Quantifying potential: Non-canonical word order through a variationist perspective

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Principle of accountability

- What do you do when circumscribing the variable context is difficult or impossible?

- Restrict amount of data examined (e.g. rate in 100 clauses)
- Compare variants/functions
- Frequency by 1000 words/10000 words

Frequency

- What does frequent even mean?
- Salience?
- Right dislocation forms are "restricted to informal spoken contexts where [they are] very common" (Quirk *et al.* 1985:1310)

- Durham 2011 – York corpus
- 91 interviews
- 294 tokens = 4.22 RDs per 10000 words

Frequent?

Cardiff corpus
- Discourse marker and discourse particle, clause final *like* – 87 per 10000 words overall, but over 600 for highest user (young man)
- Discourse marker *you know* 83 per 10000 words

- With low frequency features not ideal to restrict amount of data!

~~Principle of accountability~~

- Cases where areas/groups are said to use a feature more than others
- Recognized (and enregistered) locally
- How do we compare across varieties despite issues mentioned?
- How do we include interrelated features?

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🏴󠁧󠁢󠁷󠁬󠁳󠁿⚔️ WELSH GAME OF THRONES ⚔️🏴󠁧󠁢󠁷󠁬󠁳󠁿

"That's My Chair, That Is"

This has been an enormous amount of work for me so please give it a watch and RT!

"That's My Chair, That Is : The Welsh Game of Thrones" (Pil...
Now the King is dead, the Houses of Jones and Llewelyn have both eyes set on The Great Chair, meanwhile Cerys-...
youtube.com

8:34 PM · May 1, 2019 · Twitter Web App

Non-canonical word order

- Halliday 1985 paper titled: It's a fixed word order language is English

- SVO

- Theme, focus

Non-canonical word order

- **Right dislocation**
- **Left dislocation**
- **Fronting**
- **(Inversion)***
- **(Cleft/pseudo-clefts)***
- **(Existentials)**
- **(Passive)**

Quirk et al. 1985, Ward and Birner 1998, Winkle 2015

Cardiff

Corpora

- Archive – Welsh National Museum (St Fagans)

6 interviews (3 men, 3 women)

Collected between 1993-2009

- New interviews (2017-19)

8 older speakers (4 men, 4 women)

8 younger speakers (4 men, 4 women)

Right dislocation

- God, she was a Bostik woman, *she was*! (Cefin, old)
- It's not nice, killing kids! (Ossian, young)
- that's not very far from Augusta Street, that! (Patricia, old)

Right dislocation

- Three main variants (standard, expanded, reverse)
- Mainly subject dislocated, but object can be as well
- RRD said to be more frequent in Yorkshire and Lancashire
- ERD associated with Welsh English, Cockney and Yorkshire
- SRD subvariant *He's nice, him* Manchester

Edwards and Weltens 1985, Moore and Snell 2011, Timmis 2010

Left dislocation

- The poor devil, he's worse off than us. (Vera, St Fagans)
- this other kid, he's like, "no one understands me" (Suzie, young)
- One of the singers from um ... Manic Street Preach- Preachers, he loves the pub. (Brian, St Fagans)

Left dislocation

- Subject doubling – "me, I.." usually considered a subvariant
- Higher frequency in new varieties of English (e.g. Indian English, Lange 2012, Winkle 2015)

Fronting

- The Sound of Music they put on for me! (Cefin, old)
- there was this one sister, um ... Sister Claudia, her name was, and she was beautiful. (Meleri, old)
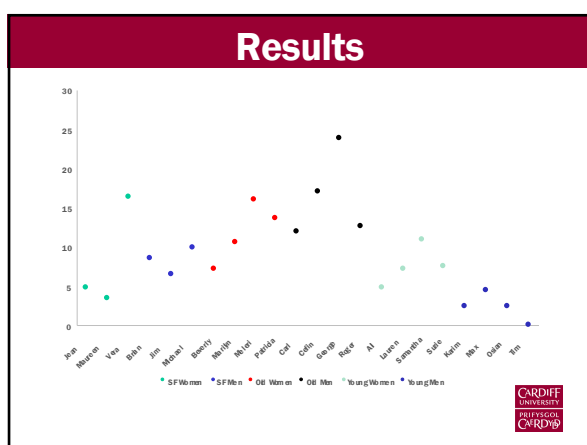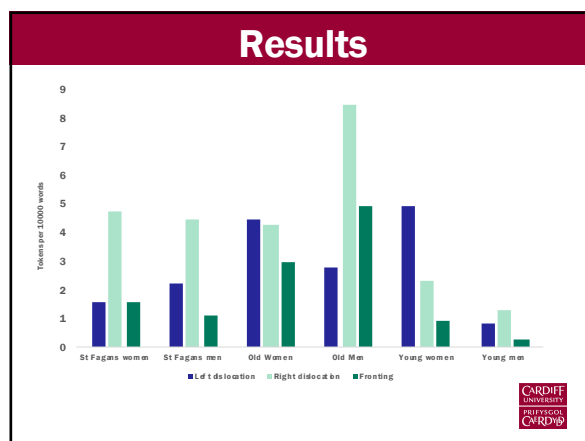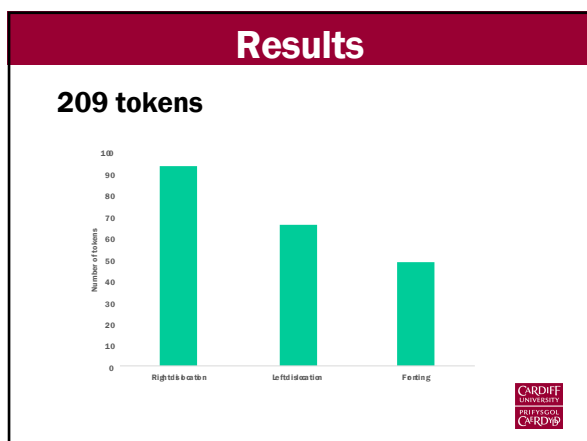- so Roman Britain, I generally did like. (Lauren, young)

Fronting

- Welsh English (Paulasto 2006, 2014)
- Yiddish English (Prince 1981)
- South Asian Englishes (Lange 2012, Leuckert 2019, Winkle 2015)

Pragmatics

- NCWO forms have pragmatic functions

- But when one variety or language makes more use of a NCWO feature more than others, is it purely pragmatic? What about social factors?

Results

209 tokens

Results

Results

Intraspeaker distribution

- 100 'sentences' for two speakers
- Variation in how many could be discarded
- Rates of non-canonical word order use: 7 and 10%
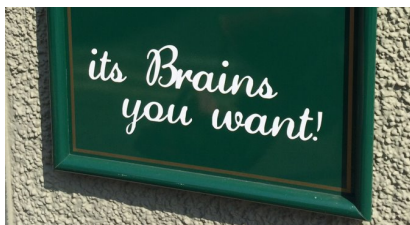- BUT very Uneven distribution

Discussion and conclusion

- Non-canonical word order has to be extracted manually
- Most sentences could potentially have a ncwo form (or two+?)
- Low frequency despite salience
- Substantial interspeaker variation and intraspeaker variation (in the sense of where they're distributed)
- Context?

Discussion and conclusion

- There are regional and social effects (at least for the three features examined)
- More research on more dialects needed to get a better sense of baselines - salience/frequency - anyone want to share data?
- Ideally, look at (in)frequency across related features, variants and functions to get around issues with principle of accountability

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