the time of migration, leading to new developments. In contrast, in the UK with fewer such influences during the same time frame, linguistic systems often remain stable. Whether the watershed in Ontario compares to other localities and how obsolescence unfolds in other places will provide further measures for understanding how human language evolves.

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WORKSHOP 2

Agreement in English: Unlocking the secrets of grammatical harmony

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This workshop addresses two primary research objectives: (i) exploring the role of internal morphosyntactic and lexico-semantic factors in determining grammatical agreement and (ii) examining the impact of native and non-native varieties of English on agreement patterns. The studies presented identify various factors influencing agreement, such as the semantic characteristics of subjects (e.g. unified-entity versus collective; human, animate, inanimate; countable versus non-countable), the meanings of verbs, and the structural and syntactic complexity of subjects (simple, with dependents, coordinated). Other variables include the presence of plural nouns and/or finite verbs in post-nominal dependents, subject-verb distance, and broader diatopic tendencies such as regularization, simplification, and transparency. Each case study formulates hypotheses grounded in these objectives and applies diverse multivariate methodological approaches to test them, using corpus data to provide insights into how linguistic and cognitive factors contribute to variation across internal and external varieties of English.

Agreement at the crossroads of syntax and complexity: A quantitative account of hybrid verbal agreement with collective nouns

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Some geographical varieties of English admit variable verbal agreement with collective nouns: the verb can either be inflected for the singular, owing to the grammatical number of the noun, or take a plural form on the basis of the semantic plurality of the collective. Of all these varieties, British English appears to exhibit the highest degree of alternation; thus, it has almost always been included in prior studies devoted to this subject, be it as the sole focus of research (Tieku 2020) or to contrast its data with the results of other varieties (Levin 2001; Hundt 2006; Fernández-Pena 2020; Lakaw 2024). Although collective-verb agreement has been already researched before, we still lack information regarding the current state of affairs of this phenomenon. This paper proposes a corpus-driven diachronic study of the evolution of the agreement patterns of a series of collectives (*band, family, crowd, crew*, etc.) in recent times in British English, paying particular attention to an array of predictors that may influence the choice of the speaker/writer. These predictors include complexity-related factors (number of words in the noun phrase, number of pre-modifiers, number of post-modifiers, etc.) and morpho-syntactic variables (type of determiner, verbal tense, type of pre- and post-modifier, etc.). Some of these have been considered by prior research on this topic, whereas others will be included for the first time as part of this study.

The data will be extracted from two corpora, the *British National Corpus* (BNC Consortium; BNC) and the *British National Corpus 2014* (Brezina et al. 2021; BNC14), and will be analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The BNC and the BNC14 have been selected due to their similar composition and the necessity to work with a large number of words in order to obtain a sufficient number of instances for some of the less frequently used collectives. Preliminary research has identified an unexpected increase in the likelihood of the plural form of the agreeing verb with some collectives (*family, band, audience*) over the last three decades, as well as certain contexts which appear to favour semantic agreement: the presence of possessive noun phrases or 1st and 3rd person possessive pronouns before the collective, the relative influence of increasing distance measured in words between the noun and the verb, relative clauses or prepositional phrases headed by *of* as post-modifiers of the collective, etc. These and further results will be presented to cast new light on the impact of contextual material on the agreement patterns of collective nouns.

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Subject-verb number agreement in flux: Structural complexity, proximity and linguistic regularization in English varieties

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This research investigates subject-verb agreement variation in contemporary English, focusing on complex nominal subjects (i.e. involving post-head dependents, as in (1)-(2)) in unmarked subject-verb constructions in inner-circle varieties of English.

- (1) *The group who actually owe the public the outing* is USADA. [GloWbE:AU B roadgrime.com.au]
- (2) *Some media in Southern Sudan* is isolated and vulnerable [GloWbE:GB B odi.org.uk]

In previous research (Fernández-Pena 2020), a preliminary analysis of sentences comprising complex noun phrases headed by collective nominals (e.g. *a host of ideas*) revealed that explicitly marked plural nouns (e.g. *factors* (3)) in the postnominal prepositional phrase correlated with a higher incidence of plural verbal patterns. This effect was even stronger for irregular plurals (e.g. *women* (4)), likely due to their inherent contrastiveness. Also, as the distance between the head noun and the verb increased – both in terms of word count and number of modifiers – only explicitly-marked plural nouns (e.g. *topics* (5)) maintained a relatively stable rate of plural agreement. In contrast, non-overtly-marked nouns (e.g. *people* (6)) showed a progressively stronger preference for singular agreement.

- (3) *A host of underlying factors* appear to be at the root of its woes [GloWbE:CA G cmaj.ca]
- (4) *A host of women* have since backed the revelations [GloWbE:GB G thesun.co.uk]
- (5) *A host of topics, including pension resources, falling fertility, projections of increased life expectancy, and the perceived health and long-term care needs of older people,* have recently focused attention upon the consequences of our ageing societies.
- (6) *a host of people* calls for a return to the gold standard [GloWbE:GB B cobdencentre.org]

This study examines a large database of sentences containing complex nominal subjects other than those headed by collective nouns and investigates the significance of intralinguistic morphosyntactic factors that were contended to be strong predictors of number (singular versus plural) variation in the previous investigation – explicitly- versus non-overtly-marked plural head nouns, structural complexity of the subjects, proximity between subjects and verbs, syntactic category, order and length of the postnominal dependent(s). The data were retrieved from the *Corpus of Global Web-based English* (GloWbE; Davies 2013), a corpus of written texts on the web – both websites and blogs – from 20 varieties of English. Multivariate statistical methods will determine the weight and significance of the predictors, and will evaluate the plausibility of hypotheses drawn from the relevant literature on the role that linguistic regularization, simplification (see, among others, Bock & Miller 1991; Franck et al. 2002) and Rohdenburg's (1996) 'Complexity Principle' (the most explicit verb number choice in English – singular – facilitates the processing and integration of long complex subjects) play for subject-verb number variation in English.

A further predictor identifying the six inner-circle varieties of GloWbE surveyed in this study (i.e. British, Irish, American, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand English) will reveal that, despite clear differences in overall agreement patterns, our results confirm that regional variation is not a major determinant of subject-verb number agreement with complex collective subjects. Instead, agreement variation has been found to be primarily governed by the intralinguistic factors already mentioned.

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Do native authors agree more than non-native professional writers?

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This study examines agreement patterns in academic writing, focusing on subjects expressed by collective nouns (*group, team*), uncountable nouns (*research*), countable plural forms lacking marked morphology (*data, media*), and singular forms ending in *-s* (*series, dynamics*). Using a 4.4-million-word corpus of research articles written by native and non-native English speakers across four disciplinary groups (Physical Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, and Life Sciences), the study investigates variation in agreement patterns across disciplines and between linguistic backgrounds.

The nouns for the analysis were selected according to the following criteria: 1) they are found in the Academic Word List (Coxhead 1998), and 2) they display variation in agreement patterns in the corpus. The corpus was processed using AntConc (Anthony 2014), which facilitated quantitative analysis. However, identifying agreement patterns for the target nouns required extensive manual pruning.

The quantitative analysis revealed several trends. First, collective nouns were more frequently used with singular verbs in professional academic writing. However, soft sciences exhibited a more pronounced tendency to use plural agreement patterns compared to hard sciences, with native speakers' texts in history and literature showing the most variation. Second, the uncountable noun *research* demonstrated minimal variation in agreement patterns, except in soft sciences, where non-native authors used plural verbs more frequently than native speakers, particularly in social sciences. Third, countable plural forms lacking marked morphology displayed contrasting trends: while soft sciences showed greater variation in their use, native speakers predominantly used *media* with singular verbs, whereas non-native speakers favoured plural verbs. Conversely, *data* was more commonly used with singular verbs in non-native writing, especially in history and linguistics. Finally, singular forms ending in *-s* also exhibited distinct patterns. The use of *series* with singular and plural verbs was roughly equal across hard and soft sciences. However, *dynamics* showed greater variation in hard sciences. Native speakers tended to use *series* with singular verbs more frequently than non-native speakers, while *dynamics* was more often used with singular verbs in non-native writing.

In summary, the corpus analysis revealed significant variation in agreement patterns for the specific noun groups in academic discourse, both across disciplinary fields and between texts written by authors with different linguistic backgrounds.

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Liverpool were superior tonight: Variation and change of verbal agreement patterns in L2 idiolects

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Plural verbal agreement with sports teams (e.g. *Liverpool have beaten Manchester United 4-0 tonight*) is a distinct feature of British English. Prior corpus-based studies show that plural verbal agreement tends to be more frequent with collective nouns in sport texts than in other news (Hundt 1998; Levin 2001). However, beyond these genre-level differences, there are significant gaps in our understanding, particularly regarding sociolinguistic and individual-level variation in this grammatical domain.

This presentation investigates the verbal agreement patterns of individuals who use English as a second language (L2) in public settings. Our study focuses on foreign-born football managers working in England, specifically in the English Premier League, which has attracted managers from various European countries since the late 1990s. These managers, who are public figures and native speakers of languages other than English, conduct pre- and post-game press conferences in English as part of their managerial duties. The individual informants were chosen because the agreement patterns in their native languages favour singular verbal agreement.

We are interested in whether these L2 speakers of English use singular or plural verbal agreement when talking about their own teams and their opponents. Additionally, we aim to determine if these agreement forms remain stable or change during their careers in England.

To explore this phenomenon, we utilize an underused source for accessing individual variation: a large set of interviews and press conferences available online. We use automatically-generated transcripts from YouTube recordings, with data obtained through national digital humanities infrastructure projects in Finland and in Sweden. This dataset includes recordings of managers' interviews and press conferences spanning roughly a decade from the mid-2010s onwards.

The topic is of interest to various audiences, not limited to those studying agreement patterns. Our unique data collection also appeals to people interested in digital humanities. The corpus-based observations not only shed light on verbal agreement patterns in proper noun + verb structures but also contribute to debates on how idiolects change in the short-term post-adolescence (Sankoff 2018). The results could provide insights into how non-native adult speakers handle stable lexicogrammatical changes in society. Prior studies have identified three trajectories of individual change: stability, adoption, and swimming against the community current.

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Non-verbal plural number agreement in English: A multi-perspective approach

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Modern English generally favours number agreement between plural antecedents and coreferential terms (e.g. adverbials, objects, modifiers), as seen in examples like *Animals make their **homes** with the resources* versus *Some animals make their **home** in it* (COCA). While much research has examined agreement (e.g. Baker 2008; D'Alessandro et al. 2008; Keine 2010; Fleischer et al. 2015; Halpert 2016), the specific phenomenon of non-verbal plural number agreement remains underexplored. This presentation highlights recent findings from several studies by my colleagues and me drawing on:

- **Modern English Corpus Studies:** Our research (Rudnicka 2019; Rudnicka & Klégr 2023) tests the claim that number agreement between the plural antecedent and coreferential term is the default option in British and American English. Furthermore, since this preference is not without exceptions, we provide an overview of scenarios in which the tendency for the distributive plural is overruled. We classify the factors blocking the use of the plural and enabling the use of the distributive singular. To test this, we analyse the phrases *lose one's life* and *lose one's job* in the *British National Corpus* (BNC) and the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA).
- **Historical Perspective:** We explore distributive singular and plural uses of the noun *stomach* in Early and Late Modern English medical regimens, drawing on data from the *Early Modern English Medical Texts* (EMEMT) and *Late Modern English Medical Texts* (LMEMT) corpora (Rudnicka & Whitt accepted). The findings show that despite the preference for plural forms in modern English, there is at least one scenario – a generalizing context – where free variation between singular and plural forms can be observed since at least the sixteenth century.
- **Cross-Linguistic Comparisons:** Comparing German, Polish and Czech to English (Rudnicka 2024; Rudnicka & Klégr 2024), we combine findings from corpus studies, the literature, and two kinds of acceptability ratings – Likert-scale questionnaires, completed by four hundred participants, and forced-choice questionnaires, filled out by one hundred and twenty participants on the Prolific platform. Our findings confirm that English, German, Polish and Czech differ in their preferences concerning non-verbal plural number agreement. These differences are context- and noun-related.
- **World Englishes:** We examine distributive plural and singular uses in selected World Englishes, focusing on verbal phrasemes, namely, *change one's life*, *change one's mind*, *find one's way*, *learn one's lesson*, *lose one's life*, and *shake one's head* (Rudnicka & Leimgruber in preparation). This analysis combines corpus data from the *Corpus of Global Web-based English* (GloWbE) and elicited data from online-based questionnaires. One of the contexts in which we look at the results is 'free variation', seen by Brown & Miller (2013: 170) as variation in which forms can be used without any change or contrast of meaning.

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WORKSHOP 3

Expanding Horizons – Expanding Circles – Expanding Englishes

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Of the models proposed to capture the spread of and variation in English globally, Braj B. Kachru's (1985) concentric circles model is not only the foundational framework, but continues, despite recent, more complex and perhaps appropriate proposals (cf., e.g. Schneider 2003, 2007; Mair 2013; Onysko 2016; Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2017), to serve as a departure point in discussions of varieties of English worldwide. While research on the Inner Circle varieties, the so-called norm-providing Englishes, enjoys a long history, the decades since Kachru's model have seen extensive work done on the Outer Circle of postcolonial varieties. Many would, in fact, consider the field of World Englishes itself as almost entirely focused on the study of this Outer Circle.

The third and Expanding Circle, on the other hand, has traditionally received less attention by scholars in the field. There are several reasons for this, among them the lack of clearly defined communities of speakers or of a clearly identifiable colonial influence and the presence of research traditions focusing more on language teaching and acquisition in these locales. Research into English as a Lingua Franca is also traditionally sited in the Expanding Circle.

Despite the existence of individual studies (see, e.g. Buschfeld 2013; Hadikin 2014; Edwards 2016; Rüdiger 2019; Rüdiger et al. 2023), what remains missing from research on Expanding Circle Englishes is the existence of a concerted and sustained corpus-based effort to document these putative varieties, such as the one seen, for example, in the *International Corpus of English*. One of the aims of this pre-conference workshop is, therefore, to discuss the realization of an openly accessible corpus conglomerate of Expanding Circle Englishes, which would allow 1) to provide researchers with a means to compare Expanding Circle Englishes directly to each other, and 2) to share data from these contexts and make them usable beyond individual studies.

In this workshop, we want to investigate the reasons behind this gap of corpus-based research on Expanding Circle Englishes in the field of World Englishes and the steps which can be undertaken to address it. In this context, we are particularly interested in the following questions:

- What are the systematic differences in the sociolinguistic and linguistic ecologies of speech communities in the Outer and Expanding Circles?
- Is variation in Expanding Circle contexts structured differently from Outer or Inner Circle contexts?
- What are the methodological challenges for corpus compilation in the Expanding Circle? How can we address these challenges and how can we create a sustainable future for corpora of Expanding Circle Englishes?
- How do factors like global mobilities and the ubiquity of digital media influence our conceptualization of varieties of English, in particular the so-called Expanding Circle? What are the repercussions for corpus design and analysis?
- At a more theoretical level, how useful is the category 'Expanding Circle', and can we find systematicity among the Englishes spoken there, as compared to the Inner and Outer Circles?

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Words of Japanese origin in the *Oxford English Dictionary* across the history of Japanese English

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This paper presents the words of Japanese origin which have entered the *Oxford English Dictionary* throughout the history and evolution of Japanese English, putting together the details on historical background and events, language- and education-related policies, sociocultural underpinnings, and their effects on the linguistic structure, particularly, its lexical development. In the process, this paper also reevaluates Japanese English as a variety in Schneider's Dynamic Model (2003, 2007). The story begins with early English language contact in Japan until the isolationist foreign policy of the Tokugawa shogunate came into effect from 1603 to 1868. As Japan came out of isolation, English was reintroduced to the country and became an important resource in its foreign relations. Japan eventually became among the political and economic leaders as it has grappled with its unique relationship with English as a foreign language yet a truly important one. This paper also serves as a case study of how the lexicon of local variety of English is 'legitimized' in dictionaries such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* and recognized as part of general English lexicon. The paper also analyses which lexical categories and processes have been prevalent in the development of Japanese English across its history.

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Explorations on the emerging variety of English in Oman

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Oman falls within Kachru's Expanding Circle, with English serving as the country's unofficial second language after Arabic. English is considered an essential tool for modernization, progress, and science and technology (Al-Issa 2007; Berns 2019) and the widespread use of English in various sectors reflects its significance in the country, particularly in urban areas. New generations of Omanis see English as a symbol of prestige and superior social status (Al Bakri 2013). This proliferation of English results in a localization of the language to fit the sociolinguistic landscape. According to Tuzlukova & Mehta (2020), the use of an Arabized form of English has gained popularity, fostering a language that is innovatively structured and conversationally approachable.

Oman has a substantial population of non-Omani nationals (>40%), primarily migrant workers (Arabian Stories 2025). This has created a multilingual environment, with English as a key medium of communication across different linguistic groups, with migrant workers also influencing the variety of English spoken in Oman today. Although English is the medium of public communication and the workforce, it is perceived as a language that does not need to be 'internalized' or 'owned', as it has little impact on an individual's life.

Despite the complexities surrounding its roles, functions, and status, empirical research on English in Oman remains limited. This study aims to investigate these complexities and aspects, specifically highlighting the influence of Omani Arabic and other varieties of English introduced by migrants on the English spoken in Oman. The study utilizes a corpus of spoken discourse from social media platforms which are commonly used by Omanis and migrant workers, providing a comprehensive exploration of authentic linguistic practices. Furthermore, it examines how these linguistic influences shape the local variety of English. Thus, this study seeks to contribute to the field of World Englishes, particularly within the Gulf region, and to offer insights into the local variety of English.

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Phonology of Indonesian English

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Indonesian English, as part of the Expanding Circle of World Englishes, is an emerging variety shaped by linguistic transfer, phonotactic constraints, and localized adaptation. However, its segmental phonological features remain underexplored, particularly regarding systematic pronunciation patterns. While previous research has primarily examined intelligibility and perception, few studies have provided a comprehensive phonological analysis of its segmental characteristics. Understanding how Indonesian speakers realize English segmental features will contribute to the classification and contextualization of this variety within broader phonological frameworks, including phonotactic adaptation and non-native English phonology. Therefore, this study aims to investigate segmental phonological variation in Indonesian English, focusing on consonant and vowel realization and their underlying linguistic influences.

A descriptive and comparative phonetic analysis will be conducted using natural speech data from Indonesian speakers of English. The dataset, projected to total approximately 60 minutes of spoken content, will be compiled from publicly available sources to ensure a balanced representation of speakers and speech contexts. This study will investigate potential segmental features of Indonesian English, focusing on phonological patterns that have been observed in other non-native English varieties, such as consonant substitutions, final consonant devoicing, modification of consonant clusters, vowel shifts and mergers, diphthong reduction, and schwa substitution in unstressed syllables. Then, these features will be analysed through acoustic measurements and phonetic comparisons, determining whether systematic adaptation patterns emerge.

Expanding beyond variety? Challenges of categorizing and structurally describing English(es) in geolocated social media data

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Forty years ago, Kachru (1985: 29) raised scholarly attention to the linguistic challenge posed by the diffusion of English and expansion of its functional range. These developments have since accelerated, not least due to social media platforms, with wide-ranging effects for the use of English, and its linguistic description. While calls for bridging paradigm gaps and complementary approaches to ESL, EFL, ELF have repeatedly been voiced (Mukherjee & Hundt 2011; Schneider 2012; Jenkins 2018), models of and studies on World Englishes continue to distinguish variety types and to outline systematic structural differences between them. However, the use of English in the Expanding Circle is not necessarily bound to a political entity, e.g. a nation, but encompasses vast populations of users dispersed over geographical regions (Kachru 1986: 13) who may build multiple (transnational) networks with English as a shared repertoire. Their motivation for using English thus depends on many individual and global factors and the lack of a unifying local driving force, such as a collective identity, complexifies how variation in their language is structured.

To disentangle some of these complexities, we explore geolocated social media data from 29 cities around the world posted around New Year's Eve 2021. The proportion of English per location is a first indication of its role in the linguistic ecology. Using NLP methods, we are able to study correlations of topic and language choice and thereby detect potential domain-specific reasons for using English on social media. By zooming in on global and local English discourses, we assess whether systematic differences between places traditionally categorized as belonging to the inner, outer and Expanding Circle can be detected in the virtual space. While we find traces of local linguistic and cultural constructions, the question arises to what extent these constitute variety-specific features.

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Expanding horizons in World Englishes research: Introducing the xE+ Network

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Even though efforts to model English varieties have advanced to ever more sophisticated frameworks, Braj B. Kachru's (1985) concentric circles model (conceptualizing varieties of English into the Inner, Outer, or Expanding Circle) remains a terminological anchor point in the field of World Englishes. Retaining Kachru's terminology, we can observe that not all Englishes are treated equally in the linguistic research landscape (cf. Tupas 2015 on the notion of 'unequal Englishes'). While Inner Circle Englishes as traditional arbiters of norm provision are often considered the 'basis' of work on varieties of English, Outer Circle Englishes (aka 'Postcolonial Englishes' or 'New Englishes') have seen extensive research efforts since the publication of Kachru's seminal work. The Expanding Circle, however, has received less attention from scholars in the field. There are several reasons for this, among them the lack of clearly defined communities of speakers or of a clearly identifiable Anglophone colonial influence, the presence of research traditions focusing more on language teaching and acquisition in these locales, and the relegation of Expanding Circle research to the English as a Lingua Franca domain.

In this talk, we introduce a concerted effort to bring Expanding Circle Englishes to the limelight of World Englishes research: the xE+ Research Network. xE+ brings together researchers with interests in regional settings that are traditionally considered part of the Expanding Circle (i.e. locales where English has no official function and which are usually considered non-postcolonial in nature). The network aims to facilitate the transfer of knowledge on Expanding Circle Englishes, to problematize the distinction from other variety types and the use of Inner Circle Englishes as a basis for comparison, and to create a research agenda that takes into account transnational developments related to the variation of English world-wide. While conceptually corpus-based in nature, xE+ is open to other methodological approaches to Expanding Circle Englishes.

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English in Brazil: Initiating corpus-based research from a World Englishes perspective

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Research on English in Brazil, as in many other Expanding Circle contexts, has tended to focus on issues concerning second language acquisition as well as the role of English in teaching and learning, with recent studies also exploring perspectives that consider English as an international language (Rajagopalan & Rajagopalan 2005; Finardi 2016, 2018; Gimenez et al. 2017; Silva Jr. et al. 2024). However, studies on English in Brazil from a World Englishes perspective remain scarce, with a few notable exceptions (e.g. Friedrich 2000). While some learner corpora include sub-components featuring written and spoken Brazilian learner language (Gilquin et al. 2010; Granger et al. 2020), there is a notable absence of World Englishes-informed corpus research specifically focused on English in Brazil.

This paper aims to initiate corpus-based research on English in Brazil from a World Englishes perspective. It will address methodological issues in corpus creation, including the availability of English language data in the country. Given Brazil's significant socioeconomic disparities, knowledge and use of English in Brazil are highly stratified, with English serving as a marker of social prestige among well-educated, affluent Brazilians (Berber Sardinha 2016). Emphasis in the methodological discussion will therefore be given to the role of sociolinguistic variation in who uses English, where and in which ways, and implications for corpus design and compilation. The paper concludes by outlining potential next steps for developing a corpus of English in Brazil within a World Englishes framework.

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Expanding English in an “Outer Circle French” territory: Postcolonial and global language competition in Mauritius

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Despite the fact that Mauritius was a British colony for more than 150 years (1810–1968), the English language has not been very influential in the multilingual territory until recently. French, also brought to the country via colonization (1715–1810) and French Creole (Morisien) play the more dominant role which could, in Kachru’s (1985) terms, be placed into an ‘Outer Circle French’ situation.

Recent surveys (Rajah-Carrim 2005; Bissoonauth 2012; Ihemere 2024) have pointed out the increasing role of English which still has an ambiguous status but, due to global influences and its dominant use in the virtual domain (Auckle 2017) is on the rise and now in competition with French and also French Creole in many domains. The situation of English in Mauritius, therefore, resembles more an Expanding Circle situation even though it also has the status of an official language.

This paper will provide a first overview of the changing status and function of English in the Indian Ocean territory. It will also propose a mixed method approach which also includes Linguistic Landscape Studies and language use in virtual communities of practice to further investigate the place of English in the sociolinguistic realism of Mauritius today.

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Register variation in the Expanding Circle Englishes: Does it exist?

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English in the Expanding Circle is conventionally considered limited in range and depth and is therefore called “performance varieties” with heavy dependence on the exonormative standard. This may still hold true compared to the Inner and Outer Circle varieties; however, the range and depth of English in the Expanding Circle is expanding exponentially today. It now serves not just in international transactions, but also as a *de facto* working language in certain domestic domains. While growing attention is paid to the expanding circle given this situation, varieties in this circle are typically treated as monolithic entities and the studies on their linguistic description centre around deviant features. This study, taking Japanese English as a test case, aims to explore register variation in the Expanding Circle. A corpus of roughly 230,000 words with six genres (both spoken and written) will be used for the investigation.

Register variation refers to systematic differences in linguistic structure depending on situational contexts and communicative purposes. Since language patterns in all linguistic levels, be it lexical or grammatical, differ greatly depending on registers, describing language in use with regard to different registers is advocated as best practice (Biber 2012). In measuring development of new Englishes, stylistic heterogeneity (cf. Hundt 2011) and embracing non-standard usages (cf. Collins 2025) are proposed as signs of a well-developed variety. As such, the present study investigates the grammatical elements that are usually stylistically marked (e.g. use of complementizer *that*-retention/deletion, contractions, 1st and 2nd person pronouns, and possibility modals) as well as proportion of non-standard features across different registers. In addition to written/spoken and formal/informal contrasts, comparison between ‘agile’ and ‘uptight’ genres (Hundt & Mair 1999) in the use of innovative forms (e.g. use of progressives, proportion of *help* + bare infinitive) is also attempted. By doing so, the study sheds light on a less explored micro-sociolinguistic aspect of English in the Expanding Circle, giving a more nuanced account of the forms being used and the functions that they serve in different speech settings. It also highlights the importance of taking register into account when providing linguistic description, even for emerging varieties.

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English as and for development in Timor-Leste: Perspectives of young Timorese professionals

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Although much has been written about language(s) in development for Timor-Leste, very few have examined the perspectives of young Timorese regarding the roles of English in the continuing development of Asia's youngest nation. Anchored in the notion of language in development (Appleby 2006), this article investigates the views of eleven young Timorese professionals (YTPs) on English as and for development in the state. From a language as development lens, the YTPs reflected on the role of English in opening doors for economic growth and social mobility. They therefore encourage the furtherance of English language teaching (ELT) in Timor-Leste through local policies and international study opportunities. As a language for development, the YTPs agree that the language is necessary to support efforts towards robust local development and strong international recognition. English for development was thus viewed as an instrument for the development of other fields outside ELT. Against the backdrop of language policies that favour Portuguese and Tetun, the findings suggest that present-day YTPs continue to echo the language sentiments of 2002 when young Timorese who were at the forefront of the fight for independence favoured English as the language for economic and cultural development.

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WORKSHOP 4

Building historical corpora of World Englishes

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Historical corpora of some World Englishes varieties have already been created (Brato 2019; Unuabonah et al. 2022; Borlongan & Collins 2023), and others are in progress, enabling novel research into the diachronic development of these varieties. Likewise, the International Corpus of English (ICE) project (Greenbaum 1992; Kirk & Nelson 2018) has provided a framework for high-quality synchronic corpora of World Englishes, allowing important comparative work to be carried out. However, historical corpora of World Englishes are currently relatively limited, with uneven geographical and diachronic coverage. There is still a notable opportunity for the creation of diachronic resources for World Englishes, including material from a wider range of places and time periods.

This workshop focuses on the challenges and opportunities of building historical corpora of World Englishes, bringing together a new network of scholars working in the creation of historical World Englishes corpora to share expertise, discuss ambitions for the future, and establish common ground on good practice. The workshop is particularly aimed at those working on the digitization of historical World Englishes texts or the compilation of such digitized texts into diachronic corpora.

The focus of the workshop will be Outer Circle and Expanding Circle varieties. Those working on historical corpora of Inner Circle varieties are also welcome to attend the workshop and participate in the discussions.

The OED's participation in the event marks a key stage in its ambitious project to create a single, large, and long-scale Historical Corpus of English. The inclusion of historical materials from World Englishes varieties in this corpus is a vital objective of this project, which aims to increase the reach and impact of projects to digitize this material.

Questions to be addressed will include:

- What types of texts can be included in corpora of World Englishes?
- What materials are available and how can these texts be accessed?
- How can we overcome any challenges in accessing and digitizing material for historical corpora of World Englishes?
- What limitations can historical corpora of World Englishes expect to meet? For example, limits to the amount of material held in archives or in the time periods for which we have written material representing a particular variety.

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Diachronic Corpora of Philippine English and Japanese English

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Since the landmark work of Leech, Hundt, Mair, and Smith in 2009, which employed short-term diachronic corpus-based methodology in analysing variation and change between American English and British English, it has been compelling to extend the analysis to other varieties of English, particularly those in the Outer and Expanding Circle Englishes to ascertain whether similar patterns of variation and change are discernible in those Englishes. However, conducting such analyses have not been straightforward, primarily because the very few English language corpora from Outer and Expanding Circle countries, and, not to mention, the difficulty of compiling such. The Philippine parallel to the *Brown Corpus* (Phil=Brown) is one of the earliest diachronic corpora from an Outer Circle country, compiled at De La Salle University in Manila, the Philippines in the year 2011 and made to represent Philippine English of the 1960s. Used alongside the written texts of the Philippine component of the *International Corpus of English* (ICE-PHI) to represent Philippine English of the 1990s, it is possible to track variation and change within a 30-year period. Compiling corpora of Outer Circle Englishes is not easy, whether they are meant to represent English language use in contemporary times but most especially in the past, for two main reasons: English may not necessarily be used in all registers because there are other languages for such registers and some materials are not well-preserved, particularly publications more than 50 years old. Expectedly, it is even more challenging to compile corpora for Expanding Circle Englishes because registers where English is used is even more limited even though some Expanding Circle countries would have preserved their English language materials better than some Outer Circle Englishes. At present, the *Diachronic Corpus of Japanese English* (DCJE) is being compiled at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, focusing on materials printed in the twentieth century. In this presentation, we will discuss the method of compilation, challenges, and initial analyses of the Philippine parallel to the *Brown Corpus* and the *Diachronic Corpus of Japanese English*.

Introducing the *Corpus of Historical Indian English*

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Contemporary Indian English (IndE) is a relatively well-documented postcolonial variety of English (e.g. Davydova 2012; Fuchs 2012, 2016; Parviainen 2012; Koch & Bernaisch 2013; Fuchs & Maxwell 2015; Sridhar 2020). However, like many postcolonial Englishes, little is known about its diachronic development due to a lack of available data: Historical linguistic data from IndE is limited mostly to lexical innovations from nineteenth- and twentieth-century dictionaries (Brown 1852; Carnegie 1877; Whitworth 1885; Yule & Burnell 1968[1886]).

The *Corpus of Historical Indian English* (CoHind) aims to fill this gap as a diachronic newspaper corpus that enables empirical investigations into developments in IndE from the late eighteenth century to the present. Additionally, the corpus is structured to distinguish between the settler strand (STL), spoken by the population of British origin in colonial India, and the indigenous strand (IDG), spoken by the population of local origin, allowing for nuanced analyses of internal differentiation within IndE.

CoHind consists of newspaper language, which, despite its formal nature, has proved a reliable source for studying linguistic variation and change (e.g. Bernaisch et al. 2011; Hoffmann et al. 2011). The targeted composition of the corpus provides a total of 6.9 million words from newspaper articles, editorials, and letters to the editor across three subcorpora: (i) IndE STL (1.8 million words, 30-year intervals 1781–1931), (ii) IndE IDG (2.4 million words, 30-year intervals 1811–2017), and (iii) a British English (BrE) reference corpus (2.7 million words, 20-year intervals 1781–2017). The digitalization of the data has been tested with manual transcription, OCR, and Large language models (LLMs). Automatic transcription has faced some challenges, such as different conventions for characters like the ampersand; however, especially using LLMs appears promising for saving time and resources during the digitalization process. Corpus compilation follows the principles of agile corpus development (Voormann & Gut 2008), uses XML-based format and the open-source tool Pacx. CoHind will be made available to researchers through the CLARIN-D research infrastructure.

A pilot study (Fuchs 2020) demonstrated the usefulness of CoHind in furthering a diachronic analysis of IndE by exploring the use of the progressive aspect in the subcorpora in 1900 and in 2000. The findings showed that, while the overall frequency of the progressive increased diachronically in both IndE and BrE, specific constructions like perfect progressives (*has been working*) showed more complex trajectories in each strand of IndE and in BrE. These results indicate that IDG and STL were structurally distinct in 1900 and that the STL variety appears to occupy an intermediate position between IDG and BrE, which is in accordance with this community's identity at the time.

CoHind will allow researchers to test theoretical models of the development of postcolonial Englishes on IndE, particularly with respect to historical processes of standardization and internal differentiation (Fuchs & Gut 2016; Mukherjee 2007). By providing a robust, diachronic dataset, the corpus takes a significant step toward a more comprehensive understanding of IndE's historical trajectory—and thus also the background that shaped this variety's contemporary state.

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Postcolonial internationalisms in the OED: A new stratum of the English lexicon?

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In the wake of its digitization (OED, 2nd ed. and CD-ROM) and eventual migration online (3rd ed.), the *Oxford English Dictionary* has developed from a dictionary into a lexicographical knowledge database for the Digital Humanities, providing data for research in linguistics, literature, cultural studies, history, and other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. The first efforts to use it as a corpus were undertaken in historical linguistics, focusing on issues such as lexical change, semantic change and grammaticalization (Hoffmann 2005). A subsequent effort on the part of the editors to decolonize the OED by increasing coverage of the New Englishes (Salazar 2021) has opened the data up to inspection from a World Englishes perspective, too.

The present paper surveys recent additions to the OED from West Africa, the Caribbean, and African American Vernacular English. The majority of them are most actively used in the regions of their geographical origin and gain additional international currency by being taken up in external writing about these regions and communities. A significant minority, however, rapidly spreads into active usage internationally and sometimes even globally, and is sometimes adopted into languages other than English in the process. Examples are *woke* (African American), *bashment* (Jamaican), or *japa* (Nigerian). This spread is motivated by a range of factors, such as the association of these lexical items with internationally popular music genres or subcultures and transnational activism for social causes. Wider currency is often associated with semantic changes and further lexical creativity on the basis of these items (e.g. *wokewashing*, *Afro-bashment*, *japa syndrome*). In recognition of comparable developments in the colonial period (compare, for example, originally Indian colonial internationalisms such as *bungalow*, *thug* or *loot*), I will refer to this new class of lexical innovations as ‘postcolonial internationalisms’.

As regards corpus construction, a close analysis of the sources of the OED citations for known sets of postcolonial internationalisms can identify typical channels for their dissemination and thus help focus the search for further instances of the phenomenon.

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The *Oxford Corpus of Historical English*: Developing a new global resource for research into modern and historical English

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The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) is in the early stages of planning a new, large, high-quality corpus of historical English, with a dual purpose: to facilitate work on editing the OED, and—in collaboration with partners in the wider academic community—to develop a key new resource for scholarly research across the full geographical and chronological span of English. The project has an ambitious scope, bringing together into a single resource English language data from 1500 to the present day, covering as many varieties of the language in as much historical depth as possible.

This new corpus project seeks to fill the gaps in data that restrict the ability of researchers in World Englishes to track long-term linguistic trends and carry out cross-varietal diachronic investigations. It aims to vastly increase the diversity of high-quality corpus data available to World Englishes scholars by providing such data not only for established, high-resource varieties with a large number of speakers, but also for low-resource varieties spoken by smaller populations. This will enable ground-breaking and innovative research projects not only in lexicography and linguistics, but also in fields such as history, literature, and social sciences.

Historical sources for the new corpus will be selected to meet different criteria for historical and geographical coverage, with additional factors such as genre, domain, and register also informing sourcing decisions. It will be created in collaboration with various individual and institutional partners to ensure a high level of data quality to cover a wide range of research use cases.

The large scale of the project brings technical challenges which will be approached with a combination of traditional and novel natural language processing methods, which could include techniques based on machine learning and large language models. Areas being actively considered include lemmatization, part-of-speech tagging, semantic tagging at the word level, and automatic domain recognition at the text level. The methods chosen to perform these NLP tasks will be selected for and adapted to the different periods and geographical areas represented in the corpus.

A prototype of the new historical corpus will be created initially for internal use, with the breadth of the content to be built out in the following years. Eventually, the corpus will be made available alongside the OED.com platform, allowing people querying the dictionary to access additional corpus-based information, and vice versa, for a richer user experience. The new corpus will be transformative in enabling new research into the historical development of different varieties of English, as well as in improving the accuracy and diversity of the OED's editorial work.

Genre development, comparability and representativeness: Rethinking the structure of diachronic corpora using insights from the compilation of the *Diachronic Corpus of Hong Kong English* (DC-HKE)

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The *Diachronic Corpus of Hong Kong English* (DC-HKE) was first designed parallel to the LOB-family corpora to ensure comparability, both regarding the periods and the genres included, to British and American English and other historical corpora following the same design. Thus, the DC-HKE covers four main periods (1928-1932, 1958-1962, 1988-1992, 2018-2022) and integrates diverse genres, including press (reportage, editorials, and reviews), academic writing, and fiction. This initial focus on comparability, however, poses various challenges regarding representativeness and genre delineation. In terms of representativeness, the genres initially selected for LOB are not necessarily those that have been produced in English throughout colonial and postcolonial history (such as fiction). For Hong Kong, we decided to include business correspondence as a genre present from the beginnings of the colony and important point of sociolinguistic contact between British expats and Chinese locals. However, the absence of this genre from the LOB-family means that additional data of the parental variety has to be collected for projects investigating variety-specific developments, especially since the genre itself is highly dynamic and has changed considerably over time.

The question of genre development, delineation and specification in historical corpora of world Englishes also arises for material traditionally included in such corpora, such as newspaper writing. The three-fold distinction between press reports, editorials and reviews present in LOB seems to have been intuitive for the compilers, but the inclusion of corresponding material for Hong Kong, especially in earlier periods, is less straightforward: As articles are not necessarily externally marked accordingly, the classification would have to be based on linguistic features instead, which, however, bears the danger of circularity when the corpus is used for register analyses.

Finally, the restriction to certain periods and pre-defined genres might lead to the exclusion of material that is either unique to the concrete sociohistorical context in which it was produced, or whose preservation is due to some chance circumstance. In both cases, comparable material might not be readily available for other varieties, but its exclusion would mean to neglect valuable sources for research. For Hong Kong, for instance, we have access to the issues of the school magazine of Queen's College dating from 1899 to 2009. Thus, a different approach for building historical corpora is to consider any source instead of trying to fill up pre-defined categories, which would, however, run counter to the idea of comparability. Our approach currently entails both: On the one hand, we are compiling, processing and annotating material fitting the LOB categories, as far as available, even though we extended or modified the genres included to better fit the Hong Kong context. On the other hand, we also curate additional material, regarding both additional periods and additional text types, based on project-specific research questions. Information on such material regarding period, genre and available metadata could be fed into an international database to facilitate locating (potentially comparable) material in other varieties and inspire collaborations.

Beyond newspapers: Increasing the range of written text-types in the *Historical Corpus of English in Trinidad*

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In recent years, World Englishes has undergone a historical turn, facilitated in part by the construction of historical corpora of World Englishes such as the Historical Corpus of English in Ghana (Brato 2018) and the *Historical Corpus of English in Nigeria* (Unuabonah et al. 2022). These corpora contain only written English, due in no small part to the lack of availability of historical spoken data and the attendant challenges involved in accessing recordings where they do exist. Important as these corpora are to enhancing scholarly understandings of the development of varieties of English around the world, they fall short in two regards: they are heavily (though by no means solely!) reliant on text types found in newspapers, and so risk masking the extent of variation in writing as varieties move towards what Schneider (2007) has called endonormative stabilization; and the texts they include often date from the mid-twentieth century, despite the fact that the British Empire was at its height during the Victorian era (1837-1901).

This paper introduces the *Historical Corpus of English in Trinidad* (HiCE-Trini), a corpus of spoken and written data spanning from 1845 to 1995. The corpus includes a number of text types not normally included in historical corpora: political manifestos and pamphlets, personal letters, advertisements, and song lyrics. This departure from the traditional text-types offers creative opportunities for researching earlier forms of Trinidadian English but simultaneously has implications for comparability across varieties of English. This paper thus considers the challenges of expanding the range of text-types beyond newspaper texts focussing on issues of accessibility, digitization, and comparability. It addresses complications that arise when authorship is brought to the fore, questioning what counts as English in Trinidad and who counts as a user of Trinidadian English. In raising these issues, the compilation of HiCE-Trini forces scholars to interrogate concepts that have hitherto been taken for granted- settler, indigenous, and adstrate groups (Schneider 2007)- and the implications our understanding of these concepts has had on World Englishes as a discipline.

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GENERAL SESSION

Humour as a strategy of denigrating dialect speakers: Investigating the historical enregisterment of non-standard American English

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In my current qualitative studies of nineteenth century non-standard American English (as documented in a variety of texts published in newspapers of the time, cf. Anderwald submitted), it is surprising how many articles employ humour as a strategy. On the other hand, we know from literary studies that “vernacular humour” was a typical American genre that emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century (cf. e.g. Blair & McDavid 1983), so its appearance in newspapers should not be wholly unexpected. I will argue in this talk that dialect humour was almost always used antagonistically – that is, to create or strengthen a perceived divide between reader and dialect speaker, to denigrate dialect speakers, to ridicule and Other them (for an overview of the different functions of humour, cf. Brock 2017). Over the course of the nineteenth century, this function of humour seems to intensify, as my analysis of a few typical examples from the period will illustrate. A second interesting question is, how were readers led towards an interpretation of a text as “humorous”, especially in the printed environment of a newspaper where “serious” (non-humorous) texts dominated the pages? As my analysis will show, strategies encompassed typography, explicit headlines (“humorous”, “humour”) or editorial guidance, but also more indirect means such as stereotypical names and behaviour, and also of course language. In this way an analysis of dialect humour texts can shed light on the groups of speakers that were enregistered as speaking various kinds of non-standard English, and imbued with increasingly negative social meaning. Humour essentially supported this enregisterment process effectively, but served as a figleaf (in the sense of Saul 2024) at the same time, making **the** texts appear rather harmless, “just a joke”.

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Bridging Psychophysiology and Linguistics: Insights into Japanese students' English reading and anxiety using eye tracking and GSR

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Learning a second language, particularly English, can be a daunting experience for many Japanese students. The unfamiliar linguistic structures and orthography often lead to challenges that go beyond grammar and vocabulary—they create significant emotional barriers, such as anxiety, that can hinder progress. This study explores how reading anxiety interacts with comprehension, focusing on the real-time reading behaviours and emotional responses of Japanese learners of English. Using eye tracking and galvanic skin response (GSR) technologies, this research sheds light on how students engage with texts and how their minds and bodies react during the process.

In this research, participants were asked to read English passages of varying difficulty while their eye movements and physiological responses were recorded. Eye tracking provided detailed insights into their reading strategies, including how long they spent on specific words or phrases and whether they revisited certain sections of the text. At the same time, GSR measurements captured subtle changes in their skin conductance, a reliable indicator of stress or anxiety. Together, these tools offered a dynamic picture of both the cognitive and emotional demands placed on learners.

