

Journée d'étude
'Dynamiques sociales et variation linguistique'
'Social dynamics and language variation'

Speakers | Conférencier·ère·s

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"But all the rest was all Scotch fellows": dialect contact and morphosyntactic variation in Falkland Island English

The English of the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic has a renowned status in the dialect contact literature as one of the only examples of a colonial variety of English that emerged in a tabula rasa context, where no pre-existing indigenous language could have influenced the outcome of settler dialect mixing. It is also flagged as a community where isolation and sparse settlement have led to less intensive contact than elsewhere. This, it has been argued (Trudgill 1996, 2004) both led to the slower emergence of a local colonial koine, but also enabled some aspects of the original settler varieties to survive among descendants. The tension here, then, is between contact-induced koineisation levelling away regionalisms on the one hand, and non-intensive contact enabling regionalisms to survive, on the other.

Here we investigate two morphosyntactic variables in Falkland Island English, and consider the roles of dialect contact alongside the possible survival of settler regionalisms in the evolution of these variables over the past century.

We firstly consider the past tense of BE. Non-standard constellations of past tense BE are common across varieties of English (see Rupp and Britain 2019 for a summary). One important linguistic constraint that has been identified is a preference for *was* after plural NPs rather than after pronoun *they*, a feature, known as the Northern Subject Rule, which, crucially here is found in Scottish and South-Western dialects of English which were heavily represented in the early colonial dialect mix.

The second variable we consider is verbs of possession, where English demonstrates robust variability between *have*, *have got* and *got*. While all three forms appear to be found in all Inner Circle Englishes, North America and Scotland show a preference for *have*, and England, especially southern England, a preference for *have got*. *Got* is, again crucially here, common in the South-West of England (Tagliamonte 2013).

We have two aims here:

- a) To examine the trajectory of these two variables across the last century in FIE, and to highlight the social and linguistic constraints on variability

- b) To explore the extent to which Falkland Island English shows any evidence in these two variables of the retention of dialect forms brought by Scottish and South-Western settlers.

We do this by examining a corpus of almost 200 hours of informal conversation with 130 Islanders. Recordings were transcribed into ELAN, with the corpus totalling 920,000 words. All unambiguous tokens of past BE and verbs of possession were extracted, 17087 and 1433 in total respectively, with each coded for a range of linguistic and social constraints.

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David Britain (Universität Bern), Danielle Tod (Universität Bern), Kazuko Matsumoto (The University of Tokyo), Dominique Hess (Universität Bern), Laura Mettler (Universität Bern), Sara Lynch (Universität Bern) & Tobias Leonhardt (Universität Bern)

It's anybody's guess: Variation and change in the personal compound determinative doublets –body and –one in Pacific Englishes

For centuries, English has demonstrated variability in its pronominal quantifier system. Both *–body* and *–one*, prefixed by *any–*, *no–*, *some–* and *every–*, are common in contemporary spoken English and this variability appears, today at least, totally unsalient.

The existing literature examines variability in *–one* and *–body* in inner-circle Englishes and points to a number of trends. Firstly, *–one* is more common in the written language than the spoken, suggesting that *–one* is deemed more formal (D'Arcy et al 2013). Secondly, there is a recent diachronic trend towards *–one* and away from *–body* in the spoken language (D'Arcy et al 2013, Britain & Büchler 2023, Britain & Hedegard 2023). Thirdly, in the spoken language, unlike the written (D'Arcy et al 2013), prefix-choice remains an important constraint on variability, patterning differently in different countries. Finally D'Arcy et al (2013) found that spoken NZE used *–one* considerably more than the Englishes of the UK, USA, and Canada.

No study to date, however, has considered the distribution of *–one* and *–body* in *Outer-Circle* Englishes, which are classified as norm-developing and thus sensitive to standards modelled by *Inner-Circle* speakers (Kachru 1988). This study examines the following:

- Do Outer-Circle Englishes in the Pacific, like the Inner-Circle, show change over time towards *one*?
- To what extent is variability shaped by local social and linguistic factors?
- Does variability reflect normative orientation towards the Englishes of former colonial administrators and/or Inner-Circle Pacific Rim neighbours?

We explore the distribution of the doublets *–one* and *–body* within a large corpus of spoken English recorded in Nauru, Saipan, Guam, Kosrae, Kiribati, Palau, and Tonga. Our corpus contains over 2 million words of transcribed conversational speech and is consequently large enough to conduct a robust analysis of a rarely occurring variable, including the linguistic and social embedding of this variability. Our presentation, in comparing patterns of variability between Outer and Inner-Circle Englishes, enables us to assess how Outer Circle varieties socially and linguistically embed changes that began centuries ago in Inner Circle varieties.

