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**Language & class revisited: The issue
of vernacular maintenance**

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Introduction

The rise and fall of 'class' as an academic concept has been documented extensively by sociologists and historians. While class was the subject of a great deal of academic attention in the in the 1960s and 1970s, it somewhat faded into the background for the next 30 or 40 years. This is as true of sociolinguistics as it is of sociology – in preparing for this talk I searched for recent work on language and social class and put out calls to my colleagues for suggestions, but very little recent work on the topic came to light (I'd be happy to be proved wrong about this and very much welcome recommendations for work that I have missed). Similarly it feels like great effort has been put into denying the importance (even existence) of class within political, media and popular discourse. But as interest in class has waned, inequality has continued to be a major issue in the UK (Skeggs 2004: 43; Savage 2000), and in some contexts, inequality and discrimination are linguistically focused.

Rarely a month goes by without the appearance of a news story that reveals some kind of linguistic prejudice connected to class bias. Within the last eight months alone, the dialect area that will be the focus of this talk, Teesside, has been in the national news twice. In February a story emerged about a head teacher of a Teesside school who had banned the use of spoken dialect forms in the classroom and written to her pupils' parents to ask that they do the same at home. The stated reason for this move was the need to give the working-class pupils involved the best possible chance of educational (and later career) success, which for this head teacher meant teaching them to speak 'proper'. In July, the BBC business reporter, Steph McGovern, revealed in an interview with the *Radio Times* that she had been subject to discrimination at the BBC because of her Teesside accent. She had also received letters from viewers, suggesting that she seek 'corrective therapy' for her 'ailment', and that she should 'get back' to her 'council estate' and 'leave the serious work to the clever folk'. Two things are clear from these stories. First, the variety of English spoken in Teesside bears indexicalities of place and class that have led to its speakers being stigmatised in some contexts (Coupland 2010). Second, the pressure for speakers to lose regional accents and dialects and conform instead to prestige standards is relentless. But despite both of these points, local and non-standard ways of speaking, including those typical of Teesside, remain.

In this talk I'm not going to focus specifically on my response to misguided attempts to quash the use of local dialect speech (though I have written about this elsewhere e.g. Snell 2013); instead I'd like to consider why these attempts appear to have had so little impact on the widespread use of spoken dialect. This question is as old as sociolinguistics itself, and it goes to the heart, I think, of the relationship between language and social class. I begin therefore by reviewing sociolinguistic approaches to class, which have generally emphasised the importance of local solidarity (over status) in the maintenance of the vernacular. I'll then introduce the study on which the rest of this paper is based (an ethnography of two primary

¹ This paper is a written version of the oral presentation I gave as invited keynote speaker at *UK Language Variation and Change 9*, University of Sheffield, 5th September 2013.

schools in Teesside), before presenting some analyses from this study. I'll end with a discussion that attempts to relate these analyses back to the question of vernacular maintenance, and in doing so I'll challenge the dominance of the solidarity versus status dichotomy within sociolinguistics.

Sociolinguistic approaches to class

Survey studies and consensus models of class

There has been a remarkable consistency in the patterns that have emerged from survey studies of language variation and social class, beginning of course with Labov's seminal New York City Study, and continuing with those that followed in its wake. These studies assigned speakers to objective class categories using indices of socioeconomic status, such as occupation, income and education, and revealed that (for stable sociolinguistic variables) working-class speakers use more non-standard and low prestige forms than their middle-class counterparts (e.g. Labov 1966; Macaulay 1977; Trudgill 1974; Wolfram 1969; for a general overview see Dodsworth 2010). Most relevant to this talk is the related finding that despite these quantitative differences, all speakers follow the same general pattern with regards to stylistic variation: speakers systematically increase their use of standard forms (and decrease their use of non-standard forms) as their perception of the formality of the situation increases (sociolinguistic interviews incorporated techniques that were designed to elicit speech styles situated at various points along this continuum of formality). This intra-speaker stylistic variation was theorised as being linked to inter-group variation, such that each group modelled its formal style on the speech behaviour of those who ranked slightly higher in the social scale. Notions of social status and mobility were thus brought to the fore.