Early findings reveal that anxiety often accompanies linguistic complexity. Students exhibited longer fixation times and frequent regressions when tackling more challenging texts, suggesting moments of confusion or uncertainty. These behaviours were mirrored by spikes in GSR, particularly when comprehension questions were introduced. Interestingly, students with higher English proficiency showed more confidence, navigating the text more efficiently and with less physiological stress. These patterns highlight how individual differences—such as language background and familiarity with English—shape the reading experience.

This study is more than an exploration of data; it's about understanding the human experience behind the numbers. By combining psychophysiology with linguistics, we can delve deeper into the factors that make reading in a second language such a multifaceted task. Importantly, the findings emphasize the need for educators to address both the technical and emotional sides of language learning. For instance, creating classroom environments that reduce anxiety while introducing manageable linguistic challenges could greatly enhance students' engagement and confidence.

The insights from this research have practical implications for language teachers, curriculum designers, and educational policymakers. They underscore the importance of tailored teaching strategies that acknowledge not only what students need to learn but also how they feel while learning. By showing how tools like eye tracking and GSR can provide a window into the cognitive and emotional worlds of learners, this study aims to inspire linguists and educators alike to adopt more holistic approaches to understanding and supporting language acquisition.

Gamification in the language classroom: Investigating its impact on learner motivation

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Gamification has gained attention for its potential to enhance learner motivation (Hamari et al. 2014). By embedding game-like elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, and narrative-driven quests, gamified environments aim to foster a more interactive and enjoyable learning experience. While previous studies suggest gamification can be an effective pedagogical tool, its impact on language learner motivation remains a subject of debate (Li et al. 2023; Liu 2025). Some research supports its motivational benefits, while others raise concerns about sustainability and differing effects on learners. This study investigates the effects of gamification on motivation in a Japanese university English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom through a two-stage quasi-experimental design, while also considering its cultural, contextual, and linguistic dimensions.

The study involved two intact university EFL classes, each with approximately 30 students. In the first stage, one class served as the experimental group, receiving a gamified curriculum that included structured game mechanics embedded in regular classroom activities. These elements encouraged participation and progress tracking. The other class functioned as a control group, following a traditional instructional approach without gamified elements. After one semester, the groups switched conditions, allowing both classes to experience gamification and serving as their own controls in the second stage of the study. Data included Self-Determination Theory (SDT)-based surveys, classroom observations, and open-ended student feedback.

Results from the study do not support the hypothesis that gamification significantly increases motivation among lower-proficiency, less motivated language learners compared to a non-gamified approach. Quantitative survey data showed no statistically significant difference in motivation levels between the gamified and non-gamified groups. However, qualitative feedback revealed that students generally enjoyed the gamified curriculum and identified positive aspects such as increased engagement and a sense of achievement. These contrasting findings suggest several possible explanations. One explanation is that gamification is not superior to traditional instruction but equally effective, offering a viable option for educators. Another possibility is that the specific treatment may not have been extensive enough to generate measurable motivational gains. Cultural and contextual factors may also have influenced students' responses.

In addition to motivational outcomes, the study raises important questions about the linguistic dimensions of gamified learning. The fantasy-based narrative introduced a distinct classroom genre, shifting both teacher input and student output toward language features atypical of conventional oral communication classes. For example, tasks favoured expressive and goal-oriented discourse over everyday transactional dialogue, altering the lexico-grammatical and pragmatic profile of classroom English. These shifts suggest that gamification also mediates the types of English learners use—an area warranting further linguistic analysis. This study contributes to research on gamification by offering both pedagogical insights and a platform for exploring emerging classroom discourse genres in EFL settings.

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Don't worry, I will take care of this: First date payment negotiation sequences and gender in Nigeria

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Since its inception, variational pragmatic scholarship has enriched our understanding of pragmatic variation (Schneider & Barron 2008), particularly on pragmatic variation across pluricentric varieties. Nevertheless, to date, such regionally-based research has primarily centred on Inner Circle varieties of English, with research on Outer Circle varieties or on comparing Inner and Outer varieties only just emerging. In addition, analyses at the interface of regional pragmatics and social pragmatics, focusing, for instance, on the interaction of region and gender, continue to represent a research *desideratum*. Also, on the analytical level, variational pragmatic scholarship has predominantly focused on the actional and formal levels, with further levels, such as the interactional level, focusing on speech act sequences, representing a research gap (Barron, in press).

Taking a variational pragmatic perspective, the present study addresses these overriding research gaps for scholarship on Outer Circle varieties of English on an interactional level, while also taking gender variation into account. In doing so, the study takes the case of payment negotiation sequences in a heterosexual first date context in Nigerian English. As such, it also adds to pragmatic scholarship on Nigerian English, most pragmatic scholarship on this variety having previously focused on the actional and formal level (e.g. Gut et al. 2024; Westphal 2024), with variational studies on the interactional level lacking. Specifically, the study investigates how interactants in Nigeria navigate the broader payment event, what role gender plays in payment negotiation, and how payment negotiation patterns in Nigeria compare with previous research focusing on the Inner Circle variety of British English, also from a gender perspective. The payment negotiation interactions analysed are elicited from 45 Yoruba speakers of Nigerian English using a free discourse completion task (Barron 2003). This format, rather than representing actual verbal behaviour, activates a dating frame, revealing cognitive conceptualizations of appropriate verbal behaviour constructed by society over time. The quantitative analysis focuses on uses, sequencing and realizations of the speech acts of payment offers, suggestions to share expenses and payment requests. Findings reveal notable sociopragmatic and discursive gender variation within Nigerian English in the uses of payment offers and suggestions to share expenses. Furthermore, a comparison of findings in relation to earlier studies on payment offers in British English on the basis of reality TV interactions (Barron 2025a, 2025b) shows variation on the sociopragmatic level in relation to speech act occurrence, on the discursive level concerning sequencing patterns and on the pragmatolinguistic level in the preferred realizations of offers and suggestions to share expenses. Such gender and cross-varietal variation are suggested to have implications for gender awareness education and for cross-cultural understanding.

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The tortoise and the hare: Evolving modal constructions in Singapore and British English

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The English spoken in Singapore (SgE) has undergone significant grammatical restructuring, largely influenced by the other languages spoken on the island, e.g. Mandarin Chinese, Malay and Tamil. The modal system of SgE has also seen a distinctive development compared to its historical lexifier, i.e. British English (BrE).

Past studies have attempted to identify the motivations for this change, such as substrate influence. For example, Bao (2010) argues that the restriction of *must* to deontic uses in SgE mirrors the Mandarin deontic particle *bìxū*, which conveys obligation but has not grammaticalized to epistemic meanings. However, recent hypotheses have proposed a broader explanation. Basile (2024), for example, maintains that some of the over-generalized uses of modal verbs in contact varieties can be understood not only as a result of substrate influence but also as a reenactment of earlier diachronic stages in the lexifier. The frequent non-epistemic use of *must* in present-day SgE can be seen as a replica of older dynamic/generic meanings of *must*, observed in the grammaticalization history of the construction since Early Middle English times (Gregersen 2020).

The present study aims to test Basile’s (2024) findings by studying to what extent British and Singaporean (semi-)modals of necessity (i.e. *must*, *have to*, and *need to*) are different and whether these differences are evolving with time. To do so, we analyse the behaviour of modals by comparing traditional datasets from the 1990s (*The International Corpus of English*) with newer blog corpora from the 2000s-2010s (*Flowerpod Corpus*, *HardwareZone Corpus*, and *GloWbE*). Specifically, we explore how modals in SgE and BrE have changed over time in expressing different functional categories (dynamic, deontic, epistemic) and in their collocation with different verb types.

Through a combination of Multiple Correspondence Analysis and collocation analyses, our findings confirm the grammaticalization trajectory predicted by Basile (2024). We show that the dynamic use of *must* in Singapore English tends to attract verbs that are more commonly associated with the semi-modals *have to* and *need to* in BrE, a pattern not found in other varieties of English (see Figure 1). Additionally, we demonstrate that, by retaining more dynamic uses, SgE *must* remains less grammaticalized compared to both BrE and other post-colonial varieties such as Indian English (IndE) and Hong Kong English (HKE), where this modal is used more frequently for epistemic functions. These results highlight the significant differences in the level and speed of grammaticalization among different varieties of English.

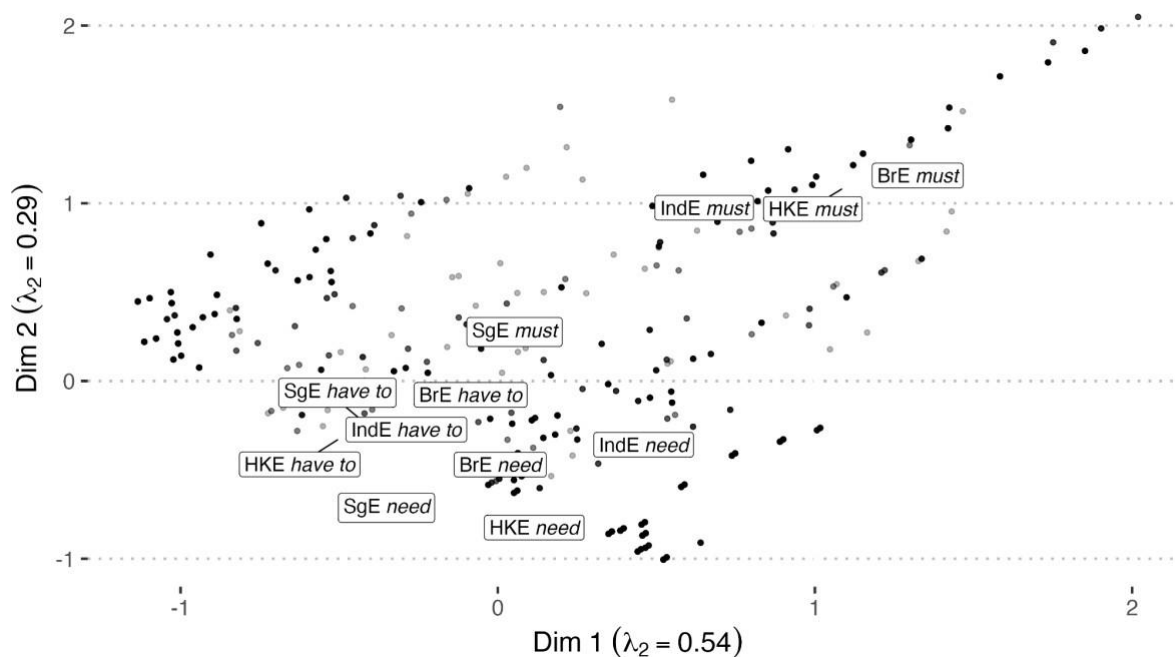


Figure 1: Multiple Correspondence Analysis of three modal verbs in different varieties of English (SgE, BrE, HKE, IndE, 1990s, ICE corpora). SgE *must* behaves more like the other modals than *must* in the other varieties.

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Mutual predictability of English compound prominence and compound semantics

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According to reference grammars of English, there are compounds that are left-stressed, e.g. *Oxford Street* and *opera singer*, while others are right-stressed, e.g. *Oxford Road* and *summer dress* (Bauer et al. 2013, chapter 19). However, a large body of empirical research has shown that, far from being categorical, perceived compound prominence varies probabilistically. Factors that have been shown to influence prominence include a range of lexical-semantic characteristics such as the semantic relation between the two constituent nouns, the semantic categories of the constituents, and their degree of semantic specificity (e.g. Plag et al. 2008; Bell & Plag 2012). It is also known that prominence patterns vary between speakers and contexts, but no previous study has attempted to quantify both contextual and lexical effects on the pronunciation of compound nouns or to explain how speakers make use of them.

Our study uses spoken compound tokens from the *Boston University Radio Speech Corpus* (Ostendorf et al. 1996). Part of this corpus consists of a set of news stories read in laboratory conditions by professional newsreaders. The stories contain many compound nouns and, because every speaker reads the same set of stories, the corpus is well suited for teasing apart the effects of interspeaker variation, context, and lexical semantics on the pronunciation of these compounds. We represent the prosodic form of the tokens as smoothed pitch and intensity contours obtained with the rPraat package in R (Bořil & Skarnitzl 2016). We then use a type of statistical model, the generalized additive model, to predict the shape of these contours from the compound, the speaker, and the context in which the token occurs. Finally, we use a computational learning model (the Discriminative Lexicon model; Baayen et al. 2019) to test the extent to which associations between context-specific prosodic form and context-specific meaning can be learnt.

The variability of stress assignment in compounds has been a test case in the debate about the nature and role of symbolic rules, associative networks and analogical mechanisms in the organization of language. The present study provides first evidence suggesting that the acoustic signal on the one hand, and context-dependent semantics on the other are closely connected. Using only prosodic information from a form's signal, one can predict its semantics at above chance level. It is therefore possible that human language also involves a direct mapping between the speech signal and semantics, and that abstract categories such as the semantic relations and semantic classes used in previous compound research are emergent from this mapping.

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Probabilistic variability in clausal verb complementation in Inner and Outer Circle varieties of English

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This study investigates the clausal complementation profile of DENY across four varieties of Present-Day English: Pakistani, Indian, American, and British English. While previous research, such as Cuyckens et al. (2014), has investigated probabilistic complement-clause variation for the predicates REMEMBER, REGRET and DENY, primarily within British English, this study expands the scope by addressing potential differences between Inner Circle and Outer Circle varieties. Studies by García Castro (2018) and Romasanta (2020) have demonstrated that complement-clause variation in REMEMBER and REGRET varies across World Englishes, influenced by sociolinguistic and structural factors. Building on these findings, the present corpus-based study focuses specifically on DENY (as in *She denied destroying evidence/that she had destroyed evidence*). It compares the four aforementioned varieties and examines the influence of intra-linguistic factors such as subject coreferentiality, complexity of the complement clause, type of subject in the complement clause, and temporal relation between the main clause and the complement clause.

The primary research questions of this study are as follows:

1. What is the complementation profile of DENY in Pakistani, Indian, American, and British English?
2. What are the differences between the Inner Circle and Outer Circle varieties regarding the complementation patterns of DENY?
3. Which intra-linguistic predictors determine the non-categorical complement-clause variation of DENY in Pakistani, Indian, British and American English and how does their significance vary in the different varieties?

To address these research questions, the study analyses the frequency and distribution of the different clausal complement patterns of DENY in the four varieties. Specifically, it investigates finite versus non-finite complement clauses (CCs) and, within finite CCs, variation between *that*-CCs and zero-CCs. The source of data is the *Global Web-based English Corpus* (GloWbE; Davies 2013). A random sample of 5,000 examples was analysed for American and British English, and all available examples for Pakistani (5,785) and Indian English (6,773). This study employs a quantitative approach, specifically logistic regression analysis, to measure the impact of intra-linguistic factors on the variation of the complement clauses of DENY.

The preliminary findings indicate that while the variation between finite and non-finite complement clauses shows no significant correlation with Inner or Outer Circle classification, the distribution of *that*-clauses versus zero-clauses is influenced by variety. Zero-CCs were found to be less common in Outer Circle varieties, probably due to their lower explicitness and transparency (Steger & Schneider 2012). Logistic regression analysis confirms that subject coreferentiality, complexity of the complement clause, and temporal relation are significant predictors of variation, with different effects across varieties. Furthermore, through manual filtering of examples I have identified potentially innovative patterns, such as DENY followed by prepositional phrases, as well as archaic uses of the verb, particularly in Outer Circle varieties.

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Form-to-function mapping in British and American grammar

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Although differences in British and American grammar are, in general, less well researched than differences on such other levels as phonology, lexicology or orthography, the last 25 years have seen an array of research on grammatical differences between British and American English (BrE and AmE, respectively) (for an overview, see e.g. Tottie 2002; Algeo 2006; Rohdenburg & Schlüter 2009; Mondorf (forthcoming)). Apart from highlighting contrasts related to individual domains of grammar (e.g. the use of the subjunctive or concord with collective nouns), several studies have suggested generalizations that may systematically account for grammatical differences between the two varieties of English (see e.g. Mondorf forthcoming).

Strikingly, all of these generalizations operate on the level of forms only. To give an example, the *to*-infinitive following *help* as in *help the woman to cross the street* is more explicit than the bare infinitive because it contains more material. In this paper, I claim that, useful as these generalizations undoubtedly are, they cannot sufficiently account for all types of contrasts. For some of them, it is necessary to look at the relationship between form and meaning (or: function). In this paper, I will introduce form-to-function mapping, a parameter originally advanced by Hawkins (1986) for the generalization across differences between English and German, to the study of differences between British and American English.

In this paper, I will demonstrate the need for a new generalization on the basis of two tense contrasts: for one, this concerns the use of the present perfect and the preterite (e.g. *has gone* vs. *went*), for another this is the contrast between the use of the past perfect and the preterite (e.g. *had gone* vs. *went*). While the present perfect is traditionally associated with contexts that relate the event described ‘more directly to the present time’ (Quirk et al. 1985: 192), AmE is almost as ready to use the preterite in these environments (see e.g. Elsness 2009). In contexts that express anteriority, traditionally the domain of the past perfect, the past perfect is nowadays often replaced by the preterite, a tendency which has been shown to be even more pronounced in AmE than in BrE (see Kleppel et al. 2021).

In this paper, I will present large-scale corpus analyses on these two tense contrasts using the *Corpus of Global Web-based English* (GloWbE). The analyses will reveal how close the relationship between form and meaning (function) is in each of the two varieties, with the variety that has a closer relationship between form and meaning more iconic than the other (for the notion of iconicity, see e.g. Bolinger 1977; Haiman 1980, 1983; Givón 1985; Rohdenburg 2003; Berg forthcoming). My paper is rounded off by explanations provided for such a divergent behaviour. Here, I draw on the idea that languages are not only iconic to various degrees but they are also economic in the sense that they cut down on their formal inventory where possible (see e.g. Croft 2003). It seems that this trade-off between iconicity and economy is not only language- but also variety- specific.

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Exploring innovations in the religious prose: Ephemeral CCC adverbial subordinators as a case in point

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It is generally alleged that religious prose is conservative and resistant to language change and linguistic innovation (cf. Barber 1997; Nevalainen 2006: 135; Kohonen et al. 2011). This paper is concerned with the impact that an innovation such as the ephemeral causal, conditional and concessive adverbial subordinators, the so-called CCC subordinators, exemplified in (1)-(3) had in Early Modern English religious prose.

- (1) Good men and woymen, þys day ys called yn holy chyrch þe Sonenday yn þe Passyon; **for bycause þat** our Lord Ihesu Cryst began hys passyon þys day. (CMMIRK-M34,110.3013)
- (2) **If so be that** he sette his herte the lasse upon oure Lord Jhesu Crist, certeyn it is a synne; (CMCTPARS-M3,302.C1.523)
- (3) **How be it** this texte after the letter is understonde of Crystys cote without seme, yet conveyently it may be understonde of every mannys lyfe or soule – (CMINNOCE-M4,11.196)

The inventory of English CCC subordinators has been subject to striking historical changes. For instance, *because*, a French-derived variant introduced in Middle English, made considerable inroads in Early Modern English, and replaced the older *for (that)* in causal clauses (cf. Molencki 2008; Lenker 2010). In the domain of conditionality, *if* has historically been the conditional adverbial subordinator par excellence, from Old English to Present Day English. As regards concessivity, there are two prototypical adverbial subordinators: *though* and *although*. *Though*, the oldest concessive conjunction, served as the base for *although*, a near synonym of *though* from the fourteenth century onwards (Rissanen 1999: 350). In addition to these changes among prototypical CCC adverbial subordinators, the CCC inventories witnessed another phenomenon: the addition of new adverbial subordinators whose history is known to be ‘ephemeral’, that is, some adverbial subordinators added to the CCC inventories in Late Middle English or, more commonly, Early Modern English, did not have a lasting effect and eventually died out (Kortmann 1997; Blanco-García 2017).

Earlier research has shown genre to play a key role for the choice of conjunctions, for instance with Early Modern English Bible texts favouring *because* more strongly than philosophical writing or trial texts, both of which rely on conservative *for* (cf. Rissanen 1998: 398; Claridge & Walker 2001: 37). Using mainly data from the *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English* (Bible and sermons) and the *Corpus of English Religious Prose* (COERP), which consists of the four genres: prayers, catechisms, sermons and religious biographies, this paper examines: (i) the overall quantitative distribution of the selected ephemeral CCC connectives in the material across time, including a comparison with the prototypical subordinators of each semantic relation; (ii) a qualitative analysis of the selected ephemeral subordinators; (iii) to what extent the religious prose was at the forefront in the use of ephemeral connectives; and (iv) if all religious genres have responded to these innovations similarly.

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The passive alternation in spoken North American English

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Variation in the choice of BE and GET (examples (1) and (2)) to form passive verb phrases is a well-attested phenomenon in English (Collins 1996; Schwarz 2015, 2017; Fehring 2022). Yet, large-scale, quantitative studies of this variable have been lacking until recently. This is due to difficulties in formally circumscribing the variable context (true passives as opposed to formally identical structures like statal or inchoative expressions as in examples (3) and (4)) as well as operationalizing some of the hypothesized constraints on the variation, such as the alleged adversativity for and responsibility of the subject. While advances in scaling up studies of the English passive have been made (Bohmann et al. 2023, forthcoming; Hundt et al. 2023), there is still a dearth of research on the variable in spoken English, where the GET-passive is most readily adopted.

- (1) I applied, but **was** not **invited** for an interview.
- (2) I applied, but did not **get invited** for an interview.
- (3) Kim **is excited** to join the team.
- (4) Kelly **got exhausted** playing two games back to back.

The present paper analyses 5 million instances of BE/GET + past participle extracted from the *Corpus of North American Spoken English* (CoNASE; Coats 2023), a collection of over 1 billion words of spoken English from Canada and the United States sampled from Youtube transcripts. Based on manual coding of a small subset of the data (n=1,000), a classifier is trained to separate central passives from statal, inchoative and other structures. The remaining true passives are coded for the following predictor variables:

- Subject animacy (following automatic detection of the subject NP head and subsequent lookup in an animacy dictionary)
- Sentiment at the level of the utterance and the verbal participle (based on a pre-trained sentiment classifier)
- Presence of absence of a *by*-PP encoding an agent
- Polarity
- Tense and aspect of the passive verb phrase
- Region (the state/province/territory a passive instance is sampled from)

Results underscore the subject responsibility constraint, with both inanimate subjects and *by*-PPs expressing an explicit agent other than the grammatical subject disfavoring GET. The notion of adversativity does not receive strong confirmation. There is an effect at the sentence level; however it is in the direction of non-neutrality, i.e.: both negative and positive sentiments favour GET. In addition to these empirical findings, this paper makes methodological contributions towards facilitating large-scale analysis of this complex case of linguistic variation.

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***They tried their hardest to find evidence of regional
variation:***
**Superlative Objoid Constructions in British and American
English**

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Superlative Objoid Constructions (SOCs) combine a possessive pronoun that is correlative with the subject and a superlative adjective that does not act as a participant but functions like a manner adverb, as in *They tried their hardest to extract the data*, i.e. ‘they tried very hard’. The SOC has a close relative, the *at*-SOC, as in *He works at his best when the deadline has passed*. Previous research on the SOC has looked at its use in American English, both from a synchronic and diachronic perspective (see Bouso 2024; Bouso & Hundt 2024). While the bare SOC was initially used with transitive verbs and has been shown to extend to intransitive verbs at later stages in the development, the *at*-SOC emerged as a more recent variant of the SOC, attracting intransitive and copula verbs, in particular (see Bouso & Hundt 2024). The aim of this paper is to broaden the perspective and take regional variation into account, notably variation between British and American English.

We use a bottom-up approach at retrieving bare and *at*-SOCs from the *British National Corpus* (accessed as BNCweb via the CQP-interface) and the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (Davies 2008), including both synthetic and analytic superlatives (e.g. *They were at their most radical*). We then annotate for a number of language-internal and -external variables (variety, register, verb lemma, objoid lemma, etc.). On the basis of this evidence, we investigate: (i) the productivity of the SOC and the *at*-SOC, and (ii) the constructional profile of these two closely related constructions. We use collexeme analysis (Gries 2022) to compare the collocational profiles of the SOC alternation in the two transatlantic varieties and multifactorial modelling to determine the factors at work in the choice between the bare and the *at*-SOC.

With respect to the overall aim of studying regional variation in the use of SOC, previous research opens up somewhat contradictory hypotheses. On the one hand, there is a general tendency for American English to lead other English varieties in ongoing language change (Leech et al. 2009: 259). On the other hand, earlier evidence from research on the related Reaction Objoid Construction (ROC), exemplified in *She smiled her thanks*, shows British English to be ahead of American English in the constructionalization of the pattern (Bouso 2021, 2022). In addition, once more fine-grained levels of variation are addressed, research often shows that “accent divides, and syntax unites” (Mair 2007; Szmrecsanyi et al. 2016; Szmrecsanyi & Grafmiller 2023; Hundt et al. 2024). We anticipated similar results across British and American English. Our results show that, as with the ROC, British English is ahead of American English with respect to the productivity of the more recent *at*-SOC, and those with analytical superlatives, in particular.

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A data-driven approach to object omission in English transitive verbs

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In English, a large but not clearly delineated group of transitive verbs licenses object omission under conditions that remain poorly understood to this day. This alternation and its range of subtypes are subsumed in the literature under the umbrella terms of ‘Understood object alternations’ (Levin 1993), ‘objectless transitives’ (Lemmens 2006) and, in more recent cognitive approaches, under ‘object deprofiling’ (Goldberg 2001, 2005) and ‘null instantiation’ (e.g. Fillmore & Kay 1995: §7; Lambrecht & Lemoine 2005; Ruppenhofer & Michaelis 2010). Despite decades of research, linguists have yet to reach a consensus on why some English verbs participate in this alternation while others do not (cf. (1a) vs. (1b); see Rice 1988). Similarly, the question of how the choice between the overt and understood object is conditioned remains unresolved (cf. (2a) vs. (2b)).

- (1) a. I haven’t **eaten** Ø yet.
b. *I haven’t **devoured** Ø yet.
- (2) a. She **lost** the game.
b. She **lost** Ø.

In the cognitive paradigm, current explanations of the issue raised by (1) emphasize semantic and distributional factors, specifically the verb lemma, its frequency of occurrence, its selectional preferences, degree of polysemy and generality (Fillmore & Kay 1995: §7; Rice 1988; Resnik 1996; Goldberg 2001: 507; Ruppenhofer 2004: 457ff). The form of object realization (cf. (2)) is analysed from a similar perspective, yet with a stronger focus on telicity, animacy, specificity, and information-structural factors (Goldberg 2001, 2005; Schwenter & Silva 2003). In either case, the phenomena are primarily approached from a purely theoretical perspective, with very few studies adducing empirical data and none of them performing rigorous statistical analyses to arrive at robust generalizations.

This study presents new data that offer not only empirically grounded but also psycholinguistically-informed explanations of the Understood Object Alternation (UOA) in English(es), addressing the questions raised by both (1) and (2). To this end, a large sample of transitive verbs has been extracted from the British component of the *International Corpus of English* (ICE-GB) and was parsed for semantic and corpus-based measures from the *The University of South Carolina Psycholinguistic Metabase* (Gao et al. 2022). Features that were not represented in SCOPE or had to be excluded due to sparsity were computed manually in R and Python for each verb, specifically (log)-frequency, dispersion and Resnik’s selectional preference strength (Resnik 1996). The data is supplemented by corpus hits that were manually annotated for object realization and other features that could not be retrieved automatically.

The multivariate datasets were used to train predictive models to detect linear and non-linear patterns in (i) object omission availability and (ii) object realization in English. Preliminary findings suggest noteworthy distributional effects (frequency, dispersion, and their interaction) as well as semantic ones (selectional preferences and concreteness). As such, this paper empirically confirms

prior theoretical findings, while offering nuanced quantitative characterizations of the effects driving the UOA.

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Evaluating the applicability of Radial Network Theory to semantic loss: The cases of *awful*, *about* and *so*

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Radial Network Theory (RNT) has attempted to capture the dynamics of polysemy (Langacker 1987; Tyler & Evans 2003). Polysemous networks are said to be structured around one or a few high-frequency sanctioning senses which give rise to and support extensions into the periphery. These extensions are driven by (largely) one-directional conceptual operations such as metaphor and metonymy, and cluster into groups of related senses. In the last decade, however, RNT has largely fallen out of favour (see e.g. Guilquin & McMichael 2019). This paper reevaluates the ideas of sanctioning and the directionality of motivational relations from RNT by exploring evidence from semantic loss.

Diachronic evidence comes from three English lexemes that lose their historical sanctioning sense, namely the adjective *awful*, the adverb and preposition *about* and the multifunctional item *so*. Their radial networks are established using *Oxford English Dictionary* entries, and the frequencies of their different senses are traced using corpus data from EEBO, CLMET and the BNC. Random samples of 200 hits per period are manually annotated according to a data coding protocol based on the radial networks.

Results show that *awful* loses its source sense ‘inspiring fear’ (1a) when a new evaluative use, ‘unpleasant’ (1b), gains in frequency. This shift results in the loss of the peripheral senses previously sanctioned by the old source, with the furthest extension into the periphery, ‘demonstrating respect’ (1c) being lost first. Similarly, *about* loses its old core ‘encircling’ (2a) and the periphery attached to this core (e.g. ‘in the vicinity’ of as in 2b) when a mental sense ‘concerning’ (2c) gains in frequency. The latter in turn starts licensing further extensions. Last, all uses of *so* with a deictic (3a) or intensifier (3b) function go into decline, whereas all uses related to causality (3c) increase in frequency.

- (1) a. the most **awful** and terrifying sight (1773, CLMET)
b. how **awful** that I hadn’t even made Toby a cup of tea (1987, BNC)
c. And let me, at **awful** distance, revere my beloved Anna Howe (1748, CLMET)
- (2) a. with a stone tyed **about** his nek cast hym in to the see (1530, EEBO)
b. **about** the parts of Suffolke (1583, EEBO)
c. all he had told her **about** himself (1893, CLMET)
- (3) a. **So** saying, she put the billet into my hand (1753, CLMET)
b. one only could have tempted him to schemes **so** hazardous (1782, CLMET)
c. there are eight races **so** an action-packed good value afternoon there (1993, BNC)

These results shows that certain concepts from RNT are useful in predicting the dynamics of semantic loss. First, the decline of old sanctioning senses leads to the loss of peripheral senses which are no longer supported, illustrating the importance of motivational ties. Second, the loss of an old sense is brought about by a frequency increase of another sense, which gains the potential to license further extensions but no longer sanctions older senses, demonstrating the role of frequency in determining sanctioning status and the directionality of ties.

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I don't know why I ever done it: Preterite lexical *do* variation in a sample of colonial Late Modern English

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Lexical *do* (*do* as main rather than auxiliary verb) belongs to a small set of English verbs that have three tense-marking forms (*do/did/done*), yielding the standardized preterite construction S+*did* +NP (he *did* his homework). In vernacular Englishes across the world, however, the number of forms is reduced to two (*do/done*), making the preterite the same as the past participle: S+*done* +NP (he **done** his homework). Cheshire (2005) observes preterite *done* to be categorical in working class adolescent boys in Reading, while Eisikovits (1991) finds adolescent Australians living in Sydney using it in over 62% of potential instances, and Malcolm (2018) documents several examples of the non-standardized construction in Australian Aboriginal English.

While preterite lexical *done* continues to be prevalent in World Englishes—Hickey (2010: 5) describing it as present in “virtually all vernacular varieties of English, both in Britain and overseas”—little attention has been paid to its history. Hickey observes that both *did* and *done* preterite forms were in widespread use over hundreds of years, with prescriptive grammars introducing stigmatization of *done* in the late eighteenth century. Trudgill & Chambers (1991: 52, 216), meanwhile, suggest the persistence of preterite *done* may point to an overall trajectory towards regularization of verb forms.

This study adopts a micro-level historical sociolinguistic approach in investigating variation and change in preterite *done*, which has been something of an overlooked variable—described by Anderwald (2009: 127) as “an inconspicuous form that has not attracted much notice by dialectologists.” Inter- and intra-individual variation of preterite lexical *do* construction is examined in two texts ‘from below’: a diary and a memoir written by sisters born in the mid-nineteenth century in the Colony of Western Australia, totalling approximately 116,000 words. Both sisters use both forms, but they differ dramatically in their preference (Figure 1): the older sister, a young woman writing a daily record of activities, leans towards syncretized *done* (examples (1) and (2)), using it in 96% of her 173 constructions, while her younger sister, in a lengthy account of family memories written late in her life, opts for standardized *did* (examples (3) and (4)) in 98% of 42 instances. This is the opposite pattern to what might be expected, given the older sister’s tendency to use more standardized forms elsewhere.

- (1) Mother and I **done** a little needlework and a lot of talking (E.A., b. 1862)
- (2) Father **done** some fencing (E.A., b. 1862)
- (3) Father **did** foolish things he trusted to honesty (B.K., b. 1875)
- (4) We **did** the teaming & getting the potatoes roasted (B.K., b.1875)

Possible explanations for this surprising contrast in distribution are explored, including lifespan change and pragmatics relating to the differing genre of the texts—specifically semantic nuance capturing the greater temporal distance between events occurring and being recounted. Elements of performativity and style-shifting are also considered, with a ‘third-wave’-oriented approach finding the younger sister’s texts to show signs of a received formulaic oral narrative tradition, including the example of direct quoted speech in this paper’s title. Findings point to questions that could be investigated in synchronic analysis of variation in a form of preterite-levelling that continues to be widely observed in present-day English.

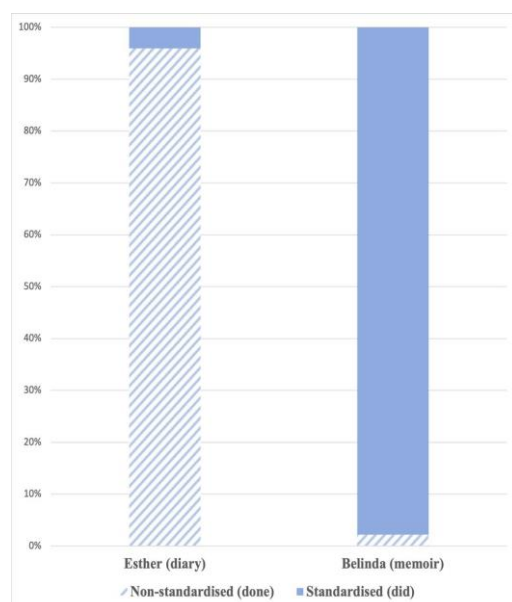


Figure 1: Sisters' selection of preterite forms of lexical *do*

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The *YouTube Corpus of Singapore English Podcasts*

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Recent advancements in online audio and video accessibility, standardized streaming protocols, and automatic speech recognition (ASR) have facilitated the large-scale collection of spoken language corpora, opening new avenues for empirical linguistic research. Despite this progress, corpus-based studies on Singapore English—a nativized postcolonial variety—have largely relied on small datasets or written language corpora, limiting the ability to analyse its full lexical, grammatical, and syntactic diversity. The *YouTube Corpus of Singapore English Podcasts* (YCSEP, Coats et al. forthcoming) addresses this gap, comprising 620 hours of naturalistic spoken data from over 1,300 podcast episodes produced by Singapore-based content creators. The dataset, transcribed using state-of-the-art ASR with speaker diarization, allows for turn-based interaction analysis, making it a valuable resource for research on phonetics, phonology, morphosyntax, and discourse pragmatics.

YCSEP provides empirical evidence for well-documented linguistic features of Singapore English while offering an opportunity to investigate emerging trends associated with its endonormative stabilization (Schneider 2007). The corpus supports studies on grammatical features, such as verb complementation and modality (Bao 2010), as well as lexical and phonetic variation shaped by language contact. By capturing spontaneous, informal speech, YCSEP allows for the analysis of low-frequency discourse markers, modal structures, and grammatical constructions that are underrepresented in existing corpora. Additionally, its data enable exploration of theories concerning postcolonial English typology, such as the development of areal norms (Kortmann 2019) and construction grammar approaches to nativization (Hoffmann 2021).

The corpus was compiled through a pipeline-based approach, leveraging yt-dlp for audio extraction from YouTube podcasts, followed by WhisperX (Bain et al. 2023) for transcription and Pyannote (Bredin 2023) for speaker diarization. The corpus consists of speech from a diverse set of speakers representing Singapore’s main ethnic communities and covers a broad range of topics, from social commentary to political discussions. Preliminary analyses reveal that discourse particles, such as *lah*, *meh*, and *sia*, occur frequently in the corpus. The data is suitable for analysis of the modal system of Singapore English, and additionally provides empirical evidence for double modals, a feature previously undocumented in Singapore English but observed in other varieties such as Scottish and Southern American English. Reduplication, a feature proposed in Singapore English be the result of contact with Chinese languages, is well-represented in the data. YCSEP represents an important step forward in the empirical study of Singapore English, providing a rich dataset for phonetic, morphosyntactic, and discourse-based research while contributing to broader discussions on language contact and change in postcolonial English varieties.

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150 years of *ain't*: Innovation in African American English

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This study examines the evolution of *ain't* in African American English (AAE) between the middle of the nineteenth and the end of the twentieth centuries as one of a cluster of grammatical developments that were taking place in the variety during this time (Bailey et al. 2022). The data for this study come from three sources: (1) the Springville Project, a longitudinal study of 67 rural AAE speakers born between 1894-2002 that has yielded a corpus of 2.5 million words; (2) recordings of formerly enslaved people (FEP) made in the 1930s and 1940s (Bailey et al. 1991); and (3) interviews included in the *Corpus of Regional African American Language* (CORAAAL), a publicly available corpus from 222 African Americans born between 1888-2005 in eight locations around the United States (Kendall & Farrington 2023). We extracted all *ain't* forms, present tense negative copula forms (including *be* and *zero*), and auxiliary *have* and *do* negatives (Springville N=18,081; FEP N=370, CORAAAL N=12,146) from these corpora. We then analysed the data in real and apparent time and with statistical procedures such as binary logistic regression to estimate the effects of predictor variables, allowing us to develop a model for the occurrence of *ain't*.

Our analysis shows the following results:

- In mid-nineteenth century AAE *ain't* was the predominant negator – the use of conjugated copula or present perfect negatives was rare and limited to first person singular. Zero copula before *not* did not occur.
- During the last quarter of the nineteenth century other copula and present perfect negators, including zero before *not*, began to expand at the expense of *ain't*, which loses its near exclusive status as a negator.
- The expansion of negatives other than *ain't* occurs initially in 1st person, then in present perfect, and then in other copula structures.
- By the late twentieth century, *ain't* occurs roughly half the time as a negator for copula and present perfect except before *got/gotta*, where it remains almost categorical.
- The use of *ain't* as a negator of main verbs occurs occasionally in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but expands in the latter half of the twentieth century (Weldon 1994; Fisher 2022).

These developments span two demographic and socioeconomic transformations and parallel other changes in AAE. The shift of *ain't* from near universal negator to robust competitor with other copula/auxiliary negators began in the late nineteenth century when African Americans started to work alongside Whites as tenant farming replaced slavery. Several innovations shared with Southern Whites (e.g. *yall*, *fixin' to*, and the *pen/pin* merger) also emerged during this time. The expansion of *ain't* as a negator of main verbs came later during the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South to the urban North and parallels the development of such features as durative/habitual *be* and *had*+past used for past tense (Cukor-Avila & Bailey 1996).

Structurally, *ain't* is a dynamic form whose evolution, in tandem with other innovations, has helped to reshape AAE into the variety it is today.

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Propagation of structured variation across non-contiguous speaker groups: Intensifiers in FL English spoken in Germany

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An established wisdom of modern sociolinguistic discourse posits that the propagation of structured variation follows the path of interpersonal interactions amongst speakers (Labov 2001). Simultaneously, there is a growing sentiment amongst linguists that there is a possibility that patterns of variation may be spreading via channels other than those offered by (extensive) face-to-face communication amongst members of a speech community (Androutsopoulos 2014). This is because digital technologies have revolutionized the ways in which people interact with each other, making far-flung contacts instantly (and oftentimes) intimately available to each other. And also because recently developed video-content and online streaming platforms (YouTube, Netflix, etc.) has made a host of English lects and registers widely accessible to global audiences including countries of Western Europe (see *inter alia* Davydova 2019, 2025). Against this backdrop, new sociolinguistic models propose that the world-wide spread of sociolinguistic patterns of variation must necessarily involve systematic comparisons of the linguistic behaviour of (i) the donor communities, (ii) mass media texts and (iii) adopting speaker groups (Sayers 2014). This variationist study seeks to investigate (iii), while also keeping an eye on the patterns of sociolinguistic variation in (i) and (ii) as documented by the previous research (Tagliamonte 2016; Reichelt & Durham 2017; Stratton 2020). To that end, the investigation targeted the variable of intensifiers (*This is **so** cool, it's **really** amazing, I am **very** astonished*, etc.), while drawing on spontaneous speech data elicited from 36 EFL young adults (aged 18 to 26) from Germany, all of whom reported extensive exposure to English-language mass media texts through online streaming practices (Netflix, etc.). Performed through the script created in the software environment R using glmer function of the lme4 package, the analyses of intensification pinpoint unambiguous similarities in the patterns of intensification attested in the German learner data on the one hand and mass media texts as well as donor (North American English) speech communities on the other. I discuss the implications that these findings carry for further building of sociolinguistic theory for a globally available language.

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A corpus linguistic perspective on error detection and correction in English academic texts: There's an AI for that?

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Both students and researchers from various fields of study and from different language backgrounds use English as a Lingua Franca when writing scientific texts (Hanauer et al. 2019; Amano et al. 2023). This fact poses a variety of challenges for non-native users of the language (Hanauer et al. 2019) as even advanced and rather proficient learners continue to make errors (Uzuner 2008). It should, however, be kept in mind that native speakers of the English language can face similar problems: even though English is their mother tongue, writing in the academic register is a competence they do not automatically acquire (Hyland 2016).

Therefore, the arrival of new AI writing tools might seem like the perfect solution for (non-native) users of the English language struggling with error detection and correction in academic texts. The ability to access such tools and to use them for proofreading might even help level the international playing field (Amano et al. 2023). But how can learners be sure whether corrections provided by these tools are suitable when put to the test? The goal of this study is to provide an evaluation of the potential of AI tools as correction aids from a corpus linguistic perspective.

The paper at hand builds on a pilot study by Schlüter & Deckert (2025), which highlighted varying error detection and correction performances between different AI tools. For the present study, a more representative selection of authentic learner errors from various linguistic problem areas (confusable words: e.g. *compliment* vs. *complement*; prepositions: e.g. *majority from* vs. *of*; collocations: e.g. *surfacing* vs. *emerging technologies*; grammar: e.g. *tendency of improving* vs. *to improve*; and register: e.g. *pretty* vs. *rather innovative*) was manually incorporated into different texts. These errors were identified and classified using a corpus linguistic approach. Words, phrases and structures were checked in native speaker corpora to see if and how they are used in authentic language. Expressions that did not occur, or occurred very rarely were classified as errors.

ChatGPT (HAWKI), DeepL Write, Grammarly, Trinkai.ai, Wortliga and Paperpal were used to correct the fictitious learner texts. Corrections were evaluated quantitatively by calculating percentages for the number of successful corrections made by each tool. The results indicate notable discrepancies between the tools regarding their correction capabilities, with DeepL Write achieving the highest overall performance, whereas Trinkai.ai and Grammarly performed the worst. For all tools, prepositional and grammatical errors were easier to correct than errors belonging to the other three problem areas. Furthermore, all four tools not only corrected the errors that had been manually inserted into the learner texts but also made additional corrections, some of which were unnecessary but could be used interchangeably, while others were changes that even introduced new errors into the text.

The results of this study highlight the difference between AI tools in terms of both overall and problem area-specific correction rates. This paper provides a basis for further research and offers practical insights for (non-native) users of English who wish to leverage AI tools effectively in academic writing.