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Massimo Cerrutti (Università di Torino)

New developments in regional varieties of Italian

The range of regional varieties of Italian is currently affected by convergence processes, mostly as a result of internal migration and mobility. Moreover, several region-specific features are now almost exclusively used among uneducated elderly speakers, and tend no longer to be transmitted across generations. On the other hand, some newly-emerged phenomena – which are not due to the retention of dialect features – seem to be exclusive to specific areas and can, therefore, lead to novel regional differentiation. Significantly, similar dynamics characterize sociolinguistic variation in most other European languages (Auer 2005; Braunmüller, Höder & Kühn 2014; Cerrutti & Tsiplakou 2020).

Convergence and divergence in regional varieties of Italian are discussed in light of the preliminary results of a recent study (Ballarè *et al.*, forthcoming). The study is based on a subset of data coming from KIPasti, i.e. a corpus of kitchen table conversations collected throughout Italy (www.kiparla.it). Speakers from Northern Italy (Veneto and Emilia Romagna, ca. 9h, 35 speakers) and Southern Italy (Puglia and Campania, ca. 9h, 27 speakers) are compared in terms of the actual clusterings of 88 linguistic features (covering

different linguistic levels, i.e. phonetics/phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexis). Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is performed to detect clusters of co-occurring features in speakers' usage.

The results of the study, alongside with those of previous research (see, e.g., Cerruti 2024 for an up-to-date review), provide some insights into the extent to which the traditional differences between regional varieties of Italian are challenged, on the one hand, by the supra-regional use of originally region-specific features and, on the other hand, by the emergence of region-specific phenomena not due to the retention of dialect features.

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Françoise Gadet (Université de Paris Nanterre)

La variation se fixe-t-elle en des variétés ?

Si le terme « variation » semble bien installé dans les usages en sociolinguistique, il en va autrement de celui de « variété », sur une définition précise duquel on ne peut que buter. La notion de variation débouche-t-elle tout naturellement sur celle de variété ? Peut-on faire l'économie de cette dernière ? Y a-t-il lieu de lui adresser les mêmes interrogations et critiques qu'à celle de « langue » ?

On illustrera le propos théorique avec deux exemples concernant le français : d'une part, celui d'un candidat au titre de « nouvelle variété », lesdits parlars jeunes ; d'autre part, une variété qui semble diatopiquement facile à cerner, le français acadien. Ces deux exemples nous permettront de nous interroger sur les rapports entre variation et variété, en soulignant l'instabilité dans une dynamique de langue.

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Emmanuelle Guérin (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle – DILTEC)

Une approche sociolinguistique du lexique actuel en français

Dans cette intervention, il s'agira de montrer comment l'actualité du lexique français peut être regardée d'un point de vue qui embrasse des considérations sociolinguistiques. L'approche adoptée place les locuteurs au premier plan. C'est en tenant compte de leurs pratiques langagières, en tant que pratiques sociales situées, qu'on tente de saisir la souplesse et le dynamisme du système lexical du français.

Concrètement, nous partirons de quelques exemples d'innovations lexicales pour montrer la complexité de la dynamique néologique qui, d'une part, ne se limite pas à une accumulation d'items entrant en concurrence synonymique avec d'autres relevant d'un lexique « standard » et, d'autre part, est alimentée par des paramètres au-delà des catégorisations traditionnellement convoquées.

En s'appuyant sur des principes théoriques et méthodologiques issus d'un cadre sociolinguistique intégrant les dimensions macrosociales et microsociales, et la façon dont elles s'imbriquent, l'étude du sens aboutit à des analyses qui peuvent s'écarter de celles attendues. Ces analyses s'appuient sur l'identification des besoins et des ressources langagières des locuteurs qui nécessite une approche ethnographique des usages de la langue.

On s'intéressera particulièrement aux emprunts à d'autres langues, appréhendés comme participant de la dynamique néologique et non comme exclusifs marqueurs identitaires et à la façon dont ils intègrent le système lexical du français. Dans bien des cas d'emprunts contemporains, le seul recours à la traduction ne permet pas d'accéder au sens. La langue d'origine, le statut du pays berceau par rapport à la France, les raisons qui ont conduit au contact avec le français et les conditions de ce contact sont des facteurs essentiels pour saisir le sens de l'unité empruntée dans l'usage de locuteurs français.

En fin de compte, nous montrerons que ces emprunts participent de la vitalité du français au même titre que d'autres procédés linguistiques, dans un contexte globalisé où les frontières entre les langues et les cultures s'assouplissent autant que s'amenuisent les contraintes d'interactions entre les individus.