The consistent patterns of style-shifting identified in Labov's (1966) New York City study, led him to hypothesise that most New Yorkers agree on which variants are more correct, or have more status. He tested this hypothesis with a 'matched guise' experiment (Lambert 1967) designed to elicit his participants' overt evaluations and found that the New Yorkers gave consistent responses to the test, generally agreeing which features of the New York accent were stigmatised and which had high status, regardless of their class designation or their own use of these forms. In light of this evidence, Labov made a general statement about the social stratification of New York City, which has had far reaching implications within sociolinguistics: 'New York City is a speech community, united by a common evaluation of the same variables which serve to differentiate the speakers' (Labov 1972a:106).

In this focus on shared sociolinguistic norms, these early approaches to sociolinguistic stratification implied a consensus model of language and social class: everyone agrees which groups of speakers and associated linguistic varieties have the most status in society, and while speakers located at a different positions in the socioeconomic hierarchy use language differently, they do so in relation to a shared set of norms.

Sankoff and Laberge's (1978) work on Montreal French problematised the socioeconomic indices used in these early survey studies. They highlighted the point that some relatively 'low status' jobs, such as secretary or receptionist, actually require a high degree of competence in the standard language because of the nature of the activities and

interactions involved. Instead of evaluating language use against 'objective' social class membership like 'occupation', then, they developed an index to measure the extent to which speakers' economic activity (taken in its widest sense) necessitated use of the standard (or 'legitimized') language. This represented the speaker's degree of participation in the standard language market (based on Bourdieu and Boltanski's (1975) notion of the linguistic market). The study emphasised the idea of an integrated linguistic market, in which all speakers (regardless of class) are subject to judgement according to the standard or 'legitimate' language; thus Sankoff and Laberge challenged the stratificational criteria used in earlier survey studies but not their consensus view of language and class.

The notion that speakers share a set of norms dominated by the standard or 'legitimised' variety raised a key question: Why do non-standard or vernacular forms persist in the face of all this pressure from the standard? Or in Labov's (1972a: 249) terms, 'Why don't all people speak in the way that they obviously believe they should? (1972a: 249). Labov's response was to posit an 'opposing set of covert norms, which attribute positive values to the vernacular'. These norms are not apparent in formal situations (such as interviews), he argued, because middle-class values dominate in these contexts. The idea that there are 'hidden' values associated with non-standard speech was taken up by Trudgill (1972), who argued that these values are related in particular to notions of masculinity, toughness and group solidarity, and as such, affect male speakers more than female speakers: 'Privately and subconsciously, a large number of male speakers are more concerned with acquiring prestige of the covert sort and with signalling group solidarity than with obtaining social status, as this is more usually defined' (1972: 188). In other words, while the standard variety appears as the sole source of *conscious* sociolinguistic norms within a speech community, there exists a set of opposing, but subconscious, norms, which circulate in the private sphere.

Ethnographic studies and conflict models of class

In her study of working-class communities in Belfast, Milroy (1980) also emphasised the link between use of the local vernacular and local solidarity, but she rejected the idea that the standard is the sole source of conscious norms. Contrary to the notion of covert prestige, there was quite *overt* pressure to adhere to the vernacular within the communities she studied (Milroy 1980: 60-61). These communities were characterised by relatively dense, close-knit networks, which Milroy argued functioned as mechanisms of vernacular maintenance because they enabled speakers to resist pressure (both social and linguistic) from outside. Speakers who made greatest use of vernacular forms were thus those most closely integrated into local networks. These speakers used the vernacular, Milroy argued, to signal local solidarity and loyalty to non-institutional norms. Cheshire's (1982) study of adolescent peer groups in Reading arrived at similar conclusions. Her participants' use of non-standard morphological and syntactic features correlated with the extent to which they adhered to the norms of an oppositional vernacular culture (measured via a 'vernacular culture index') (cf. Labov 1972b).