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A preliminary study of the sociophonetics of word-final /t/ in *The Young Offenders*

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This paper examines the realizations of word-final /t/ in simple syllable codas produced by eight characters from the *The Young Offenders* (2018-), a TV show that follows the adventures of two teenagers from a working-class neighbourhood in North Cork. What makes this show worthy of linguistic analysis is the fact that most of its actors are from Cork themselves. Three research questions were formulated on the basis of findings from studies on the sociolinguistics of the Irish English accents: (1) What are the most frequent realizations of word-final /t/ in *The Young Offenders* and are they influenced by whether the consonant occurs in intervocalic or pre-pausal positions? (2) Are fricated realizations of word-final /t/ more common in the speech of female, middle-aged and middle-class characters? and (3) Do female characters produce longer frication periods in their realizations of word-final /t/ than male characters?

A total of 235 tokens of word-final /t/ in intervocalic and pre-pausal positions were subject to an auditory and acoustic analysis using Praat (Boersma & Weenink 2022). First, the tokens were classified auditorily as unreleased, stop, glottalized, tap or fricated and then an acoustic phonetic analysis was carried out to check if the auditory classification was correct. For the acoustic analysis, the tokens were manually annotated in Praat using a textgrid with three different tiers: one for the orthographic transcription of the word containing the token, one for the name of the character producing the word and a third to delimit the consonant segment /t/. The words analysed were taken from the six episodes of the first season of *The Young Offenders*. Any word selected was used a maximum of three times for each of the eight characters whose speech was analysed to prevent skewing the data. Moreover, for a word to be chosen the pronunciation of the word-final /t/ had to be easily distinguished. Many words had to be discarded due to background noise, interruptions and overlapping.

Preliminary results from the auditory and acoustic analyses show that, in line with research carried out in Dublin by Schulte (2023), both the intra-linguistic factor of segment position (intervocalic or pre-pausal) and the extra-linguistic factors of gender, age and social class influence the realization of word-final /t/ to a greater or lesser extent. The most frequent realizations are the tapped and fricated allophones, with taps only produced in intervocalic position and fricated tokens mainly occurring before a pause. On the other hand, the sociolinguistic analyses suggest that, contrary to expectations, female and male characters produce a similar number of fricated allophones. However, when examining length of frication, women produce longer frication periods than male speakers. Finally, age-related trends seem to indicate that fricated /t/ is more common in the speech of older speakers in the TV show.

This study aims to contribute to the field of sociophonetic research by using acoustic phonetic analysis on a type of language data that has hardly been investigated in the field: fictional language in audiovisual media. While performed language differs from naturally occurring speech, it can still offer valuable insights into language production and perception patterns. Moreover, due to today's mass production of audiovisual content and its growing influence in shaping linguistic perception, analysing the linguistic features within audiovisual portrayals is of increasing relevance.

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An overview of locative prefixoids: Modeling directional antonyms in a constructional network

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This paper employs a range of corpus methods to examine antonymous pairs of locative prefixoids (*up-down*, *in-out*, *over-under*, *on-off*) in complex words such as *downfall*, *outsource*, *undergraduate*, and *offshore*. Being situated within the framework of Construction Morphology (Booij 2010), it posits constructional idioms with specified parts and open slots and sketches a network of constructions that includes meaning extensions of the individual prefixoids as well as taxonomic relations between them.

Bauer et al. (2013: 345) provide an overview of opposite spatial axes of these antonymous prefixoids and Lieber (2004: 107) posits antonymous semantics for the corresponding prepositions. However, the relations between directional antonyms of locative prefixoids have not yet been systematically researched. Although the prefixoids can be attached to the same bases to create antonyms (*upstairs-downstairs*, *ingrown-outgrown*, *overstate-understate*, *online-offline*), semantic equivalence is not consistently maintained across all constructions. Specifically, some meanings expressed by one construction, e.g. the ‘defeat’ meaning for *out-* in words like *outdance* (Kotowski 2023: 134), do not have a corresponding antonym, here in the *in-* construction.

Van Goethem & Norde (2020) have shown that a combination of multiple distinctive collexeme analysis, semantic-distributional profiles by way of semantic vector spaces, and productivity measures is a profitable method of determining the similarities among functionally similar constructions, in their case of extravagant “fake” morphemes in Dutch. Research has also shown that clustering methods are able to identify antonyms (Gries & Otani 2010). This paper applies the methodology employed by Van Goethem & Norde (2020) to pairs of directional antonyms to determine similarities and differences among them.

First, samples of the eight constructions are extracted from the ELEXIS English Web 2020 corpus (Jakubíček et al. 2022). Second, a multiple distinctive collexeme analysis (Stefanowitsch 2013) is conducted. This method “is concerned with collexemes that are significantly associated with a (particular slot in a) construction as compared to a semantically or functionally similar construction” (Stefanowitsch & Gries 2005: 8). In the present analysis, this method can determine whether specific bases are significantly attracted by one or more of these constructions. In a third step, these results are submitted to a clustering procedure, clustering the constructions by their bases (Levshina 2015: 323–332). Fourth, the distinctive collexeme ratio of each construction is calculated, i.e. “its number of distinctive collexemes divided by its number of types in the corpus sample” (Van Goethem & Norde 2020: 443). Multiple productivity measures serve to further compare the constructions and locate them on Barðdal’s (2008) productivity cline.

The aim of this study is to determine to which extent complex words with locative prefixoids have similar semantic-distributional profiles and productivity measures and whether there are differences within and among the four antonymous pairs. For example, antonyms where one member exhibits more extended meanings (e.g. *over-*, *out-*) are expected to show larger differences in their semantic-distributional profile, productivity, and distinctive collexeme ratio. This study also investigates whether locatives making reference to the same end of the spatial axis share certain similarities (e.g. *up-*, *over-* and *down-*, *under-*).

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“Shaping the future” between the EU and China: The perceptions of the New Silk Road in European diplomatic discourses

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This research paper conducts a corpus-assisted discourse analysis to investigate how China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), also known as “the New Silk Road”, is discussed in European diplomatic discourses. BRI was initiated by the People’s Republic of China in 2013. The analysis of diplomatic ties between Europe and China is highly relevant in our shifting international context. Notably, the European Union’s stance towards China continues to evolve, as it attempts to formulate a collective answer to “the challenges posed by China” (Wang 2022: 5), and to reposition itself as its historical ally, the United States, becomes more distant. Diplomatic discourse plays a pivotal role in shaping international relations, reflecting not only policy objectives but also underlying sentiments, ideologies, and strategic positioning (Zhang 2015; Afzaal et al. 2022).

Research in linguistics has focused on the communication surrounding the New Silk Roads (Van Noort 2021). The representation of the Silk Roads in diplomatic discourses has been investigated from an Asian perspective –for example, by contrasting Indian and Pakistani diplomatic discourses (Afzaal 2021) or analysing U.S. diplomatic discourses (Afzaal et al. 2022; Lu & Zhou 2024), but never from a European perspective. Thus, the linguistic analysis of the New Silk Road is highly relevant for understanding how geopolitical perceptions and diplomatic discourses frame the new relationships between Europe and China. The historical link of the Silk Roads, emphasized by China, serves as an argument to rekindle this ancient trade partnership (Trécourt 2022).

This paper seeks to address this research gap. To this end, diplomatic texts with the terms “New Silk Road/NSR” and/or “Belt and Road Initiative/BRI” and/or “One Belt One Road/OBOR” were retrieved from the European Union Institutions: European External Action Service (EEAS), European Commission – Trade & International Partnerships, EU Council Conclusions & Press Release, and European Parliament Research Service (EPRS). This study will employ a novel methodological approach, combining topic modelling and corpus-based discourse analysis to examine key themes, prevalent topics, and recurring linguistic patterns.

This corpus-based discourse analysis, informed on Critical Discourse Analysis (Wodak 2014; Flowerdew & Richardson 2020), focuses on the linguistic strategies used by politicians. The key features of the EU discourses, i.e. the lexical choices (e.g. *debt diplomacy* vs. *mutual development*), the metaphors (e.g. *Silk Road* vs. *a debt trap*), intertextuality (how diplomats reference each other’s statements), power dynamics (whose voices dominate NSR discourse), are analysed. The results are mapped through the network analysis, showing how opinions cluster by country/ideology.

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Subordinate interrogatives and embedded inversion in historical Irish (and British) English: Evidence from the 1641 Depositions and the CED Depositions

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This presentation examines Embedded Inversion (EI), a label applied to the inversion of verb and subject in subordinate interrogative clauses:

- (1) You may ask **why did Pope Damasus feel** that this revision was necessary. (ICE- Ireland; Kallen 2013: 77)
- (2) Sir vallentine asked him [...] **in what maner would he Employ them** (1641 Depositions; Examination of James Linch FitzSteephen; Galway, 20/1/1652; MS 830, fol. 164v)

Subordinate interrogatives are clauses in complement function which are typically used in reporting enquiries (1)–(2), but they have numerous other uses too and do not need to be derived from a potential utterance in direct speech, as shown in (3) below. Formally and semantically, they fall into two main categories, WH- (or variable) interrogatives, which are introduced by a WH-word, and YES/NO (or polar) interrogatives, which in British English (BrE) are introduced by *if* or *whether*.

EI is a frequent feature of Irish English (IrE) (Corrigan 2010: 69–70; Kallen 2013: 77–80), which differs significantly from BrE in this regard, where subordinate interrogatives usually employ non-inverted order:

- (3) It depends where she was born.

Although constructions with EI are reasonably common among varieties of English (eWAVE 3.0, feature no. 227), the high rate of attestation of EI in IrE has long been interpreted as due to substratal influence from Irish (Filppula 1999: 169–179; Hickey 2007: 276). Irish Gaelic, the Celtic language spoken in Ireland, retains the word order of direct questions also in dependent interrogatives.

The few studies (Davydova et al. 2011: 306–316; Amador-Moreno 2019: 168–199, 2024) addressing EI from a historical perspective have focused only on the Late Modern period, possibly because the textual record of IrE prior to the mid-eighteenth century is very scant; they date the earliest occurrences of EI to 1820. However, the availability since 2010 of a digital edition of the 1641 Depositions has opened new possibilities for research on EI in historical IrE.

The 1641 Depositions are a compilation of witness testimonies recorded after the 1641 rebellion in Ireland, an uprising initiated in October 1641 by Catholic gentry and military officers. The testimonies were collected by a state-appointed commission, and document the alleged crimes committed by the Catholic Irish insurgents. This presentation proposes to investigate a set of 688 dependent interrogatives retrieved from a 800,617 word corpus compiled from the 1641 Depositions. A comparative analysis of 503 dependent interrogatives in BrE will also be carried out, this using the witness depositions' component (172,940 words) contained in the *Corpus of English Dialogues 1560–1760* (CED; Kjöto & Walker 2006). Our specific aims are as follows:

- i. To contribute to a better understanding of the textual record of IrE by showing that the 1641 Depositions, despite their partiality, constitute a valuable source of evidence on seventh-century IrE. To date, they have hardly been subject to linguistic analysis (though see Fanego et al. 2025).
- ii. To show that EI is attested in IrE subordinate interrogatives earlier than suggested in existing

research in the field, and to try to reconstruct the course of development of this grammatical feature.

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Requests in Nigerian and British English conversational interactions: A corpus-based approach

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Recent years have seen an increasing interest in pragmatic phenomena in postcolonial Englishes. The inclusion of data from these multilingual and multicultural contexts (cf. e.g. Anchimbe & Janney 2017) has shown that explanatory frameworks established for the analysis of Western speech acts may not be able to explain the use of speech acts in non-Western contexts. To date, there is still a regrettable lack of research into these patterns of speech act use in postcolonial Englishes. While there are some studies on speech acts and, more specifically, request realization in postcolonial Englishes, many national varieties have not been studied at all or in sufficient detail. The few empirical investigations of requests indicate both sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic differences between postcolonial Englishes and British English (BrE) (Kranich et al. 2021; Gut & Unuabonah 2022; Degenhardt 2023). For Nigerian English (NigE), Gut & Unuabonah (2022) find that while the requests sampled from the *International Corpus of English* (ICE) generally take similar linguistic forms in NigE and BrE, the evaluation of factors influencing contextual appropriateness differ. The authors report that the request per word ratio is higher in NigE than in BrE and that NigE requests are generally more direct across a wide range of text categories. Differences in sociopragmatic patterns are also reported for business and social letters in particular, a fact the authors explain with reference to cross-varietal differences in perceptions of social distance.

The present project seeks to complement Gut & Unuabonah's (2022) analysis of NigE corpus-based requests by focusing specifically on the forms and function of requests in the entire conversation text category in ICE-Nigeria and ICE-GB and adds a qualitative perspective in that we examine different types of requests (discourse-functional requests such as requests for floor management and requests for information) in order to be able to determine refunctionalization of the speech act (Nair 2022). To avoid relying on etic perspectives, we only include those requests in our database, that are responded to as such by the discourse participants. With this design, we are able to compare NigE requests with Variational Pragmatic research into requests in different varieties of English (e.g. Breuer & Geluykens 2007; Barron 2008; Flöck 2016) and uncover request patterns that have not been described for inner circle varieties of English. Our results suggest that the vast majority of requests in NigE conversations are requests for discursive-verbal action (such as requests for information and local turn-management). The requests for action in our database are predominantly realized by direct linguistic means with imperative strategies being most frequent. The differences in directness levels employed in the BrE and NigE requests are statistically significant. A first qualitative analysis indicates that some request sequences tend to be quite extended with requesters repeating their requests even after several explicit indications of non-compliance from the addressee. Furthermore, conventional indirectness does not play the same role in NigE requests as it does in BrE requests with numbers of conventionally indirect requests being significantly lower in NigE. Such patterns have not been reported for inner circle varieties of English and cannot easily be described in terms of existing politeness theories. Instead, such patterns may be explained by Nwoye's (1992) notion of 'group face'.

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Informal access to English among Italian university students: A sociolinguistic profile

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The presence of English in people's lives has grown at an unprecedented pace in recent years due to globalization and media saturation. Concurrently, new affordances are contributing to changing the sociolinguistic status of English worldwide, bringing it close to a second language in countries where it was traditionally considered a foreign language (de Bot 2014; Arnbjörnsdóttir & Ingvarsdóttir 2018; Modiano 2024). This process also affects English learners' self-perceived identities as more autonomous language users and fosters the informal, naturalistic acquisition of the language outside of institutional settings. Italy is an example of this evolving scenario, given the increasing availability of English through traditional and new media – and the resulting change in the linguistic ecology of the country (Pavesi & Ghia 2020; Pavesi 2024). The present study aims to explore the relationship between informal exposure to English (Sockett 2014; Benson 2021; Toffoli et al. 2023) and linguistic, educational, social and attitudinal factors which may play a role in fostering spontaneous access to English through the media among Italian university students (Pavesi & Bianchi 2024). The following research questions are addressed: 1) What social and language-related variables correlate positively with students' degree of informal contact with English?; 2) What are the reasons for accessing English-language audiovisual media during leisure time? A 72-item questionnaire (Pavesi et al. 2024) was administered to 4,007 university students enrolled in various degree courses in four Italian universities across the country. Global exposure indexes were generated based on the frequency and length of exposure to different media and input types (e.g. audiovisuals, YouTube, social networks, video games, song lyrics, face-to-face interactions), serving as estimates of individual experience with English. These indexes were statistically correlated with students' majors, parental occupational level, gender, attended secondary school, attitudes towards English and self-assessed proficiency level, to outline a fine-grained profile of learner-users. A second phase of the analysis focused on films, TV series and other programmes, which emerged as the preferred media. Data were examined using non-parametric tests to identify the relationships between intensity of exposure and reasons for accessing audiovisuals in English.

The results reveal that the degree of informal experience with English-language media correlates strongly with users' own educational history, self-perceived proficiency and liking of the language. By contrast, the socio-economic background of participants' families and the perceived importance of English are scarcely relevant. As for the reasons behind accessing audiovisuals, the responses to the questionnaire show that improving English is not the only motivation for students to seek informal contact with English in their spare time but goes hand in hand with other frequently reported reasons, such as language appreciation, entertainment, information gathering, and socialization. The varied factors which correlate with frequent engagement with English and the reasons for accessing the language in leisure activities will be brought together in the final discussion. They will be interpreted as pointing to a change in the status of English resulting from a shift towards informal language practices among new generations of young Italian university students.

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Secondary CLIL students' performance of the cognitive discourse function "explore": Examining the role of epistemic modality in reasoning

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Over the past five decades, the relationship between learning and classroom discourse has been extensively studied. Considerable evidence supports the sociocultural perspective that knowledge is co-constructed through interaction and that exploratory talk fosters higher-order thinking and advanced literacy skills (Mortimer & Scott 2003; Mercer & Hodgkinson 2008), which are crucial for deeper learning and align with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals of Quality Education (Maine & Čermáková 2023; Llinares & Morton 2024). However, research shows that students often lack opportunities for inquiry-based learning and rarely receive explicit guidance on using the language for reasoning, which is particularly relevant in L2 learning contexts, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) (Moate 2011; Boyd & Kong 2015).

This study examines the role of using language for reasoning within English-Spanish CLIL programmes and how CLIL students engage in the complex discourse function of exploring. It presents qualitative and quantitative insights from an empirical study where secondary-level CLIL students (N=113) from three different schools in northern Spain (Navarra) were asked to orally explore cross-curricular topics. A learner corpus was created using *Sketch Engine*, and the academic discourse function "explore" was operationalized for the CLIL context by drawing on L2 learning and socio-cultural theories (Mercer & Hodgkinson 2008), and Dalton-Puffer's (2013) construct of Cognitive Discourse Functions (CDFs), which is based on seven prototype cognitive operations, such as *defining*, *explaining*, or *exploring*. Within this context, students "explore" utterances were analysed by examining their use of epistemic and deontic modality features (modal verbs, adjectives and adverbs, Epistemic Lexical Verbs (ELVs)), conditional *if*, and discourse markers, and by investigating their role in reasoning, which is an important step on the way to performing exploratory talk.

The findings show that the students have acquired a basic awareness of the role of epistemic modality markers in developing and displaying exploratory reasoning. However, they need more explicit guidance on how language and, in particular, CDFs can support their learning to overcome specific difficulties. Pedagogical implications for future research and practice will be presented to enhance these skills and, where possible, align them with exploratory talk in CLIL classrooms.

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We can work it out: Using Corpus Linguistics for language and translation learning

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This paper presents the preliminary results of two studies focused on the use of linguistic corpora as teaching tools for the acquisition of lexical and translation skills, situated within a Mexican university context. In the first case, a quasi-experiment was developed in order to implement a workshop for the use of linguistic corpora in vocabulary acquisition, aimed at students with B1 and B2 levels who aspire to advance to level C1 by taking a certification exam, following to Granger et al. (2002) and Reppen (2010). This workshop focused on providing a detailed explanation of how to use the *Sketch Engine* platform to explore and analyse lexical and phraseological units in their English corpora collections.

In the second case —based on works of PACTE group (2017) and Bowker (2024)— an online survey was conducted in which 46 Mexican students —enrolled in programs related to the translation of English text— were asked to complete a series of tasks related to the translation of two texts, as well as a questionnaire to assess their perceptions of the use of electronic corpora as a work tool. Of these 46 students, 15 ultimately completed the proposed activities.

The reason these studies are conducted is to determine whether there is an observable impact on the acquisition of new linguistic knowledge, as well as skills that facilitate the completion of translation-related tasks, or the successful completion of a certification exam. This reason is important considering the current state of language education in Mexico: despite the benefits that several researchers have reported regarding its use by language students, in the Mexican case the integration of such kind of tools into university curricula remains limited: only two institutions provide formal training in the use of corpora: the Autonomous University of Baja California (UABC) and the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM).

The studies developed here pose a contrast between those students who are enrolled in the aforementioned universities (and who have had some previous experience using linguistic corpora), with other students for whom this is their first experience with this type of resources. Finally, we hope these experiments will contribute to the implementation of an English teaching model based on corpus linguistics, considering the needs and expectations of Mexican students who are exploring electronic corpora for the first time.

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South African English – A question of authenticity

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Despite of officially having twelve official languages,¹ South Africa's Lingua Franca is English. English serves as the language for intercultural communication, it has become the language of business and commerce, and it is perceived as the language of social mobility and economic success on a national and international level (Casale & Posel 2011; Bowerman 2012; Rudwick 2022). Considering that in the latest national census of 2022 only 8.7% of the 66.2 million South Africans indicated that English is the most often spoken language at home (Statistical Release 2023: 22), it can be assumed that English in South Africa is predominantly spoken as a second, third or fourth language. Therefore, South African English should be understood as an umbrella term, encompassing various dialects and accents of South African English, which are marked by regionality, ethnicity, socioeconomic factors, and L1 influence, amongst other criteria (Coetzee-Van Rooy 2020; Siemund 2023).

In this paper, I want to investigate South Africans perceptions of South African English(es), and particularly their understanding of what “authentic” South African English is. My data comprises of ethnographic interviews with English and/or Afrikaans first language speakers of different generations and various ethnolinguistic backgrounds, which I collected in Johannesburg in 2023 and 2024. Taking an interactional sociolinguistic approach, content and discourse analytical tools are employed to the data to investigate the following research questions:

- a) What do South Africans perceive to be “authentic” South African English, and what not, and
- b) What differences in such perceptions can be found based on ethnolinguistic background and age?

Furthermore, I would like to highlight how the discourse on authentic South African English feeds into a national identity building project, considering how languages were previously used as a tool for categorizing South Africans along ethnolinguistic lines under the apartheid regime. The English language in post-apartheid South Africa has *inter alia* been described as the language of freedom, a neutral compromise, and symbol for post-apartheid South African identity.

Preliminary findings from my data suggest that while South African English is clearly described as a denomination of British English due to South Africa's colonial past, my interviewees show a highly positive attitude towards – if not pride in – L2 influence on South African English, explaining that language contact with other national languages and L2 accents make the variety distinct. However, some speakers seem to be highly prescriptivist when it comes to outside influence, such as American English, as this supposedly erodes South African culture. Thus, while outside influence is perceived by some as a threat to national identity, the influence of national languages on South African English seems to be more generally believed to authentically showcase the post-apartheid rainbow nation on a sociolinguistic level.

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¹ South African Sign Language has recently been promulgated the country's twelfth official language.

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To whom does *they* refer?

Comparing LLMs and trained human annotators in pronoun resolution

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After the pronoun *they* saw increasing use as a generic pronoun in the twentieth century (Bodine 1975; Balhorn 2004; Laitinen 2007, *inter alia*), it is seeing innovative use as a singular pronoun in more recent decades (Bjorkman 2017; Conrod 2019, *inter alia*), including as a personal pronoun of reference for non-binary-identifying people (Konnelly et al. 2023). The latter reason and the pronoun’s new-found mainstream prominence as a marker of progressive language use point toward its origin in social circles of Sexual and Gender Minorities (SGM) and its current role as a social signifier (Conrod et al. 2023; Hartmann 2024). Further quantitative studies might shed even more light on its exact social diffusion patterns. The bottleneck to any such study is the difficult task of disambiguating the different potential uses of *they* (Conrod 2019: 139; Zimman & Hayworth 2020). This task requires good textual understanding and real-world knowledge to be reliable, significant hurdles for human annotators and machine algorithms alike (Rudinger et al. 2018; Cao & Daumé III 2020; Baumler & Rudinger 2022). While the latter have been much less reliable in this task than humans, they have now, however, seen immense improvements through the advent of Large Language Models (LLMs) (Brown et al. 2020; Vadász 2023). I was able to capture their increasing performance in disambiguating *they* since 2022 and how they have, in my estimation, recently reached human-like performance in the task of pronoun coreference resolution. I therefore ask the research question: “Among LLMs and trained human annotators, who is the most reliable at disambiguating authentic uses of *they*?”

A balanced dataset of various authentic uses of *they* (plural, generic, singular; explicit or context-dependent antecedence; gendered on or off the binary, or gender-neutral) will be compiled to serve as test data. My annotations will serve as Ground Truth. The test data will be given to different human speakers of English who were selected by gender, proficiency in English, and knowledge of linguistics. Further background influences will be recorded, such as their frequency of personal interaction with SGM. The same dataset will be annotated by LLMs in an unsupervised fashion (i.e. entirely via scripting and using the same prompting technique). The performance of humans and machines will be scored quantitatively according to my Ground Truth and their errors closely analysed. I expect some LLMs to perform on the level of the best-performing human annotators. However, the interpretation will be complicated by the challenge posed by the material (i.e. the unclear definition of what constitutes genericness or singular number), the amount of real world knowledge needed to interpret sentences correctly, and the differences in reasoning exhibited by humans and LLMs.

The results may point towards a broadening of available methodologies in English linguistics. Questions that were previously not easily answered due to a lack of capable annotators may become more feasible through the help of LLMs. However, an informed discussion of ethics and sustainability shall contextualize to what extent the use of LLMs is justifiable for this purpose.

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Late Modern input to Southern Hemisphere Englishes

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The three major anglophone regions of the Southern Hemisphere, South Africa (Bowerman 2008), Australia (Cox & Palethorpe 2001; Horvath 2008) and New Zealand (Bauer & Warren 2008), were subject to input from English, Scottish and Irish settlers (to differing degrees) in from the late eighteenth through the nineteenth down to the early nineteenth centuries. This input during the formative period of the later varieties of these regions (Hickey 2004, 2020a) was instrumental in determining the trajectories which their sounds system took (Hickey 2023: 238–245; 266–272).

For the current paper the development of low vowels, which in the history of English show continuous movement, usually upwards along earlier back and later front trajectories, will be considered. In addition, other factors will be discussed, e.g. how low vowels have been subject to lengthening processes, which have compensated for the loss of earlier instances of long low vowels; shifts along a horizontal axis, from low front to low back, can also be discerned throughout the history of English. These developments are especially relevant to Southern Hemisphere Englishes which show (i) a historical raising of short front vowels, (ii) a raising of low back vowels and (iii) a differential realization of the BATH vowel. These developments are interesting from the perspective of phonological typology as they involve segments which move in tandem, e.g. the short raised vowels and can offer insights into the nature of chain shifts, a central concern in the history of the sound system of English. They are also relevant to the much more recent lowering of short front vowels, apparent throughout the anglophone world (Hickey 2018), including the Southern Hemisphere.

The current paper will begin by examining the initial situation in late eighteenth-century English, using data such as that contained in the *Eighteenth-Century English Phonology Database* (Beal et al. 2015) and in the works of various prescriptivist writers (Hickey 2010), to determine the outset for later developments in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It will then scrutinize realizations of low vowels in Southern Hemisphere varieties in order to offer a possible chronology for the overall development of low vowels in the past two centuries (Hickey 2020b). The paper will also examine the internal developments within the Southern Hemisphere and consider factors which are active here, above all contact with further languages, such as Afrikaans in South Africa and Māori in New Zealand.

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Diasporic creole in urban dialect contact: The case of Toronto Jamaican English

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In at least two different locations, London and Toronto, Diasporic Jamaican Creole (DJC) has developed through four successive sociolinguistic stages (described in Hinrichs 2025): from (1) the L1 of first-generation immigrants via (2) a second dialect of second-generation speakers and (3) a localized repertoire that indexes minoritized racial identities (as opposed to Jamaican ethnicity) to (4) a tributary to a highly diverse, local “feature pool” (Mufwene 2001) from which a multiethnolect (or “contemporary urban vernacular”, Rampton 2015) emerges. Given how widely multiethnolects are spoken and how broad their linguistic input is, advancement to stage (4) is the most remarkable for any diasporic repertoire in an urban contact setting. Drawing on findings from research on Toronto Jamaican English (TJE, Hinrichs forthcoming), this paper asks which sociolinguistic prerequisites must be met for a diasporic creole to advance to Stage 4. The analysis attends to aspects of phonetics/phonology, lexis, and metadiscourse and draws comparisons between TJS (representing Stages 2 and 3) and Multicultural Toronto English (MTE, Denis et al. 2023), two relatively new urban contact varieties. The conclusion offers a discussion of similarities and differences between the feature pools of TJE and MTE and the various selection processes at play.

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More interesting, the closer you look: English ‘reversed’ comparative correlatives from a cognitive perspective

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The English Comparative Correlative (CC) Construction consists of two sub-clauses C1 and C2 (1):

- (1) [The more we get together,]_{C1} [the happier we’ll be.]_{C2}

Regarding semantics, CCs carry asymmetric and symmetric properties: The relationship between C1 and C2 is a conditional one (asymmetric), where C1 acts as the cause/protasis and C2 as the effect/apodosis (cf. Goldberg 2003: 220). However, the construction also encodes a parallel change-over-time meaning in C1 and C2 (symmetric).

Apart from the “canonical” (Hoffmann 2018: 192) C1C2 order (1), there is also a “reversed” (McCawley 1988: 176) variant in which the apodosis precedes the protasis, i.e. a C2C1 order (2); Culicover and Jackendoff refer to this as “CC” (1999: 549).

- (2) [We’ll be happier,]_{C2} [the more we get together.]_{C1}

Previous studies have revealed a significant preference for C1C2: Hoffmann (2019) found a C1C2:C2C1 ratio of 37:1 in his dataset from the BROWN corpus family and 23:1 in his ICE data, and Hoffmann et al. (2020) determined a ratio of 15:1 in their BNC data. This preference has been explained with the Principle of Iconicity (Bybee 2012: 529), i.e. the “(partial) motivation of a construction’s form by its meaning” (Hoffmann 2019: 12): C1C2 is preferred because it “mirrors the semantic [cause-effect] interpretation” of the CC (Hoffmann 2018: 186). However, it remains unclear what function the C2C1 order serves (research question 1).

Moreover, the studies mentioned above used relatively small data sets (BROWN, ICE) or restricted themselves to one variety (BNC). The question remains whether small corpora such as BROWN and ICE provide reliable data for investigating a mildly frequent construction such as the CC (research question 2), for which e.g. Hoffmann et al. indicate a per-million-word ratio of 30:1 to 40:1 (2019: 32), and whether other varieties of English behave the same way as British English (research question 3).

To address these questions, I present new data from a variety of very large corpora that cover numerous varieties and registers of English: COCA, GloWbE and *English Web 2015*. I extracted from these corpora a total of 8,618 CC tokens using CQL and then manually annotated them for the variable ORDER (levels: C1C2, C2C1). A look at frequencies in these datasets confirms previous findings, i.e. a significant preference for C1C2 over C2C1 (cf. Tables 1-2). However, the ratio varies significantly, from 37:1 to as little as 3.4 for individual GloWbE varieties (cf. Table 2). In fact, it appears that the ratio is considerably lower in GloWbE in general, which might indicate that the C2C1 order is more preferred in postcolonial varieties.

Regarding the possible function(s) of the C2C1 order, I argue that since it retains the overall CC meaning it must differ regarding pragmatic function (in line with Goldberg’s Corollary A to her Principle of No Synonymy (1995: 67, as noted by Hoffmann 2019: 157)) as well as Firbas’ “principle of emphasis” (1964: 117), which posits that an unusual constituent order (i.e. C2C1) “that strikes the recipient as more or less out of the ordinary [...] fulfils an additional communicative purpose” (1992: 118). I argue, based on Horsch’s study of the Slovak CC’ construction, that the C2C1 order results in “a contrastive focus on C2” and that therefore “the effect [as opposed to the cause] semantics are foregrounded” (2020: 35). This, in turn, leads to “a general foregrounding of the asymmetric (cause-effect) semantics”, which is in line with Hoffmann’s observation that “the use of a focus particle [e.g. even] in C2 is more acceptable in CC’ constructions” (2019: 157) (cf. [The

more you think about it,]_{C1} [the more interesting it even becomes]_{C2} vs. [It becomes even more interesting,]_{C2} [the more you think about it]_{C1}).

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ORDER	English Web	GloWbE	COCA	BNC¹	BROWN²
C1C2	2044	4164	1409	2041	149
C2C1	57	905	39	139	4
Total	2101	5069	1448	2180	153
C1C2:C2C1	35.85	4.60	36.12	14.68	37.25

Table 1: C1C2 and C2C1 tokens across various corpora

ORDER	CanE	IrE	AuE	NZE	SingE	SAfE	JamE	PhilE	MalE	IndE	KenE	TanzE	NigE	HKE	SriLE	GhE	BangE	PakE
C1C2	572	391	630	360	160	202	117	176	157	314	138	99	160	154	110	112	138	174
C2C1	143	105	183	103	22	40	18	40	27	50	11	24	23	25	14	25	28	23
Total	715	496	813	463	182	242	135	216	184	364	149	123	183	179	124	137	166	197
C1C2:C2C1	4.00	3.72	3.44	3.50	7.27	5.05	6.50	4.40	5.81	6.28	12.55	4.13	6.96	6.16	7.86	4.48	4.93	7.57

Table 2: C1C2 and C2C1 tokens by GloWbE varieties

¹ From Hoffmann et al. (2020: 204).

² From Hoffmann (2019: 173).

Tracking the diachronic development of an NPN constructional network

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NPN (Noun-Preposition-Noun) patterns such as *face to face* and *step by step* are remarkably frequent in language use and occur across many languages and in a variety of syntactic functions (Jackendoff 2008: 15; Sommerer 2022: 369). Their syntactic versatility and supposed form-function mismatch in expressing plurality despite the use of singular nouns have posed a challenge to researchers from various approaches to grammar and thus make the phenomenon a promising avenue for the diachronic study of constructional networks (Matsuyama 2004: 57; Sommerer & Baumann 2021: 102).

Many approaches propose hierarchy, similarity and sequential predictability to be main structuring principles of constructional models (cf. e.g. Langacker 1987; Goldberg 1995; Diessel 2019, 2023; Schmid 2020). Nevertheless, the question of how to model these constructional networks when applied to specific linguistic phenomena is still controversial (Smirnova & Sommerer 2020: 3-4; Ungerer & Hartmann 2023: 38). Another recurring discussion revolves around the question of when it is possible to posit the existence of a particular construction at all (e.g. Hoffmann 2022: 43). The outstanding variability and productivity of NPN patterns provide a rich basis to address the issue of how we can explain the synchronic structure of constructional networks in general (Sommerer 2022).

Recent works have drawn attention to the diachronic development of constructions in order to better understand the structure of constructional networks (cf. e.g. Bergs & Diewald 2008; Traugott & Trousdale 2013; Sommerer & Smirnova 2020). In adopting this approach, the talk sheds light on continuities and shifts in the NPN network over time. This explorative study is partly based on a synchronic, token-based study previously done by the author in which 3,000 tokens of NPNs taken from the BNC (*The British National Corpus 2001*) were used to sketch a present-day network of NPN patterns in English. The talk will now extend previous findings by taking into consideration the diachronic development of the NPN network, focusing on the emergence of highly frequent patterns such as *step by step* and their influence on the formal and functional characteristics of NPN patterns. It will be examined which prepositions and nouns are used in the patterns and how the metaphorical dimension of the patterns develops. This will be done based on data retrieved from the *English Historical Books Collection* through *Sketch Engine*, which contains texts from the UK and the US between 1473 and 1820 (*Sketch Engine* 2025). Each of the tokens in the dataset will be analysed for syntactic and semantic features as well as cooccurrence patterns. Patterns of similarity between tokens in the data for several time intervals will be presented to show how diachronically prominent forms and functions have shaped the present-day constructional network of NPNs.

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Private verbs in interactive discourse in contemporary American English

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This research examines the behaviours of so-called private verbs in contemporary English, which are defined by Palmer (1988: 72) as: “those [verbs] that refer to states or activities that the speaker alone is aware of”. Examples of private verbs include: *assume, believe, doubt, feel, find, guess, suppose,* and *think*. Biber (1988: 242) gives a longer list of these verbs, demonstrating at the same time that their frequent occurrence is a characteristic feature of interactive style (1988: 105). While previous studies tend to examine various private verbs together, the present paper aims to demonstrate that different private verbs behave differently.

The data derive from the *Corpus of Spoken Professional American English (CSPAЕ)* (© Michael Barlow), which includes interactive discourse in conferences and meetings of four different types in contemporary American English. While an increasing number of spoken English corpora are available today, CSPAЕ, though based on recordings from 1994 to 1998, remains unique, yielding transcriptions in clearly defined interactive formal discourse: White House press conferences, faculty meetings at the University of North Carolina, and national meetings of two types, one on mathematics tests and the other on reading tests. We will use approximately 1.6 million words of this corpus, extracting only those utterances whose speakers are identified.

Our approach is corpus-based. We will investigate *think, believe, guess, assume,* and *suppose*, which are relatively frequent and similar in meaning. They are also typically employed in conferences and meetings. The analysis shows that *think* is by far the most commonly used private verb in interactive settings. All five verbs are inclined to be used with the first-person singular subject *I*, but this tendency differs, noticeable in a way, depending on the verb. Also, the choice of the verb differs depending on the setting. For example, *believe* is distinctively more common in formal meetings, typically in White House briefings, when compared with less formal but more interactive meetings.

Other results include: the combination of the first-person singular subject *I* and a private verb has a strong tendency to be a comment clause, disjunctively used in sentences (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: §15.53; Brinton 2008, among others): e.g. *We’re doing, I think, a reasonably good job* (White House). Here again, however, different verbs behave differently. Although the five verbs all tend to occur with the first-person subjects, *guess* and *suppose* are exclusively used in combination with *I*, whereas *think* and *believe* often occur with *we* as well as *I*.

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Focus Fronting in English and Spanish: Feature Inheritance revisited with Split INFL

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Focus Fronting (FF) refers to the phenomenon in which the focused element appears in a structurally higher position than it would in a canonical word-order construction (caps for focus):

- (1) A: Did you want tea?
B: COFFEE I ordered, I think. (Birner & Ward 1998: 86)
- (2) Even MAX I hate to bother. (Jackendoff 1972: 251)

Despite shared interpretive properties, FF exhibits varied structural properties across languages. For example, English fronted focus as in (1) and (2) is a typical A'-moved element, characterized by obligatory reconstruction, Weak Crossover (WCO) effects, parasitic gap licensing, etc. In contrast, in Spanish, although fronted focus is also clause-initial, as in (3) (PST stands for past; 3SG for third person singular), it shows A-movement properties according to Camacho-Taboada & Jiménez-Fernández (2014).

- (3) Manzanas compró Pedro (y no peras).
apples buy-PST.3SG Pedro and not pears
(lit.) 'Apples Pedro bought (and not pears).' (Adapted from Zubizarreta 1998, p. 4239)

Moreover, in Spanish FF constructions, the subject generally remains post-verbal, unlike in English. Consequently, although focus is fronted to the seemingly same structural position in English and Spanish, it does not display the same structural properties.

To uncover the mechanism behind these contrasts, this work revisits Chomsky's (2008) Feature Inheritance (FI) theory alongside the Split INFL Hypothesis (Pollock 1989).

According to the Principle of Economy of Projection (EOP) proposed by Speas (1994), XP is projected only if X or [Spec, XP] has independent semantic or phonetic content. In languages with overt agreement morphemes, Agr(S)P must project. In languages such as English, verbal agreement morphemes are base-generated on the verb instead of heading its own projection (AgrS), suggesting the specifier of AgrSP must be filled by the subject. In contrast, in languages such as Spanish, AgrS contains an agreement morpheme, permitting AgrSP to project without requiring its specifier position to be filled; therefore, the subject does not need to raise unless discursively marked.

On the other hand, assuming that FI only occurs between a phasal head and the functional head immediately below it, we argue that in English, unvalued discourse(δ)-features remain at C, and are valued against the interpretable δ -features carried by the focus. In view of the EOP, the focused element moves to the specifier of CP for this phrase to be projected. The fact that [Spec,CP] is an A'-position conforms with the A'-movement properties of FF in English. In Spanish, however, unvalued δ -features are inherited by AgrS from C, so the focused element moves to [Spec,AgrSP]. Since the subject does not need to raise, it may remain in the base-generated (and hence, postverbal) position.

Consequently, the Split INFL Hypothesis, in tandem with the theory of FI, suggests that cross-linguistic variation in FF arises from the parametric realization of agreement morphemes and the inheritance or retention of δ -features across different languages, in line with Jiménez-Fernández (2023), Miyagawa (2010, 2017), Jiménez-Fernández & Miyagawa (2014), Ojeda (2020) and Yang (2024), *inter alia*.

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English in the classroom: Teacher perceptions and language boundaries in Guyanese primary schools

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Guyana is a former British colony where the majority of the population speaks Creolese, an English-lexified creole language, as their mother tongue, but English is the official language. The influence of English in Guyana is evident. From its entrance in the colonial period with seventeenth-century British dialects and Caribbean English-lexified creoles shaping the formation of Creolese, to post-independence, where British-influenced Standard English remains the official language in formal institutions such as government, media, and education. This complex linguistic history has given rise to a linguistic continuum, traditionally described as continuum of varieties (lects) ranging from the most Creolese (basilect) to the most English-like (acrolect).

Despite extensive research on Creolese and the continuum, the acrolect—often described simply as the “local standard” and assumed to be influenced by colonial varieties—remains poorly defined. Works from Allsopp (1966), Devonish & Thomas (2012) and Hackert (2016) have made strides in defining the standards of English in the Caribbean, and while these authors have noted shared trends and features, they also found that each Caribbean nation has its own distinct norms and usage of English. Trinidad and Jamaica have seen the most research on their varieties of English, but research on other English-official Caribbean nations has lagged behind. This study addresses how primary school teachers in Guyana define and navigate the boundaries between English and Creolese within the context of English-only education.

Through sociolinguistic interviews and translation production tests with 19 primary school teachers from diverse regions of Guyana, this research explores the features teachers identify as acceptable “English” and instances where the distinction between English and Creolese becomes ambiguous. Conducted at teachers’ workplaces by an English-speaking foreign researcher, these interviews and tests were designed to elicit what teachers perceive to be the most acceptable or prestigious forms of speech—Standard Guyanese English.

Preliminary findings reveal that while teachers aim to model a formalized variety of English, they often demonstrate pragmatic flexibility, at times accepting features traditionally categorized as Creolese. This blurring of linguistic boundaries reflects the fluidity of English in post-colonial contexts and challenges assumptions about what is acceptable “English” in “English-only” instruction in Guyanese classrooms. By focusing on teacher-defined norms of English, this study contributes to broader discussions on the localization of English in educational settings, the role of teacher agency in language standardization, and the sociolinguistic dynamics of post-colonial multilingual societies.

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Did simple forms change meaning as *BE Ving* come peaking?

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According to received wisdom, as the English progressive construction *BE Ving* grammaticalized into an obligatory grammatical aspect marker for the expression of progressive meaning (e.g. Kranich 2010), its zero-marked simple form counterpart became obligatorily associated with the expression of non-progressive meaning – a process Bybee (1994) refers to as “the grammaticization of zero”. However, the timing of obligatorification of *BE Ving* for the expression of progressive meaning remains unclear. Moreover, the history of the simple forms themselves has been largely ignored in the literature (Kranich 2010: 165), leaving a major blind-spot in our understanding of the development of aspectual marking in English. Our research thus aims to investigate the impact of the rise of *BE Ving* on the meanings of the simple forms.

To this end, shifts in the predominant use and interpretation of simple forms are investigated for seven verbs selected to represent the full range of situation types (see e.g. Vendler 1957; Smith 1997). These are *stand* (mostly state), *sleep*, *talk* and *eat* (mostly activities), *read* and *build* (often accomplishments), and *catch* (mostly achievement). Data have been collected from the EEBO, CLMET and BNC corpora, covering Early Modern, Late Modern and Present-day English and consist of random samples capped at about 150 instances per verb per period.

As a first step, we establish how the interpretations of simple forms, which range from imperfective (including habitual and progressive) to perfective, arise pragmatically from other elements in the context, such as relations established to other profiled events. For example, the framing subordinate clause in (1) encourages a progressive reading, while in (2) the sequence of events triggers a perfective interpretation.