Paul Kerswill (University of York, Queen Mary University of London)

Neither creole nor koine: The multiethnolect as a distinct form of contact-induced language change. Case study: London

My talk deals with a new variety of English, or rather continuum of English varieties, which has emerged in London since the early 1980s. Since the late 1940s, London has seen large-scale immigration, mostly from the UK's former colonies in the Caribbean, the Indian Subcontinent, and West Africa – and elsewhere. London is highly multilingual, with some 300 languages being spoken, with half its school children being exposed to languages other than English at home. My focus is not on multilingualism, but on the emergence of what we have called Multicultural London English (MLE). MLE contains several features which differentiate it sharply from other London varieties, notably Cockney. The features include a

transformation of the diphthong/long-vowel system, uvular [q] for /k/ after low-back vowels, the reinstatement of /h/ and a lack of allomorphy in the articles *a* and *the*. The most striking, and stereotyped, lexico-grammatical feature is the use of *man* as a first or third-person singular pronoun with specific discursal and pragmatic functions. These innovations can be studied quantitatively as variables, but their origins do not show the generational continuity found in a monolingual speech community, because the original input speakers are largely not anglophone. The linguistic heritage is a wide range of languages, and this leads to the hypothesis that creolisation has taken place – but there is little evidence of this. Alternatively, MLE could be seen as a koine. It shares with koines and creoles a lack of intergenerational transmission, but its emergence did not involve the adaptation of mutually intelligible varieties typical of koines, as in New Zealand. The development of MLE does, however, show some similarities with Schneider's five-stage dynamic model of postcolonial Englishes, as well as crucial differences – summarised in a related model for multiethnolects. In my talk, I will also touch on the status of MLE as a vernacular and as a style, as well as the contentious claim that it is essentially a Black variety. I will conclude by setting out some early results from a large-scale new project, Generations of London English.

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Véronique Lacoste (Université Lumière Lyon 2, UL2)

Phonological Variation among Haitians in Multicultural Toronto

Part of the sociolinguistic research in Canada investigates ethnolinguistic variation in the highly multicultural city of Toronto, studying for instance to what extent immigrant communities play a part in sociophonetic change (Denis et al. 2023, Hoffman & Walker 2010, Nagy et al. 2013, Baxter & Peters 2013). This paper examines phonetic variation in the English spoken by a heterogeneous group of Haitians living in Toronto. The data comes from sociolinguistic interviews and concerns two categories of English speakers of Haitian descent: 1. informants who live in Toronto or in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and were born in Haiti, both their parents are Haitian and their native tongue is not English and 2. informants who live in Toronto or in the GTA and were born in Toronto or elsewhere in Canada, both their parents are Haitian and their native tongue or dominant language is English. Realisations of dental fricatives, intervocalic phoneme /t/ and phoneme /ɹ/ will be presented. Quantitative results reveal that Haitian speakers who were born in Haiti and learnt English as a foreign language exhibit high intra-speaker variation. This variation reflects variants characteristic of Standard Canadian English such as a tap [ɾ] for phoneme /t/ although its voiceless stop [t] counterpart also appears in their speech. The range of phonetic variation for phoneme /ɹ/ displays the alveolar approximant [ɹ] found typically in English, the voiced uvular fricative [ʁ] often observed in francophone speakers of English and the labio-velar approximant [w] present in Haitian Creole, although Haitian Creole <r> shows a rather complex phonological situation (Nikiema & Bhatt 2005). Some phonetic variants produced by Haitians match those found in the speech of Anglophone Caribbean

speakers also established in the Toronto area while other variants may signal influence from Haitian Creole or French. Haitian speakers whose English is their mother tongue were found to produce a majority of mainstream Canadian English features. Haitians' English phonology, especially for speakers in category 1, may reflect their sociocultural and sociolinguistic situation of "in-betweens" in the Canadian diaspora (Madibbo & Maury 2001), exhibiting a sense of identity preservation with respect to the host society and towards their 'Haitianity'. However, there is no indication at this point that a Haitian English variety is emerging in the Toronto area, which may be explained by the current lack of strong community ties and a relatively young settlement in the city, and also due to individual socio-historical and migratory trajectories.

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Jakob Leimgruber (Universität Regensburg)

Recent change in contemporary Singapore English

The English spoken in Singapore is among the more widely described World Englishes. Its vernacular form, variously called Singlish or Colloquial Singapore English (CSE), has emerged as a contact variety in a context marked by the demographic predominance of speakers of primarily Sinitic and Austronesian languages. The resultant variety is marked by substantial grammatical influence as well as lexical admixture from the substrate languages. Crucial to the ongoing development of CSE, however, is the continued presence of these original substrate languages, with high degrees of (also politically desired) bilingualism. In addition to the substrate Sinitic languages of the Min Nan and Yue varieties, Mandarin has emerged in the past half-century as an increasingly important language in the majority Chinese ethnic group. This leads to two observations: (1) High rates of individual and societal bilingualism in English and Mandarin have the

potential for continued transfer effects in both directions; (2) Intense inter-ethnic contact facilitates the cross-ethnic dissemination of linguistic innovations.

In this talk, I will consider a number of features found in CoSEM, the recently-compiled Corpus of Singapore English (text) Messages (Gonzales et al. 2023), that show relatively innovative linguistic uses in the Singaporean population. Among other things, age-grading and comparisons with earlier corpora of CSE show changes in the use of certain lexical items, grammatical construction, and the use of clause-final discourse particles. While ethnic variation can still be observed, many features are found to be used well beyond the confines of the speech community where they are thought to have originated.

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