

They were canny good like: Variation and change in the intensifying system of Tyneside teenagers

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Project overview

Discourse-pragmatic variation and change in the oral speech of Tyneside teenagers

Boosters

What typifies Tyneside Teen Talk?

Age-grading or language change in Tyneside?

Methodology

Sampling & Data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>12-15</th>
<th>16-18</th>
<th>19-20</th>
<th>Total per gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total per age</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data analysis of booster use

- Function-delimited variable
- Adverbs pre-modifying adjectival heads
- Bottom-up approaches: corpus informs list of variants.

Null cases for Principle of Accountability (Labov 1972)?

- Inclusion (e.g. Itô & Tagliamonte 2003, D’Arcy 2015): statistical accuracy, neutral degree
- Exclusion (e.g. Barnfield and Buchstaller 2010): interest in variants, not intensifying as a strategy
- My approach: dual analysis to test if it makes a difference.

Maximisers & boosters?

- Same variable context: boundaries are not clear-cut (Xiao and Tao 2007); they behave similarly in syntagmatic terms (Barnfield and Buchstaller 2010)
- My approach: not the same variable context, different in paradigmatic terms.

References


Discussion of results in booster use in the 16-18 age group

16-18 age group: 6 M, 5 F

Exclusion of null cases; Chi-square test

Comparing total with Barnfield and Buchstaller (2010: 273)

- ‘very’ is in steep decline (~33% v 10%)
- ‘so’ sees a moderate increase (~10% v 22%)
- ‘really’ is on the rise (~28% v 55%)
- ‘canny’ and ‘proper’ are still infrequent (~4% and 5%)
- ‘canny’ and ‘dead’ are almost exclusively used by male speakers (see Childs 2016)

Internal constraint: semantic category of modified adjective

- ‘really’ and ‘very’ are widely spread across semantic categories
- ‘proper’, ‘canny’, and ‘dead’ are still restricted to specific categories (early grammaticalisation)
- Only 2 tokens of position adjs with boosters (‘so’ and ‘proper’) and 2 of origin adjs with boosters (‘very’)
- Differences due to semantic category significant at p < 0.01

External constraint: gender

- Female speakers: ‘really’ accounts for more than half of the uses, whereas ‘so’ is almost as infrequent as ‘very’.
- Male speakers: more variation, ‘so’ and ‘really’ similar in frequency
- Gender differences significant at p < 0.01

Internal constraint: syntactic position of modified adjective

- ‘really’ largely dominates both contexts
- ‘t’ token of attributive ‘so’ (systemic impossibility)
- ‘proper’ already used both in attributive and predicative contexts
- ‘canny’ and ‘dead’ used exclusively in predicative contexts (early grammaticalisation – cf. Ito and Tagliamonte 2003)
- Differences due to syntactic position significant at p < 0.1

Notes

3. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. The Diachronic Electronic Corpus of Tyneside English. Last accessed 13th February 2018, from https://research.ncl.ac.uk/decte/.