- (1) Vnto this Pertynax therefore wente Letus, and Electus, with a few of theyr complices aboute mydnyghte, whyles all men **slepte**. (EEBO, 1556)
- (2) [He] bit his lip, and **read** the letter twice, and turned it over, but with a careless air; and then he asked what o'clock it was. (CLMET, 1837)

Then, we exploit the presence of these pragmatic interpretative cues as proxies to the likely intended aspectual reading of any given instance, in order to gain insight into any semantic change in the simple form and its timing. If the rise of *BE Ving* affected the use of simple forms, the latter are expected to shift away from contexts favouring a progressive interpretation as *BE Ving* gains in frequency.

Results paint a far more complex picture than the literature suggests. Apart from an expected noticeable contrast between verbs of different situation types, findings show striking differences across tenses. In the present tense, although Present-day data contain very few instances of progressive simple forms, there is no systematic decrease of the share of progressive meaning in favour of a habitual meaning over time. The past tense even reveals an essentially stable coexistence of the simple form and *BE Ving* in the expression of progressive meaning in state and activity verbs.

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[S]ince this is an issue of foreign policy I'm going to speak in English:

English as a Lingua Franca in public political discourse

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English is *the* lingua franca of the twenty-first century and is used by and among speakers of different linguacultural backgrounds (cf. Seidlhofer 2011: 7) to conduct business internationally, communicate with a transnational community online, publish academic research and, most relevant to this paper, shape EU legislation. While the status quo of the *de jure* multilingualism in EU institutions, the role of interpreting services, and the language attitudes of parliamentarians have been thoroughly explored (see e.g. Wright 2007; Leal 2021; Ringe 2022), research on political discourse from an ELF pragmatic perspective is still in its infancy.

This study investigates the public use of ELF by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in plenary sittings. In the plenary, parliamentarians “usually speak in their own language, and what they say is interpreted live by Parliament’s interpreters into the other official EU languages” (European Parliament 2025). In contrast to many other ELF scenarios, English is not the “*only option*” in this setting, but, when selected, represents a conscious choice (Seidlhofer 2011: 7, italics in original). This paper therefore examines (i) which MEPs use ELF in public plenary debates, (ii) to what extent, (iii) and for which purposes. To this end, the PoliELF Corpus (*Corpus of Political English as a Lingua Franca*) was compiled. This corpus is based on the 9th parliamentary term (2019–2024) and comprises 35,772 contributions (4.4 million words) by 397 MEPs in 273 publicly accessible plenary sittings. In addition, socio-demographic data on the politicians were gathered.

A quantitative analysis of these contributions shows that almost half of the MEPs use ELF in plenary debates. The frequency of use, however, varies according to multiple factors, such as age, gender, and political affiliation. For example, pro-European and left-leaning political groups have a significantly higher share of members using ELF and a higher average share of ELF contributions per affiliated parliamentarian than right-leaning and Eurosceptic political groups. Nationality is another complex variable, with the length of EU membership, the status of English in the respective country, and its role in the education system potentially impacting politicians’ language choices (see also Wright 2007). These findings motivate the classification of MEPs as minimal, light, regular, frequent, or heavy ELF users, according to their share of English contributions. The qualitative analysis of the pragmatic functions that ELF fulfills in the plenary is particularly revealing for the minimal and the light user group. English is chosen to metalinguistically comment on interpreting services and language choices, or to flag code-switches. Moreover, highly ritualized procedural speech acts, such as requests for referral or blue card questions, as well as floor management and calls to order by the chair of the debate, are performed using ELF. Overall, this research sheds light on parliamentarians’ language choices and provides a statistical and functional account of ELF in a highly representational, public, and multilingual professional domain.

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A corpus approach to (*not*) *that* hedging in English

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The so-called (*Not*) *That* Hedging construction has two different types, as illustrated by the following attested examples.

- (1) a. Did she have any romantic interests? **Not that I ’m aware of.** (COCA 2017 MOV)
b. None of them had explosives, **that I know of.** (COCA 2010 TV)

The (*Not*) *That* Hedging Construction comprises positive and negative fragmental expressions used for hedging or mitigating (Horn 1985; Delahunty 2006; Schmid 2013; Hoeksema 2017). The hedging constructions have several peculiar syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic constraints. There must be a syntactic gap in the clause and the presence of *that*. The possible predicate type of the construction is quite limited, which represents the speaker’s mental state. The positive and negative hedging constructions are also peculiar in that they are polarity-sensitive. As shown in (1), the construction needs to occur in non-veridical environments: the negative hedging construction responds to an interrogative while the positive hedging is licensed by the downward entailing expression none. Polarity sensitivity excludes examples as follows:

- (2) a. *Some of them had explosives, **that I know of.**
b. *He was on the list, **that I am aware of.** (cf. He was never on any lists, *that I’m aware of.*)

The construction cannot have internal negation, either. It cannot refute the evidential value of the preposition expressed (see Hoeksema 2017), as shown in these ungrammatical examples:

- (3) a. *He was never on any lists, **that I’m unaware of.**
b. *None of them had explosives, **that I didn’t know of.**

A corpus investigation using BNC (*British National Corpus*) and COCA (*Corpus of Contemporary American English*) yielded 228 tokens for (*Not*-) *That* Hedging and 133 tokens for *That* Hedging Construction. Qualitative and quantitative analyses focused on polarity licensors, predicate types, and subject types as shown in three tables:

Environment	(Not) That-clause	NPI	That-clause	NPI
Comparative	1 (0.43%)	1 (0.43%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Conditional	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.75%)	0 (0%)
Declarative	8 (3.50%)	0 (0%)	23 (17.29%)	1 (0.75%)
Negation	41 (17.98%)	4 (1.75%)	79 (59.39%)	6 (4.51%)
Negative prefix	1 (0.43%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.75%)	0 (0%)
Only	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.75%)	0 (0%)
Question	175 (76.75%)	100 (43.83%)	13 (9.77%)	2 (1.50%)
Superlative	1 (0.43%)	0 (0%)	4 (3.00%)	0 (0%)
The first, the last	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (2.25%)	0 (0%)
The only	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (6.01%)	0 (0%)
Without	1 (0.43%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Sum	228 (100%)		133 (100%)	

Table 1: Licensing environments for the (*Not*) *That* and *That* Hedging Construction

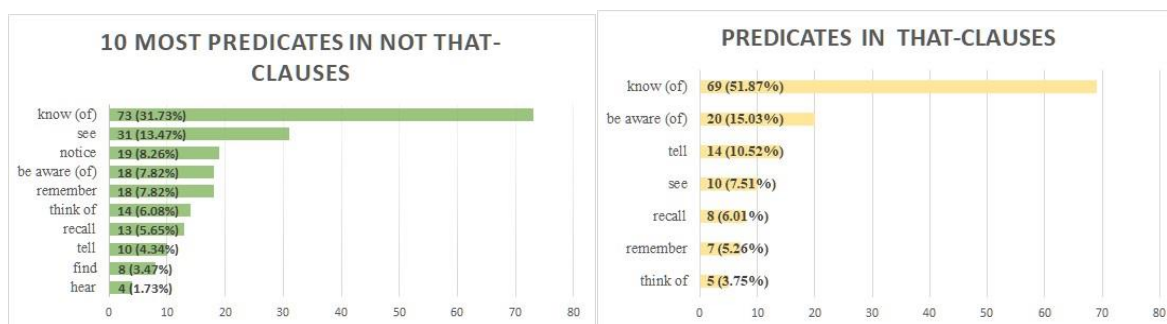


Figure 1: Predicate types for the (*Not*) *That* and *That* Hedging Construction

Subject types	(<i>Not</i>) <i>That</i> -clauses	<i>That</i> -clauses
I	198 (86.84%)	95 (71.42%)
We	10 (4.38%)	32 (24.06%)
He	9 (3.94%)	0 (0%)
You	7 (3.07%)	3 (2.25%)
She	3 (1.31%)	0 (0%)
They	1 (0.43%)	3 (2.25%)
Sum	228 (100%)	133 (100%)

Table 2: Subject Type for the (*Not*) *That* and *That* Hedging Construction

The corpus investigation supports that the Hedging Construction is polarity-sensitive, licensed in nonveridical constructions. However, the attested data, in Table 1, provide only downward entailing contexts including negative expressions and questions. Our data yield no examples with nonveridical operators like *perhaps*, *maybe*, *quite likely*. Figure 1 shows the 10 most frequent predicates in both constructions, with propositional attitude verbs like *know*, *see* and *aware* dominating. These verbs express the speaker’s commitment to the proposition denoted by the antecedent clause. The predicate type and no internal negation also aligns with the construction’s discourse function, expressing hedging of the proposition denoted by the antecedent clause. The predominant uses of the subject pronoun, as given in Table 2, is the first person singular *I* and plural *we*. Second or third person pronouns are hardly used, indicating that the construction primarily conveys the speaker’s perspective or knowledge.

All these observations support a Construction Grammar analysis of the construction. No linguistic elements in the construction evoke the observed syntactic and semantic requirements or constraints. These are constructionally assigned properties, as hinted by Hoeksema (2017). We suggest that a construction-based account could address these interactive constraints in a much more robust way than derivation or ellipsis-based accounts.

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Not (*as*) *easy as pie*: Factors determining the omission of the first correlative in frozen similes

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Frozen similes like (*as*) *easy as pie* are an acknowledged part of the phraseological inventory of English (cf. e.g. Gläser 1986: 46, 82–84; Moon 2008) and other languages. They serve to emphasize a proposition. In contrast to free adjectival comparisons of the form *as* ADJ *as* NP (cf. 1), the first of the two correlatives may be omitted after a copular verb in frozen (phraseological, familiar) similes (cf. 2, 3; cf. Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 1130; Moon 2008: 5).

- (1) Essentially, it's **as easy as copy and paste**. (GloWbE; Davies 2013; emphasis added)
- (2) We can imagine utopia; it's **as easy as pie**. (GloWbE; Davies 2013; emphasis added)
- (3) Hitching rides to get around the island in the summer is **easy as pie**. (GloWbE; Davies 2013; emphasis added)

It has been claimed that the variant without the first correlative is preferred in more informal style and that it is less emphatic (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 1138; *Oxford English Dictionary online*, s.v. *as* conj. I.3a). If these were the only factors determining the omission of the first correlative, however, we would expect to find a rather even distribution of such forms per type in a stylistically rather homogenous corpus, such as the *Corpus of News on the Web* (NOW; Davies 2016–). However, a search reveals that the types vary in the frequency of first correlative omission between 100% (e.g. *dry as bone*) and 4% (e.g. *as big as houses*), and it would be hard to prove a difference in emphasis in individual contexts, cf. (4) and (5).

- (4) It was undergoing a drought at the time so it was **dry as bone** ... (NOW; Davies 2016 –; emphasis added)
- (5) The Seymour River Salmonid Society's hatchery manager, Brian Smith, says some of the rocks are **as big as houses**. (NOW; Davies 2016 –; emphasis added)

In a pilot study, 120 different units which are attested 10 or more times in the *Corpus of Global Web-Based English* (GloWbE; Davies 2013) were compared to their occurrences in *The iWeb Corpus* (iWeb; Davies 2018) and the NOW corpus. It appears that across these large web-based corpora the individual units' behaviour concerning the omission of the first correlative is rather consistent. Therefore, it will be suggested here that an important factor for the omission of the first correlative is the item itself, that is, the individual frozen simile and –potentially– its stage of phraseologization. In order to check this assumption, correlations with other signs of phraseologization will be studied, such as formal markedness like alliteration (e.g. *cheap as chips*) and the degree of semantic transparency (e.g. *easy as pie* as against *tough as nails*). Among further correlations to be taken into account are frequency of use and the complexity of the noun phrase (e.g. *as different as chalk and cheese*). In this way, this study hopes to contribute to our understanding of processes of item phraseologization within one construction.

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Changing conceptualizations of social roles: Recent change in American English address terms and language use in service encounters

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The central question we aim to investigate in this paper is to what extent democratization and the ensuing changes in role conceptualizations can explain recent language change in US English. Since around 1960, numerous social changes have occurred in Western societies, leading to a decrease of formal hierarchies, e.g. in the workplace, and an increasing value placed on equality. These social changes lead to changes in conceptualizations of and interactions within every-day roles, like boss/employee or service worker/customer. Social changes have been argued to be responsible for recent language change in English (e.g. colloquialization, cf. Mair 2006). But while previous research has merely linked corpus-based frequency changes to sociocultural changes based on plausibility (e.g. Myhill 1995), we aim at a systematic investigation connecting changes in language use with sociocultural processes such as democratization and the concomitant change in social role conceptualizations.

The paper will start out by presenting theoretical and methodological considerations and then present two case studies that aim to substantiate a connection between ongoing change in social role conceptualizations and language use. The first, using COHA (*Corpus of Historical American English*; Davies 2010) aims to shed light on changes in addressing conventions. Two particular terms of address, a formal one, *sir*, exhibiting a clear pattern of decline, and an informal one, *guys*, showing the reverse trend, will be focused on. We will discuss to what extent the changes in the course of the twentieth century, not just in frequencies but especially concerning their distribution across speaker-hearer constellations and situational contexts, can be connected to changing role realizations. The second case study will showcase linguistic behaviour and attitudes in service encounters. Discourse completion tasks are used to uncover changing patterns in language use in service encounters (while DCTs are non-authentic data, they are a data type that has been widely recognized to uncover socially accepted norms) in combination with questions about attitudes. Data has been collected from informants belonging to four different age groups, so as to recognise change with the help of an apparent-time approach that complements the real-time approach to linguistic change taken in the first case study. The main findings of the second case study show clear-cut differences between “Boomers” and “Generation X” speakers on the one hand, and “Millennials” and “Generation Z” speakers on the other. The paper thus takes on the challenging task (as pointed out by Culpeper & Nevala 2012) to get a nuanced picture of the connection between sociocultural processes and language change with the help of a multi-method approach, combining findings from discourse completion tasks and attitude questionnaires with corpus-based studies.

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Morpho-syntactic patterns across nine varieties of English: Insights from the Bamberg Survey of Language Variation and Change

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A typological analysis of the *World Atlas of Varieties of English* data (WAVE; Kortmann et al. 2020) indicates that the type of variety (such as ENL, ESL, EFL, Pidgin or Creole) has a more significant impact on the distribution of morphosyntactic features than geographical factors. Furthermore, while some non-standard spoken features may be considered Angloversals, other features distinguish different varieties or variety types (cf. Kortmann 2020). The nature of the WAVE data (experts' intuitions with only one data point per variety available), however, sometimes limits the linguists' confidence in these findings.

In this study, we will provide empirical support for, and qualifications of, (e)WAVE observations related to variety-type. To this end, we utilize data of the Bamberg Survey of Language Variation and Change (BSLVC, cf. Krug & Sell 2013) – a large-scale, questionnaire database – to explore morpho-syntactic differences between varieties of English (n=9). In contrast to our earlier studies on lexical variation (e.g. Krug, Schützler & Werner 2020), we use the largely untapped grammar part of the BSLVC data, where participants (n=903) provide usage ratings for 345 sentences that address a wide range of linguistic features (partly overlapping with the WAVE feature set).

Usage ratings in our questionnaire are elicited for two contexts: First, participants listen to audio recordings and are prompted to evaluate language use in a more informal, spoken register. This is followed by providing usage ratings for a larger set of (printed) sentences in a more formal, written register. The data were collected in countries where English is used as a native language (ENL, n=3; England, Scotland, United States), as a second language (ESL, n=4, Gibraltar, India, Malta, Puerto Rico) and as a foreign language (EFL, n=2, Sweden, Slovenia).

Due to the complexity of the data, the analysis is conducted in two stages: First, we subject the data to dimensionality reduction to visualize similarities between participants. The goal is to investigate if speakers of the included varieties form clusters. In the second step, we train a random forest model and extract variable importance measures to identify features that differ significantly or are shared across the varieties.

Overall, the two-dimensional representation of the data reveals the following patterns: i) ENL varieties cluster together while being distinct from each other, ii) EFL and ESL varieties form a cluster as well, though with more overlap and fuzzy boundaries, iii) EFL varieties gravitate more towards ENL varieties, and iv) the differences between varieties are more pronounced in the informal set of our data. In the analysis of the individual features, we find features that delineate ENL from ESL & EFL varieties (subjunctive mood), features that separate ENL & EFL from ESL varieties (e.g. pronoun dropping, preposition substitutions), as well as features that are significantly more accepted in specific regional varieties (e.g. invariant *isn't it?*, *me* as possessive pronoun, substitution of *for* with *to*, progressive use of *want*). At the same time, we find evidence for Angloversals, i.e. features shared by all varieties (e.g. *go* as quotative, progressive use of the verb *like*).

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Lexical innovation in digital social networks: From actuation to diffusion

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This study investigates lexical innovation in digital social media. Various recent studies have shown that new lexis in American English emerges from urban centres that act as “hubs of lexical innovation” (Grieve 2018: 309, 2016). Theoretically, these studies have shown when and where new words emerge (i.e. information on actuation).

What is missing from these prior studies is information about the social settings from which new words emerge (*viz.*, information on diffusion). We do not know *who* the innovators are and in what types of social settings they operate. We explore this topic by examining innovators’ social networks, utilizing social network theory as our framework (Milroy & Milroy 1985). It predicts that innovators are typically peripheral people, but for an innovation to be successful, it needs to be picked up by more centrally connected early adopters. The limitation with this model is that it has primarily been tested on very small data, and it needs to be tested using large-scale evidence from other settings. Various recent studies in computational linguistics have investigated lexical change in digital networks, but they have lacked the methodological rigor of variationist approaches (Del Tredici & Fernández 2018; Zhu & Jurgens 2021).

As our material, we use three very large social media datasets that contain 3.42 billion words of texts from 2020 to mid-2022 and represent American, Australian, and British English. The data are organized as ego networks of real people (no celebrities, bots, or large organizations). These networks are labelled with a value that indicates their network strength, which is based on the actual interaction of the members in each of the ego 5,775 networks. This enrichment process is algorithmic and has been carried out in an interdisciplinary digital infrastructure project funded by the Research Council of Finland.

The empirical part traces emerging lexis and uses a method modified from Grieve et al. (2016, 2018). It results in 8-13 new lexical items per variety (e.g. *oomfies*, *watchalong*, *girlies*, *J6*, and *subathon*). These newly emerging lexical items are then mapped against the social network information of each ego network. Our research questions are:

- 1) Does the weak-tie hypothesis in linguistic change hold in large-scale social media networks?
- 2) Do we observe consistent patterns in which new lexis is systematically connected to certain types of networks?

The results show that, with few exceptions, lexical innovations that grow in frequency and survive tend to be systematically associated with truly weak-tie networks at the outset and then spread to other settings.

The presentation offers various insights for English linguists interested in variation and change. Empirically, it shows how large-scale social media can be accompanied by social information based on interactions, unlike traditional text corpora that lack interactional information. Theoretically, it adds a novel angle to the study of lexical innovation by providing the social information required to understand diffusion (Croft 2000). We also propose further studies to include lexis that first increase and then decrease (and disappear), because their social trajectories could be different from innovations that survive.

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On conditionals in spoken and written English and Spanish: Exploring the correlation between discourse functions and morphosyntactic features

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In the domain of discourse relations, condition has long attracted much attention (Traugott et al. 1986; Athanasiadou & Dirven 1997; Couper-Kuhlen & Kortmann 2000). Conditionals are typically formed by a protasis, indicating a cause, and an apodosis, expressing its consequence or effect, as in (1) and (2).

- (1) If they cannot agree, the government will soon run out of money, leaving it unable to pay items such as social security payments, military pay and interest payments. (CONTRAST-IT cnt_en_gua_bus_010)
- (2) Si no me gustan las vendo (C-ORAL-ROMefamd102) ‘If I don’t like them I sell them’

However, conditional constructions “seem to have many more semantic and pragmatic functions than has hitherto been evident” (Declerck & Reed 2001: 1). With the notable exceptions of Ford and Thompson (1986), Ford (1997) and Warchal (2010), corpus-based studies delving into the wide range of discourse functions of conditionals are scarce. In Lastres-López (2019, 2021), I argue that conditionals can express ideational, interpersonal and textual functions in discourse, providing a taxonomy of conditionals based on the metafunctions distinguished in Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014). In this paper, I will explore such functions of conditionals in English and Spanish, extending now the analysis to written discourse as well. The aim is to explore the different functions that these constructions may express in speech and writing and unveil dissimilarities between the two modes.

The methodology adopted is corpus-based. For spoken discourse, data are extracted from the British component of the *International Corpus of English* (ICE-GB) (Nelson et al. 2002) and the Spanish component of the *Integrated Reference Corpora for Spoken Romance Languages* (C-ORAL-ROM) (Cresti & Moneglia 2005). For written data, I employ the English and Spanish components of CONTRAST-IT (De Cesare 2018), a contrastive corpus of newspaper discourse featuring different thematic sections such as politics, economy or sports, among others. Data are manually annotated according to a number of variables: (i) metafunction, (ii) degree of likelihood of the condition, (iii) position of the *if/si*-clause in the conditional construction, (iv) markedness of the apodosis, and (v) presence of a modal verb in the apodosis. Corpus findings unveil differences in the use of these constructions across speech and writing. In addition, preliminary results also show a correlation between certain discourse functions and morphosyntactic features. For example, modal verbs, regarded as characteristic of conditional constructions (Gabrielatos 2019), are revealed as distinctive of ideational conditionals only. Similarly, certain subtypes of interpersonal conditionals show a preference for their occurrence in final position in the construction (apodosis-protasis), despite the fact that initial position (protasis-apodosis) is considered the default position for these constructions (Haiman 1978).

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Hedged performatives in spoken American English: Recent change and variation in their use

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This paper investigates recent change in the use of Hedged Performatives (HPs) in spoken American English from 1950 to 2019. HPs consist of a (semi-)modal verb and a performative verb, and were first discussed by Fraser (1975).

- (1) I **must request** that you sit down immediately. (Fraser 1975: 194)
- (2) I **have to admit** that you have a point. (Fraser 1975: 187)

Since the diachronic development of HPs has not yet been analysed within a diachronic construction grammar perspective, we first sketch the network of HP constructions (Hilpert 2019), differentiating the macro-level ($[I + \text{MODAL} + V_{\text{perf}}]$), the modal-specific meso-level (e.g. $[I \text{ must } V_{\text{perf}}]$), and the micro-level constructions (e.g. $[I \text{ must say}]$). We then examine the frequency change in 2 meso-constructions and 10 micro-constructions, the selection being based on normalized frequency and mutual information scores (i.e. the strongest performative verb collocates of *I must* and *I have to*). This study is based on three corpora: the American subparts of the *TV Corpus* and the *Movie Corpus* (1950-2019), and the spoken subpart of COCA (1990-2019).

Our research questions are as follows:

- RQ1. Is the diachronic trend observed at the macro level reflected in the development of each of the meso-level constructions, or do we observe divergent trends?
- RQ2. Do the modal-specific meso-level constructions mirror the frequency changes of their respective modal verbs, or do they exhibit distinct trajectories?
- RQ3. Do the micro-constructions follow the trends of their respective meso-level constructions, or is there evidence of idiosyncratic variation related to individual performative verbs?
- RQ4. Pertaining to register, are the diachronic trends similar in scripted and unscripted speech?

Our results show different diachronic trends at the meso-level, with $[I \text{ must } V_{\text{perf}}]$ declining and $[I \text{ have to } V_{\text{perf}}]$ rising. Concerning RQ2, the diachronic trends of the meso-level HPs do not directly mirror those of their base modals, substantiating their status as constructions. Indeed, *have to* shows a stable frequency over time, but increases significantly as a HP, while *must* exhibits a significant decline, both as a modal and a HP. Therefore, change appears to operate primarily at the meso-level, as a result of shifting discourse norms away from authoritarian modality, leading to the replacement of $[I \text{ must } V_{\text{perf}}]$ by $[I \text{ have to } V_{\text{perf}}]$. Regarding RQ3, all micro-constructions with *must* and *have to* follow the same downwards and upwards trend as the meso-level construction, this development overall showing a shift suggesting a replacement of *must* HPs by *have to* HPs. We will discuss some additional observed patterns related to the type of performative verb used, in view of Fraser's distinction between assertive I and assertive II verbs.

Finally, the comparison of scripted speech (*TV* and *Movie Corpora*, 1990s-2010s) to unscripted conversations (spoken subpart of COCA, 1990s-2010s) reveals a higher, though statistically non-significant, use of the HP construction in written-to-be-spoken speech compared to spontaneous discourse (see e.g. Jucker 2021). One potential reason is that scriptwriters may overestimate the frequency of HPs due to a biased perception of their use in spontaneous discourse.

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Orthographic evidence for Older Scots long front vowel changes

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This paper explores changes in spelling practices for the representation of Older Scots long front vowels /i:/, /e:/, /ɛ:/, /a:/, and how this data can be used to reconstruct sound changes affecting these vowels. Scots long-vowel changes and the Great Vowel Shift (GVS) have been approximately dated by scholars such as Johnston (1997) and Aitken & Macafee (2002). However, a systematic corpus-based analysis of spelling evidence to date the changes has yet to be done. Exploring the development of long vowels in Scots not only has merit in its own right, but allows us to assess whether the GVS as a whole was a pull chain or a push chain (see Figure 1, cf. Luick 1896; Jespersen 1909).

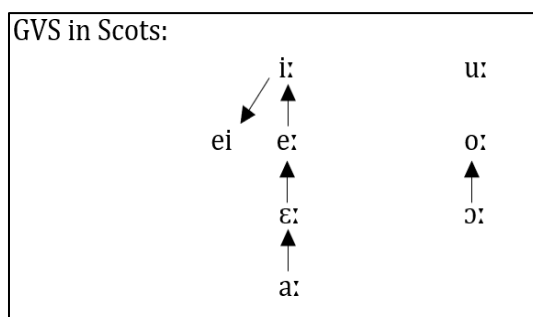


Figure 1: Scots Great Vowel Shift

Data

The orthographic data for this research is drawn from three corpora. *The Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots* (HCOS, 1450-1700) is untagged and searchable by strings, while *The Linguistic Atlas of Older Scots* (LAOS, 1375-1500) is lexically-grammatically tagged. Both these corpora require extensive data extraction to quantitatively analyse spellings of Older Scots vowels. LAOS's sub-corpus *From Inglis to Scots* (FITS) is additionally grapho-phonologically tagged and reconstructs Older Scots phonology by triangulating between spelling, sound changes, etymology and present-day pronunciation. This grapho-phonological mapping creates a corpus of extensive spelling convention profiles of phonemes. The three corpora combined cover the entire Older Scots period and offer over three centuries of spelling evidence across some 1,200,000 tokens.

Method

This paper takes a two-fold approach to trace changes in spelling conventions which could indicate sound change. First, the overall (relative) frequencies of spelling variants of long front vowels between 1375 and 1700 are extracted and analysed. This reconstructs orthographic conventions and can show larger changes in spelling. Secondly, isolate and unconventional spellings are studied in detail in the context of the specific orthographic system they occur in. This approach allows a detailed analysis of spelling (systems) on a macro and micro level. Orthographic research of this kind follows the *littera* approach, which is based on the theory that sound shifts are often reflected in spelling changes in a pre-standard variety (Laing & Lass 2003). Spelling changes are the primary evidence of sound changes in this time period and this project is the first to quantitatively investigate orthography and the GVS in Older Scots in corpora.

Results

Analysis of FITS and LAOS data show both a new spelling convention and isolate spellings suggesting diphthongization of /i:/ beginning c1400. The relative frequency development of spelling practices for /i:/ shows the emergence and increase of <iy>-type spellings; a new convention which likely indicates a minimal diphthong, and isolate <ei> spellings (see Figure 2). Raising of /e:/ is detectable in <i>-type spellings first appearing in the mid-fifteenth century. Spellings indicating these changes further increase in HCOS. Isolate innovative spellings in FITS and LAOS suggest the raising of /ɛ:/ and /a:/ in the mid-fifteenth century. These innovative spellings become more frequent in HCOS, though this increase is disrupted by southern English orthographic conventions increasingly affecting Scots from the mid-sixteenth century onwards.

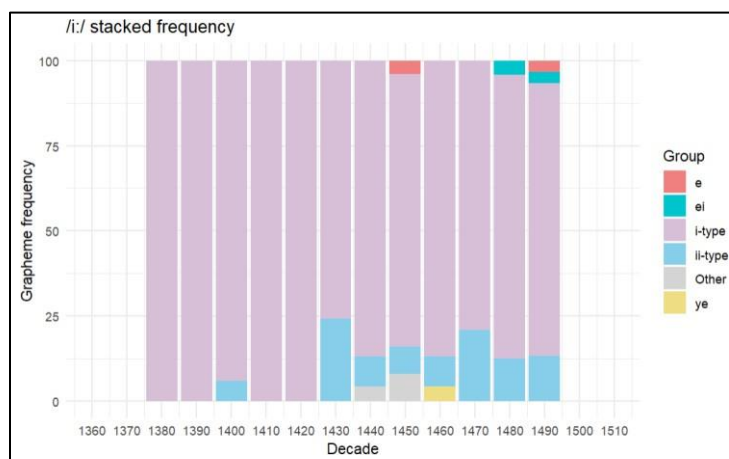


Figure 2: Relative frequency of /i:/ spellings in FITS

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*Thank you, Suren. I'm very grateful for the offer and for everything you did for me.*¹

Expressions of gratitude in the English-speaking Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora community

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To shed light on variation in expressions of gratitude used by members of the English-speaking Sri Lankan Tamil (SLT) diaspora community in Canada, the US, Australia and the UK, the present paper combines a corpus-driven quantitative and qualitative analysis with an interview-based analysis. Although the outbreak of the Sri Lankan civil war in the early 1980s led to the global dispersion of the SLT community, the community has been able to remain closely connected thanks to the advent of the internet and social media so that today, it is a polycentric and truly global community.

Several studies have shown that among the younger generations of the SLT community who are growing up in nations where Tamil is not a national language, proficiency levels of the heritage language Tamil are diminishing (cf. Canagarajah 2008, 2019; Sankaran 2021). Therefore, individuals who were raised in predominantly English-speaking nations are usually native speakers of English (cf. Fernandez & Clyne 2007; Canagarajah 2008, 2019; Perera 2015; Sankaran 2021). The analysis combines a tailor-made corpus amounting to 1.5 million tokens comprised of prose fiction authored by second-generation diaspora members writing in English with an analysis of interview data of second-generation diaspora members. It indicates that the language choices of the second generation of the SLT diaspora reflect Tamil politeness conventions when speaking English.

According to Appadurai (1985: 236), compared to British English or American English, in Tamil “it is ... difficult to say ‘thank you’ in a direct way”. Appadurai (1985) observes that instead, non-verbal ways of expressing gratitude are employed, e.g. gestures such as nodding, and that when gratitude is expressed verbally, it may also take the form of praise, e.g. complimenting the benefactor. These observations that were made about Tamil are reflected in the English corpus compiled for this study, see (1) and (2).

- (1) Lucky **nodded her thanks**. (Safe Haven, Shankari Chandran)
- (2) When I pushed him to acknowledge my sacrifice he'd murmured, “Yes, yes, **you are a good grandson**.” (Hungry Ghosts, Shyam Selvadurai)

The data analysis in this paper tests to which extent Appadurai's (1985) observations can be applied to variation observed in verbal and non-verbal expressions of gratitude used in the English-speaking SLT diaspora. The data analysis points towards a functional split between instances where code-switches to Tamil occur (e.g. *nandri* ‘thank you’) and instances where individuals choose English expressions of gratitude: *Nandri* is used much more sparingly and usually not with phatic function. The interviews furthermore reveal intergenerational differences, e.g. in that the older generations generally use expressions of gratitude less frequently. The paper offers novel empirical insights into determinants of variation observed in a supra-local speech community.

¹ Shankari Chandran, Son of the Sun God.

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Modal sentence adverbs of certainty from LModE to PDE: *Certainly* and *definitely*

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English has a large set of sentence adverbs, of which the modal sentence adverbs have been the most productive in the history of English (Swan 1988). This corpus-based study looks at recent shifts in the usage of sentence adverbs *certainly* and *definitely*, which are among the most frequent modal adverbs of present-day spoken British English and which overlap in their discourse functions. *Certainly* was a highly frequent adverb in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, while *definitely* was rarer. Recently *definitely* has risen fast and in the PDE spoken data from the 2010s (BNC-2014) is more than four times more frequent than *certainly*. The aim is to compare the evolutions of the two adverbs in LModE and in PDE through analysis of corpus data, coded for position, scope, co-occurrence with modal verb, polarity, mood, event status, and discourse relation.

The LModE data show *certainly* in a range of functions, gradually losing its manner usage ('with certitude') (1) and belief or inference (evidential) usage (2) and moving towards its current usage (3), which includes functions as a polarity item, intensifier and incipient concession marker.

- (1) I don't know **certainly** (OBC1733)
- (2) as I expected one Robert Nelson to come to supper, said I, that is **certainly** Bob's knock, I will open the door myself (OBC1749)
- (3) well the garden **certainly** looks better for your little clearup (BNC1KBB)

Definitely appears in the courtroom data only from the 1860s, in a 'with certitude' sense (4) comparable to that formerly expressed by *certainly*.

- (4) I do not remember **definitely** (OBC1890)

For *definitely* the manner usage also dwindles, and roundabout the 1930s it emerges as a modal sentence adverb. The diachronic and synchronic relationships between the evidential, epistemic and intensifying aspects of the two adverbs are discussed (cf. Squartini 2009) and compared with similar developments within a grammaticalization framework (cf. Suzuki 2012).

Despite the overlapping functions of the two adverbs in PDE, different discourse patterns are observed in dialogic use, so that (with contextual modulation) *certainly* tends towards acknowledgement of the truth of an idea unit while *definitely* tends towards expressing that there is no place for doubt. The findings broadly concur with those of Simon-Vandenberg & Aijmer (2007), who suggest that *certainly* expresses speaker's subjective assessment of likelihood and *definitely* applies to the nature of a state of affairs, and of Simon-Vandenberg (2008), who points to collocational differences. However, it is suggested that both, in certain typical contexts, operate in PDE less on the epistemic modal level and more to modify illocutionary force. For both adverbs, it is argued, the PDE discourse patterns reveal persistence (in the sense of Hopper 1991), including greater collocation with modal verbs and greater intersubjectivity for *certainly*, compared with *definitely*.

Corpora

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Investigating the use of the conjunction *and* in English prenominal adjective sequences

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This study addresses the question of which variables underlie the choice to realize or omit *and* in English prenominal adjective sequences, see e.g. (1) and (2) below. We report the results of a multifactorial corpus-linguistic analysis testing the claim that this case of variation is driven by both structural-semantic as well as language processing constraints.

- (1) A big red ribbon
- (2) A big and red ribbon
- (3) A (peaceful (political life))

In the research literature, the use of the coordinating conjunction *and* is commonly viewed as marking a structural-semantic distinction. Sequences with *and* are viewed as paratactic constructions in which both adjectives make an “independent attribution of qualities” and that are “of the same kind”, typically belonging to the same functional class (Vandelanotte 2002). In contrast, sequences without coordinator or other separator are viewed as instantiating a hypotactic relationship, as illustrated by the bracketing structure in (3), and typically involve adjectives of different functional classes. However, adjective sequences without a coordinator instantiating a paratactic relationship are commonly used, e.g. example (1) above. We put forth the argument that the choice for/against *and* is not a purely structural-semantic one, but is also driven by language processing constraints. In particular, we test Rohdenburg’s complexity principle, that “in the case of more or less explicit grammatical options, the more explicit one(s) will tend to be favoured in cognitively more complex environments.” (Rohdenburg 1996: 151). Coordination with *and* is the more explicit variant and should therefore be preferred in cognitively demanding contexts.

We carried out a multifactorial, corpus-linguistic analysis based on samples extracted from the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (Davies 2008). As mentioned above, a prediction derived from the structural-semantic account is that the two adjectives combined with *and* are of the same kind. We tested this claim by coding the functional classes of the adjectives, as well as measuring their semantic similarity via word embeddings provided by Günther et al. (2015). Regarding the language processing perspective, a number of variables commonly attributed to impact lexical access were coded, namely length, frequency, concreteness as well as the semantic and phonological neighbourhood density of both adjectives, employing data from the *English Lexicon Project* (Balota et al. 2007).

A random forest analysis was conducted, showing that variables from both perspectives are statistically significant predictors. Semantically similar adjectives favour sequencing with *and*, in line with the view of coordination of “the same kind”. With regard to the processing-related variables we find that characteristics of the second adjective yield particularly strong effects. For example, in case the second adjective is long and/or infrequent, the probability to overtly realize *and* increases. This is in line with the predictions of the complexity principle and suggests that it is the ease of lexical access of the second adjective in particular that affects coordinator omission or realization. Overall, the results support the interpretation that the phenomenon investigated is co-determined by both semantic-structural considerations as well as processing constraints.

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Nonfinite clauses in varieties of English: Conspiracy for convergence?

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Constructions involving complementation by nonfinite clauses occupy a prominent place in research on grammatical variation in standard varieties of English. The paper argues that when recent corpus data are used, convergence, usually along current North American norms, is more often observed than stable variation and increasing diversification. This will be demonstrated with three variables:

- (i) bare and *to*-infinitives with *help* (e.g. *help (you) (to) carry the bag upstairs*),
- (ii) *-ing* with and without *from* with verbs expressing prevention (e.g. *that'll stop/prevent/... you (from) losing money*), and
- (iii) a rapidly expanding fused construction with *need* (e.g. *I need you to get started now or I need you to sign this for me*).

The first two variables have been well described in previous corpus-based research, and for them the present study thus merely aims to complement the picture with findings from very recent corpora of written English, such as the 2021 LOB-update compiled at Lancaster, and from diachronic corpora of spoken English, such as BNC 1994/BNC 2014. The inclusion of spoken data is a desideratum, because spoken language has been less well covered in previous research than writing, and convergence and divergence should not be expected to play out in the same way in speech and writing. The development of the fused construction with *need* will be documented more comprehensively, from ca. 1800, based on data from COHA/COCA and the BNC (old and new), also because its spread is connected with the development of the already well covered modal *need to* and thus raises interesting issues for grammaticalization theory and the study of modality. Finally, the study features a methodological innovation in that it complements traditional corpus analysis with AI-based text-generation and machine-translation tools, which are used in prompting experiments designed to elicit competing variants. The study submits that Large Language Models (LLMs) have joined grammaticalization and Americanization as a further powerful homogenizing force in the grammar of World Englishes. The three factors generally re-inforce each other, although they may affect individual variables in slightly different ways. Together, they add up to the conspiracy for grammatical convergence in twenty-first century (standard) Englishes.

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Experimental evidence on facilitating factors in non-native processing of English compounds

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Due to their dual activation of lexical items to generate new entries with varying degrees of compositionality (González Alonso et al. 2016) and their role in the interplay between lexical storage and grammatical combination (Semenza & Luzatti 2014), compounds have been a central topic in language processing research (e.g. Libben 1998; Gagné 2002; El-Bialy et al. 2013; de Zeeuw et al. 2017, etc.). A comparative approach to compound processing is particularly interesting in the context of typological differences across languages, but also in terms of native vs. non-native processing (see Clahsen & Felser 2006; Kotzor 2021; Pellicer-Sánchez et al. 2022), with a number of studies suggesting that L2 learners can process morphosyntactic structures unique to the target language in a native-like manner (cf. Alemán-Mañón et al. 2014; Trenkic et al. 2014; Alaskar & Cunnings 2024), thus leading to questions on whether L2 processing relies on distinct cognitive mechanisms or whether observed differences are largely proficiency-driven. While previous research suggests that compound processing in L2 does not strictly follow inflection-derivation or computation-storage divide (Giraud & Dal Maso 2018), factors such as morphological relatedness, frequency, congruency and proficiency seem to play a crucial role (Schreuder & Baayen 1997; Murphy & Hayes 2010; Siyanova-Chanturia 2011; Dal Maso & Giraud 2014; Jiang 2022; Yang et al. 2024).

This study investigates the processing of nominal compounds in Croatian and Slovene as L1 and English as L2, focusing on morphological relatedness, frequency, schematicity, and the effects of L2 proficiency. Our research aims to address whether morphological decomposition occurs with nominal compounds in Croatian and Slovene as L1 and English as L2, and whether frequency measures (such as constituent frequency and schematicity) affect processing in L1 and L2, and to what extent. Given English's flexible compounding system —ranging from open compounds (*tax payer*) to hyphenated (*tax-payer*) and closed (*taxpayer*) forms— alongside ongoing linguistic change, this research considers how variation in English compounds interacts with processing mechanisms in non-native speakers. The relevant compounds were identified and extracted based on selection criteria such as language, corpus size, relevance, recency, and text type, with English examples being sourced from the *ukWaC English Corpus*, and Croatian and Slovenian compounds being drawn from the *CLASSLA Web Corpora* (CLASSLA-web.hr and CLASSLA-web.si). We present initial findings based on two masked priming lexical decision experiments conducted with non-native (either moderately or highly proficient) speakers of English as L2. The first experiment examines the role of morphological relatedness in non-native compound processing, and the second experiment investigates the effects of corpus-derived data such as schematicity, testing whether compounds whose right constituents appear with a greater number of left constituents are processed faster in L1 and L2. The results indicate consistent effects of frequency and L2 proficiency in both experiments, with a more prominent effect for higher proficiency participants. Morphological relatedness also seems to be a factor among the higher proficiency participants in Experiment 1, but despite significant effects of schematicity, there does not seem to be evidence for morphological decomposition in Experiment 2.

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Exploring English sensory light nouns: From data to cognition, and back

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Over the past twenty years, linguistic studies have devoted massive attention to the domain of Senses, exploring its realization in several nominal constructions, mainly adopting a cognitive perspective (cf., Jütte 2005; Viberg 2008, among others). Among the five senses, Hearing and Sight have always been considered predominant in human experience, compared to Touch, Taste, and Smell. This means that the last three senses have been somehow neglected by scholars, with a few recent exceptions (cf. Speed et al. 2019; Winter 2019).

This study wants to explore, from a cognitive perspective, the sensory domains of Smell, Taste, and Touch in English binomial constructions of the type ‘a N1 of N2’, such as *a whiff of racism*, *a taste of freedom*, *a touch of color*. The aforementioned construction, recently accounted for in multiple studies on Romance languages (Simone & Masini 2009, 2014; Masini 2016) and Basque (Zabala 2017), has been named Light Noun Construction, since the first nominal represents the syntactic Head of the pattern but not the semantic Head, and, therefore, undergoes a sort of nominal ‘bleaching’ (in parallel with the well-known concept of Verb Lightness).

We adopted Schmid’s Entrenchment-and-Conventionalization Model (2020) to analyse data drawn from the *EnTenTen20* corpus in order to demonstrate how the semantics of the first and the second nominal are combined to license the meaning of the construction. The quantitative analysis was carried out using the SketchEngine tools of ‘Word Sketch’, ‘collocations’, and ‘word combination’. For each pattern we set a minimum score threshold of 5.0. We selected examples in which *whiff*, *taste* and *touch* did not have a full referential meaning but performed a quantifying or qualifying function. The construction “a smell of N2” was not included because either 1) the few instances in the corpus did not reach the score of 5.0; or 2) the occurrences retrieved did not provide a clear enough context so as to exclude a full referential use. The dataset contains 104 examples of N2s that combine with the three LN constructions under analysis. More specifically, “a whiff of” combines with 14 N2s (for example, *scandal*); “a taste of” combines with 45 N2s (for example, *Italy*); “a touch of” combines with 65 N2s (for example, *vanilla*). As the next step, ten examples for each N1-of-N2 pattern were randomly extracted for further processing and analysis, for a total of 1,040 examples. The results show regularity of behaviour on the syntagmatic, semasiological, onomasiological and contextual dimensions, i.e. specific conformity profiles of the three LN constructions. After that, we conducted a survey on 50 native speakers of UK and US English, using the platform *Prolific* (<https://www.prolific.com>), through which we administered two tests in order to check the psychological reality of these conformity profiles.