In light of these ethnographic studies and related work (including her own work in Catalonia) Woolard (1985) argued that speakers do not simply use the vernacular in situations in which pressures from the standard language market are relaxed (i.e. in the 'private sphere'); rather they orient to markets governed by alternative or opposing

linguistic norms. This formulation implied a move away from consensus to a conflict model of language and class, in which the focus is on divergence rather than adherence to a shared set of norms.

Rickford's (1986) work on sociolinguistic stratification in the village of Cane Walk is perhaps still the clearest illustration of the explanatory value of a conflict-based model. Rickford found dramatic differences in the speech of the two groups in Cane Walk. The speech of the Estate Class, composed entirely of fieldworkers on the sugar estate, was overwhelmingly Creole, while the Non-Estate Class were much closer to standard English. Rickford argued that even though the EC members were aware of the status associated with standard English, they actively chose to use creole rather than standard English 'as a revolutionary act, as a means of emphasizing social solidarity over individual self-advancement and communicating political militancy rather than accommodation' (Rickford 1986: 218). The jock-burnout opposition in Eckert's ethnography of a Detroit High school also foregrounds competing linguistic markets and conflict models of class (Eckert 2000: 16).

In this body of ethnographic work, adherence to alternative vernacular norms or markets is seen as an act of opposition to the demands of the standard market. As Eckert (2000: 18) points out, this is not a reason to reject the dominance of the standard market as constructed by Bourdieu and Boltanski (1975), 'for the creativity and the force of the vernacular can be seen as a response to relative powerlessness in the face of the standard'. Indeed, the studies cited here have all emphasised how in the face of such powerlessness working-class and other marginalised communities turn to local support and group solidarity, and use of the vernacular is seen as part of this more general orientation. So even where there is recognition of the status of the standard variety, there can also be a rejection of this standard based on the contrasting dimension of solidarity (Woolard 1985: 744)

Competing dimensions: Status and solidarity

Woolard (1985: 739) draws explicit attention to what she calls the 'special attachment' that sociolinguists have had to the notion of two competing social values – status and solidarity – and she sees this as a key contribution of sociolinguistics to wider social theory:

The vocabulary we have used has fluctuated between power, prestige, dominance, negative face, and status on the one hand, and covert prestige, positive face, and solidarity on the other. But the notion of two competing social dimensions of language use has grown more fixed and has gained wide acceptance ... The contrastive status/solidarity concepts amount not simply to a theory of the social use of language, but to a guiding theory of social relations, certainly not original to, but nonetheless most extensively elaborated by sociolinguists.

(Woolard 1985: 739)

Woolard was writing 30 years ago, but these binary concepts do still seem to be a staple of the sociolinguistic toolkit, certainly if textbooks on the subject are anything to go by (e.g. Chambers 2003: 245-246; Mesthrie et al. 2009: 89; Wardhaugh 2010: 28, 184-187, 208-211). The status versus solidarity dimension also emerges in Eckert's more recent account of the practices of jocks and burnouts (though this distinction is by no means clean cut); and I've drawn upon these dimensions in my own work (Snell 2007, 2013).

The focus on local solidarity and opposition to the standard language market has provided strong evidence for the maintenance of vernacular norms in the face of pressure from the standard. Today I'd like to interrogate this question of vernacular maintenance a bit more, adding to the emerging picture additional evidence from local interactional use (since all of the studies quoted so far focus on aggregate language use and quantitative patterns). In doing so, I want to raise a question mark over the dominance of the solidarity versus status dichotomy, not necessarily suggesting that it is wrong, but that the situation may be more complicated. The data I'm going to use comes from fieldwork I conducted in two primary schools in Teesside, north-east England, so I begin with some brief background information about this study.

Background to the study and class categorisation of the two schools

Between November 2005 and February 2007 I conducted ethnographic fieldwork at two primary schools in the urban conurbation of Teesside in north-east England. Murrayfield Primary School and Ironstone Primary School were both Roman Catholic schools of similar size, but they were differentiated in terms of the socioeconomic profile of the areas they served, and by implication, the social background of the pupils.