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The intersection of register and complexity: Subject pronoun expression in Singapore English

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Although English is the canonical example of a Non-Null Subject Language (NNSL), it is well established that there are several well-documented exceptions to this generalization that result in roughly 3% of subjects remaining unexpressed (Torres Cacoullos & Travis 2019); contexts that allow unexpressed subjects include situational ellipsis and diary ‘pro-drop’ (e.g. Haegeman 1990). The vast majority of these null subjects in British and American English are utterance-initial, leading to the analysis that they are casualties of left-edge deletion (the dropping of weak syllables at the left edge of prosodic phrases). This approach reconciles these deviations with English’s NNSL-hood (Weir 2012). However, varieties such as Singapore English show higher rates of unexpressed subjects that occur outside of these restrictions, likely an effect of contact with discourse-NSL Chinese (Sato & Kim 2012; Tamaredo 2018; Schröter 2019).

Tamaredo (2018) argues that the higher rate of unexpressed subjects here is a result of simplification: if the referent is recoverable, a structure without an overt subject is simpler than one with a pronominal subject (see also Tamaredo 2020). However, as Tamaredo (2018: 88–93) observes, the notions of simplicity and complexity are not straightforward to operationalize. We argue, *pace* Tamaredo (2018, 2020) and Williams (1987, 1988), that – if complexity is conceptualized as L2-difficulty, following Trudgill (2011) – leaving the subject unexpressed is complex, not simple. Support for this contention comes from studies showing that L2 acquirers of NSLs consistently overproduce subject pronouns, regardless of their L1 (Bini 1993; Sorace 2011 and references cited there).

This warrants a reexamination of Singapore English, since the historical context in which this variety emerged is one in which adult language acquisition by L1 Sinitic speakers is implicated (Leimgruber 2013). Our data is drawn from direct conversations and social letters in *ICE Singapore* (2002). In a mixed-effects model, register and utterance position are found to have a significant interaction ($p < 0.002$): while there is a major difference between utterance-initial position (in which the subject may remain unexpressed) and other positions (in which the subject is almost always overt) in social letters, in direct conversation this difference is not substantial, and subjects can remain unexpressed in all positions (Figure 1). This suggests that while Weir’s left-edge deletion analysis applies to letters, for conversation a different analysis is needed, one which has more in common with the discourse-NSL structure of Sinitic languages. Register and position also emerge as important predictors in a conditional inference tree model, consistent with the above; however, in this model, pronoun (person and number) is the most important branch (Figure 2). *I* greatly favours null subjects, supporting similar reports in British and American English (e.g. Wagner 2016). Overall, our results show that register matters: unexpressed subjects are a feature of both colloquial and more formal Singapore English, but the constraints which govern them differ. In Colloquial Singapore English, in particular, the constraints we see are reminiscent of those found in Chinese, consistent with an account in which simplification driven by adult L2 acquisition is one of the factors at play.

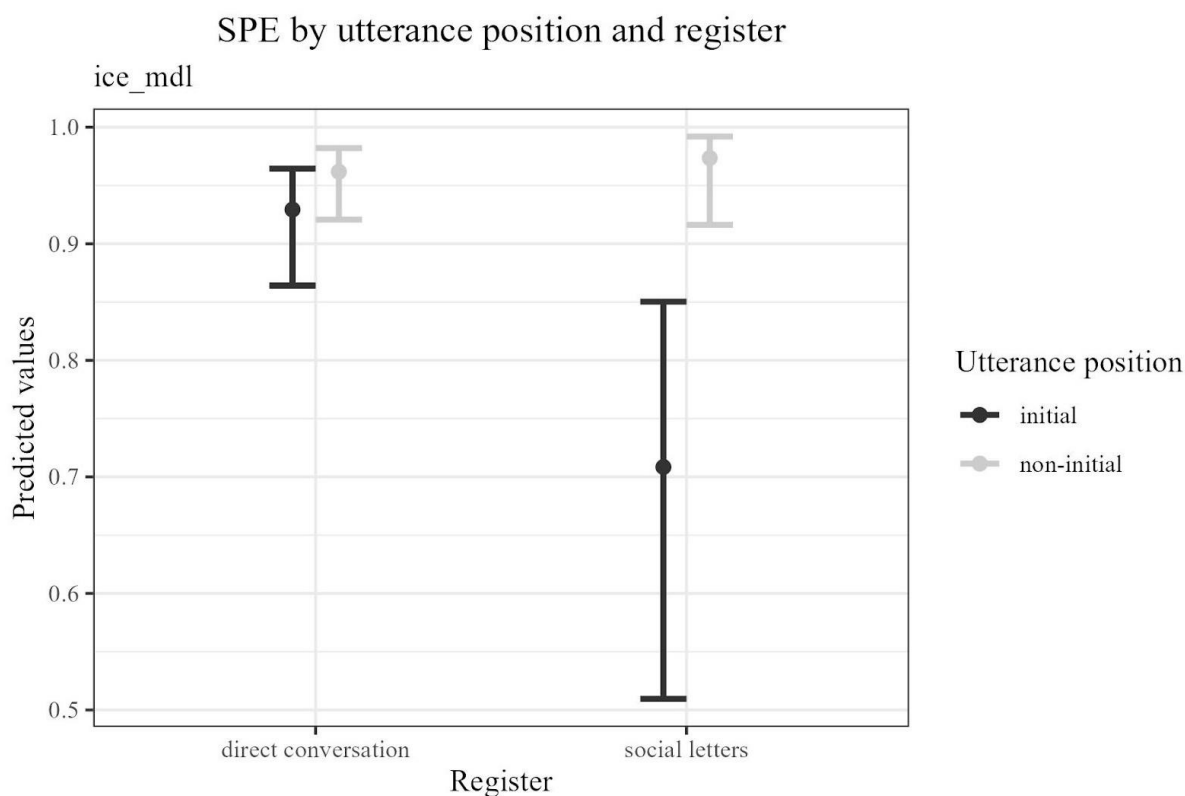


Figure 1: Effects plot for predicted SPE by utterance position and register

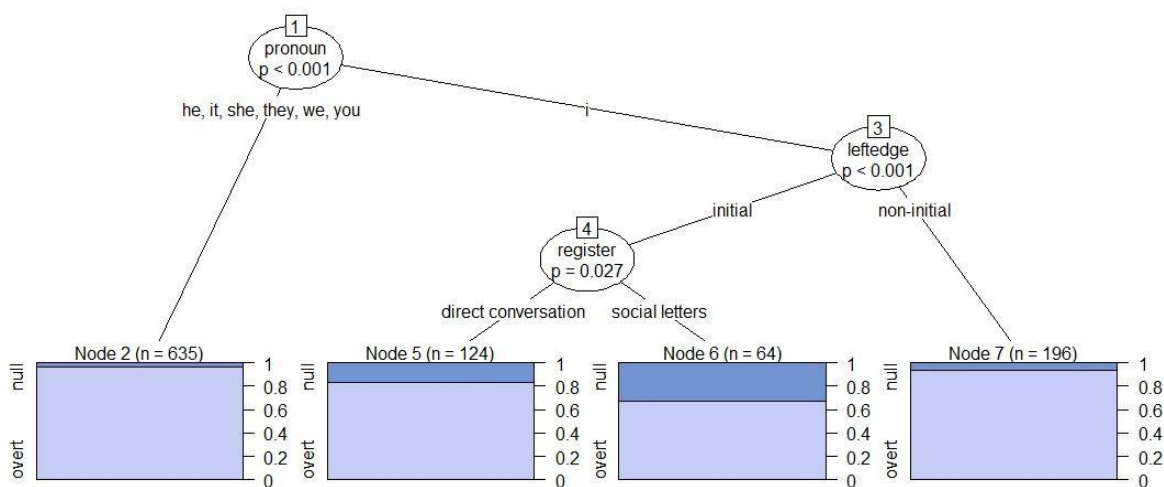


Figure 2: Constraint Hierarchy for pronoun, utterance position (leftedge) and register

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(th)-variation in Nigerian English: A large-scale corpus phonetic study

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Most phonetic and phonological research on Nigerian English (NigE) is currently restricted to anecdotal observations and small studies (see e.g. Awonusi 1986; Jibril 1986; Gut 2008; Jowitt 2019). The same is the case for the sociolinguistic variable (th). Previous work has revealed some variability in the production of the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/, with realizations varying between [θ ~ t] and [ð ~ d] among the Yoruba and Igbo ethnic groups as well as [θ ~ t ~ s] and [ð ~ d ~ z] among Hausa speakers (Gut 2008; Oyebola et al. 2019). However, no comprehensive study of (th)-variation among Nigerian speakers of English exists yet. Especially the relative influence of different linguistic factors on (th)-variation that have been shown to operate in other varieties of English (e.g. Labov 2006: 144-156; Drummond 2018; Irvine-Sobers 2018; Meer 2023: 171) has not been investigated yet for NigE.

It is the aim of the present study to provide the first large-scale corpus phonetic investigation of (th)-variation in NigE that takes into account a range of potentially influencing factors. To this end, the speech of more than 100 Nigerian speakers taken from the *International Corpus of English (ICE)-Nigeria* is examined using auditory phonetic analysis complemented by visual spectrographic inspection, and the potential effects of different linguistic factors (e.g. VOICING, POSITION IN THE WORD, WORD CLASS) and external factors (e.g. TEXT TYPE, GENDER, ETHNICITY) are investigated. Generalized linear (logistic) mixed-effects models and tree-based algorithms are used for statistical modelling.

Preliminary results based on more than 1,200 (th) tokens produced by 44 speakers in the broadcast talks, broadcast discussions, and broadcast news from ICE-Nigeria show that (th)-stopping is relatively frequent in educated NigE (29.4%). By contrast, the production of alveolar fricatives is virtually absent (0.1%). A preliminary investigation of the effects of TEXT TYPE, POSITION IN THE WORD, and VOICING indicates that (th)-realization may vary stylistically across text types.

The ongoing analysis of the full dataset including all factors will shed further light on the patterns of variation and provide a large-scale corpus phonetic account of (th) in NigE.

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The acquisition of *-ing*-complements in British and American children

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1. Background One of the strategies for forming complement clauses in English is non-finite *-ing*-clauses (e.g. *They keep [drinking Irn-Bru]*). While their diachronic development, synchronic distribution, and function have been investigated in detail (e.g. Fanego 1996, 2004; De Smet 2013; Maekelberghe 2020), the L1 acquisition of *-ing*-complements has received significantly less attention. Limber (1973) merely notes a late onset of *-ing*-complements in their data (after 3;0). Diessel (2004) confirms this for subject-controlled *-ing*-complements but not object-controlled structures, which start to appear earlier (on average 2;5). Crucially, no study to date provides a detailed description of the acquisitional process. Moreover, both studies are based on data from North American children. Recent research, however, has highlighted differences in the usage of *-ing*-complements in different English varieties (Vosberg 2009; García-Castro 2020), raising the possibility that these observations may not hold for other varieties. This study addresses these issues through a corpus analysis.

2. Corpus study Two research questions are investigated: First, how does the early acquisition of subject-controlled *-ing*-complements in L1 learners progress, and to what extent can distinct stages be discerned? Second, do any differences between British and North American L1 learners emerge? These questions are addressed using the North American and British collections of CHILDES (MacWhinney 2000), which comprise data from multiple children. The study focuses on utterances produced by younger children (aged 1;0–5;0). All corpora with part-of-speech and a universal dependency annotation are queried using a Python script. The extracted data is manually checked to exclude any false positives resulting from incorrect part-of-speech tagging, non-complement status of the *-ing*-clause, and structures without subject control. Data collection for British children has already been completed (yielding 1134 *-ing*-complements), while collection for North American children is still ongoing.

Analysis of the British data reveals the production of *-ing*-complements by children as young as 1;10 – with their frequency increasing steadily until 5;0 (from 2 to 13 per 10,000 words). Initially, *-ing*-complements exhibit a formulaic character and are ambiguous between nominal and verbal readings (e.g. *I like [bashing]*), but this soon changes (e.g. *They keep [picking you]*). The total number of verbs selecting *-ing*-complements remains low (approximately 30 verbs). Around age 2;0, two verb classes selecting *-ing*-complements emerge: aspectual verbs (e.g. *keep, stop*) and volitional verbs (e.g. *want, like*). Additionally, some verbs that fall outside these classes also select *-ing*-complements (e.g. *go, try*). New matrix verbs are added in the third and fifth year of life but not in the fourth. These phases may correspond to different stages in the acquisition of *-ing*-complements.

3. Discussion The analysis of British children’s speech reveals that *-ing*-complements emerge significantly earlier than previously assumed. Moreover, *-ing*-complements appear to be limited to specific verb classes, though exceptions exist. The talk will also present a similar analysis for North American children. The similarities and differences between learners of the two varieties will be highlighted and discussed. The discussion will consider factors such as grammatical context, innovations, and how those relate to the input.

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The emergence of English *-ing*-complements as result of broader syntactic changes

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This paper proposes a new account of the emergence of the English alternation between *-ing* and *to*-infinitive non-finite complements (cf. (1)–(2)).

- (1) a. She likes **reading** books.
b. She likes **to** read books.
- (2) a. She remembered **reading** that book.
b. She remembered **to** read that book.

to-infinitives date back to Old English, *-ing*-clauses to at least Middle English. The first complement *-ing*-clauses are found circa 1500 (Fanego 1996, 2004; De Smet 2013). Evidence from the PPCEME (Kroch et al. 2004) and PPCMBE2 (Kroch et al. 2016) shows that they expand dramatically in frequency between 1500 and 1780, after which they remain largely stable (Figure 1).

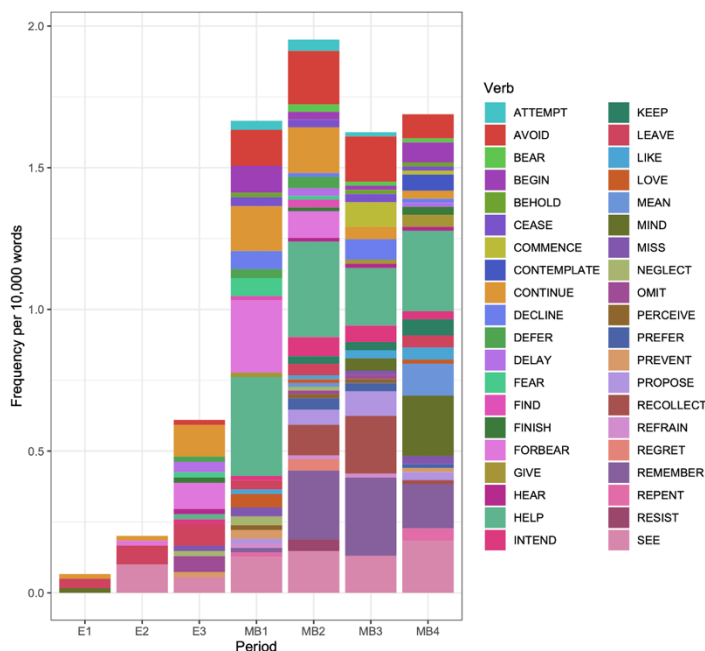


Figure 1: Verbs taking *-ing*-complements in Early Modern English (E) and Modern British English (MB)

The set of verbs taking *-ing*-complements and the set of verbs taking *to*-infinitive complements are entirely disjoint during the Early Modern period (Figure 2a), but during the period covered by the PPCMBE2 this changes, and in the present day the distribution of the two types of complement overlaps considerably, with many verbs taking both types (Figure 2b, based on CHILDES, MacWhinney 2000).

Although today the choice between the two complement types is sometimes semantically motivated, e.g. (2a) vs. (2b), this only holds for few verbs, and for the vast majority no difference of meaning exists (e.g. (1a) vs. (1b)). Moreover, while in Early Modern English the verbs selecting *-ing*-complements arguably fall into particular semantic classes (e.g. negative implicatives; Fanego 1996), this no longer holds. The Tolerance Principle, a well-supported productivity metageneralization (Yang 2016), predicts productivity thresholds over verb classes based on the number of verbs in the class. Analysis of verb classes from Levin (1993) against the historical and contemporary data reveals that no non-trivial class ($N > 4$) ever takes *-ing*-complements productively. Consistent with this analysis, nontargetlike overgeneralizations of *-ing*-complements

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Identity construction of engineers in websites: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis approach

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Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 1995, 2003; Wodak & Meyer 2001) provides a powerful framework for examining how language constructs and reinforces social power relations. More specifically, Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) offers a nuanced approach to examining how engineering expertise, identity, and professional authority are constructed through diverse semiotic resources, including language, visual elements, layout design, and interactive features. Traditional discourse analysis has largely focused on linguistic structures, but engineering communication increasingly relies on multimodal strategies—such as graphs, technical schematics, photographs, and digital interfaces—to shape narratives of innovation, professionalism, and social responsibility.

In the qualitative and quantitative discourse analysis of thirty internationally recognized engineering companies, the “About Us” sections serve as key textual sites where expertise, professionalism, and social responsibility are discursively shaped. A deeper integration of discourse analytical and corpus linguistics perspectives—including Hicks (2014) on expert identity formation, Jacoby & Gonzales (1991) on the interactional construction of expertise, and Hatmaker (2012), Downey & Lucena (2004), and Poleacovschi et al. (2017) on engineering expertise—allows for a more nuanced interrogation of how knowledge and authority are established within professional engineering communities.

Engineering websites frequently rely on specialized terminology and complex syntactic structures to position engineers as authoritative figures. As Hicks (2014) argues, expertise is not an inherent trait but is actively constructed through discourse, often by invoking technical precision and disciplinary exclusivity. This linguistic strategy, seen in the preference for passive constructions and nominalizations, creates a sense of neutrality while reinforcing boundaries between expert and non-expert audiences. The corpus-based approach further reveals how interactional patterns shape knowledge exchange, highlighting how engineering expertise is reinforced through communicative practices such as directives, hedging, and evidential markers.

Engineering professionalism is often framed in a way that prioritizes technical mastery over ethical or societal considerations. Hatmaker (2012) examines how professional identity in engineering is structured around institutional and performance-based criteria rather than collaborative or social dimensions. The absence of explicit engagement with ethical dilemmas or structural inequalities in these websites reflects a dominant discourse that limits professionalism to regulatory compliance rather than social accountability.

While engineering websites frequently emphasize contributions to human safety, environmental sustainability, and diversity, they often neglect the systemic inequalities embedded in technological advancements (Poleacovschi et al. 2017). Innovation and efficiency obscures critical discussions about power relations within engineering and how technological infrastructures reinforce social hierarchies. By applying MCDA to engineering discourse, researchers can uncover the ways in which expertise, professionalism, and social impact are textually and visually orchestrated. Engineering communication is not neutral—it is shaped by intentional multimodal strategies that influence public perception, professional hierarchies, and industry narratives.

By incorporating insights from MCDA and corpus linguistics, the study of engineering communication can move beyond surface-level textual analysis to uncover the interactional, structural, and ideological mechanisms that shape expert discourse. The findings suggest that dominant engineering narratives privilege technical proficiency over inclusivity, reinforcing hegemonic structures. Future research should further examine alternative discourses—especially

those that challenge traditional conceptualizations of expertise and advocate for more diverse representations within the engineering profession.

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Updating the *Coruña Corpus*: Advances in the *Corpus of English Texts on Physics*

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This paper describes the compilation of CETePh, the *Corpus of English Texts on Physics*, which is the new subcorpus in the *Coruña Corpus of English Scientific Writing* (CC). We will describe the difficulties faced during the process of selection and computerization of samples and how they were overcome. One of the most relevant features of CETePh is that it includes certain elements of scientific notation whose rendering implies a challenge. The corpus contains forty-five samples of texts on different fields within Physics (c. 400,000 words).

The rationale behind the compilation of the CC is to gather Late Modern English scientific texts in several twin corpora sharing the same characteristics (Crespo & Moskowich 2010; Moskowich 2016). We first delimited the time-span to be covered and determined the size of samples. Although there are many different proposals for the periodization of English, we set our time limits between 1700 and 1900 basing on extralinguistic factors. Regarding sample size, we first examined some of the texts from the period and decided to collect 10,000-word extracts. When we made this decision in 2003, specialized corpora did not abound and not much information about them was available, except for Biber's (1993) claim that 1,000-word samples were enough to observe variation in present-day specialized registers. Our direct reading of the material, and the fact that we did not intend to collect huge amounts of samples, convinced us otherwise. This idea and the use TEI-XML for text encoding is now backed by other corpus compilers (VARIENG 2016; Rodríguez-Puente et al. 2019).

The CC is organized into different sub-corpora, one for each discipline. Disciplines are considered attending to the criteria of the historical moment when texts were published, that is, an inclusive one, since, during the late modern period, fields of knowledge were not as separated as they are nowadays. We have chosen not to talk about Natural Philosophy since this term comprised both natural and physical sciences. We used the divisions proposed by UNESCO (1988) as a starting point. As of now, five subcorpora have been published: CETA (*Corpus of English Texts on Astronomy*), and CEPHiT (*Corpus of English Philosophy Texts*), CELiST (*Corpus of English Life Sciences Texts*), CHET (*Corpus of Historical English Texts*), and CEChET (*Corpus of English Chemical Texts*) and the corpus on Geography and the present one are in different stages of development.

A metadata file accompanies each text sample. Such metadata files provide information about both the author and the text itself, and can be used to narrow searches according to extralinguistic parameters with the Coruña Corpus Tool, now updated. Besides these extralinguistic elements (sex, age or geographical provenance of the author, publication date, etc.) the compilation process entails the classification of samples into different genres, as different disciplines require different taxonomies. We examine the historical context of academic writing in the transition from Natural Philosophy to early Physics in Late Modern English, and how this affects the compilation process, as well as how this makes the corpus representative of the disciplinary practices of the period.

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Where do butterflies and ants meet?

Salient vs. frequent variants of habitual *used to* in the statistical modelling of English variety types

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In current World Englishes research and neighbouring fields, usage-based approaches struggle to reconcile the qualitative value and the statistical impact of two kinds of constructions, which have been coined *linguistic butterflies* and *linguistic ants* respectively (e.g. Bernaisch et al. 2022). The metaphor of linguistic ants stands for largely schematic grammatical constructions with high usage frequencies and subtle, non-salient probabilistic variation, whereas butterfly collecting in linguistics pertains to non-canonical structures with low frequencies but typically high salience. The latter structures easily escape quantitatively minded analyses; yet they may constitute meaningful shibboleths of particular varieties.

The present study takes this issue at the intersection of theoretical and statistical modelling to the empirical test case of habitual aspect in World Englishes. Based usage data from 5 Inner Circle varieties and 8 Outer Circle varieties part of the *International Corpus of English* (Greenbaum & Nelson 1996), we examine the grammaticalization patterns and behavioural profiles (Gries 2010) of the auxiliary [*used to* V], taking into account semantic (e.g. aktionsart), morphological (e.g. tense) as well as syntactic (e.g. negation) features. Being a fairly frequent expression overall, the habitual marker *used to* exhibits some categorically unique variants that qualify as “butterflies” as defined above, such as contracted *usen’t* in Irish English (1) and future-time *will use to* in Hong Kong English (2).

- (1) I used to always get on well with my Mam but I **usen’t** get on well with my Dad (ICE-IRE: S1A-048\$B)
- (2) **Will** you **use to** be more authoritative than than Martin and I ... [?] (ICE-HK: S1B-033#67:1:B)

Such non-standard variants of *used to* are attested almost exclusively in Outer Circle Englishes. However, commonly employed methods for testing hypothesized variety types (esp. Kachru 1985) against usage data, such as hierarchical agglomerative cluster analysis (Levshina 2015), fail to reflect this qualitative trend well. This is because the merge algorithms and maximally token-based approaches conventionally taken in cluster analyses give much more weight to “ant”-like features that are realized alongside virtually any token, such as the aktionsart of the main verb following *used to* in the test case at hand. We therefore discuss how choices in the coding process and in the application of clustering algorithms may help balance the qualitatively meaningful with the statistically impactful. Ultimately, charting the metaphorical meeting area of linguistic butterflies and ants is likely to enhance researchers’ understanding of when the increasingly sophisticated statistical methods applied in the field adequately test major theoretical models and narratives of World Englishes (cf. Hundt 2021).

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Asymmetries in the nineteenth-century courtroom – Talking about spoken threats in Old Bailey trials

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Threats are crimes of language, which makes their verbal representation in the courtroom central to the outcome of a trial. This is particularly important when spoken threats are discussed, as these are not available as physical evidence – unlike, for example, threatening letters. To determine whether a verbal action constitutes a threat, and, thus, an illicit speech act, the utterance in question must first be reproduced by trial participants, for instance in the form of (in)direct quotations, Narrative Reports of Speech Acts (NRSAs), or Narrator’s representations of Voice (NVs) (see Semino & Short 2004; Grund 2023). Speech representation, however, is never neutral but rather constitutes a “highly selective and thus powerful resource of institutional meaning-making” (Johnson 2013: 148). While in (1), the witness in a murder trial very clearly labels the speech act in question a threat, the speaker in (2) does not comment on the illocutionary force of the alleged threat but rather provides the jury with a direct quotation of the defendant’s statement.

- (1) I have heard him **threaten** her
- (2) he **said**, “I will take you as Mary Smith, if you don’t give me 5.”

However, as trials are highly asymmetric speech events, not all trial participants have equal opportunities for providing speech representations: First, not all trial participants have the right to initiate turns. Second, the structure of the adversarial trial affects the order in which participants can present their version of events (see Heffer 2010). And third, trial participants have different knowledge of the legal process and of expectations in the courtroom.

In this paper, I investigate how spoken threats are represented by different parties in 98 criminal cases tried at the Old Bailey in the nineteenth century, the first period in the legal history of England, where the role of defendants was considerably strengthened as they were finally allowed access to professional legal representation, at least in theory (see Langbein 2003). The threats either constitute the main crime under investigation or they accompany other crimes, such as robbery or murder. I then analyse whether the role of the speech reporter (witness, legal expert, etc.) and the sequential positioning of the speech representation in the trial (e.g. as part of the examination or cross-examination) affects the type of speech representation.

Although the situation of defendants in the courtroom had improved considerably in the Late Modern period (see Langbein 2003), my findings show that power asymmetries on the macro-level of the trial persist, specifically between prosecution and defence and between legal laypersons and professionals. These asymmetries emerge through and are reinforced by power differences on the micro-level: While non-professional witnesses often rely on direct quotations with *say*, questioning by legal experts during (cross-)examination frequently aims at making them choose more evaluative language, for example by adding speech descriptors or by choosing more specific illocutionary verbs (e.g. *threaten*). Furthermore, the sequential structure of the trials puts defendants at a disadvantage, as it only allows them to react to the frame established through previous speech representations.

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Bayesian multivariate analysis of grammatical variability in spoken and written English as a Lingua Franca

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This study investigates grammatical variability in the use of necessity modals in spoken and written English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). In this modal domain, *must* coexists with semi-modals *have to*, *need to*, and *(have) got to* to express obligation and necessity, often interchangeably. Previous research of native and second language varieties shows a decline of *must* and a rise of *have to* and *need to* (Krug 2000; Collins 2009; Leech 2013). Empirical studies suggest ELF speakers not only follow these trends but also exhibit unique divergences due to cognitive and social factors in multilingual settings (Deshors 2020; Laitinen 2020; Nie 2024).

This study expands the limited quantitative research on ELF by analysing spoken and written ELF corpora: *English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings* (ELFA 2008) and *Written English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings* (WrELFA 2015). It investigates whether ELF speakers are aware of stylistic differences in necessity modals, such as the tendency for *have to* and *need to* to be more frequent in spoken language, while *must* is more often used in written language, as observed in native Englishes (Leech 2003). By comparing ELFA and WrELFA, this study addresses two key questions:

- 1) How does the distribution of necessity modals differ between spoken and written modes in ELF?
- 2) How does the influence of variables constraining the choice of necessity modals differ between spoken and written ELF?

The descriptive statistics indicate that *have to* and *need to* are more frequent in spoken ELF, while *must* is more common in written data. Comparing the frequency of modal verbs in speech versus writing, this study reveals that *have to* is more frequent in speech (ratio of 4.46:1), whereas *need to* also favours speech but to a lesser extent (ratio of 1.18:1). In contrast, *must* is more frequent in writing (ratio of 0.76). When compared to Collins (2009: 286–287) and Hansen (2018: 366–367), ELF exhibits a stronger contrast between spoken and written modes compared to ENL and ESL varieties, particularly for *have to*. This finding suggests that language use in lingua franca settings may accelerate grammatical change in modal verbs, as proposed by Laitinen (2020).

This study employed Bayesian mixed-effects regression modelling for multivariate analysis. The results of the multivariate analysis show that: (1) Mode, Grammatical Person, Domain, Association between a lexical verb and a necessity verb, Reference of the subject, and L1 all have a strong influence on the choice of necessity modals in academic ELF; (2) Although the distribution of necessity modals differs between spoken and written academic ELF, the effects of the linguistic variables are largely parallel across both modes.

These findings indicate that while ELF users are aware of the differences between spoken and written modes, and the variables that constrain the choice of modal verbs are largely the same, they also show distinctive characteristics in using these necessity modals. This study enhances our understanding of the underlying processes and factors that influence non-native English grammar as a whole.

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Morphological insights into the phonological analysis of variation /n/-/ŋ/ in eighteenth-century pronouncing dictionaries

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It has been acknowledged that in the last decades there has been a ‘phonological turn’ in the studies of Late Modern English aided by the advances in the digital humanities (Yáñez-Bouza 2020: 477). Despite the absence of a comprehensive volume detailing the main features of Late Modern English akin to Dobson’s work on the Early Modern period (1957), a considerable body of scholarly work has been produced to accurately describe and delimit this stage of the language (see Bailey 1996; Görlach 1999, 2001; Jones 2006). A result of this increasing concern over phonology was the compilation of the *Eighteenth-Century English Phonology Database* (ECEP), which contains direct evidence of historical pronunciation drawn from eleven eighteenth-century pronouncing dictionaries published in the second half of the eighteenth century. These dictionaries, along with other works of elocution, have proved to be reliable sources for the study of historical phonology (Beal 2009; Yáñez-Bouza 2020). The data in ECEP have been transcribed into IPA format and categorized according to Wells’ (1982) lexical sets, as well as some additional consonant sets. Quite recently, a new set has been added to this database for the study of the velar nasal /ŋ/ in the context in which <n> follows a velar stop /g, k/, namely *thing* (Yáñez-Bouza & Nieves-Fernández 2023). The lexical set *thing* contains 3,625 words divided into two subsets: THING_a for the voiced context (*anger, congratulate*) and THING_b for the voiceless context (*banker, include*).

Previous research on the interface between morphology and phonology points towards the conditioning nature of morpheme boundary, and more specifically prefixes, for assimilation processes to take place (Kiparsky 1985; Carr 2013). In this context, this paper aims to address two research questions with regard to the Late Modern English period: i) What was/were eighteenth-century orthoepists’ interpretation (if any) of the realization of the sequence <n> + /g, k/ when the nasal phoneme belongs to the coda of a prefix?; ii) Which realization of <n> (velar /ŋ/ or alveolar /n/) is selected when the sequence of <n> + /g, k/ occurs in morpheme boundary? In order to answer these questions, I will examine evidence drawn from ECEP by manually reading the prefatory materials and analysing *thing* lexical entries. Particularly, I will focus on the entries which begin by the following prefixes: *con-* (*conavity*), *in-* (*incomparable*), *en-* (*enclose*), and *un-* (*ungainly*).

Preliminary results show that, when orthoepists make generalizations in the prefaces to the dictionaries, they tend to regard words beginning with prefixes (or prefix-like sequences, that is, when *con-*, *in-*, *en-*, and *un-* are not prefixes) as a homogeneous group with the same realization, usually with the alveolar variant (e.g. *engrave, include*). However, a close analysis of the representation of pronunciation in the lexical entries conflicts with this generalized interpretation and reveals certain inconsistencies within the same prefix-group. Said inconsistencies are driven by, but not limited to, variations in stress placement. These findings contribute to the study of the history of the velar nasal /ŋ/ in the English language and, crucially, at a time in which the codification of spoken English was at its prime.

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Structural priming and preposition omission in fragment responses to questions

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I examine the nature of structural priming effects under ellipsis, based on data collected by Chia et al. (2020). The experimental paradigm used by Chia et al. (2020) and Chia & Kaschak (2024) involved experimenters calling businesses to ask either *What time do you close?* or *At what time do you close?* Responses they elicited can be cross-classified by syntactic category (matching or mismatching the PP (*At what time*) or NP (*What time*) present in the question) and by ellipsis (some of them were full sentences (*We close (at) 9 pm*) and some were fragments (*(At) 9 pm*)). Chia & Kaschak (2024) reported a main effect of structural priming across all responses, but localized it to the fragments more than the full sentences. They did not explore any further why fragments should show particularly strong structural priming effects. One reason for the difference is that, while reuse of parallel structure is a characteristic of language production in dialogue (Branigan et al. 2000) and elsewhere (Pickering & Branigan 1998; Scheepers 2003; Reitter et al. 2006), it could play a greater role in fragments by facilitating retrieval of elided structure. A processing advantage of parallel structure is in fact predicted for ellipsis by cue-based models of sentence processing like that defended in Martin & McElree (2009, 2011), and a preference for parallel structure has been supported for fragments (Nykiel et al. 2023) and Verb Phrase Ellipsis (Parker 2018). Yet, there is reason to suspect that even strong structural priming effects could get partially overridden by what is known as P(reposition) omission in fragments. To explore whether this is so, I fitted mixed-effects regression models separately to Chia et al.'s (2020) fragments and full sentences. For the fragments, structural priming was stronger for questions with NPs than with PPs ($p < 0.001$), and for the full sentences, it was stronger for questions with PPs than with NPs ($p < 0.001$). Leaving full sentences aside, I focus on the mechanism underlying the production of an NP response (*9 pm*) to a question with a PP (*At what time do you close?*), which violates structural priming. This mechanism is ambiguous between changing the syntactic category of the temporal adjunct from PP to NP, which the grammar permits for full sentences and fragments alike, and dropping the preposition *at* through P-omission, the kind of omission that is well-documented under ellipsis in English (e.g. Merchant 2004; Nykiel 2017; Nykiel & Hawkins 2020; Lemke 2021). P-omission has been argued to have a processing motivation, allowing speakers to omit redundant material when it is easily accessible from the context (Nykiel & Hawkins 2020). I propose that the questions asked by Chia et al. (2020) and Chia & Kaschak (2024) provide an accessible context, making P-omission easy to process and explaining the weakened structural priming effects for questions with PPs. More generally, I propose that P-omission can be easier to process under ellipsis than parallel structure.

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The role of adjuncts in the development of copula verbs in the history of English

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According to the generative literature e.g. Chomsky (2000, 2004), adjuncts are attached to lexical phrases such as VPs or NPs via the syntactic operation of pair-merge. There is, at the same time, a general diachronic tendency, as formulated by van Gelderen (2018, 2022), for a verb's adjuncts to be reanalysed as part of the verb's argument structure. This tendency is argued to be driven by concerns of economy, in that language users try to avoid resorting to the computationally costly operation of pair-merge (van Gelderen 2022: 159). It is argued that different types of verbs have been affected by this tendency, including copulas. To the best of our knowledge, however, no corpus-based study has confirmed that tendency in English. The argumentation in van Gelderen (2018, 2022) is informed by an example-based presentation, with examples taken from the OED and limited corpus searches.

Research questions that this pilot study aspires to answer are as follows:

1. Does the tendency for adjuncts to be reanalysed as the subject predicate of a copula mentioned above find a confirmation in large scale corpus data?
2. Are there any syntactic factors that serve as predictors of the reanalysis?

The focus of this study is on six English verbs which have functioned as copulas since Middle English, namely *remain*, *run* (durative copulas), *become*, *grow* (telic copulas), and *appear* and *prove* (stative copulas) (cf. Visser 1963: 189ff; van Gelderen 2018: 118). The verbs have different histories: *prove*, for example, is a French loanword first attested in English around 1200 (OED *s.v. prove*) while *run* is a native English verb. All the copulas investigated are associated with aspect, as are many copulas emerging in ME. Van Gelderen (2018: 119ff.) links this fact to the loss of the realis/irrealis distinction which could be indicated via copula *beon* 'be' in Old English.

We use corpus data, obtained from *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English* and of *Early Modern English* and the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse*, to analyse the adjuncts co-occurring with the selected verbs across the Middle and Early Modern English periods, trying to isolate those which might have contributed to the reanalysis of both verbs into copulas by being reinterpreted as the verbs' arguments. Our analysis takes into account a variety of syntactic factors, namely person, animacy of the subject, realization of the subject as an NP or pronoun, adjacency of verb and adjunct.

Our early results indicate that the existing accounts of the copula reanalysis may be too optimistic placing the reanalysis of all the six verbs strictly in ME. Our corpus data adduce a large number of ambiguous cases which suggest that the reanalysis takes places later.

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If I were sorry: Describing *sorry* in repair in Australian and Canadian English

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While the English word *sorry* is canonically understood as an expression of apology, a close examination of the form reveals a range of pragmatic functions, one of which is in repair (Schegloff et al. 1977; Hoffman & Walker 2018). In repair sequences, *sorry* can be seen as extending its central ‘meaning’ to an interactionally-focused apology for disrupting the progress of the interaction (Robinson 2006; Hayashi et al. 2013). Examples (1) and (2) show its use in same-turn self-repair, with this category of repair, in general, potentially employing ten different operations, including *aborting* or *replacing* the trouble source (Schegloff 2013).

- (1) Even on my like nineteenth bir- no **sorry** my twentieth birthday. (Speaker 116/1442.862)
- (2) “Introduction to Human Behaviour” or something, oh, “Human Resources”, **sorry**. (Speaker 108/01:24:13)

Following the tenets of Conversation Analysis, research on repair has focused on its actions and sequencing. Here we take a more ‘linguistic’ approach, by focusing on the role of one form (cf. Lerner & Kitzinger 2015; Németh 2025), and explore the use of *sorry* in repair sequences in detail. We examine its functions and constraints for further insights into its polyfunctionality. Our main objective is to detail the use of *sorry* in this under-examined context.

Our data come from corpora of sociolinguistic interviews with 187 speakers of Canadian and Australian English of different ages, conducted by in-group members of different ethnolinguistic communities in Toronto and Melbourne. These interactions, which have been fully transcribed in standard English orthography, approximate informal conversations between peers. We build further on our earlier work on *sorry* in Canadian English and additionally analyse use in Australian English, attending to similarities and any potential differences.

We examine variation in the sequence and use of *sorry* to reveal common elements, including:

- i. its position in relation to the repairable and to non-lexical elements such as cut-offs, sound stretching and pauses (Schegloff et al. 1977),
- ii. whether it is prefaced by another lexical form (Lerner & Kitzinger 2015),
- iii. if the repair was successful or if it was followed by further repair on the same trouble source,
- iv. which operations are involved in the repairable being adjusted to its repaired form (Schegloff 2013), and
- v. how the repairable was clear, given the openness of *sorry* (Drew 1996).

Together, our findings provide an account of this under-considered function of *sorry* and redress the dearth of its discussion in the repair literature. We also expand the horizon of its study, by examining data from two less considered ‘inner circle’ varieties.

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From condition to construction, *if at all* Uncovering the status of an English fragment

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This study investigates the *if-at-all* construction in contemporary English, with a particular focus on its constructional status and historical variation in American English. While previous research has examined the discourse-marker function of reduced *if*-constructions such as *if you choose/like/prefer/want/will/wish* (Brinton 2008, 2014), the fragmentary sequence *if at all*—typically found at the end (1)-(2) or in the middle (3) of sentences conveying factual statements—has received significantly less attention (cf. Declerck & Reed 2001).

- (1) Martin, the doctor, hadn't done it properly, **if at all** [COCA:2018 SPOK NBC_Dateline]
- (2) Eliminating that network is practical **if at all** [COCA:2012 WEB spectator.org]
- (3) It's difficult to find any **if at all** quotes that support the Democrats strange interpretation [COCA:2012 BLOG ...ramento.cbslocal.com]

Characterized by its fragmentary subordinate structure, which originates from *if*-conditionals, the *if-at-all* construction incorporates the degree modifier *at all*. This element interacts with a specific component or 'correlate' in the main clause (*properly* in (1), *practical* in (2) and *any* in (3)), serving to quantify, evaluate or highlight it.

To examine this construction, approximately 1,000 instances were extracted from the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA) and analysed through several linguistic and extralinguistic factors. These include the placement of *if at all* within the sentence (initial, medial or final), its referential scope (anaphoric, cataphoric), polarity (positive, negative) and the syntactic role of the correlate (argument, phrasal dependent, adverbial). Additionally, register (written, spoken, speech-related) and time period (1990–1994, 2010–2019) were considered. The analysis, framed within (Cognitive) Construction Grammar (Goldberg 2006), explores the evolution of this construction's form, meaning and usage across different syntactic and discourse environments.

The study addresses two key research questions: (i) whether *if at all* qualifies as a distinct construction, and (ii) how its use has changed over time. Regarding (i), the findings show that *if at all* inherits features from both conditional *if* and intensifier *at-all* constructions while developing a non-compositional meaning. Specifically, it contributes to 'disfactualization' by introducing a quantificational, evaluative or profiling effect, thereby casting doubt on the factuality of the main clause, which is otherwise assumed to be factual by default. The inheritance links between conditional-*if*, intensifier-*at-all* and *if-at-all* patterns further reinforce the status of *if-at-all* expressions as independent constructions with a specialized meaning. Regarding (ii), the diachronic analysis identifies notable trends. Although the overall frequency of *if-at-all* constructions in American English has remained stable, their usage has become more specialized, showing clear patterns of conventionalization. Three key areas of convergence emerge: first, an increasing preference for sentence-final *if at all* with anaphoric reference, along with correlates fulfilling clause-core (2) and phrase-dependent (3) syntactic functions, thus signalling structural regularization; second, a marked increase in occurrences within negative polarity contexts, indicating polarity levelling; and third, a significant decline in written registers, leading to a narrowing distinction between written and spoken usage over time.

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Revisiting the expression of the perfect in Irish English: A comparative study of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

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The expression of the perfect in Irish English has been widely studied. Thus, the vernacular *after*-perfect (*He's after coming back from England*); the Medial Object Perfect (MOP, henceforth) (*They have their spreadsheet done*) and the pseudo-perfect (*I've two daughters married today*); and the indefinite anterior (*I never had a beard*) have received considerable attention from multiple perspectives and sound conclusions have been drawn by previous studies. Among them, historical works attribute the origin of most vernacular expressions with perfect meaning to the contact with Gaelic (e.g. Filppula 1999; Hickey 2023). In addition, many variants of the perfect are well-attested in speech, particularly in spoken registers, and these exhibit variation between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, as observed in corpora (Kirk & Kallen 2008; Kirk 2017) and sentence acceptability surveys (Hickey 2004, quoted in 2007). However, previous research lacks a comprehensive analysis of the grammatical variables influencing this regional variation. Moreover, while earlier native acceptability tests have proven to be invaluable, they may not fully capture the most up-to-date use of the perfect.

This paper fills these gaps by re-examining the three forms of the perfect mentioned above in the context of grammatical variation and comparing their contemporary usage in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Specifically, it aims to answer the following research questions: (i) How frequently are these three constructions used in the two regions?; (ii) How are they distributed across different text-types?; (iii) What factors condition their variation?; and (iv) How acceptable are they in each region? The methodology adopted combines an analysis of the *ICE-Ireland corpus* with data from global databases such as eWAVE and GloWbE, alongside an acceptability questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed among 120 young native speakers of Irish English, aged 18–40, who were born and raised in Counties Cork and Kerry, representing a strongly Gaelic-influenced area in the Republic of Ireland; and in Counties Antrim, Down and Tyrone, which have a history of significant Ulster settlement in Northern Ireland.

The results reveal that, while the three constructions differ in verb valency and meaning, they are syntactically similar in both regions and are predominantly found in spoken and informal discourse. The expressions also vary in frequency across regions. The *after*-perfect is more prevalent in the Republic of Ireland, as reflected in both the corpus data and the questionnaire. Both the MOP and the pseudo-perfect occur more frequently in the Republic of Ireland sub-corpus, but this is not mirrored in the questionnaire, where both constructions are similarly accepted by speakers from both territories, with Northern respondents rating them slightly more favourably. Notably, the MOP is more readily accepted across both regions than the pseudo-perfect, which is viewed as less acceptable. The indefinite anterior appears consistently in both regions, in both the corpus and the questionnaire, though it is rated as more acceptable by Northern respondents.

This paper concludes that the primary factors driving the extent of regional variation in Ireland are the influence of the Celtic substratum, national identity, the recent introduction of Gaelic in Northern Ireland school curricula, attitudes toward vernacular forms, and the concomitant occurrence of some of the expressions of the perfect in other World Englishes.

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Spectral dynamics of monophthong vowels in German learners of English

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This ongoing research project explores the acquisition of Vowel Inherent Spectral Change (VISC) in monophthong vowels among advanced adult German L2 learners of English. The study addresses three central questions: (1) Are there notable and systematic differences in VISC patterns between German learners and native English speakers?; (2) How do specific learner and demographic factors influence the attainment of native-like VISC?; (3) Which independent variables among learners effectively enhance the acquisition of native-like VISC in English?

This paper will focus on an acoustic analysis of VISC data (collected from a word list and reading passage) for eight monophthong vowels produced by German L2 learners (English students at Leipzig University; n=29), comparing their patterns of spectral change to those of native speakers, specifically General American (GA; n=14) and Southern Standard British English (SSBE; n=7) speakers. Additionally, speakers' L1 vowel inventories were solicited as a baseline for comparison between German and English VISC realizations via a nonsense word list (14 German vowels from the German L1 speakers and 8 English vowels from the English L1 speakers) in identical phonetic environments for each vowel for maximal comparability (Strange et al. 2007). Using Praat (Boersma & Weenink 2024) and various signal processing techniques for consistent and reproducible measurements (Sundararajan 2021; Kendall et al. 2021), German and English vowel trajectories were processed, extracted, and subjected to statistical analysis (Boersma & Weenink 2024; R Core Team 2024).

The initial results will be discussed, focusing on the average overall Euclidean distance and angles of VISC, which provide a general assessment of dissimilarity between native speaker trajectories and individual learner productions (Schwartz et al. 2016; Jin & Liu 2013). Preliminary findings reveal significant differences in VISC behavior for monophthong vowels in German and English, as well as for select vowel trajectories between the GA and SSBE native speaker groups. Moreover, there are indications that certain learner criteria (such as duration of residency in an English-speaking country and years of formal English language instruction) and demographic characteristics (including age, sex, and gender) may have an influence on the acquisition of native-like VISC. Ultimately, this research aims to shed light on the complexities of acquiring VISC in a second language and outlines potential future directions for this study.

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The mother of the country doesn't even speak Finnish: **The changing role of English and its relationship to the national languages of Finland**

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The current Finnish president, Alexander Stubb, is the first in Finnish history to have a non-Finnish born spouse: Suzanne Innes-Stubb, who was born in the UK. The treatment of Innes-Stubb in the press and in public discourse has, to a large extent, focused on her status as an L2 speaker of Finnish and Swedish, with recent online headlines proclaiming: “click here to hear what she sounds like.” At the same time, online discourse has focused on her status, and indeed her family’s status, as “elite” speakers of English in Finland, as well as the fact that they use Swedish, Finland’s other official language (in addition to Finnish), as a home language.

Finland’s first family stands as a telling example of the changing role of English in Finland, including its changing relationship to the national languages. In this presentation, we offer an analysis of the public discourse surrounding the language use of the first family, especially Suzanne Innes-Stubb, focusing in particular on ideologies concerning their family’s use of English, Finnish, and Swedish. The overarching research question is how ideologies about English in Finland have evolved and are applied to language use of the president and first lady. The hypothesis, based on these data, is that English is to some extent regarded as commonplace or even reviled (see Peterson & Beers Fägersten 2023). At the same time, there is a concerted push to uphold and champion the national languages, particularly Finnish, in relation to other languages, and English in particular.

The data for this investigation are drawn from sources such as Finnish media outlets, in particular discussion forums (observing ethical issues, accessibility, and anonymity). We use content analysis to apply critical discourse analysis to the data. The findings from this study are situated within those of recent larger-scale studies, mainly surveys on English and the national languages of Finland, such as Hekanaho (2025), Laitinen et al. (2023), and Onnikki-Rantajääskö (2024). Our findings demonstrate a wide range of overlapping attitudes, including an expectation for migrants in general, including Innes-Stubb, to speak better Finnish, while at the same time condemning her L2 Finnish and asking “Why don’t they just let her speak English?”

Our findings offer ideological insights not only about English in Finland but in other settings, as we witness what appears to be a saturation point regarding English, coinciding with shifting geopolitical and social conditions.

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Cognitive styles versus social circles in the Early Modern English progressive construction

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This talk discusses the weight of social and cognitive variables in syntactic change, and argues that interindividual differences help understand its timing (the actuation problem). The case study is [BE *Ving*] ('the progressive'), and its growth in the seventeenth/eighteenth centuries. Throughout this process, [BE *Ving*]'s two sources, which go back to the Old English constructions in (1) and (2), continued to exert influence.

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (1) | [BE <i>Vende</i>] | Ic eam huntende (deor) | 'I am hunting (deer)' |
| (2) | [BE on <i>Ving/ung</i>] | Ic eam on huntunge (deora) | 'I am on hunting (of deer)' |

Construction (1) is verbal, and codes objects as direct objects and assigning (active) voice. By contrast, (2) inherits from the nominal gerund, coding the object as a postmodifier ('of deer'), and remaining underdetermined for voice (e.g. in *John is in a training* John is likely the trainee but may also be the trainer).

From Late Middle English onwards, the two sources merge, the preposition *on* being reanalysed as a prefix *a-*. This blend boosted the unified [BE *Ving*] construction, but also led to increased complexity. One unexpected result was the emergence of the PASSIVAL, a hybrid that is active in form but passive in meaning, as in (3) and (4):

- (3) Whilst **Troy was Sacking** by the Greeks... 'Whilst Troy was being sacked by the Greeks' (Dryden, 1693)
- (4) ... at the Debates about [those Bills]; in the Privy-Council of England. Every Clause in them was so strenuously oppos'd and vindicated, **that they_i were debating** ('that they were being debated') in Council near Two Years. (Oldmixon, 1716)

Some passivals were probably hard to parse even for contemporaries, such as (4), where they might (mistakenly) be taken to refer to the members of the privy-council.

To see how language users deal with this complex input I examine 25 individuals from the *EMMA corpus* (Petré et al. 2019). Analysis reveals two major groups: (a) 'Grammar-informed thinkers', who no longer use postmodifiers (the outgoing 'of deer' variant), and constrain the passival, aiming for a context independent distribution of voice and subject type: e.g. they are fine with (3), where the *by*-agent formally marks the passive voice, but avoid the context-dependency of (4). Close scrutiny reveals that they not only share a cognitive style, but are also all educated and London-based; (b) 'Associative thinkers', who still display (relic) uses of nominal objects, and do not constrain the passival, relying on context for interpretation.

Generally, the results suggest that 'grammar-informed thinkers' systematically neo-analysed their input. This resulted in an overly constrained passival and the growing need for an alternative, which the progressive passive (*he was being bullied*) filled in the late eighteenth century. While therefore conservative towards incoming uses, they are quicker to abandon outgoing uses. Associative thinkers, by contrast, promote incoming uses more (though in the current case their influence was not sufficient). The evidence complements work in the vein of Dąbrowska (2012), which argues that some language users have a higher impact in shaping community grammar, but does not differentiate between outgoing and incoming variants.

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Synthetic or natural? Tracing the semantic evolution of smell-related adjectives in American English

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The semantic domain of SMELL has hitherto been relatively understudied in semantic research if compared to other senses and the domain of COLOR. According to scholars working in the field of sensory linguistics, one of the main reasons for this is the limited olfaction vocabulary of most Western languages, including English (e.g. Winter 2019), contrary to other languages such as Cha'palaa, spoken in Ecuador, where smell is even coded in grammar (Floyd et al. 2018). Recently, however, new research has contributed interesting findings concerning how SMELL is conceptualized in English, which predominantly relies on so-called 'source-based terms' when describing odors, that is, by focusing on naming the entities which emit the smell (Poulton 2023), e.g. *rose* in *the rose is fragrant*. Such studies, especially those adopting a diachronic perspective (Pettersson-Traba 2022, Schönefeld 2024), have identified an increase of synthetic aromas at the expense of natural ones over time, possibly reflecting social and technological changes of highly industrialized countries such as the USA, including the growing importance of hygiene and the mass-production of goods containing chemical substances. Nevertheless, only a handful of olfactory terms have so far been investigated, most of which are used with a positive (e.g. *fragrant*) or neutral connotation (e.g. *smell* v.).

This paper aims to fill this gap by comparing the semantic evolution of a range of smell-related adjectives used to denote either agreeable (e.g. *perfumed*, *scented*) or disagreeable (e.g. *fetid*, *smelly*) scents in the history of American English. By drawing on data from COHA, the nominal heads of the adjectives were extracted, since most source-based terms in olfactory descriptions analysed in previous studies were found to be precisely nouns (e.g. Poulton 2023). The nouns were then grouped into semantic categories (e.g. CLEANING/PERSONAL CARE and FOOD) by resorting to USAS (Rayson et al. 2004), which provides semantic classifications of words. Many of these categories show a one-to-one correspondence with either natural or synthetic smells and serve to examine the frequency of different types of odors in different periods. The main objective is thus to identify whether the diachronic tendency towards an increase of synthetic smells is observable also when examining words used to designate unpleasant odors.

Preliminary findings point to significant frequency fluctuations of the examined adjectives over time, indicating modifications in the organization of the semantic domain of SMELL in the last 200 years. For example, *scented* increases at the expense of *fragrant*, and *stinky* and *smelly* overtake uses previously covered by *stinking*, which is often used as an intensifier nowadays (e.g. *stinking rich*). Concerning the distribution of synthetic and natural smells, the growth of synthetic ones is primarily noticed with adjectives designating agreeable aromas. Nevertheless, the increased significance of both personal and environmental hygiene is evident also when analysing adjectives with a negative connotation as many such terms collocate increasingly with nouns designating body parts and people (e.g. *stinky man*, *reeking breath*), as well as nouns referring to the environment (e.g. *lake of fetid water*).

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[N *is*] focalizing sequences in the initial field: Pragmatics and ordering preferences

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The [(*the*) (adj) N *is*] focalizing construction, which typically occurs in the initial field (or left periphery), plays a significant role in discourse management and projection. The schema has garnered considerable interest over the past decades (e.g. Schmid 2001; Aijmer 2007; Keizer 2013; Shibasaki 2014; Wang 2016; Hundt 2022), but the sequences in which [N *is*] occurs remain understudied. They include cases like the following:

- (1) **You know, *thing is*, look**, I'm a dominant [...]. (COCA SPOK: ABC, The View, 2016)
- (2) **So, look, I mean, you know, *the fact is***, is that there – **you know, as I said**, in all likelihood, you will have an [...] outsider populist who will emerge [...]. (COCA SPOK: CBS, Face the nation, 2015)
- (3) **But, I mean, *the bottom line is*, I'm sorry**, Newt is not sustainable. (COCA SPOK: NBC MeetPress, 2012)
- (4) **Now, *the problem is*, you know**, what are the facts and how much corroboration is there for it? (COCA SPOK: CNN Cooper, 2018)

This paper constitutes an extension of Pinson (2025), which only addressed sequences surrounding *bottom line (is)*. The collocational profiles of five other [N *is*] focalizers (*thing is*, *fact is*, *truth is*, *point is* and *problem is*) are added to this research based on the spoken section of the *Corpus of Contemporary American English*, for which a total of 3,000 peripheral expressions were collected. The aim of this study is twofold: to shed more light on the pragmatic specificities of each [N *is*] focalizer and establish word order preferences within these left-peripheral sequences.

The study shows that these six [N *is*] focalizers differ in terms of their degree of intersubjectivity and discursive contribution. For instance, *thing is* is the only one which is more often preceded by *and* than by *but* and it collocates with *you know* considerably more often than the others. *Point is* has a higher percentage of co-occurrence with *but* and viewpoint expressions than the others. *Bottom line (is)* collocates with *so*, address terms and attention-getters more frequently than the others. These comparisons show, among other things, that *point is* is the marker of oppositional stance *par excellence*, that *bottom line (is)* is more summative, emphatic and argumentative, and that *thing is* is more continuative and constitutes an attention-getter in itself.

This analysis of [N *is*] sequences also contributes to the burgeoning research on ordering preferences within the initial field (e.g. Fraser 2015; Lohmann & Koops 2016; Haselow 2019, Klumm 2024). This study shows that [N *is*] focalizing sequences are composed of nine optional slots, typically organized as follows: turn-initiator > connector > marker of disalignment > attention-getter/(sub-) topic shifter > viewpoint expression > N *is* > stance-marker > argumentative booster > address.

It is hoped that this study can deepen our understanding of the characteristics of projecting sequences in spontaneous discourse and, more generally, of the complex processes at play in the initial field.

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Always a female entrepreneur and never a male entrepreneur: A corpus linguistic analysis

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News media has the power to influence social beliefs and values (van Dijk, 1995) but little attention has been given to exploring the representation of female entrepreneurs in news and the media's institutional role in sustaining a challenging environment for women in industry. Female entrepreneurs face many challenges (Adikaram & Razik 2023) including the perception that their businesses are only legitimate within the 'pink ghetto' (Swail & Marlow 2017), and the 'gender investment gap' with less than 2% of venture capital being invested into female-founded businesses (British Business Bank, 2023). With little indication of this gap closing over the past decade, it seems that existing interventions have been ineffective and/or external factors continue to hinder progress. Only 14% of UK-based angel investors are female, which directly impacts UK female founders as female angel investors are more likely to invest in female-founded companies (UKBAA, 2022).

This paper applies a corpus linguistic approach to examine the language used to describe male and female entrepreneurs in a specialized, thematic ~465,000 token corpus of news texts containing 'female', 'male', and 'entrepreneur' published in *The Times* online between January 2019 and December 2023. This publication is considered 'the "paper of record" on public life', including on business issues (The Times, 2025). Using SketchEngine software (Kilgarriff 2014), keywords, collocates and concordance analyses were carried out to determine (i) whether and how challenges facing female entrepreneurs are represented to readers, and (ii) key similarities and differences in language used to describe male and female entrepreneurs.

Findings show clear differences in representations of female and male entrepreneurship: the issue of 'underfunding' is typically associated with female entrepreneurs, and rarely males; 'serial entrepreneurs' are usually male; and business valuation figures appear more frequently in relation to male entrepreneurs than female entrepreneurs. Such findings may be seen to legitimize male entrepreneurship and reinforce associations between entrepreneurial success and masculinity. In contrast, female entrepreneurs are often backgrounded in this space, with the important exception of industries associated with the 'pink ghetto', where they are seen to belong. This may lead to disempowerment of women in industry and discourage investment into women-led businesses. This research forms part of a broader interdisciplinary study aimed at exploring this topic through multiple lenses including linguistics, network analysis and both business and psychology theoretical perspectives. Identifying patterns of representation in the news that reinforce gender stereotypes and undermine the progress of female entrepreneurs is an important step towards supporting women in industry.

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#JustSaying – Tracking constructional change in online communication

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The frequency of BE *just saying* has increased tremendously in the past 20 years, especially in the first-person present tense form (Rohe 2019; Rautionaho, in press). The construction has non-aspectual uses such as downtoning a statement made previously, providing an interpretation of what a statement means (see (1)), or highlighting the fact that a statement was made recently (see (2)).

- (1) relax, I'm not accusing you of anything! **I'm just saying** you like her (BNC2014, FictMis121)
- (2) perhaps this has something to do with what **I was just saying** about a lack of education (BNC2014, WtsDra274)

Interestingly, social media data showcases a new construction related to BE *just saying*, i.e. the hashtag *#justsaying*, which seems to carry the same functions as the full form. Our data consist of nearly 8 billion words of user-generated social media posts from Australian English, British English, and American English. They are from one social media application (*Twitter*/now *X*) between 2006 and 2023. Importantly, the data have been enriched with information of the account holders' social networks. By measuring the online interaction, replies, comments, and so on, of the account holder and whomever they interact with, we are able to predict the structure of these social networks (Laitinen & Fatemi 2023). Therefore, we use network properties, such as network strength and size, as independent variables to analyse how *#justsaying* is used. Such enriched social media data allows us an unprecedented view of how a new construction evolves and takes flight – we can track the networks where this construction is introduced into use in this social media application, and how its use diffuses from one network to another. This study will thus shed light on constructional change in online communication.

Our research questions are as follows:

- i. What is the role of social network structure and size in the use and frequency of *#justsaying*?
- ii. To what extent does the social network theory hold for digital social networks, i.e. are innovations introduced in weak-tie networks?

In line with the social network theory (Milroy & Milroy 1985), we expect that the new construction, *#justsaying*, first crops up in weak-tie networks, i.e. networks whose members are only loosely connected to one another. Individuals in weak-tie networks are more likely to be innovators in language use (*ibid.*), but for a new feature to gain foothold, its use needs to be adopted by stronger, more close-knit networks. By tracking the evolution of *#justsaying* in our enriched social media data with the help of data-intensive corpus linguistic methods, we are in a unique position to assess the social network theory in digital communication.

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Attitudes and ideologies in primary education in Cameroon

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In traditional sociolinguistics, the pivotal role of children and adolescents in contact-induced language variation and change is unquestioned (e.g. Romaine 1989; Tagliamonte 2016). Children and adolescents play a fundamental role in the diffusion of innovative linguistic variants and are influential transmitters of language change (Kerswill & Williams 2000). However, the separation of second language acquisition and the field of World Englishes (WEs) constitutes one of several paradigm gaps in current sociolinguistic research. In recent models of the evolution of WEs (e.g. Schneider 2007; Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2017), this group is rarely even mentioned and studies on children and adolescents are still far and few in WEs. Variationist work by e.g. Buschfeld (2020) in Singapore and Lacoste (2012) in Jamaica are notable exceptions.

Located at the interface of sociolinguistics and WEs, this paper explores language attitudes and ideologies in primary education in Cameroon. It forms part of a broader project aimed at providing a first glimpse into the role of children as facilitators and pacemakers of linguistic change in Cameroon and investigating the dynamic interplay of English, French, and the local languages in the country's multilingual and multi-ethnic society. Data were collected in Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon, in April-May 2024. To ensure a comprehensive representation of the Cameroonian school system, three types of primary schools were selected: an English-medium private school, an English-medium government school, and a bilingual school. The study targeted children aged 8–11 (classes 4, 5, and 6), focusing on the 'final' product of language acquisition. Using a stratified random sampling approach, 18 children per school (six per class, evenly distributed by gender) were recruited, totalling 54 participants (27 boys and 27 girls). The data for this paper draw upon a specific portion of the broader research design: parental and children's questionnaires administered in loco and follow-up semi-structured interviews with children. The questionnaires were designed to inquire into children's English proficiency, language background, and domain-specific usage, alongside both parents' and children's direct attitudes toward English, French, Cameroonian Pidgin English (CPE), and local languages. Semi-structured interviews further investigated children's daily language practices, emotional associations, and ideological orientations. Overall, the results show that both parents and children highly value English and French, with only some local languages being prioritized. An interesting contrast emerges between parents' and children's attitudes toward CPE. While most parents view CPE as a corrupted variety that hinders English learning, children's attitudes are more varied: some dissociate from CPE due to e.g. its prohibition in school and parental disapproval, while others display integrative attitudes tied to e.g. accommodation strategies used to communicate with their grandparents.

The paper concludes by emphasizing the importance of understanding children's language attitudes and the broader ideological frameworks that shape their language perceptions, not only in examining early linguistic gatekeeping and its role in decolonizing language education but also in determining when and how these beliefs become embedded in society.

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Sweet tastes and sweet voices: Sensory word ratings meet use in discourse

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The aim of this study is to find out whether the sensory meaning potential of adjectives according to speaker ratings is reflected in naturally occurring language use. For this purpose, we use corpus data from the *British National Corpus 2014* (Brezina et al. 2021; Love et al. 2017) and rating data from Lynott et al. (2020). The ratings provide insights into to what extent speakers of English experience adjectives and nouns in isolation to be expressive of sensory meanings. For instance, the ratings show that speakers experience *sweet* as primarily associated with taste and smell, while *harsh* has a broader sensory profile with moderately strong ratings across all five sensory modalities: vision, audition, touch, smell, and taste. However, the extent to which these sensory ratings of adjectives and nouns align with their usage patterns in natural language remains unclear.

Recent research on sensory meanings has shown that some of the senses share perceptual structure (Bianchi et al. submitted). Affinities with respect to both the perceptual structures across the sensory modalities and the polysemy patterns of the individual adjectives have been shown to be strong between taste and smell on the one hand, and vision and touch on the other (Bianchi et al. submitted; Caballero & Paradis 2020, 2023, 2025; van de Weijer et al. 2023; Winter 2019). Also, a close affinity between audition and touch has been demonstrated in descriptions of acousmatic sounds, i.e. sound stimuli without visual support (Hartman & Paradis 2023).

We made use of a set of 412 adjectives and 5732 unique nouns from the sensory rating data to investigate their use patterns in the corpus. Our prediction was that the patterns of sensory instantiations rated by the speakers would hold also for how adjectives and nouns are used in natural communication. For example, nouns that are primarily experienced to express taste meanings in the rating data would combine with adjectives that have been rated as taste dominant.

Using mixed-effects regression modelling for the analysis, we found that (i) the sensory modality correlations for sensory modality strength of individual adjectives and nouns are robust in the rating and corpus data, and (ii) the primary factor predicting adjective-noun combinations is frequency of usage of the adjectives. Very frequent sensory adjectives have a broad sensory meaning potential. For example, the most frequent taste-dominant adjective *sweet* combines readily not only with nouns that also express gustatory and olfactory experience, such as *sweet taste* and *sweet smell*, but also with nouns expressing sensory experiences relating to audition, vision, and touch *sweet voice*, *sweet face*, and *sweet pain*. In contrast, infrequent sensory adjectives tend only to function within sensory-specific contexts. For example, the low frequency smell-dominant adjective *acrid* is used only to express sensory meanings related so smell or taste, *acrid stench*, *acrid reek*, *acrid taste*.

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Fronted /u/ but no /u/-fronting? Investigating /u/ in an older Canadian community

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Fronting of the high back vowel /u/ has been observed throughout North America and in several other varieties of English (e.g. Ash 1996; Mesthrie 2010; Harrington 2012; Smith 2018). In Canada, Labov et al. (2006) argue that fronting is particularly advanced and potentially unique by being less connected to other vowel shifts. However, there is limited phonetic data examining the phenomenon, especially from speakers born before 1965. In this study, we examine /u/-fronting in an older, rural community to determine if fronting is present, if the characteristics are similar to those observed elsewhere and how the results might inform our broader understanding of this vowel change.

Our study includes 40 speakers from the *Wolfe Island English Corpus* (interviews with residents of Wolfe Island, Ontario, collected 2010-2015), 19 women and 21 men, born from 1919-1959. The speakers were chosen for their strength of connection to the island (birthplace, ancestral history, time away) in order to assess a relatively homogeneous population. The interviews were transcribed, segmented into Praat textgrids (Boersma & Weenik 2025) and processed with DARLA's semi-automated vowel extraction (Reddy & Stanford 2015). To assess fronting, we calculated: F2 of /u/ across several environments; F2 of /u/ compared to /oʊ/ and /i/; F1 of /u/ compared to /i/; F2 of /u/ subtracted from /æ/ to determine the Index of Phonetic Innovation (IPI) (Boberg 2011: a negative value indicates /u/ has moved ahead of /æ/).

Comparing the F2 of /u/ with /oʊ/, we find /u/ considerably front of /oʊ/ for all speakers, an average difference of 630 Hz (despite the possibility of /oʊ/ also fronting, not examined here). The average distance between /u/ and /i/ is 660 Hz, not significantly different from /u/-/oʊ/. This places /u/ equidistant between the front and back vowels. Regarding IPI, 6 speakers have a negative value and 13 are within 100 Hz. From these results, we conclude that /u/ occupies the central vowel space for this population and further that almost half of speakers have IPI values similar to younger, urban speakers in previous studies.

However, our other results suggest the /u/-fronting phenomenon described in the literature is not occurring. First, fronting is not increasing in apparent time: negative IPIs are spread across the birth years. Second, the post-coronal environment does not increase fronting: only seven speakers have significantly fronted /u/s in this context. Third, women do not exhibit more fronting than men: the average /u/-/oʊ/ F2 distance does not differ significantly between the genders, and only two women have negative IPIs. (In line with past studies, we find that fronting is blocked by a following /l/ and that /u/ is not lowering.)

We conclude that the relatively recent /u/-fronting phenomenon taking place in Canada has not yet begun in this population but that nevertheless these speakers have /u/s that already occupy the central vowel space. These results and ongoing related work may have implications for our understanding of the origins and development of this phenomenon as well as insights into the nature of vowel change.

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Exploring the lexicon of video game jargon as a product of informal language learning

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As technology continues to evolve, so does the growth of video game usage and its linguistic dimension within the Language Learning Beyond the Classroom (LBC) environment (Reinders & Benson 2017). Similar to many other social communities, a specific type of video gaming jargon (Balteiro 2019) has proliferated, and its varieties, or ludolects (Ensslin 2015, 2017), serve as indicators of a gamer's membership and ranking within a particular group. This scholar also argues that this lexicon ranges from straightforward and user-friendly to intricate and specialized, “depending on such factors as the relative expertise and skill levels of each player” (Ib 2015: 4). Furthermore, gaming jargon is suggested to possess “specific lexical, semantic, and morphological features which may be global or universal for all gamers” (Balteiro 2019: 54). This lexicon is characterized not only by various dynamic language creative processes but also by players sharing diverse linguistic backgrounds, resulting in hybridized multilingual production, such as the use of Anglicisms by Non-Native English Speaking (NNES) gamers (Mekarski 2014; Fernández de Molina 2020; Arnold-Stein & Hortobágyi 2021; Orta-Casado & Peña-Acuña 2022; Schuring & Zenner 2022; Birka 2024). In light of this, the present paper set out to explore two main research questions:

1. What are the main Anglicisms and hybridization processes present in the spoken exchanges of Spanish mainstream gamers?
2. How does the degree of intelligibility of these hybridized forms differ for more casual gamers?

Regarding the methodology, two main tools were employed in this project: a corpus and a questionnaire. The corpus consisted of transcripts from 17 game videos featuring five mainstream Spanish players. The selection criteria for the players were their high rankings on a 2023 world list published by two major esports websites. The videos covered various categories of games and were in Spanish. Their average running time was about 16.37 minutes, and their transcription using Anthiago produced 37.070 words. Using AntConc, 30 concordances containing English words were retrieved as KWICs. In the second stage, a total of 145 students aged 19 to 20 years, enrolled in two different higher-level educational institutions, completed a questionnaire about their gaming profiles and were asked to provide the meanings of the KWICs in their mother tongue(s).

Results indicate that the primary formation processes of ludolectal words in this small corpus involve derivations that incorporate an English word root and Spanish suffix(es). For instance, the verb *pushear*, from EN *push* (1602- intr), meaning to make one's way with force or persistence, and the Spanish suffix *-ear*, is used in gaming to refer to tactically advancing, attacking, and applying aggressive pressure on the opponent. Similarly, *carrear*, from EN *carry* (1348- tr), meaning to transport or move a person or thing from one place to another, and the Spanish suffix *-ear*, denotes the performance (usually solo) of a skilled player who secures victory for the rest of the team. Another characteristic of this ludolect is the presence of semantic shifts, where a term adopts a meaning distinct from its original context; for example, *drops* (EN 1637- n from vb, referring to the action or act of dropping) is used to describe items, supplies, loot, or rewards. Additionally, participants in both groups exhibited varying levels of awareness regarding the meanings of the terms; for instance, the expression *estaba buggeado* was highly intelligible to them, whereas *en el estado conocido como tilt* was not. Some other identified differences also appear to reflect the participants' gaming profiles. Research implications are discussed.

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Accent biases in childhood

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Sociolinguistic research shows that people judge others not only based on what they say, but also on how they say it. For instance, people from the UK consider a person speaking with a standard British accent as more suitable to be a lawyer than someone with a London accent (Levon et al. 2021). It was thought that such associations between accents and personal traits emerge in adolescence (e.g. Labov 1964). However, recent research (e.g. Dossey et al. 2020) demonstrates that children’s language attitudes develop in childhood. This study investigates the factors that drive the development of accent biases in childhood. It focuses on whether this development depends on (i) the type of accent used as stimuli (i.e. regional vs. second-language accents), (ii) exposure to linguistic diversity, and (iii) accent intelligibility and categoriation.

Data from 249 children between the ages of 7 and 11 years was collected. Of these, 136 were from Southwest England and 113 from London. All children were native speakers of English. Children who spoke more than one language used or heard English the most. The accents included in the study were: Standard Southern British English, Southwest British English, London English, and French- and Chinese-accented English. The battery of tests consisted of five tasks. One was a questionnaire for the caregivers to gauge their children’s exposure to linguistic diversity and provide demographic information. The children completed the four remaining tasks:

- intelligibility task (speech in noise)
- verbal-guise task (e.g. how smart they think a speaker of a given accent is)
- accent classification task, where they group multiple speakers of each accent
- British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS), a receptive vocabulary task.

London children were exposed to more linguistic diversity than those from the Southwest of England. Both groups of children scored similarly in the BPVS. Results from the intelligibility task show that task performance improved with age across locations at comparable rates. In the verbal-guise task, the smart and hardworking questions showed an age, accent, and city interaction. In Southwest England, children’s ratings between the ages of 7.0 and 9.5 years did not differ across accents. It is only after this age that they showed signs of accent biases. In London, the youngest participants already showed accent biases. In the classification task, children in the Southwest of England became better at correctly categorizing accents with age, but London children’s performance did not vary with age. Younger children from London outperformed their peers from Southwest England. The age at which the scores of participants from Southwest England start to match those from London was 9.5 years.

In conclusion, the development of accent biases is argued to depend on the ability to categorize accents, but not on what kind of accents they are or the ability to understand them. Furthermore, children’s categorization skills are likely the result of exposure to linguistic diversity, creating an indirect link between exposure to language variation and accent biases.

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Five verbs, one pattern: Insights from corpus data on complementation

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The complementation patterns of retrospective verbs such as *remember*, *regret*, and *forget* have long intrigued researchers due to their ability to take both infinitival complements—indicating prospective actions—and *-ing* complements—signaling retrospective actions. *Recall* and *recollect* also belong to this group, being exclusively associated with retrospective meaning. These verbs exhibit considerable variability, alternating between finite (*that-/zero-*) and nonfinite (*-ing*) complements. While prior studies have primarily focused on the historical development of *remember* and *regret* (e.g. Fanego 1996; Heyvaert & Cuyckens 2010; Cuyckens et al. 2014), the complementation profiles of *forget*, *recall*, and *recollect* remains underexplored.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), *remember* and *regret* were borrowed from French in the Middle English period (with earliest attestations in 1350 and 1400, respectively), *forget* is inherited from Germanic and attested in Old English, reflecting a deeper historical continuity. In contrast, *recall* and *recollect* emerged in the sixteenth century: the former was formed within English but modeled on a French lexical item, while the latter was borrowed directly from Latin. Earlier research has shown that *-ing* complementation gradually increased over time, often replacing finite clauses, with *remember* being the only retrospective verb to appear with both *-ing* and infinitival complements before the late eighteenth century (Fanego 1996). This suggests that *remember* may have paved the way for the broader diffusion of *-ing* complementation among other retrospective verbs.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the complementation patterns of the five retrospective verbs (*remember*, *forget*, *regret*, *recall*, and *recollect*) using data from CEECS (*Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler*; Nevalainen et al. 1998), CLMET 3.1 (*Corpus of Late Modern English Texts*; De Smet et al. 2015), and GloWbE (*Corpus of Global Web-Based English*; Davies 2015). Preliminary results reveal a clear diachronic shift toward the use of *-ing* clauses. While earlier stages show little to no use of this construction, its presence increases steadily over time, becoming the preferred pattern in more recent stages. Verbs like *remember* and *regret* show a particularly strong tendency to occur with *-ing* complements, suggesting a growing association between this structure and the expression of past experiences. Other verbs, such as *recall* and *recollect*, also follow this upward trend, though to a lesser extent, whereas *forget* remains relatively stable. This development aligns with previous studies that have noted the gradual expansion of non-finite structures in English complementation patterns over time (e.g. Mair 2002; Rohdenburg 2006), as well as the increasing use of *-ing* clauses in spoken and informal registers (Biber et al. 1999). It also may be linked to broader changes in discourse style, with a shift toward more subjective and experiential language.

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Accent bias and equity: Implications for telephone triage

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The intersection of sociolinguistics and medical communication presents unique challenges in healthcare delivery, particularly in telephone triage settings. Research has consistently demonstrated that language attitudes, especially unconscious biases toward non-standard or accented speech, significantly influence listeners' judgments of speakers' credibility, intelligence, and likeability (Levon et al. 2021; Sharma et al. 2022). This phenomenon becomes particularly critical in medical contexts in which pain is self-reported verbally, and perceived patient credibility can directly impact whether pain is accurately assessed by medical staff, in turn impacting patient care decisions. While traditional face-to-face medical consultations benefit from a multimodal assessment framework - incorporating visual cues, vital signs, and physical examination - telephone triage represents a uniquely challenging environment where healthcare providers must rely solely on acoustic information.

This contribution advances the hypothesis that this modal restriction to purely verbal communication may amplify the impact of language-based biases in pain assessment. The absence of supplementary clinical data and nonverbal cues potentially increases the weight given to linguistic features in clinical decision making (Chaiken & Maheswaran 1994). Drawing on contemporary research in perceptual sociolinguistics and medical communication, I examine how accent-based prejudices may influence pain assessment in telephone triage contexts.

The focus of the presentation is on data from verbal-guise studies conducted with participants in Ireland and the UK, comparing speaker evaluation ratings of differently accented guises in neutral and medical contexts. The guises are recordings of the same ten male speakers representing five different varieties in both studies: RP, three different Irish English varieties and Polish-accented English. For the neutral context study, one text giving directions was recorded and rated in all five accents by 48 participants on scales representing prestige, solidarity, and credibility dimensions. The medical context study included ten different texts describing symptoms that were then rated by a total of 450 participants divided into subgroups so that all combinations of accents and guise texts were represented and evaluated. The rating scales for the medical setting included additional scales for pain assessment. All participants also completed a questionnaire regarding internal and external motivation to respond without prejudice (Plant & Devine 1998), as well as current mood and linguistic background. The studies were conducted online using the Limesurvey survey platform and Prolific for the recruitment of participants.

Preliminary results suggest a significant effect of accent on speaker evaluation ratings in the neutral context, as well as on pain assessment in the medical context. Data from the neutral context study show significant differences in accent ratings, with internal motivation to respond without prejudice significantly interacting with accent, influencing the ratings along with the factor of participant gender. Similar patterns are also reflected in the medical context study simulating telephone-triage situations. The implications of these findings extend beyond sociolinguistics and telephone triage to broader questions of equity in healthcare delivery and the role of linguistic competence in medical education.

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Effects of donor dialect and substrate: Laryngeal phenomena in Pākehā versus Māori New Zealand English

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The well-documented Voicing Effect (VE) makes vowels shorter before voiceless/fortis consonants. Cross-linguistically, its size is found larger in English than elsewhere. More recently, research on the English VE has turned to its size in spontaneous speech (rather than wordlist data) and to its non-uniformity in English varieties. Tanner et al. (2020) identify a scale in which the VE size is larger in the US than in England than in Scotland, which indicates that in general, the larger the functional load of vowel length, the larger the VE.

We aim to contribute to this research trend with the investigation of New Zealand (Pākehā) English (NZE) and Māori English (ME), crucially missing from the scale, and examine whether the substrate effect of ME still affects VE size and/or Voice Onset Time (VOT). Originally, ME had unaspirated plosives but according to Maclagan and King (2007), both the frequency of aspiration and VOT duration increased over time under the influence of English, the donor dialect. The frequent affrication of /t/ in general NZE is also an important factor to consider.

The database contains sound recording corpora of spontaneous NZE speech, whose relevant chunks are extracted and analysed in Praat. Vowel duration for seven vowels and VOT for the fortis plosives were measured and compared in the two varieties. Statistical analyses were carried out using the lme4 package in R. Our research questions are as follows:

1. Previous studies find the VE in NZE larger than in either BrE or AmE. Do our results confirm this? Does this correlate with a relatively/considerably long VOT in NZE?
2. Does ME preserve its weaker/less frequent aspiration as a substrate effect? (Warren & Bauer 2004.) Where does this locate it on the VE scale?

Our results support the first hypothesis as NZE is at the maximal end of the scale with great VE size (fraction/ratio: 0.75/1.32) and long VOT values. As was expected, the VE size is smaller compared to the results of previous studies due to the more spontaneous speech style. VOT is 68 ms for Pākehā speakers, consistent with previous measurements (Maclagan & King 2007).

Regarding our second research question, ME is at the lower end of the scale with small VE size (fraction/ratio: 0.9/1.10), but relatively long VOT. We observed weaker aspiration but no unaspirated tokens, which indicates that the substrate effect is still present but the donor dialect has a strong influence on ME. As a result, plosives are aspirated due to the donor dialect but VE size remains low because of the substrate effect.

As a phenomenon accompanying both NZE and ME tokens, plosives are frequently affricated, which is in line with previous findings. It is a highly influencing factor regarding VOT duration, as there is a tendency for female speakers to have more affricated tokens and longer VOT values.

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Morphosemantic analysis of English denominal converted verbs with particles (NV-Ps) through a frame-semantic approach

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This study addresses the morphosemantic characteristics of denominal converted verbs with particles (henceforth NV-Ps) in English, as in *lanyer up*, *pork out*, *leech off*, and *chunk down*. While extensive research has been devoted to the process of N-to-V conversion in English (see, e.g. Martsa 2006; Nagano 2008; Varela 2023; Díaz-Negrillo & Fernández-Alcaina 2023; Debouzie 2024), little is known about the argument-structural behavior of particles in NV-Ps, where they act as category markers while being associated with a specific meaning and a syntactic frame (Nagano 2008: 137–138). The objective of this study is twofold: (i) to examine the morphosyntactic features of NV-Ps (which are made up of *down*, *up*, *out*, and *off*) through the elaboration of a ‘matrix grid’ of Frame-Semantic Categories (FSCs), based on the frame-semantic approach and the Lexical Conceptual Structure (LSC) framework (see, e.g. Kageyama 1997; Lieber 2004; Boas 2008; Plag et al. 2018; Barbu Mititelu et al. 2023); and (ii) to identify and explore instances of semantic specificity (or niche) and competition within the matrix grid of FSCs, as illustrated in (1)–(3) below for *up* and *down*.

- (1) [x CAUSE [y BECOME LOCATIVE [w <down>]] WITH [INSTRUMENT [z <NOUN>]]
Instrumental = ‘use N (to change position of y)’ (e.g. *cursor down*, *arrow down*)
- (2) [x PROVIDE [y] WITH [RESOURCE [w <up>]] UNTIL [COMPLETION [z <NOUN>]]
Ornative = ‘provide y with N’ (e.g. *gas up*, *skill up*)
- (3) [x ACT LIKE/AS [PERSON [z <NOUN>]]
Similitive = ‘act like/as N’ (e.g. *bro down*, *buddy up*)

The matrix grid is made up of 37 FSCs, which are extracted from the annotation of 4,000 random hits in enTenTen21 (SketchEngine), 1,000 for each particle. We conducted a distributional analysis of argument structures (e.g. locative, intensive, aspectual, and directional, as proposed by Machonis (2009)), and the meanings of [z], the base noun, and [w], the particle. This distributional analysis was then applied to the four datasets of the grid, where idiomatic NV-Ps (as in *figure out* and *hand out*) are excluded. While this study is still in progress, our findings are expected to show that the meanings of FSCs can be either direct (e.g. *cursor down* in (1), where the result component is marked through the locative *down*) or indirect (e.g. *party down*, whose result component relates to the fact that ‘a party is finished when everyone is *down*’). In addition, while ornative and inchoative FSCs are generally expressed through NV-*up* units, NV-*out* shows morphological preference towards similitive and performative frames. Semantic niches can also have a bearing on rival same-particle units (e.g. *partner up*, *partner down*), where, as outlined by Nagano et al. (2024), competition resolution is thereby linked to the semantic specialization (meaning-based) rendered by the particle [w]. Hence, these results further support the idea that particles contribute to semantic specificity, as also illustrated by privatives (e.g. *nipple down*, *power down*) and ornatives (e.g. *chunk down*), where the meaning of the frame is bolstered by the meaning of *down* ‘reducing (to the extent of removing) N’.

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Which English do you (think you) use?

Divergent intuitions and norms among advanced students of English in eight Expanding Circle countries

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This paper reports a bipartite questionnaire study conducted among more than 400 university students of English in various countries of the expanding circle (Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Spain, Brazil, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Iran; see Kachru 1985). The study design aims to 1) gauge participants' familiarity with usage in the major national varieties, and 2) explore their normative orientations, given the pluricentricity of Englishes (Leitner 1992; Mair 2013: 259).

In a quasi-experimental error correction task, participants first gave intuitive acceptability ratings of prepositional variants (e.g. *to chat to/with, unfair on/to, in/on top form*). As attested in the *Corpus of Global Web-based English* (GloWbE; Davies 2013), all variants that appear in the questionnaire are firmly established in British and/or American English, the normative standards in countries of the expanding circle, but the choice of variants diverges substantially between British and American English. This part elicited the similarity of participants' spontaneous intuitions with British and American usage, respectively.

Subsequently, participants were presented with data displays of the relative frequencies of the prepositional variants across twenty L1 and L2 varieties (in the GloWbE corpus) and asked to re-assess their acceptability in light of this information. This part elicited participants' underlying norm orientations and revealed deviations from their spontaneous reactions in the first part. In addition, participants were questioned about their learning biographies, exposure to English varieties, and proficiency levels.

The present paper is the first in a series to apply this quasi-experimental setup to differences between countries where English is taught as a foreign language. The results analysed so far uncover a number of cross-national differences:

- Predictably, participants from Germany and Austria self-report a mixed intake of British and American English, with the first dominant in school settings and the latter in leisure activities. In contrast, Iranians and South Koreans show strong orientations towards American English.
- In the spontaneous judgment task, participants from South Korea show rather indiscriminate acceptance of the prepositional variants. In contrast, students from Germany, Austria, and Iran appear more familiar with American prepositional usage, resulting in high rejection rates of variants typical of British English.
- After exposure to corpus data, German and Austrian students, and to a lesser extent Iranians, shift their judgements in favour of British English, as the target variety promoted by their school systems, and generally to the more frequent variants. Rather unexpectedly, this leads to increased rejection of other attested variants. South Koreans, however, become even more tolerant of prepositional variation.