Initially, I used government census data and school inspection reports to compare the two schools and surrounding areas. Table 1 summarises some of the key census statistics for the two 'output areas' within which Murrayfield and Ironstone Primary were situated. The difference between the two areas is apparent across a number of criteria, most notably occupation, level of unemployment, and housing. It is perhaps most clear, though, when we consider the government's measures of deprivation. The index of multiple deprivation includes information on seven domains of deprivation (Income, Employment, Health Deprivation and Disability, Education Skills and Training, Barriers to Housing and Services, and Crime and the Living Environment). All 32,482 'output areas' were ranked according to how deprived they were relative to each other across these measures. Murrayfield's output area was ranked 15,626 (where 1 was the most deprived and 32,482 the least deprived). In stark contrast, Ironstone's output area was ranked 1,475 – close to the most deprived end of the scale. So, while Murrayfield and Ironstone Primary do not constitute the opposite extremes of the socioeconomic continuum, there is clearly some social distance between them. Residents in the two areas likely correspond to the categories 'lower working class' and 'lower middle class' used in survey studies.

Table 1: 2001 Census Data (Neighbourhood Statistics 2001)

	Lower Layer Super Output Area			
	Murrayfield Primary		Ironstone Primary	
	N	%	N	%
Total Number of Residents	1,673	-	1,422	-
Number of Households	713	-	486	-
Unemployment Rate	39	3.4%	96	10.3%
Employed in managerial/professional occupations	139	23.1%	39	9.1%
16-74 year olds having no qualifications	389	33.7%	463	49.7%
Households owner occupied	532	74.6%	191	39.3%
Houses rented from Council	109	15.3%	226	46.5%
Households with 2 or more cars/vans	175	24.5%	48	9.9%
Households with > 0.5 persons per room	167	23.4%	262	53.9%
Households living in overcrowded conditions	14	2%	68	14%
Average price of semi-detached property	£62,479		£23,379	
Position in Index of multiple deprivation (1=most deprived, 32,482=least deprived)	15,626		1,475	

Ethnographic fieldwork helped me to understand how these social and demographic differences translated into actual experience. I made weekly visits to the Year 4 (age 8 to 9 years), and then subsequently Year 5 class (age 9 to 10 years), in both schools, and I participated in classroom life initially as an informal helper. As well as assisting in the classroom, I spent time with the children in the playground, chatting and playing games. I also spent time in the staff room talking to teachers and listening to their conversations, and generally hung around in the schools observing what was going on.

These observations augmented my understanding of the two schools and their relationship to the local area. I learned, for example, that both schools were proud of their association with the local church and, through it, the local community. Within Ironstone Primary in particular, there was a strong sense that the school was an integral part of the local community. The annual school musical, for example, was a community affair, held on two consecutive nights at the local community centre, accompanied by food and a more general social gathering (which I was able to experience in June 2007 when I attended their production of *My Fair Lady*). On a less positive note, when the school was the victim of a serious arson attack shortly after the end of my fieldwork, there was an overwhelming response from members of the local community, who rallied together to ensure that lessons could continue (almost without interruption) in the local church hall. Individuals approached local businesses, for instance, in order to secure vital materials for the pupils such as paper and pencils.

After seven months of making weekly visits to the schools and engaging in participant observation, I began recording the children using a radio-microphone. The radio-microphone enabled the children to move around freely while being recorded. I had to be nearby (at a distance where the receiver was still picking up the transmission) but did not have to be involved in the children's conversations and could be out of sight. The children were excited by the prospect of being recorded in this way so I tried to give all volunteers the opportunity to wear the radio-microphone (provided that they had a signed parental consent form). In the end I collected over 75 hours of data. So far, I have analysed 50 hours of this data (25 hours per school), concentrating on the following linguistic variables/features:

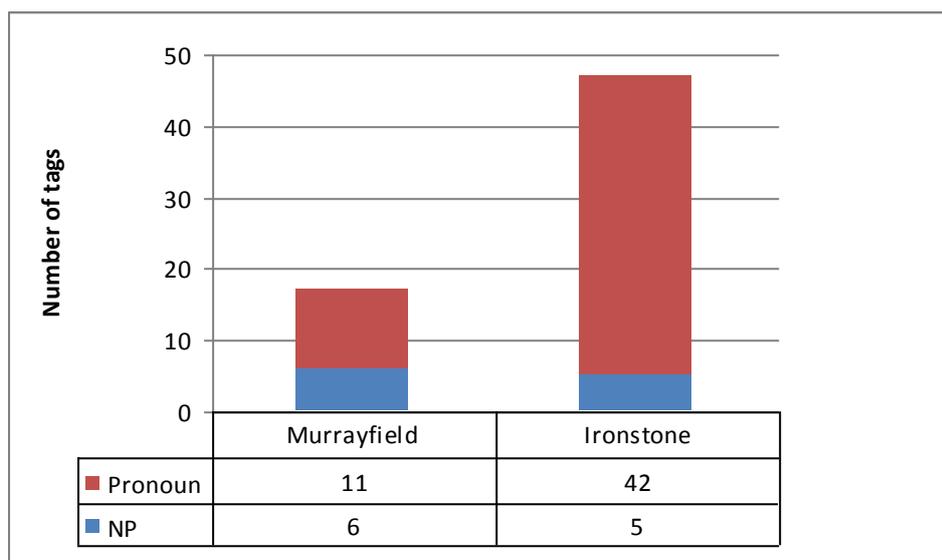
- First person objective singular, focusing on singular 'us' e.g. 'Give us my shoe back' (Snell 2007, 2013)
- First person possessive singular, focusing on possessive 'me' e.g. 'Me pencil's up me jumper' (Snell 2010)
- Right dislocation e.g. 'They do have guns, police', 'I love jam doughnuts, me' (Snell 2009, Moore and Snell 2011)
- 'Howay' e.g. 'Howay, let's go' (Snell 2009, 2012)

All of this analysis contributes in some way to the argument I want to make today, so ideally I would talk about all of these linguistic features; in the interests of time, however, I'll focus on just a couple: right dislocation and 'howay'. I don't intend to present a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis for each of these (though this is available elsewhere). My aim here is to present some worked examples that do not fit neatly within current frameworks for interpreting working-class speech. In doing so, I will interrogate the idea that the use of vernacular forms is necessarily associated with values such as solidarity, reciprocity and dependency, and question whether alternative vernacular markets arise solely in opposition to the standard language market. In the final section of the talk I'll draw these examples together to address the question of vernacular maintenance.

Analysis

Right dislocation is a linguistic phenomenon that works at the interface between grammar and discourse and thus don't lend itself well to a traditional variation analysis; that is, it isn't possible to identify a linguistic variable with a discrete set of variants, or alternative ways of 'saying the same thing' (cf. Cheshire 2007, Dines 1980, Lavendera 1978, Romaine 1984). It refers to the phenomenon whereby a clause is followed by a tag that is co-referential with the preceding subject or object pronoun. The tag may be a full noun phrase (as in '**They** do have guns, **police**'; 'Is **it** brown or blond, **your hair**') or a pronoun ('That's just stupid, **that**'; '**He**'s mad, **him**'). The distribution of these tags across the two schools can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Right dislocation across schools



Right dislocation with noun phrase tags occurred consistently across the data set. This use of right dislocation is well-documented in English grammars, where it is noted to be a feature of informal spoken (and some written) discourse (e.g. Biber et al. 1999; Huddleston and Pullum 2002; Quirk et al. 1985). These grammars typically assign an emphatic, clarifying or focusing function to noun phrase tags and acknowledge that they are well suited to the needs of conversation.

Pronoun tags, on the other hand, are largely absent from standard grammars. They appear instead in dialect grammars (e.g. Shorrocks 1999), and in some grammars of the spoken language (e.g. Carter and McCarthy 1995: 150). This distinction suggests that pronoun tags are not generally considered to be a feature of standard English. Indeed, pronoun tags do not have a single standardised form: the type of construction favoured in pronoun tags varies from region to region. For example, in Yorkshire the tag is often preceded by an auxiliary verb, as in 'He's got his head screwed on, has Dave' (Beal 2004: 135-136; see also Durham 2007). This type of construction does not occur in Teesside.