All in all, the results reveal underlying orientations that would remain inaccessible to more direct elicitation methods. The discussion critically addresses the bias evident in the intuitive acceptability judgements of participant groups and their oftentimes notable tendency to correct towards a single native-speaker norm, institutionally promoted in their respective countries. Crucially, the study thus pinpoints a need to foster greater acceptance of global English variation as showcased by international corpora like the GloWbE, particularly in European educational institutions.

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Syntactic change in negative interrogatives was complex, wasn't it?

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Present-Day English requires DO-support in so-called NICE environments, i.e. in contexts of negation, inversion, coding of previously mentioned material and emphasis. The present paper focuses on the later stages of the spread of DO-support in a particularly interesting context, i.e. in negative interrogatives. These not only combine two of the NICE criteria but, historically, are the locus of three syntactic changes which overlap in time and potentially interact with each other.

Before the emergence of auxiliaries and DO-support, the word-order in interrogatives was inverted $V_{\text{fin}} S$ (*know you*). From about 1390 onwards an inverted structure with DO-support began to spread (Ellegård 1953): $V_{\text{fin}} S V_{\text{lex}}$ (*do you know*). In negative interrogatives, however, a second change had been spreading since Old English: While *not* had mostly followed the subject (*know you not*) it increasingly moved to the position before the subject (*know not you*, Jespersen 1917; Rissanen 1999). Due to the temporal overlap in these changes, speakers (theoretically) had four syntactic options to choose from, as illustrated in (1). To complicate matters further, since Early Modern English, the negator *not* has been able to contract and cliticize onto auxiliaries, copula BE and lexical HAVE, creating a fifth option (*don't you know*).

- (1) a. Know you not Clara?
b. Know not you Clara?
c. Do you not know Clara?
d. Do not you know Clara?

The present study investigates the interplay between these changes, taking into account that DO is not the only auxiliary, thus also addressing the question whether DO triggered change or whether it completed processes begun by other auxiliaries. My data was drawn from large corpora of British prose fiction, covering the past 500 years (*Early English Prose Fiction, Eighteenth-Century Fiction, Nineteenth-Century Fiction, British National Corpus*). Analyses are based on two datasets, one of c.15,000 negative interrogative clauses with pronominal subjects (c. 6,000 of these with DO-support) and a second dataset of c.10,000 negative tag questions, which are more limited in terms of the variation they permit.

First results begin to reveal a complex pattern. Firstly, while DO spread earlier in negative interrogatives than elsewhere, use of $V_{\text{fin}} S$ without an operator fizzled out more slowly than previously assumed with vestiges of it left until the late nineteenth century. Secondly, idiolectal differences in the adoption rate of DO-support were considerable. Thirdly, since 1550 negative interrogatives with other auxiliaries have hardly been any more frequent than ones with DO, which puts into question whether further changes (like contraction of *not*) emerged among the auxiliaries and then spread to DO, as has been previously suggested. Instead, the results suggest that the shift from 'Subject *not*' to '*not* Subject' spread from DO to other auxiliaries.

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Complexity is complicated: Variable past marking in South Atlantic English

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The absence of morphological marking in past-referencing verbs has been of considerable interest in contact linguistics for a few decades now. As Hackert (2008: 127) noted, “no other morphological variable except the copula has played as prominent a role in sociolinguistics and creole studies.” The phenomenon has been widely studied in English-based creoles in the wider Caribbean, Nigerian Pidgin English, African American Vernacular English, New Zealand Māori English and Singapore English. Additionally, past-marking variation has drawn attention in second language acquisition and learners of English with diverse sociolinguistic backgrounds, which suggests a most challenging and promising area of overlap between language variation and second-language acquisition.

In this paper, we explore how past-marking variation can be used to signal contact-induced language change and help identify donor varieties of restructured forms of English around the world. Our focus is on South Atlantic English, particularly Tristan da Cunha and St Helena, as they offer valuable insights into contact-driven linguistic variation (Schreier 2016: 216). Zero past marking was first mentioned in Zettersten’s (1969) descriptive study and quantitatively studied by Marković (2017). To broaden the picture, we look at global variation patterns in past marking in Tristan da Cunha English and test this sociolinguistic variable in a sample of native speakers born between the 1890s and the 1930s. In order to establish the frequency and cross-relationships of non-marking in World Englishes, we first conduct a small survey of data in the electronic *World Atlas of Varieties of English* (eWave; Kortmann et al. 2020), which is followed by a quantitative analysis of the feature in South Atlantic English. We show that past tense marking, as in:

- (1) she actually steer south, but we didn’t know she was the Copenhagen
- (2) We took no notice to it, because we never see anything like that before
- (3) when we come back to the ship he tell us that the ship was at Gough and she was catching plenty fish

is remarkably widespread in Tristan da Cunha English (non-marking rate of 51.8%, total N=5296). We argue that this sheds light on the sociohistorical roots of the variety and that non-marking is most likely to have its origins in language contact on the island or elsewhere, being indicative of change mechanisms in new-dialect formation.

Moreover, we take a wider approach and discuss potential ramifications for contact effects under isolation (Schreier 2009), addressing Trudgill’s (2009) “true typological split” between high- and low-contact varieties and the processes of simplification and complexification. Our bottom line is that 1) contact intensity is a sociohistorically sensitive process and notoriously difficult to quantify, and 2) that processes of simplification can be found in varieties that have long histories of low contact, making it difficult to generalize outcomes of contact strength even if reliable evidence for communities is at hand.

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How landmark is this?

On the spread of N > A category shifts in Late Modern English

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Noun (N) and Adjective (A) are distinct word classes but share some distributional properties such as their ability to premodify N. Such functional overlap enables and may lead to category shift from N to A. Earlier works (De Smet 2012; Denison 2013) show *key* and *fun* taking different paths on their way to A (via the premodifying and the predicative function, respectively, as in **key** factors, *This is fun*). This difference is attributed to the fact that *key* is a count and *fun* a noncount noun. This paper provides a type-based study on N>A shift during the Late Modern English (LModE) period and a case study on *genius*, which can be both count and noncount. Complementing previous research, we address the question which functional slot (premodifying or predicative) dominates as the primary locus of shift and whether countability of N plays an important role.

We use the *Oxford English Dictionary* online as a data source to compile a set of N>A words, extracting A with prior attested use of N. For post-1700 instances where only one of the two possible functions (premodifying and predicative) is attested in the OED, supplementary evidence is collected from the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* online, the *Corpus of Historical American English* (COHA) and the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA). The data for the case study on *genius* comes from COHA and COCA.

This paper broadens the dataset and includes non-simplex N, namely, derived nouns, such as *alarmist*, *regulation*, *novelty*, compound nouns or noun phrases, such as *science fiction*, *high frequency*, *low key*. Evidence from a broader set of count and non-count N does not provide support of the different paths of development that De Smet's (2012) and Denison's (2013) discussion on *key* and *fun* indicate. The case study on *genius* shows that the category shift occurs predominantly in the premodifying function, overall. A multifactorial analysis shows that the functional slot is the most important predictor for use as A, N or ambiguous contexts and that there is interaction with the language-internal variable 'co-occurrence with another adjective' and with the language-external predictors 'register' and 'decade'. Across time, there is an increase in A use, with those in predicative function lagging behind, particularly in more formal registers.

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Global trends, local patterns: A corpus-based study of *end up* constructions across World Englishes

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The phrasal verb *end up*, illustrated in (1), is a pervasive feature of contemporary Englishes across the globe. Beyond its core meaning of transitioning to a state (see FrameNet), it is frequently used to convey mirative semantics—i.e. to introduce new and/or surprising information, often with overtones of counterexpectation or unexpectedness (DeLancey 1997; Aikhenvald 2012).

- (1) Watch out, Charlie. You'll **end up working** for him. (COHA-TV/MOV, 1935)

Despite its widespread use today, the historical record suggests that *end up* is a relatively recent innovation, first attested in the late nineteenth century. It is not until the 1930s that *end up* began taking gerundial complements, as shown in (1). The [*end up* V-*ing*] construction saw a dramatic rise in frequency in the later decades of the twentieth century and is now prevalent across registers, particularly informal ones (Serrano-Losada 2020). Regarding its diffusion, this phrasal verb appears to have spread earlier in North American English but is now widely used across all varieties of English.

While *end up* is commonly associated with *ing*-complements, this phrasal verb may take other complementation patterns, including adjective phrases (2), noun phrases (3), and prepositional phrases (4):

- (2) I **ended up** homeless (GloWbE-AU G)
(3) consumers will **end up** the victim of this great gas ripoff (GloWbE-GB G)
(4) we'll **end up** in the hospital, anyhow (GloWbE-US G)

The aim of this corpus-based study is to investigate the complementation preferences of phrasal *end up* across World Englishes, drawing on data from the *Corpus of Global Web-Based English* (GloWbE; Davies 2013). The analysis will assess (i) the frequency and distribution of different complement types, (ii) regional variation in usage preferences, and (iii) the mirative senses associated with the different constructional patterns.

Preliminary findings suggest that while English varieties exhibit some homogeneity, local usage norms influence distributional trends. As expected, the gerundial complement pattern is the most frequent across all varieties of English, reinforcing its status as the globally preferred construction. However, notable regional differences emerge: African and South Asian English varieties exhibit a higher proportion of prepositional complements, suggesting localized preferences potentially shaped by regional syntactic norms. In contrast, norm-providing varieties show a stronger preference for the gerundial form. Additionally, the different *end up* constructions convey varying meanings, with some varieties favouring those that emphasize mirative readings. Thus, despite the global dominance of [*end up* V-*ing*], regional factors continue to shape both syntactic and semantic choices.

This paper contributes to the growing body of research on syntactic variation in World Englishes by providing a systematic, corpus-based account of *end up* across global varieties. By examining its complementation preferences alongside its semantic functions, the study offers insights into the global diffusion and cross-varietal dynamics of *end up*. Ultimately, this study contributes to our understanding of how English grammar adapts and diversifies in a global context, shedding light on broader patterns of language variation and change.

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English non-native accents in Russia: Influence of some local indigenous languages (Tatar, Bashkir, Udmurt)

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The Russian accent in English is conventionally understood as the result of linguistic interference from Russian and is broadly attributed to all Russian citizens. However, this perspective overlooks the country's diverse ethnolinguistic landscape, where approximately 20% of the population belongs to non-Russian ethnic groups, many of whom speak indigenous languages alongside Russian. This study examines how three such languages – Tatar, Bashkir, and Udmurt – contribute to shaping English non-native accents, challenging the assumption that Russian is the sole source of linguistic transfer in English pronunciation across Russia. The central hypothesis posits that while ethnic Russian speakers may exhibit significant L1 interference from Russian in their English pronunciation, speakers from non-Russian ethnic groups are more likely to demonstrate pronunciation patterns primarily shaped by language transfer from their ethnic L1, with Russian influence being secondary. To investigate this, three key research questions were formulated: (1) What are the potential transfer effects from the phonetic/phonological systems of ethnic L1s onto English pronunciation within the studied groups?; (2) What empirical evidence supports these transfer effects?; (3) To what extent does Russian influence linguistic transfer in these multilingual groups?

The study employs two methods: contrastive phonetic analysis and empirical research. The former was used to compare the phonetic/phonological structures of English with those of Russian, Tatar, Bashkir, and Udmurt to identify group-specific areas of possible L1 transfer. Based on these comparisons, the empirical component focused on segmental features that showed potential for inter-group variation in L1 transfer (e.g. the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/, present in Bashkir but absent in Russian, Tatar, and Udmurt). The realization of these features was tested on the recordings from 98 participants collected across the four ethnic groups. All informants were fluent in Russian, their ethnic L1 (for the non-Russian groups), and English. Participants read “The Boy Who Cried Wolf” passage (Deterding 2006) and their pronunciation was analysed using acoustic and auditory methods.

The results reveal certain tendencies for inter-group variation largely driven by positive L1 transfer specific to each ethnic group (e.g. more accurate production of /æ/ and /w/ by Tatar and Bashkir speakers, of /θ/ and /ð/ by Bashkir speakers, and of /dʒ/ by Udmurt speakers). Apart from occasional back vowel fronting by Bashkir and Tatar informants, negative L1 transfer was minimal, likely due to the mitigating role of Russian as an additional L1, facilitating the production of features uncommon in Tatar, Bashkir, and Udmurt, such as consonant clusters. However, Russian also neutralized positive L1 transfer from indigenous languages, introducing some intra-group variation, such as TRAP–DRESS overlap among Bashkir and Tatar speakers. Besides, the influence of Russian anglicisms was evident across the groups, e.g. in forms like *plan* [plan] and *cousin* [ku'zɛn].

These findings highlight the complexity of English pronunciation in Russia's multilingual context, illustrating how ethnic L1s interact with Russian to shape English non-native accents. They also open the door for future research on the factors contributing to accent variation in Russia, such as everyday language use (Russian vs. ethnic L1), age, gender, or language acquisition type.

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“Of course not,” she said *matter-of-factly*. The historical development of reporting clause constructions with *matter-of-factly*

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This study examines the historical development of *matter-of-factly* as a manner adverb in English and argues that, while (*as a*) *matter of fact* has been used as a Pragmatic Marker (PM, hereafter) in a wide variety of genres, *matter-of-factly* has developed into a sentential manner adverb mostly in written discourse, forming a reporting clause construction. Some adverbs and connectors are found to have followed the pathway from a sentential adverb to a discourse-pragmatic maker (e.g. Lenker 2007; *besides* and *indeed* in Traugott 1995; *after all* in Traugott 2022). In addition to such multi-functional expressions, I propose that other expressions have the potential to develop their own forms according to their discourse-pragmatic functions as seen in the historical development of *matter-of-factly*.

The source construction of these expressions is likely to be a collocational sequence, *a matter of fact* in (1), meaning “that portion of a subject of judicial inquiry which is concerned with the truth or falsehood of alleged facts” (OED, s.v. *matter of fact*, n.1.a).

- (1) He speaketh of **a matter of fact**. (1583 A. Nowell et al., *True Report of Disputation E. Champion sig. M1^r*; OED, s.v. *matter of fact*, n.1.a)

The expression first develops into the PM (*as a*) *matter of fact* as follows. The nominal *a matter of fact* may have derived the adverbial usage of *in matter of fact* ‘in point of fact’ (from 1593 onward; OED, s.v. *matter of fact*, n. 2.1.b.). The PM *as a matter of fact* ‘in fact, really, actually’ seems to have developed gradually from around the early seventeenth century according to EEBO, resulting in the reduced form *manner of fact* in colloquial use.

Subsequently *matter-of-factly* developed in the following way. From the seventeenth century onward, *matter of fact* begins to be used as an adjective; OED states that the form is usually hyphenated as in (2). Presumably, such a hyphenated form gives rise to *matter-of-factly* ‘in a matter-of-fact manner’ as in (3).

- (2) To write him a mere **matter-of-fact** affair, like a merchant’s order. (1787 R. Burns, *Letter 15 January (2001) vol. I. 84*; OED, s.v. *matter of fact*, adj.)
- (3) ‘You mean us, I suppose’, I answered **matter-of-factly**. (1873 R. Broughton, *Nancy vol. I. 47*; OED, s.v. *matter-of-factly*, adv.)

Further, a COHA-based survey shows that *matter-of-factly* is used mostly in a narrative part, in a preferred sequence of ‘DIRECT QUOTE + REPORTING CLAUSE [S V-PST] + *matter-of-factly*’ (PST=past tense) as in (4); the reporting verb, *say*, is used most frequently in the sequence. Importantly, this sequential pattern has been strengthened almost steadily over time.

- (4) “Rosemary told Mr. Jordan last night,” she said **matter-of factly**. (1922 *Rosemary*; FIC, COHA)

Theoretically, this collocational pattern attested at discourse level may give fresh insight into constructionalization, because it has been described, developed or tested mostly within the range of clause or argument structure. The current study thus contributes to a better understanding of how elements are constructionalized extending the limits of clausal boundaries.

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Negative and positive polarity violations: An acceptability rating study of English

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Background Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) are licensed, among others, in the direct scope of “negative” operators like clausal negation (1). Positive Polarity Items (PPIs) are characterized by the reverse of this condition: they cannot be interpreted in “negative” contexts, such as the immediate scope of local logical negation (2).

- (1) Mary has been to Paris. *John has been to Paris either.
- (2) Mary hasn’t been to Paris. *John hasn’t been to Paris too.

While the (anti-)licensing conditions of different kinds of Polarity Items (PIs) have received a great deal of attention (Giannakidou 2019; Penka 2020), the status of the violations of these conditions in native speakers’ perception is barely explored.

Acceptability rating study We present results from an acceptability rating experiment, testing two NPIs and two PPIs in English, which was designed to contribute to filling this gap. Regardless of the details of the precise licensing/anti-licensing conditions of the specific NPIs (*ever, either*) and PPIs (*something, fortunately*), in the negative/non-negative sentence in which we placed each of the two types of PIs they are supposed to be disallowed (3).

- (3) a. So I think that Lucy has ever been to Paris.
b. So it happened that I didn’t bake something. (‘didn’t bake anything’)

Each such critical target sentence appeared at the end of a different text that was designed to provide appropriate context fixing the relevant target interpretation. This yielded 20 critical experimental items (2 types of PIs x 2 PI words x 5 sentences with context). We also constructed 5 unacceptable and 5 acceptable control items without PPIs/NPIs, and 30 fillers. The 60 items are presented to each participant in different pseudorandomized orders. Participants had to judge target sentences on a seven-point scale.

Results and conclusions We report data from twenty-seven monolingual native speakers of English (age range: 18-71 years), residing and born in the UK. Linear mixed-effects models were employed to test the z-transformed values of the raw responses illustrated in Figure 1. The analyses yielded no statistically significant difference between the two NPIs ($p = 0.17$) or between the two PPIs ($p = 0.33$). Crucially, unlicensed NPIs are more severely degraded compared to anti-licensed PPIs. This is substantiated by the significant difference between each of the two NPIs and each of the two PPIs (all four p values > 0.01) resulting in a highly significant main effect of PI TYPE ($p > 0.0001$). This pattern suggests that while violations may be modulated to some extent by the specific lexical type of the NPI or PPI respectively, NPI licensing violations are substantially more severe than PPI anti-licensing violations; the latter appear to be relatively mild. The fundamental asymmetry revealed by these findings converge in an interesting way with the results of the few existing experimental studies, according to which violations of the conditions of NPIs and PPIs have different event-related brain potential profiles (Saddy et al. 2004; Liu et al. 2019), and the distribution of PPIs is acquired later in L1 than that of NPIs (Schwab et al. 2021).

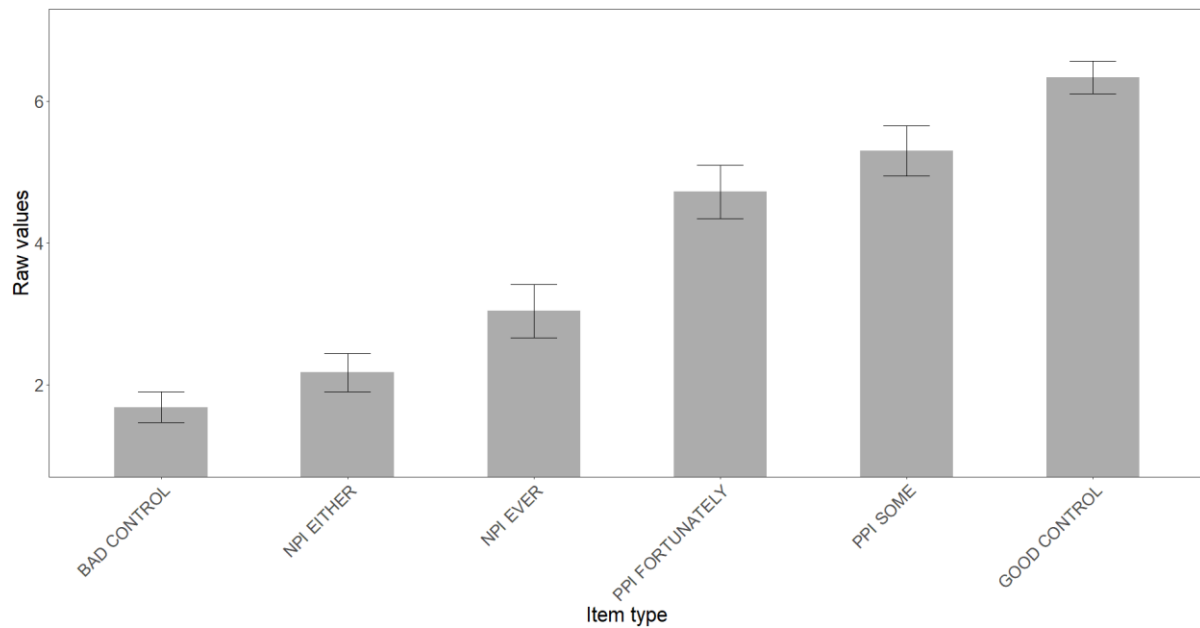


Figure 1

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The meaning and function of early English *do*-support: Using clues from a northern Italian dialect

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It is often the case that a new construction first enters the language with an expressive function. (Haspelmath 1999). As it competes with an existing, blander variant with largely the same meaning, either it wins out and replaces the other, or both forms are kept and grammatical functions redivided and reassigned between them (De Smet et al. 2018).

Consider historical English *do*-support (DS). The traditional explanation has been that it facilitated the modern word order, where verb and complement remain adjacent in all syntactic uses. In generative grammar terms this is known as the loss of verb raising and is the explanation of why (or, in non-generative terms, the description of how) English has a different word order from French (e.g. *I often go to Milan* vs. *Je vais souvent à Milan*). From a functional point of view, in historical as well as dialectal English, *do* when used with a non-stative verb has also been linked to habituality.

Despite this, it is unlikely the word order function was the main motivation for its initial use in the fifteenth century. Research suggests that in the affirmative, sentential adverbs such as *never* were already being placed before the finite verb (i.e. S-Adv-V-O rather than S-V-Adv-O) irrespective of the presence of DS (Haerberli & Ihsane 2016). Therefore although DS, which rose rapidly during 1450–1550, would have been increasingly favoured given the new word order, the word order change largely predates it. This leaves pragmatic benefits such as expressivity as the more likely reason for its initial appearance.

Disentangling the meaning and function of early DS is a difficult task, given that most of what remains of the language of the time are relatively complex intellectual texts lacking in dialogue. Fortunately, we can use another, living language with DS as a proxy. In the Camuno dialect, spoken in the mountains north of Milan, DS is used in questions, with no apparent connection to habituality. In some varieties preferential use of DS with agentive-subject, activity verbs suggests that the *do* auxiliary still has lexical content, and these DS questions have ‘special’ meanings (Swinburne 2024). The most notable of these is presupposition, where DS is used to express doubt and the speaker is seeking confirmation from the interlocutor.

This presentation compares those findings to what is known from the early stages of English affirmative DS, 1400–1550. Drawing on the work of Stein (1990), it illustrates how DS was used to highlight and foreground propositional material above the rest of the passage; and also for contrast. It proposes that the underlying functionality of highlighting doubt in the question (particularly notable in the Camuno data) and adding intensity to the statement (in English) is the same, and concludes that the intensification function of *do*, which comes from its energetic, agentive and activity semantics, is responsible for this effect.

The talk ends by describing a rigorous qualitative study now underway to analyse a wealth of texts from this period, many of which were not available to previous investigators. Examples of DS are being annotated according to over 20 syntactic and semantic variables, and token analysed using statistical techniques including conditional inference trees and random forests to determine which factors are most important in each author’s choice. The meaning of sentences with DS constructions will be compared to corresponding ones without DS using a method based on minimal pairs, to quantitatively test the hypothesis of a meaning difference.

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Long term variation in the complementation of *remember*, *forget* and *expect* in Late Modern English: The interaction between individual and population

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Long-term variation is often viewed on the population level, with the role of individuals considered “reduced below the level of linguistic significance” (Labov 2012: 265). Such views narrow the scope of research by tightly focusing on social identity, minimizing the influence of individual differences. By studying individuals, we may uncover how they accommodate change in their understanding/use of language over their lifetime, and how individual differences in cognitive processing impact the spread of variants (Petré & Anthonissen 2020).

This paper provides a study of 44 writers across three 100-year periods of Late Modern English (from c. 1650, 1700, 1800, respectively). It investigates changes in their use of competing variants of finite vs. nonfinite Complement Clauses (CCs) with the Complement-Taking Predicates (CTPs) *remember*, *forget*, and *expect*. In this variation, the finite CCs (*that*-clauses and zero-complementation clauses; the older forms) compete with the nonfinite CCs (the *to*-infinitive, the newer form, although first attested late fourteenth century: see Los 2005: 254–255) and the *ing*-form (emergent). A preference for a certain form could be due to processing considerations, a (personal) determination of a semantic/pragmatic difference, or even a (conscious) social association (as suggested by Cheshire et al. 2005). While the nature of their competition appears to change, all patterns continue to coexist.

Data consist of >500,000 words per individual, annotated for CCs with *remember*, *forget*, and *expect*, and coded on seven variables. Multifactorial classification models (cf. Fonteyn & Nini 2020) are employed to determine which language-internal factors condition individuals’ variation, and how these constraints vary between individuals, between periods, and during the lifespan of an individual. Preliminary results from >5,000 instances show individuals tend to organize their own behaviour using partly idiosyncratic systems; we argue this accounts for the persistence of long-term variation. A drop in the degree of idiosyncrasy between the earlier and later periods shows potential standardization at play. In addition, lifespan analysis reveals (almost) all authors increase their use of *that*-clauses (previously regarded as an older form) across their lifespan, thus going against the general tendency at population-level outlined in the Great Complement Shift (e.g. Rohdenburg 2006). We propose this tendency relates to all of them being professional writers who are increasingly placing more emphasis on the clarity of their prose.

Generally, the results suggest that individuals may have different cognitive representations of certain constructions, and that population-level change is simply a change in the average semantic-pragmatic or social understanding of the different forms, and/or the relative processing advantages.

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Why the dative alternation has been around for 1,000 years

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In the grammar of English, we observe a number of “stable”, rather long-lived syntactic alternations, such as the alternation between the ditransitive and prepositional dative (*I gave Tom a present* vs. *I gave a present to Tom*), or alternation between particle-object and object-particle order (*I looked up the word* vs. *I looked the word up*). To many theorists, the longevity of such variation phenomena, and thus the optionality between alternate ways of saying the same thing (Labov 1972: 188) that they afford, is a bit mystifying. The reason is that this kind of variation is at first glance incompatible with the foundational notion in cognitive linguistics, construction grammar, and functional linguistics that optionality is dysfunctional and thus abnormal. When it occurs, it must – or so many people assume – be suboptimal and short-lived. After all, well-known axioms like the Principle of Isomorphism (Haiman 1980) or the Principle of No Synonymy (Goldberg 1995) imply that language as a complex adaptive system is designed, as it were, to find functionally different niches for particular form-function mappings. If multiple forms are associated with the same meaning or the same grammatical function, it is often predicted that this suboptimal optionality is transitional until languages sort themselves out, so to speak (see De Smet et al. 2018 for critical discussion).

Against this backdrop, we endeavour to test whether grammatical alternations are in a measurable way suboptimal (or: difficult and inconvenient) for language users. We specifically use a corpus-based psycholinguistics research design with a variationist twist and analyse SWITCHBOARD (Godfrey et al. 1992), a corpus of conversational spoken American English. We ask if and how grammatical optionality correlates with two symptoms of production difficulty, namely filled pauses (*um* and *uh*) and unfilled pauses (speech planning time). Our dataset covers 108,487 conversational turns in SWITCHBOARD, 22 grammatical alternation types yielding 57,032 optionality contexts, 589,124 unfilled pauses and 43,801 filled pauses.

Mixed-effects linear regression analysis shows that overall, optionality contexts do not attract dysfluencies – regardless of how many language-internal probabilistic constraints are in operation, or how many variants there are to choose from. In other words, grammatical optionality does not trigger production difficulties. The interpretation is that there is therefore no production-driven evolutionary pressure to eliminate form-function asymmetry. As we will argue, any additional cognitive inefficiency introduced by having to choose between grammatical alternatives is likely to be offset by a number of compensatory benefits (including adjusting explicitness, managing information density, communicating efficiently, establishing Easy First order, achieving rhythmic well-formedness, domain minimization, and stalling for planning time).

The take-home message is that grammatical optionality can be long-lived because it is neither difficult and suboptimal, nor dysfunctional. We conclude by discussing a strong interpretation of our results, viz. the Principle of Optionality: “Languages and language users favour the availability of different ways of saying the same thing”.

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Pathways of specialization in semantic change: English adverbs of approximation

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English has many adverbs that express inexactness and proximity, e.g. *I'm almost/pretty much/close to/nearly/(just) about/more or less done writing*. Previous research (cf. Sadock 1981; Quirk et al. 1985; Wierzbicka 1986; Leech 1991; Horn 2017) has argued that approximating adverbs of this type have distinct semantic functions. For example, the form *almost* has additional nuances: 1) “from below” (Wierzbicka 1986: 607); and 2) “narrow escape” contexts (Wierzbicka 1986: 606). In the former, (1a), Sam can be 47, 48, or 49 but not 50, 51, or 52. In the latter, *almost* conveys the meaning that something could have happened, but did not, i.e. the only felicitous interpretation of (2a) is that Joe did *not* kill John. However, these restrictions do not apply for every adverb, cf. (1b) and (2b).

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|--|
| (1) | a. Sam is almost 50 years old. | b. Sam is pretty much 50 years old. |
| (2) | a. Joe almost killed John. | b. Joe pretty much killed John. |

We propose that the eight most frequent adverbs of approximation (*almost*, N=2693; *pretty much*, N=1863; *close to*, N=1171; *pretty well*, N=1140; *(just) about*, N=10,329; *near*, N=387; *more or less*, N=365; and *nearly*, N=272) should be analysed by first identifying and removing these near categorical contexts. The variable contexts that remain comprise those that have non-directional and non-narrow escape meanings. Extracting these contexts from the *Ontario Dialects Project* (14.4 million words) provided over 10,000 tokens from individuals born from 1879 to 2011, the alternation of forms exposes dramatic changes in distribution over 130 years. Abstracting away from the dominance of *about* across the twentieth century, Figure 1 shows that *almost* and *pretty well* remained the most frequent approximating adverbs until *pretty much* overtook both of them among individuals born after the 1950s. Overall, *almost* and *pretty much* change in rate from 12 to 63% and from 7 to 30% respectively over the whole period. Conditional inference tree analyses of year of birth, gender, education, and occupation confirms watersheds in 1945 and 1967 and correlations consistent with change from above, i.e. *pretty much* is favoured by more educated individuals, white-collar workers, and women (Figure 2). The Gen-Z return to favouring *almost* in the 1990s suggests ongoing recycling as each generation rejects the most popular form of their parents.

In summary, approximating adverbs offer unique insights into pathways of specialization in semantic change. As the system reorganizes, some areas of the system become categorical, e.g. “from below” and “narrow escape” meanings. Dialectal and/or minor variants fall away, e.g. *near/nearly*. As the system continues to change, even dominant variants may recede, e.g. *pretty well*. In this system, *almost* and *pretty much* continue to vary in non-directional and non-narrow escape contexts. To date, neither adverb has overtaken the other, suggesting the twentieth century is a telescoped slice of an ongoing change in a longitudinal evolving system.

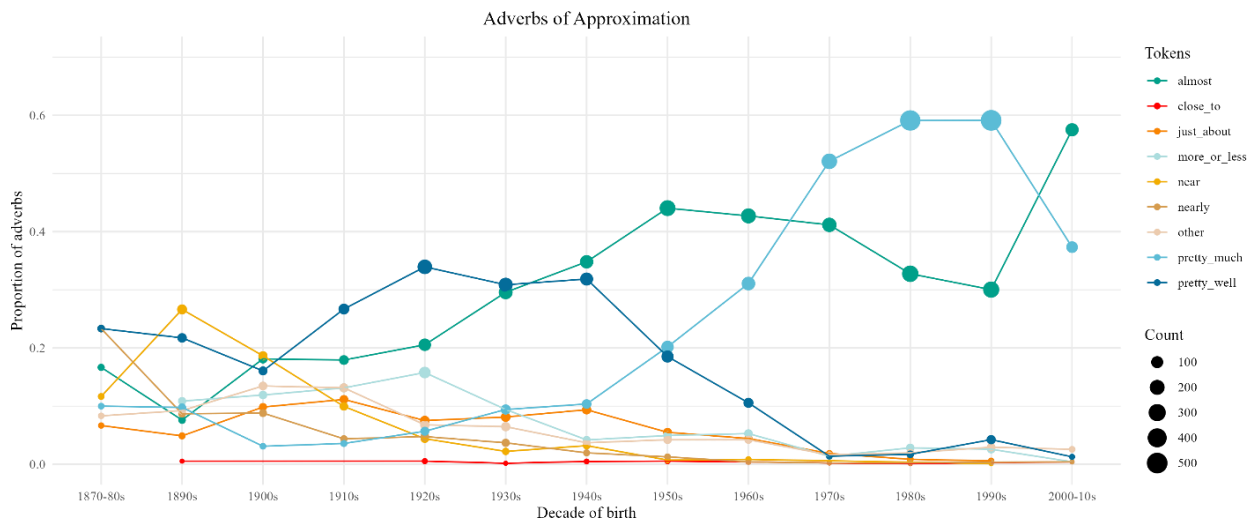


Figure 1: Adverbs of approximation

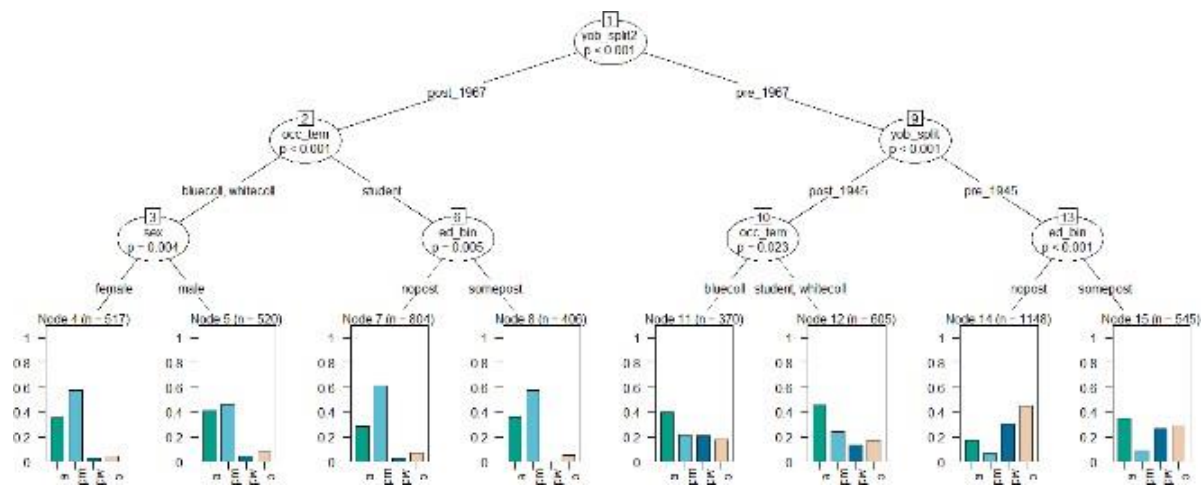


Figure 2: Ctree for *almost*, *pretty much*, and *pretty well*

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Productivity and prototypicality: A cross-varietal investigation of the null subject alternation

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In his seminal work on Postcolonial Englishes (PCEs), Schneider (2007: 83) argued that “[i]nnovations and distinctive structural properties of PCEs are frequently positioned at the interface between lexis and grammar.” Since then, much research has focused on lexicogrammar, examining how words combine with syntactic constructions in different varieties of English (e.g. Tamaredo et al. 2020). To account for lexicogrammatical variation in a principled manner, Hoffmann (2021) proposed the Dynamic Model Productivity (DMP) hypothesis, which claims that the degree of schematicity of speakers’ constructional representations varies across dialects, reflecting their phase of evolution in Schneider’s Dynamic Model: speakers of varieties in earlier phases rely more on constructions that are partly lexically filled rather than on completely schematic ones. However, Hoffmann so far investigated constructions which are not in competition with other alternative expressions, so it is unclear whether the hypothesis also accounts for syntactic alternations.

As a case study, we focus on the null subject alternation, which can be represented as [(PRO +) VERB], where PRO is a subject realized by a personal pronoun and VERB is the main verb of the clause. The pronominal subject, however, is sometimes deleted, resulting in examples like (1):

- (1) Told her to go straight home. (GloWbE, BD G, thedailystar.net)

Drawing on GloWbE (Davies 2013), a database of null and overt pronominal subjects was created and annotated for the lemma of the main verb of the clause. Eight national components were selected for analysis, namely, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, India, Jamaica, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Singapore, thus including two varieties from each of the last four phases of the Dynamic Model (i.e. phases 2 to 5). Hoffmann’s DMP hypothesis makes two predictions: (a) constructions in more advanced varieties are more productive, that is, they are used with a wider range of lexical fillers, than in less advanced varieties, because (b) speakers of the latter type of varieties tend to rely strongly on a limited set of prototypical fillers. First, to measure the productivity of the VERB slot of the null subject alternation, the data was submitted to Large Number of Rare Events models (cf. Brunner & Hoffmann 2020), which take into account the zipfian distribution of words. Second, to examine the speakers’ reliance on prototypical verbs, the verb lemmas significantly associated with each of the variants were identified using Distinctive Collexeme Analysis (Gries & Stefanowitsch 2004). Finally, for each phase, an index of productivity and an index of reliance on prototypical verbs were calculated.

The results, on the whole, support the DMP hypothesis, suggesting that its scope of application can be extended to syntactic alternations: varieties in later phases, with some exceptions, exhibit more schematic constructional representations, with the null subject alternation being more productive and less strongly tied to prototypical verbs the more advanced a variety is in Schneider’s Dynamic Model. All in all, the present study sheds further light on the cognitive motivations underlying lexicogrammatical variation in World Englishes, showing that speakers’ choice between alternative syntactic constructions is lexically determined to different degrees across varieties.

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The dynamics of probabilistic grammar: Investigating grammatical alternations across different registers through the lens of grammaticalization

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This project examines the stability of probabilistic grammar across six registers, investigating to what extent speakers' grammatical choices are context-specific. Grammatical variation phenomena have been shown to be influenced by a set of multiple factors or constraints that subconsciously guide speakers' decisions. While earlier research described probabilistic grammar as relatively constant, recent studies emphasize its dynamic nature, shaped by extralinguistic factors such as time, register, or variety (e.g. Engel & Szmrecsanyi 2022; Bartels & Szmrecsanyi 2024). Furthermore, variation phenomena seem to differ in the extent of instability, with some showing more variability than others (Szmrecsanyi et al. 2016). However, why certain phenomena may turn out to be more stable than others across registers remains largely underexplored: Is there any systematicity in regards to which variation phenomena are more (in)stable? Could a form that is comparatively earlier along the grammaticalization path, such as *be going to* in the future temporal reference alternation, to some extent destabilize the probabilistic system, while alternations with comparatively more established variants, such as deontic modality, provide a more stable picture across registers? These questions are addressed by the present project, utilizing a quantitative approach to capture the dynamics of probabilistic grammar.

To this end, this study adopts this perspective by systematically comparing two variation phenomena, future temporal reference, and deontic modality, across six registers in the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA; Davies 2008-): academic, blogs, fiction, magazines, newspapers, and spoken. Variants considered for future temporal reference are *will* and *be going to*; deontic modality is operationalized as the variation between *have (got) to* and *must*. The analyses are based on 500 concordances per variant and per register, amounting to 6,0000 concordances for each of the phenomena respectively. Using VADIS (Variation-Based Distance and Similarity Modeling; Szmrecsanyi et al. 2019), generalized linear mixed-effects models and random forests were applied to uncover differences in predictor significance, their effect sizes, and constraint hierarchies based on conditional variable importance across registers. Register divergence was quantified through pairwise Euclidean distances and Spearman rank correlations, yielding a mean distance score that enables quantitative cross-phenomenon comparisons beyond qualitative judgements of (in)stability.

The results of these multilevel analyses highlight notable differences in stability between these two alternations: future temporal reference shows significant variability across registers, especially in predictor significance, while deontic modality exhibits greater stability across effect significance and size as well as constraint hierarchy. These findings could indicate that grammaticalization plays a role in this divergence, with relatively less established forms causing greater instability. By addressing how grammatical alternations vary across registers and connecting these patterns with grammaticalization, this project reveals potential links between the stability of probabilistic grammar and diachronic language change as a whole.

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Backgrounding and reduction on a grammaticalization cline: Realizations of *sort/kind of X* in spoken American English

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This paper presents a new approach to the English construction *sort/kind/type of X* (SKT), with a focus on the question of how cognitive and communicative factors affect on-going variation and change. Previous research has documented its grammaticalization from binomial (N of N) to qualifying, adverbial and pragmatic marker (cf. Ajmer 1984; Brems & Davidse 2010; Margerie 2010; Denison 2011; Reichelt 2021; consider the function in *I like this kind of music* vs *I kind of like this music*). In usage, this means that the function and category is determined by context as well as expectations derived from experience. In a view of grammaticalization as increasing ‘ancillariness’ (decreasing discursive prominence; Boye & Harder 2012), we should also expect prosodic backgrounding and phonetic reduction to accompany more grammaticalized functions.

Desemanticization, decategorialization and phonetic reduction have been frequently discussed in connection with the SKT. Phonetic reduction leads to variant forms represented as *kinda* and *sorta*; regarding prosody, Dehé & Stathi (2016) have found that increasing grammaticalization is associated with decreasing prosodic prominence. On the other hand, reduction can also result from articulatory factors (speaking rate, phonological context), social context or item frequency. Therefore, an open question is how these factors interact in the usage of SKT along the grammaticalization cline. Do prosodic changes mark the earlier stages of the cline (as suggested by Dehé & Stathi 2016: 939), and does phonetic reduction only occur at later stages? Are specific reduced variants (such as *kinda*) more strongly tied to a specific function than prosodic patterns (as would follow if forms are mentally stored but prosodic patterns are not)?

By way of a detailed analysis of actual realizations in a large data set, we can pitch these factors against each other to test whether grammaticalization really has a backgrounding or reducing effect in spontaneous usage. We present a quantitative analysis of 1,243 SKT items extracted from two different corpora of North American spoken English: the *Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English* (Du Bois et al. 2000-2005), of spoken conversation, and the *Buckeye Corpus* (Pitt et al. 2007), of personal interviews. The tokens have been analysed for function, phonetic form, prosodic prominence and duration; information on co-text, context and speaker attributes are extracted from the corpora. As *type of* shows hardly any signs of grammaticalization, our analysis focusses on *sort* and *kind of*.

We apply a structural equation model to capture the interrelations between variables. The results reveal a mixed picture. Especially *kind of* shows a pattern of realizations that partly confirms the hypothesis that more grammaticalized forms are backgrounded and more reduced – though reduction is also strongly affected by articulatory factors, suggesting that there are hurdles to the entrenchment of *kinda* as a distinct grammaticalized variant. Realizations of *sort of* show some similar trends but appear more variable. We suggest that these items represent the grammaticalization of a constructional pattern: *kind of* as the most frequent one leads developments that also affect *sort of*, which consequently trails behind.

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Microaggression: A mismatch between illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect?

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Offensive language ranges from overt insults to more subtle comments like microaggressions, which rely on seemingly inoffensive cues that are based on negative stereotypes and reveal underlying prejudice. Sue & Spanierman (2020: 36) have defined microaggressions as “brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership (e.g. people of colour, women, or LGBTQ persons).” Microaggressions are highly context-dependent: they result from the hearer’s interpretation and typically allow the speaker to deny any intent to harm (Elder 2021).

First identified by Pierce (1974), microaggressions have been primarily studied within psychology and sociology, with a focus on their impact on marginalized groups. Despite the crucial role of context in their interpretation, linguistic research on microaggressions remains relatively scant (Guardamagna et al. 2024). In this talk, we attempt to get a firmer grip on the concept by offering a linguistic analysis of a dataset with 500 microaggressions, grounded in a pragmatic framework that integrates several theories such as Speech Act Theory (Searle 1975), Facework Theory (Brown & Levinson 1987) and Stalnaker’s concept of pragmatic presupposition (1999). Our general research question is:

- Can the linguistic mechanism behind microaggression be captured in pragmatic terms?

This will require us to address two further research questions:

- What is *micro* about so-called microaggression?
- What is *aggressive* about microaggression?

We argue that microaggressions crucially hinge on a potential mismatch between the speaker’s intended speech act and the speech act actually interpreted by the hearer (Searle 1975). For instance, a microaggression like *Where are you really from?* may be intended as a genuine request for information by the speaker but is often perceived by the hearer as questioning their belonging, creating a perlocutionary effect of criticism and alienation. Mismatches of this kind are often mediated by background beliefs in the form of pragmatic presuppositions (Stalnaker 1999), which frequently are encoded in specific syntactic and lexical constructions (Goldberg 2019).

The dataset consists of 500 self-reported cases of microaggression extracted from a dedicated online Tumblr forum, *Power, privilege, and everyday life*. Each reported microaggression includes contextual information and/or personal reflections by the addressee concerning how they were affected by the microaggression. Each microaggression in the dataset was coded by two of the co-authors in terms of the following variables: (a) semantic presupposition triggers (Levinson 1983), (b) pragmatic presuppositions, and (c) direct and indirect speech act, as most likely intended by the speaker and perceived by the target.

We will argue that the “micro” and “aggression” components of microaggression function on distinct yet connected pragmatic levels, that is, illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect. Specifically, the potential mismatch between the speaker’s intention and the hearer’s perception often relates to underlying background beliefs conveyed as pragmatic presuppositions. These presuppositions, frequently tied to socially constructed assumptions and stereotypes, tend to surface through specific lexical choices or linguistic constructions. The latter are entrenched and part of the communicated message, and significantly impact on the hearer. However, though

conventionalized, a more literal meaning remains accessible, with a potentially alternative non-aggressive reading resulting.

Summing up, we will demonstrate that the pragmatic approach adopted can make more fully explicit the nature of microaggressions and the subtle yet powerful ways in which language can convey aggression.

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The English past perfect progressive and discourse relations

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In Reichenbachian approaches, the Past Perfect (PP) indicates a temporal relationship in which the situation occurs before the Reference Time (RT), which is located before the speech time.

Therefore, they cannot explain the oddity of *?Max poured himself a cup of coffee. He had entered the room*, because the PP here satisfies the temporal relationship. Lascarides & Asher (1993) claim that the PP involves a consequent state at the past RT and its use is regulated by discourse relations between the Simple Past (SP) and the PP; the above sequence would be acceptable if the context allowed a discourse relation like “explanation” (indicating a “causal” relation). Lee (2017) argues that such regulation is a mere stipulation, claiming that whether the PP includes such a consequent state depends on predicate types, and a certain epistemic background condition is imposed on PPs with certain discourse relations.

While some studies (including Asher & Lascarides 2003, and the above two DRT analyses) offer systematic analyses with discourse relations, few studies have focused on the Past Perfect Progressive (PPP). (Reichenbachian approaches cannot distinguish PPPs from PPs in the first place.) Although PPPs occur much less frequently than PPs in narrative discourse, they certainly represent discourse relations. The PPP in (1) provides a “background” relation (expressing backdrops/circumstances) to the preceding SP. The PPP in (2) provides some motivation/“explanatory basis” with background condition/information for the preceding sentence/scene—a discourse relation referred to as “explanatory background” in this study.

- (1) *Hagen went on. “...” Kay **had been listening** to this with tears running down her face. (The Godfather)*
- (2) *“It’s the simplest kind of code!” Sophie was stopped on the stairs below him, starting up in confusion. A code? She **had been pondering** the words all night... (The Da Vinci Code)*

These discourse relations seem to be affected by the imperfectivity of progressive aspect.

To draw a rough sketch of the correspondence relationships between types of PPPs and predicate types/discourse relations, we investigated ten randomly selected novels and found 207 PPP examples. We used novels as data sources because they provide long-range information with clear background. Out of the found PPPs, 95 met our purposes because only PPPs in main clauses (including free indirect speech) show clear discourse relations to other sentences/scenes. We adopted Shimura’s (2024) tripartite distinction of perfect progressives based on Declerck (2006)—the continuative use (describing a situation that continues up to the RT), the “up-to-now” use (describing one that continued toward but has finished just before the RT), and the “indefinite” use (describing one that merely happened (entirely) before the RT)—partly because many perfect progressives constitute the “up-to-now” use.

We first observed the correspondence relationship between the three types of PPPs and predicate types. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1	activity	state	telic	total
Continuative	33	14	1	48
Indefinite	18	4	1	23
Up-to-now	18	3	3	24

We next observed the correspondence relationship between the three PPPs and discourse relations. The results are represented in Table 2.

Table 2	background	explanation	elaboration	explanatory background
Continuative	28	4	8	8
Indefinite	0	7	7	9
Up-to-now	3	3	0	18

To illuminate these correlations, we introduce the “temporal-structure” analysis developed by Wada (2001, 2019) and Shimura (2024), which has been used to consider various temporal phenomena of English tense forms, including the present perfect (progressive). We argue that the co-occurrence patterns in Tables 1 and 2 can be motivated by the compatibility between the temporal structures of the three uses of PPPs and the temporal semantics of predicate types (cf. Smith 1997)/the characteristics of each discourse relation.

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Language gatekeepers and the implicit transmission of linguistic norms

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While the distinction between descriptive and prescriptive approaches to grammar is crucial to the field of linguistics, the linguistic study of prescriptivism -- its origins, its functions, the shapes it can take, its potential impact on language use -- is not a popular area in linguistics. However, more recently, sociolinguistic studies (e.g. Curzan 2014; Anderwald 2020; Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2020) have looked at prescriptive attitudes towards language as a legitimate topic of linguistic inquiry. They argue that linguists need to ‘expand their horizons’ by engaging with prescriptive attitudes as data rather than treating them as irrelevant or annoying ‘poppycock’ (*Language Log*) not worthy of any serious attention. This paper contributes to this approach by focusing on how prescriptive attitudes are transmitted by people in linguistic gatekeeping positions. Language professionals -- like editors, teachers, writers -- regularly find themselves in positions where they influence the speech of others, be it through the consistent use or avoidance of some linguistic forms or as authorities on language use that set norms themselves or that are consulted for advice. Unlike laypeople who habitually engage in discussions of prescriptive rules about language outside of their professional domain, e.g. on social media platforms (‘grassroots prescriptivism,’ Lukač & Heyd 2023), the majority of language professionals usually do not opine on matters of language use. They exert their influence by writing, editing, grading. Are language professionals aware of their role in potentially transmitting prescriptivism, and how do they approach their role as linguistic gatekeepers? Results from a recent attitude survey on American English (Wanner & Zhang 2023) showed that language professionals were not necessarily more or less prescriptively inclined than non-professionals and that they showed awareness of factors like register variation when judging sentences as acceptable or not. The present study complements existing survey data with insights gained from in-depth interviews with language professionals (n=20). Journalists, writers, editors, speechwriters, teachers, and communication professionals (most of them working in the US) were asked to describe in which ways grammar is important to them, if they have any grammar pet peeves, how they react when they are asked to give advice on grammar-related questions, and where and under which circumstances they themselves seek linguistic guidance. Most of the interviewees approach linguistic variation in a situational way, as necessitated by speaking to or writing for a specific audience, and consider grammatical correctness as subordinate to clarity. Similarly, they frame their grammar pet peeves in terms of violations of clarity rather than grammar rules. Language professionals trust their judgments and rarely consult usage guides or reference grammars in their work (they do consult style manuals for particular publication venues). In giving advice to others, most prefer to edit someone else’s text over discussing rules or providing commentary. In essence, the interviewed language professionals recognize their role as gatekeepers, but they see their role primarily as language users striving to communicate clearly, authentically, and appropriately for the situation. Their norms are transmitted implicitly through their choices. What does this mean for how we as linguists depict prescriptive attitudes in our work, for example in introductory textbooks? Are we serving our students well when we depict the force of prescriptive rules through citing explicit rules that we assume students may have been exposed to such as “You must not end a sentence with a preposition” or “You must not split an infinitive” (Yule 2010: 85)?

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The impact of language prestige on phonological confidence in Jamaican children

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This paper investigates the frequency with which 2 groups of Jamaican children at the primary school level produce the low back rounded vowel [ɔ] which is a phone of Jamaican English (JE) but not of Jamaican Creole (JC). The vowel [a] is a stigmatized JC variant of the JE vowel [ɔ].

It is part of a larger study that examines how Jamaican school-age children process selected JE phones that are not present in JC. The research questions guiding this investigation are: (1) What are the rates at which a group of grade 2 children and a group of grade 5 children produce the JE phone [ɔ] which is not present in JC?; (2) What are the rates at which a group of grade 2 children and a group of grade 5 children produce the JC phone [a] which is also present in JE?

The language situation in Jamaica is one in which there is constant interaction between JE and JC, leading to several intermediate varieties (DeCamp 1971). JE is a variety which is mutually intelligible with other standard varieties of English. JC is an English-lexified Creole and differs from English in phonology, morphology and syntax. The different varieties are linked to socioeconomic status with JE having high status and prestige and JC having low status, though perceptions of this variety are slowly changing. Most children in Jamaica enter the formal school system speaking some form of JC and little, if any, JE (Pollard 1998; Christie 2003; Bryan 2004). They are required to navigate both JC and Standard Jamaican English (SJE), the language of education, from an early age (Lacoste 2012). It is expected that at the end of primary schooling, children should have a good command of JE. However, results from high-stakes English Language examinations suggest that this is not the case, and this lack of command may begin with the child's navigation of the differing phonological systems in this variable linguistic environment.

A quantitative approach was taken to explore the research questions. There were 94 children participating in the study ranging in age from 7;2 – 9;0 from grade 2 and 10;3 to 12;2 from grade 5. Purposive sampling was used to select four government-run primary schools from which the children were chosen to participate in the study. The participants completed a repetition task involving mostly nonsense words in which the JE vowel [ɔ] was paired with JC vowel [a] which is also a part of the JE inventory.

The results show that the participants at both grade levels performed well (over 90% accuracy) on the token containing the JE vowel. Contrary to what was expected, the participants performed less well on the token containing the vowel [a] that is present in both JE and JC - 58% accuracy for grade 2 participants and 69% for those from grade 5). The lower rates for the JC or native form suggest that many children may be exhibiting linguistic insecurity regarding JC and are avoiding a form that is considered stigmatized even though it is also present in the higher status JE.

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Human vs. AI-generated texts for inclusive and sustainable tourism: A corpus-assisted analysis

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One of the main applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) today is the generation of specialized texts, a development that has interested scholars applying the methods of corpus linguistics to discourse analysis. AI's potentialities in text generation have been explored in various domains, including academic writing and healthcare, where researchers have assessed the linguistic features and overall quality of machine-produced content. However, there is a lack of studies focusing on AI-generated texts within tourism discourse, despite increasing evidence that AI can enhance travel experiences by providing personalized, efficient, and adaptive solutions to users (Kırtıl & Aşkun 2021). Given the rapid advancements in AI and its growing role in content creation, it is crucial to investigate how AI-generated tourism texts compare to human-authored materials in terms of communicative effectiveness. Tourism discourse, as a field of linguistic inquiry, has been widely examined from various perspectives (e.g. Dann 1996; Cappelli 2006; Maci 2017), including the issues of sustainability (e.g. Malavasi 2017; Pasquini 2018; Cappelli & Masi 2019; Caimotto 2020; Lazzaretto 2021; Pato et al. 2021; Tiago et al. 2021). In light of this, it is important to explore whether, and to what extent, AI can be effectively integrated into the creation of tourism texts aimed at clearly and meaningfully communicating information about environmental and human sustainability.

This study seeks to fulfil this research aim by conducting a comparative analysis of two sub-corpora of tourism texts: the first consists of human-created texts retrieved from institutional websites of local authorities and tour operators, as well as posts from social media (e.g. *Instagram* and *Facebook*); the second includes texts generated by AI-based tools such as *ChatGPT* and *Gemini*. Given the focus on sustainability, the selected texts describe some of Europe's most well-known walking trails, as identified by international walking tour organizations. Walking tourism is generally considered more environmentally sustainable and more economically affordable than other forms of travel. Moreover, it is chosen by religious individuals worldwide for pilgrimage purposes, as in the case of the Camino de Santiago. Methodologically, this study employs both quantitative and qualitative methods of corpus-assisted discourse studies (Baker 2006; Partington & Marchi 2015), including the observation of lexical keywords and word frequencies, and the close examination of their lexicophraseological patterns (Sinclair 2004) in their extended concordance lines. The analysis assesses whether AI-generated tourism texts successfully fulfil the communicative functions typical of the genre of tourism discourse. Additionally, it examines the extent to which these texts adopt an inclusive and sustainable linguistic-communicative approach, ensuring that the language used is accessible for a variety of tourists, including children, elderly people, religious communities, and people with disabilities.

From a practical perspective, the study offers actionable recommendations, including optimized prompt strategies for generating texts of tourism discourse that align with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as well as sustainability objectives. These insights can be strategically applied by local institutions, tourism enterprises, and content creators seeking to integrate AI-generated texts effectively while ensuring linguistic quality and communicative effectiveness for the aforementioned categories of tourists.

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go to Spain in summer or *go in summer to Spain*: Modelling PP-order in the history of English

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This paper takes a diachronic perspective to ordering principles in post-verbal PP-clusters – more specifically clauses with two prepositional phrases following the motion verbs *come* and *go*, as illustrated in (1-6) – in the timeframe from Middle to Late Modern English (ca. 1150-1900). The main focus here is on assessing the effect of various variables linked to processing efficiency, and potential changes in such factors over time.

- | | | | |
|-----|---|----|---|
| (1) | They went to Spain <i>in summer</i> | vs | They went <i>in summer</i> to Spain |
| (2) | They went to Spain <i>in a hurry</i> | vs | They went <i>in a hurry</i> to Spain |
| (3) | They went to Spain <i>with their parents</i> | vs | They went <i>with their parents</i> to Spain |
| (4) | They came to Spain <i>from Italy</i> | vs | They came <i>from Italy</i> to Spain |
| (5) | They went to bed <i>at night</i> | vs | They went <i>at night</i> to bed |
| (6) | They came to a conclusion <i>in the end</i> | vs | They came <i>in the end</i> to a conclusion |

Most importantly, in Present Day English both dependency length (syntactic weight/ length ratio of the PPs) and semantic closeness between a verb and the PP seem to impact ordering: For example, the latter presumably explain the preference for ‘come to a conclusion in the end’ over ‘come in the end to conclusion’ in (6), as it places the semantically/lexically entailed PP closer to the verb. However, this bias may be overridden in cases such as (7), reflecting a tendency to place the longer PP in later position. Which of these factors takes precedence in cases of conflict is debated – while length is e.g. taken as more influential than semantics in Hawkins (1999), Wiechmann & Lohmann (2013) argue for the opposite (cf. also Liu 2019, 2023).

- (7) They came **to a reasonable yet not highly satisfactory conclusion regarding the issue under discussion** *in the end* vs. They came *in the end* **to a reasonable yet not highly satisfactory conclusion regarding the issue under discussion**

The present study then aims to provide further insights into the relative role of these factors based on historical data, viz. an analysis of about 1,250 PP-clusters extracted from the *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpora of Historical English* (PPCME2, Kroch et al. 2000; PPCEME, Kroch et al. 2004; PPCMBE2, Kroch et al. 2016). Furthermore, the study tests assumptions about the diachronicity of these factors, as previous studies observe a decrease in clause-level dependency lengths over time, correlated with systemic changes such as the loss of case marking from Middle English onwards (e.g. Tily 2010).

The results of logistic regression analyses on the data ultimately suggest that length consistently plays an important role in the investigated timeframe, but that more semantically driven factors increase in relevance over time. The study thus provides tentative support for Wiechmann & Lohmann (2013) while at the same time indicating a more complex picture. It furthermore challenges hypotheses about diachronic change in the impact of the factors in question for the specific case of PP-ordering.

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On behalf of complex prepositions in the history of English

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This paper zooms into the history of complex prepositions in English. Specifically, we investigate the development of patterns with *behalf* in a corpus of Late Middle English and Early Modern English letters: this composite prepositional phrase, which ultimately goes back to a combination of a preposition and the noun *half*, appears to gradually have emerged around 1300, but was rather rare until the 1800s (see OED, s.v. *behalf*; also Hoffmann 2005). Most importantly for the present paper, the pattern has been described as showing variability on several levels, as well as diachronic change therein: first, the preposition used varies between *in* (1) and *on* (2), with the former only persisting in American English today (e.g. Butterfield 2015). Second, we see the emergence of distinct structural patterns reminiscent of the Present-Day English genitive alternation (e.g. Heller & Szmrecsanyi 2019), in that *behalf* was originally used with a possessive determiner (1) but came to alternate with a post-nominal *of*-structure as in (2). An additional variant including a demonstrative determiner (3) is now obsolete. These developments are typically discussed in terms of univerbation and grammaticalization, and presumably correlate with semantic changes, in that the pattern moves from a meaning of ‘with respect to, regarding’ and ‘in the name/as the agent or representative of’ to mainly expressing ‘in the interest/in support/for the benefit of’ in a process of subjectification (OED, s.v. *behalf*; Hoffmann 2005; Denison 2010).

- (1) I pray thank him **in my behalf** (DUPPA,37.023.473)
- (2) that which you desire **on behalfe of** my little Nephews (PEPYS,52.030.400)
- (3) I trust to your good satisfaction **in that behaulf** (CROMWEL,II,4.036.369)

Although the *behalf*-pattern is typically drawn on in accounts of English complex prepositions and their history and a comprehensive investigation of the construction in Present-Day English is provided in Hoffmann (2005), however, no empirical study of its use in earlier English exists to date except in Brinton & Akimoto (1999) and Iyeiri (2025), where it is marginally discussed. Our study then aims to address this gap by analysing the total of about 500 instances of the patterns in the *Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (PCEEC2, ca. 1410-1681; Santorini 2022). We use this corpus since the construction – although rare overall – is still more frequent in letters compared to other text types, as the former typically feature more informal and spoken-like, yet at the same time also rather formulaic language use. Using logistic regression modelling and *Multiple Correspondence Analysis*, among other tools, we investigate the associations between the different structural patterns and particular syntactic as well as semantic features, including overall meaning but also e.g. governing category and well-known factors in alternation relations such as animacy, pronominality, or length.

Our results suggest that the demonstrative variant in (3) is clearly syntactically and semantically distinct from the earliest attestations on, and disappears towards the end of the investigated timeframe. By contrast, variation on the level of the preposition and regarding the possessive relation interact in highly complex ways, gradually approximating the present-day situation over time and both confirming and challenging subjectification and chunking processes (e.g. Bybee 2010).

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The status of language(s): Multilingualism and English as a Lingua Franca in the Swiss anglophone diaspora

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Migrants made up 281 million of the global population in 2020 (World Migration Report 2024), a number expected to increase over the next years. Through migration, individuals are exposed to new linguistic environments, which can lead to changing attitudes towards languages in both home and host countries. Moving from place to place can have an impact on identity, language acquisition, and language use (e.g. Fiedler 2011; Yagmur & Ehala 2011; Adachi 2020). Situated at the intersection of language and migration, the LASAD (Language Attitudes in the Swiss Anglophone Diaspora) project investigates language attitudes/experiences and multilingualism of English speakers in a historically non-anglophone country.

We report on attitudes towards multilingualism and English as a *lingua franca* in the South African diaspora in Switzerland, which subsequently serves as a baseline for studying other anglophone diasporic communities. There are currently 2,130 South Africans living in Switzerland (SEM 2025). In our sample, the majority has completed a tertiary education and is white. Using a mixed-method approach, we present findings from online questionnaires and 20 in-person interviews and discuss how South African migrants perceive language vitality in both Switzerland and South Africa with their additional multilingual (migrant) experience, particularly regarding the status of English as not only a first or second language but also in its function as a global lingua franca *vis-à-vis* the usage and acquisition of local languages. As such, the paper will focus on the following research questions:

1. How is multilingualism perceived and constructed by members of the anglophone South African diaspora in Switzerland?
2. Which languages are perceived as important in Switzerland *vis-à-vis* South Africa?
3. What societal and personal status does English hold for South African migrants?

Two important findings are a) that local languages are perceived as important for integration and success at the workplace, and b) that English is perceived as the most important language. The latter is emphasized by opinions that English should be spoken by “ALL people” (15, Pos. 5) and the language’s description as a bridging language in both countries. This paper will further shed light on the perceived importance of multilingualism in Switzerland and South Africa and the individual self-reported language use, which indicates a contrast between statements that “Everyone should be able to speak at least two languages” (47, Pos. 5) and their dominant use of English in their daily lives. Indeed, we highlight their motivations not to acquire a local language, which contradict their perceived importance, as the migrants solely rely on English instead. Investigating which languages are perceived as important, necessary, and/or expected of residents in a country will help understand the language attitudes by migrants in a global and national multilingual context. We aim to generalize our findings by specifically looking at the contrast faced by speakers in migrant communities between a) the advantage of speaking a world language which is highly valued in Swiss society generally vs. b) making efforts to acquire local languages on the ground which serves as a key towards establishing identity and social integration.

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The probabilistic grammar of rap: A corpus study of future temporal reference

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Being one of the most prominent music genres, rap has attracted considerable attention from linguists. Previous studies have primarily focused on lexis and found diffusion into other registers such as social media (Grieve et al. 2018). Morphosyntax, however, remains relatively underexplored. Notably, rap incorporates features of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) across ethnic boundaries, creating a unique morphosyntactic repertoire (Werner 2019). Given rap's lasting popularity, it is plausible that –similar to lexis– morphosyntactic features are also subject to diffusion. To better understand the grammatical patterns encountered and potentially adopted by its listeners, the present study applies the concept of probabilistic grammar (e.g. Bresnan 2007) and investigates Future Temporal Reference (FTR) in a newly compiled corpus of 57,302 American rap songs.

Probabilistic grammar assumes that syntactic knowledge is not categorical but governed by probabilities and aims to investigate determinants underlying the choice between functionally equivalent structural variants. The present study follows this approach by analysing FTR variants in rap. Analyses include mixed-effect modelling and random forests among other variationist methods. The study focuses on *I'ma*, *gon'* and *finna*, which are all commonly found in the corpus and illustrated in (1) – (3).

- (1) And I promise this to you, **I'ma get** us out this hood [Ace Hood: Ride, 2008]
- (2) We **gon' keep on** winnin', we **gon' keep on** shinin' [Maino: Tonight, 2015]
- (3) Lil' bruh got the drop, he say he **finna suit up** [Stunna 4 Vegas: 38 freestyle, 2022]

More than 100,000 FTR contexts were extracted from the corpus. Independent variables include well-established factors such as grammatical person of the subject, animacy and verb type (Poplack & Tagliamonte 1999; Engel & Szmrecsanyi 2022). Additionally, phonological variables like onset and word length, as well as other variables, e.g. concreteness, copula absence and variant-specific collexemes, are considered.

The coding process is currently ongoing. A preliminary study of 5,000 songs suggests significant effects of multiple variables on FTR variant choice in line with the assumption of probabilistic grammar. For instance, grammatical person and verb type appear to yield effects, with *finna* occurring predominantly in first person and with dynamic verbs. *Gon'* shows a stronger preference for second- or third-person subjects and stative verbs than the less marked variants *gonna* and *will*.

By examining patterns in FTR variant choice, this study aims to shed light on the probabilistic nature of rap's morphosyntax, offering a new perspective on this culturally highly relevant register. Given the music's potential to serve as a source of diffusion into other registers, the findings may also point to grammatical variants impacting FTR choices beyond this artistic genre itself.

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POSTER SESSION

Searching for Old English influence in Old Norse homilies through the lens of verb-initial word order and cohesive vs. contrastive conjunctions

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While much work has been done on the influence of Old Norse on English during the Viking Age, relatively little has been written on linguistic influence in the other direction. A noteworthy exception is research on lexical borrowing of religious terminology due to the Christianization of Norway and the organization of the Norwegian church, both processes predominantly led from England (Gunn 2017). And this is the starting point of my project: If English clergymen influenced the vocabulary of the newly founded Norwegian church, it is not far-fetched to also assume that Old English influenced the Old Norse language in other ways, such as through pragmatic borrowing (Prince 1988). Such influence would presumably be particularly visible in Old Norse learned/religious texts with an Anglo-Saxon provenance – such as the sermons in the *Old Norwegian Homily Book* (Abram 2004), a manuscript produced in the Western Norwegian town of Bergen around 1200 AD, at a time with a strong English ecclesiastical presence there.

In the search for pragmatic borrowing, my project investigates the use of verb-initial word order (V1) in Old English and in Old Norse, i.e. declarative clauses where the finite verb precedes an expressed subject and any other clause elements. V1 has been described as a predominantly cohesive word order in Old Norse, whereas in Old English, it has been claimed to have both cohesive and contrastive functions. And while for Old English, these claims have concerned non-conjunct V1 clauses, my preliminary findings suggest that they likely also pertain to V1 conjunct clauses, i.e. V1 main clauses introduced by a coordinating conjunction.

In order to operationalize the pragmatic functions of contrast vs. cohesion for the initial, quantitative part of my study, I have focused on the use of cohesive vs. contrastive initial conjunctions – *and* vs. *but* – in general vs. in homiletic literature. My hypothesis is that Old English V1 usage is reflected more closely in the Old Norse homilies than it is in e.g. Old Norse saga texts – a hypothesis tentatively supported by my preliminary findings: The use of the coordinating conjunction *en* ‘but’ in Old Norse V1 conjunct clauses seems to have been more acceptable in the homiletic literature represented in the corpora than in other Old Norse texts.

My poster, then, will aim to answer the following research question: What can the use of V1 word order in conjunct clauses introduced by *and* vs. *but*, in Old English vs. in Old Norse, reveal about possible Old English influence on the language of the *Old Norwegian Homily Book*? To answer this question, I will conduct a corpus-based, quantitative study of V1 in Old English and Old Norse prose, using three corpora: the *York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose*, the *Menotec* corpus, and the *Icelandic Parsed Historical Corpus*. The results will be the groundwork for further qualitative analysis, outside the scope of this poster.

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An analysis of the awareness level of English loanwords and proficiency levels of English in an EFL context

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This paper describes the relationship between an awareness level of English loanwords and proficiency levels of English with the aim of discussing the potential benefits of Katakana loanword usage in English Language Teaching. The Japanese language has a long and unique history of lexical borrowing by incorporating loanwords from other languages. These loanwords have become an important and integral part of social activities and functions as well as common use in the language itself (Sanseido 2020). Although knowledge of English-based loanwords in Japanese can facilitate various aspects of English learning, these loanwords are also challenging and disruptive factors due to linguistic and phonetic differences for Japanese learners of English (Nation 2003, 2005; Daulton 2011; Rogers et al. 2015).

This research was started with the aim of raising awareness of these troublesome elements such as discrepancies in pronunciation, spelling, and meaning shifts, in order to find ways to help learners activate and utilize their existing knowledge of loanwords and to improve their English proficiency. In this paper, two of the initial research questions to be addressed are:

1. What is the awareness level of Katakana loanwords from English used in Japanese among Japanese university students?
2. What is the relationship between university students' English Katakana loanword awareness and their English proficiency?

By analysing the awareness level of Katakana loanwords from English among Japanese university students and the relationship between their Katakana loanword knowledge and their English proficiency, some pedagogical and motivational benefits are to be discussed regarding the use of English loanwords in English language teaching and learning.

For the purpose of finding out the correlation between the level of English loanword awareness and the levels of English proficiency, a study was carried out at a university in Tokyo with a total of 101 students. In this study, a set of questionnaires which were composed of twelve items were used to obtain the data, with each question being measured using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). The data includes TOEIC® Listening & Reading Test scores as an English proficiency measurement, and all the data was analysed with IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 29). Upon conducting an assumption test to check the normality of the data, the participants were divided into three groups based on TOEIC scores according to the Score Scale Range created by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in order to analyse differences between groups with different proficiency levels.

This paper will highlight the preliminary findings that learners of English with a higher proficiency have a tendency to use English loanwords less in Japanese and also when studying English. The study concludes that students with a higher proficiency tend to have less positive views towards Katakana loanwords knowledge and use. Based on the findings, this paper will discuss potential benefits of Katakana loanwords in English Language Teaching in terms of an exploration of teaching and learning aids used in building English vocabulary and ultimately improving skills in English.

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Exploring personal pronoun declaration in digital social media networks

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This poster presents an on-going doctoral work that explores the declaration of personal pronouns in English-language tweets in large digital networks. Recently, personal pronouns such as *she/her*, *he/him*, and non-binary pronouns like *they/them* have been increasingly used to express one's gender identity in various social settings (Loureiro-Porto & Ariza-Fernández 2024). Drawing on concepts from social network analysis, this research focuses on how pronoun declaration is affected by people's social networks. The underlying theoretical model is the weak-tie hypothesis, according to which the diffusion of linguistic innovations is facilitated in weak-tie environments, while strong-tie environments inhibit language change (Milroy & Milroy 1985). The hypothesis has substantially influenced sociolinguistic studies, although most previous analyses in the discipline have considered networks that are much smaller than real-life human networks (Laitinen et al. 2020).

Jiang et al. (2023) observe increased pronoun disclosure among former non-pronoun users who interact with pronoun users, suggesting that network ties considerably influence pronoun declaration. This study further explores the relationship between social networks and pronoun declarations. It addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent are personal pronouns declared in social media user profiles, and how are different types of pronouns distributed across different geographical settings?

RQ2: What differences in network dynamics can be found in relation to the declaration of pronouns in the user profile?

The data comprises four extremely large network datasets derived from one social media application (*Twitter/X*). The material dates between 2006 and mid-2023, and the datasets amount to almost 10 billion words from 829,608 user accounts. These data are organized in 19,345 ego networks, each consisting of one ego node, all nodes connected to it, all links between the nodes, and the user-generated texts. The data have been enriched with information on the network strength index, which indicates how strongly or loosely connected the network is (Laitinen & Fatemi 2023).

In-depth data exploration and statistical analyses are used to approach the research questions quantitatively. This includes a comparison of pronoun types and frequency across geographical locations, and across networks of different strength and sizes.

Regarding the first research question, it is expected that a minority of users will disclose their preferred pronouns, given the novelty of the pronoun declaration phenomenon. However, a high degree of variation in pronoun type is expected among pronoun users and across geographical locations, considering the countless possibilities for pronoun invention (Loureiro-Porto & Ariza-Fernández 2024). In terms of the second research question, differences in pronoun disclosure in networks of different strength may be found in smaller networks but are expected to disappear for larger networks.

An exploration of pronoun declaration on social media promises to advance research on the applicability of the weak-tie hypothesis in complex digital networks. This study is therefore relevant to both social network analysis and those interested in English pronouns, providing insights into the development of gender-inclusive language in very large digital social networks and, by extension, in real-life social communities.

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Cognitive Linguistics' role in analysing how immigrant stand-up comedians construct their racial and ethnic identity

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This paper studies the relationship and application of the cognitive linguistics theory to verbal humour. Particularly, it focuses on the relationship of stand-up comedy, a genre of verbal humour, and the implications of constructing one's racial and ethnic identity through humorous discourse. To construct meaning, there are certain factors to consider, such as conventionality, frequency, and familiarity (Giora 1999, 2003). For humour studies, two other factors, also mentioned by Giora, become essential to meaning construction. These are the inferences and the expectations that such a complex process as constructing meaning may entail. Stand-up comedy tends to tiptoe around certain topics without directly mentioning them; however, inferences are made and constructed around those unsaid ideas.

The study has been based on a mixed methodology, considering the qualitative and quantitative approaches for its completion. Although verbal humour studies have been largely carried out from a qualitative perspective, the quantitative paradigm has taken a space in recent studies, which suits the present one. From the quantitative approach, occurrences of the construed identities were tallied. By identifying the different occurrences in which any sort of identity was built, it was possible to focus the attention on the ethnic/racial identity construction. In that sense, this representation could serve to justify why new meaning construction is more salient when ethnic/racial identities are being displayed. Meanwhile, in the qualitative approach, new meanings were examined and dissected to be aligned with Current Discourse Space (CDS), proposed by Langacker in 2001, to determine how these new meanings are presented by the comedians to audiences. New meaning occurrence served itself from figurative language, which can be a vital mechanism within verbal humour to express new ideas. A corpus of 20 immigrant comedians from both the United States of America and Spain is being analysed; however, we are exclusively focusing on the English language corpus. These comedians are first- or second-generation immigrants, the main criteria to be included in the corpus ICER-UP. In that sense, the corpus contains 20 stand-up comedy shows that range from the late 2010s up to 2024. The shows are both in English and Spanish; therefore, two transcription systems were used (Jefferson Transcription System and Val.Es.Co.) to suit the requirements of the languages.

In preliminary results, it was attested that to build their version of racial and ethnic identity, comedians create some sort of tension between the aspects of the focus/figure, which is the most relevant semantic-pragmatic element in the discourse, and the context and the shared knowledge, helping to create new meanings. In fact, racial and ethnic identity would influence and defy the own representations the comedians conveyed. A partial conclusion was obtained from the idea that stand-up performances are instances produced in public where the audience's mental representations of their society and culture are altered to some degree (Yus 2016). The creation of new meanings derived from these altered mental representations audiences have in store, and stand-up comedians are the perfect tool and have the adequate platform to introduce these new ideas.

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The status of FOOT-STRUT vowels in Northern England: A sample study in young adults

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Northern English dialects have garnered increasing interest in recent years, particularly due to possible dialect levelling occurring in the region (Strycharczuk et al. 2020). This study focuses on one of the key aspects that unite Northern English varieties and differentiate them from Southern British English: the status of the FOOT-STRUT split (Wells 1982). In the North of England, the vowels in FOOT and STRUT words are pronounced identically (e.g. *cut* and *put* rhyme perfectly in the North), while in Southern English varieties, they represent different vowels.

Recent studies indicate that the split is diffusing northward (MacKenzie et al. 2022), potentially reshaping the map of British English dialects. In this context, the present research examines the status of the FOOT-STRUT split in the speech of young adults from the North of England to assess whether the speakers exhibit pronunciation traits typical of Southern or Northern English. Additionally, this study explores whether potential linguistic changes relate to speakers' own accent perceptions, thus analysing the relationship between accent self-identification and accent levelling.

Data for the analysis was collected from ten respondents (five male and five female), aged between 20–27, from across the North of England. To create a more homogeneous corpus, all participants had to have completed some form of higher education. Audio materials of self-recorded speech were gathered using elicitation tasks, accompanied by basic demographic data and a description of accent identification. The recordings yielded 109 STRUT tokens and 53 FOOT tokens. F1 and F2 values were extracted from audio recordings using a Praat (Boersma & Weenink 2025) script, and values were normalized using the Lobanov method to account for physiological variation. Formant data was consequently analysed statistically to examine vowel realization patterns.

Results reveal that most speakers maintain the traditional Northern English vowel realization, with overlapping FOOT and STRUT formant values. However, female speakers exhibit greater variation in STRUT F1 values ($\sigma = 36.78$ vs. FOOT $\sigma = 14.29$), which may reflect increased phonetic instability in these vowels, potentially signalling the early stages of a shift. A significant interaction between lexical set and sex was observed ($p < 0.05$), with female speakers showing higher F1 values for STRUT vowels. Notably, two female speakers, who identified their accents as 'Mostly RP,' demonstrated a clear FOOT-STRUT split, with STRUT F1 values exceeding a threshold of approximately 460 Hz, based on the range of values observed across participants. Respondents identifying their accents as 'Northern English' did not exhibit a FOOT-STRUT split, while those aligning with 'Mostly RP' tendencies were more likely to produce distinct vowel realizations.

These observations suggest a connection between accent self-perception and vowel variation, with female speakers potentially leading this change. While social mobility was not explicitly examined, the association between RP-oriented self-identification and vowel differentiation may reflect wider social dynamics influencing speech patterns. This pattern aligns with broader sociolinguistic findings that women often act as leaders in sound change (Labov 2001), suggesting that the observed variation may be part of a more general tendency. In conclusion, while the FOOT-STRUT split remains largely absent across Northern English speakers, there is evidence of emerging variation among young adults, particularly in relation to how individuals position themselves within or beyond regional norms. These results contribute to understanding ongoing phonological shifts in Northern England, highlighting the interplay between regional identity, linguistic change, and social factors in the context of dialect levelling (Labov 2001; Watt 2002).

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Generational variation in intensifiers in Michigan English

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Adjectival intensifiers such as *very*, *really*, and *so* have long been of interest to sociolinguists because of their propensity for rapid change and recycling (Ito & Tagliamonte 2003). Changes in the system of intensifiers happen quickly, as forms lose their pragmatic force. Sociolinguistic studies of intensification have found that, in North American English, *really* has replaced *very* as the most frequently used intensifier, and *so* is accelerating in younger generations (Tagliamonte 2008; Hermosillo et al. 2024). The present study investigates this phenomenon in a novel dataset of self-recorded audio diaries.

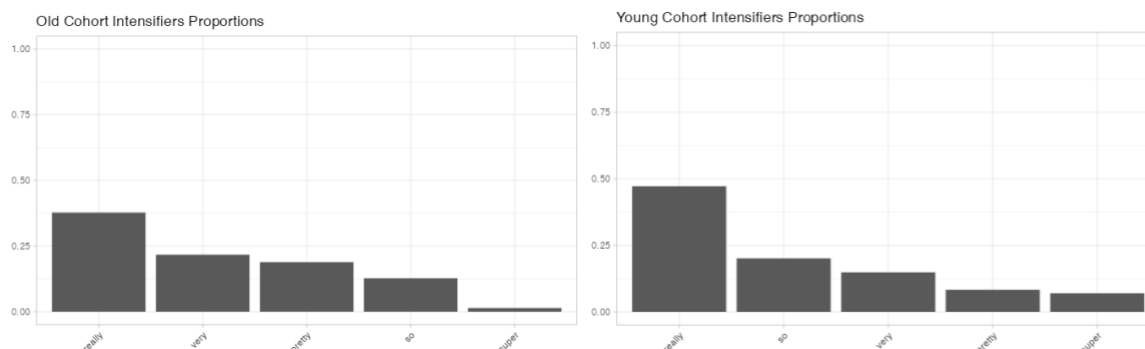
Research Questions: 1) What is the distribution of intensifiers in Michigan English? 2) What incoming forms are present?

This study takes a variationist sociolinguistic approach, operationalizing methods from Ito & Tagliamonte (2003). Variable context was limited to boosters before adjectival heads, exemplified below.

- (1) It was all **very** strange and bizarre. (MCD-00444)
- (2) This has been a **really** frightening year. (MCD-00432)

The data analysed comes from the MI Diaries project, which has collected self-recorded audio diaries since 2020 (Sneller et al. 2022). Two cohorts of speakers were selected to allow for generational contrast in apparent time and for comparison with previous studies. Cohort 1 consists of 19 speakers (8M, 10F, 1X) born between 1978–1988. Cohort 2 consists of 18 speakers (5M, 13F) born between 2005–2015. All speakers were born and raised in Michigan, USA.

Adjectival heads were exhaustively extracted, using a list from the SUBTLEX-US corpus (Brysbaert & New 2009). A maximum of 25 intensified tokens per speaker were included to avoid biasing the data toward any one speaker. Data are being coded (454 tokens to date) for predictors of the lexical identity of the intensifier: semantic category of adjective (Dixon’s 1997 classifications, following Ito & Tagliamonte 2003), syntactic context (as predicative or attributive), and speaker gender and birth year. Preliminary data exploration shows that Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 both use *really* most frequently compared to other intensifiers. This is in line with what we expect. However, generational differences emerge when examining other aspects of the intensifier system. For younger speakers, the intensifier *so* is proportionally more frequent than *very* and *pretty*. This supports previous reports of *so* as an incoming form.



Initial data review also finds that *super* has many characteristics of an incoming form: there are no tokens of *super* in attributive contexts, and there are far more *super* tokens from young speakers (N=19) compared to older speakers (N=3).

- (3) It was **super** exciting for me. (MCD-00444, b1984)
(4) ...which was **super** nice of her and **super** cool of her. (MCD-00314, b2010)

Expected Results: The preliminary results support previous patterns of really dominating North American English, with so on the rise. We predict that further qualitative and multiple regression analysis will show additional cross-generational differences once the full suite of language-external and language-internal predictors is included.

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Metaphors of HATRED from Anglo-Saxon to Present-day English

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The findings presented are part of a larger project examining emotion words and emotion metaphors from a diachronic perspective. Building on the premise that figurative language is central to how emotions are conceptualized (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Kövecses 1986, 1990), this synchronic-diachronic study explored metaphorical conceptualizations of HATRED from Anglo-Saxon to Present-Day English. The aim was to uncover physiologically and culturally motivated conceptualizations of HATRED and to trace their evolution across the history of English, thereby shedding light on how people have experienced and made sense of hatred in different historical contexts. In light of current societal, political and religious developments, a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of hatred seems more important than ever.

Methodologically, I employed *Metaphorical Pattern Analysis* (Stefanowitsch 2006) to extract metaphors from four different corpora (DOEC, CMEPV, EEBO and BNC). I then applied an adapted version of MIPVU (*Method for Linguistic Metaphor Identification*) (Steen et al. 2010; Nacey 2013) to identify metaphor-related words in the corpus data and adapted Krennmayr's approach (Krennmayr 2013) to examine conceptual metaphors.

A lexical field study, based on data drawn from *The Historical Thesaurus of English* and *A Thesaurus of Old English*, identified nouns employed to refer to the emotion hatred throughout the history of English, representing the target domain HATRED. These include 29 Old English lexemes (e.g. *feondraeden, hete*), 45 for Middle English (e.g. *enemite, haine, hating*), 80 for Early Modern English (e.g. *dislove, hatred, antipathy*) and 72 HATRED-nouns for Modern English (e.g. *odium, detestation, hostility*). In total, nearly 6,400 metaphorical expressions (tokens) were analysed for the four periods of English.

Research across many disciplines has demonstrated that emotion concepts are not static but flexible, evolving with and depending on time and space. (e.g. Geeraerts & Grondelaers 1995; Diller 2014) While many conceptual metaphors identified for HATRED exhibit continuity across the four periods of English (e.g. HATRED IS AN OBJECT, HATRED IS AN OPPONENT, HATRED IS A FLUID), they also show some degree of diachronic and cultural variation (e.g. Gevaert 2002, 2005; Kövecses 2005). For example, the conceptual metaphor HATRED IS FIRE accounts for about 7.2% of tokens in Old English, but only 2.2% in Modern English. Furthermore, the source domain PRESSURIZED FLUID, a subtype of FLUID (IN A CONTAINER), emerges only in Early Modern English.

The study also examined the metaphorical expressions on the linguistic surface, which often changed more markedly than the underlying conceptual source domains. For instance, the conceptual metaphor HATRED IS FIRE is attested across all periods, but its linguistic realizations shift over time. In Old English, it is reflected in now-obsolete expressions such as *onælan* 'kindle', *forbærnan* 'burn' and *brandhāt* 'burning hot', whereas lexemes of Romance origin such as *extinguish* and *fervent* appear from Middle English onwards.

The diachronic perspective of the project allowed me to explore and analyse the concept HATRED from its first records in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts up to the present day. The vast collection of HATRED-nouns and the wealth of metaphors identified demonstrate that hatred has been, and continues to be, a culturally, socially and emotionally complex phenomenon.

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