The Teesside data shows that the use of pronoun tags has a distinct social distribution (just like other regionally marked dialect forms). The children at Ironstone Primary used pronoun tags much more frequently than those at Murrayfield Primary. Further, pronoun tags occurred only in informal peer-centred spaces and tasks, never during formal centre-stage classroom talk; and while noun-phrase tags did crop up in talk with adults (e.g. 3 of the 6 noun phrase tags at Murrayfield were directed to adults) pronoun tags occurred almost exclusively with other children. The data therefore confirms familiar quantitative class-based differences. But it's worth probing the data a bit more.

Figure 2: Distribution of right dislocated pronouns across schools

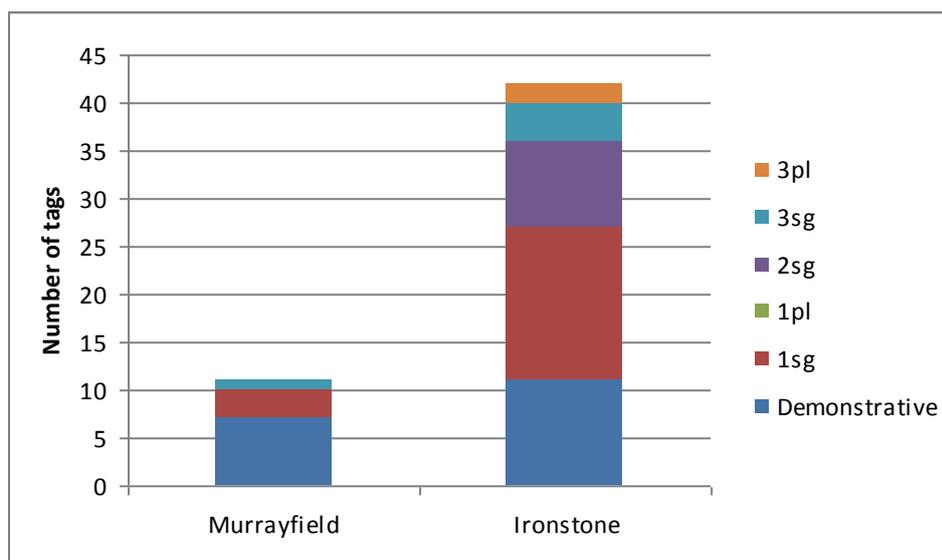


Figure 2 shows the distribution of pronoun tags between the two schools by *type* of pronoun. Like noun phrase tags, demonstrative tags, such as ‘That looked good, that’, are acknowledged within descriptions of right dislocation by standard grammars such as Biber et al. (1999:958), in which they appear to be accepted as part of informal spoken standard English. Also like noun phrase tags, demonstrative tags occur robustly across the dataset. In contrast, the use of personal pronouns is markedly differentiated across the two schools. Both groups of children display some use of first person singular pronouns (e.g. ‘I want that one, me’), though this is much more frequent at Ironstone Primary; but all other personal pronoun contexts (with the exception of just one third person singular tag) are absent from the Murrayfield Primary data. It seems then that these two groups of children may differ from one another with regards to communicative preferences of a more qualitative kind. To explore this further, let’s look at an example of a third person pronoun tag in context.

Extract 1: She’s a liar, her²

In this extract, Ironstone Primary’s Clare is wearing the radio-microphone while she is sitting in the dining hall eating lunch with Danielle and three other girls: Tina, Joanne and Rosie. These five girls all

² **Transcription notations include:**

- (text) - Transcription uncertainty
- (xxxxxxx) - Indistinguishable speech
- (.) - Brief pause (under one second)
- (1) - Longer pause (number indicates length to nearest whole second)
- (()) - Description of prosody or non-verbal activity
- [- Overlapping talk or action
- [-
- text - Emphasised relative to surrounding talk (underlined words)
- te:xt - Stretched sounds
- sh- - Word cut off
- TEXT - Shouting
- (.hhh)/ (hhh) - Audible inhalation/exhalation

30 Clare: ((*laughing*))

31 Danielle: **she's a liar her**

32 I hate her

33 Clare: nicked two pieces though

34 Tina: yeah but you're a liar

35 (1)

36 you're a liar [lɪə]³

37 [(someone xxxxxx)]

38 Clare: [a lawyer? ((*mimicking Tina's pronunciation*)) ((*laughs*))]

39 Tina: [you're a liar [lɪə]]

40 (.)

41 (I went to her sister and said)

42 on the (xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx) show

43 >or something like that<

44 says you're a liar [lɪə]

45 to her sister

46 (.)

47 why you law- you're a liar [lɪə] you

48 (2)

49 my brother says you're a liar [lɪə]

50 (2)

51 she's a liar [lɪə]

52 Clare: ((*laughs*))

53 Tina: ((*sing-song style*)) you're a liar [lɪə]

54 Clare: at least I'm on TV

There is no doubt that the utterance containing the third-person right dislocated pronoun tag in line 31 is intended to negatively evaluate Clare, and quite aggressively so – the tag emphasises both the strength and the target of the evaluation, as does the immediate repetition of ‘her’ in ‘I hate her’ – but there is more at stake here. By using right dislocation, Danielle expresses this evaluation in a way that aims to draw the others into alliance with her and against Clare. We see on line 34 that she is successful in this endeavour, as Tina clearly aligns with Danielle’s stance. Danielle is thus able to demonstrate publicly that her

³ This may be an attempt at an American pronunciation. It seems that Tina is imitating a character from a television show in lines 20 to 32, but it’s unclear from the recording what the name of this show is (the recording on line 23 is obscured)

characterisation of Clare is one that others share. In this way the right dislocated tag serves not only to evaluate Clare as a liar, someone who has violated the groups' norms and values, but also to show Danielle as the moral authority.

We see here how peer-group identities are continually constructed through linguistic practices, including right dislocation. Danielle was very popular, both with her fellow pupils and with the teachers. Her class teacher described Danielle as 'a shining star'. The same teacher told me, somewhat euphemistically, that Clare 'falls in and out of friends with people a lot' (interview with teacher, 29th January 2007), and this was certainly my impression of her too. Although fleeting, the stance taken by Danielle in line 31, and the way Tina aligns with it, reinforces the well-established peer group hierarchy, in which Danielle is at the top and Clare firmly on the periphery of the girls' friendship group.

Personal pronoun tags were frequently used in these kinds of overt evaluative practices, usually co-occurring with items of evaluative lexis, such as emotion verbs (e.g. 'like', 'hate', 'love') and evaluative adjectives (e.g. 'shit', 'old', 'mad', 'nasty'): 'He's shit, him'; 'I hate this book bag, me'; 'I like the old ones, me'; 'He's mad, him'; 'You are a copy-cat, you'; 'You're dead nasty you now'; 'God, you're gay, you'. In such instances, pronoun tags were a resource used by the children to construct value for themselves and others in what Penny Eckert has referred to as a 'marketplace of popularity' (Eckert 2000: 14). The use of second and third person tags to explicitly position *others* in this marketplace was a relatively common strategy at Ironstone Primary; but these tags were largely absent from the Murrayfield data. I'm going to come back to this difference between the two schools later, but for now, it's enough to emphasise that right dislocated pronoun tags were a feature of the local dialect that could be (and often were) used to attribute explicit negative evaluations and negotiate status differentials within the peer-group.

These kinds of negotiations were not always straightforward of course – individuals do not necessarily simply accept the way they are positioned by others. For example, going back to Extract 1, we glimpse some of the means through which Clare attempts to resist the girls' efforts to exclude her (cf. Goodwin's (2006) analysis of Angela), using laughter (lines 38, 52), verbal play (line 38) and witty retort (line 54). We should also acknowledge the fact that her moves were not just defensive but sometimes *offensive* too. While it was true that Clare often fell out with the other girls and didn't really fit into established friendship groups, she was by no means a shrinking violet; on the contrary, she was extremely flamboyant and appeared confident. We see this confidence in lines 10-12 of Extract 1, where Clare takes an assertive and authoritative stance towards Danielle and the issue of the stolen food. In doing so she makes use of the next linguistic feature that I'd like to talk about today, 'howay', so I'll briefly introduce this feature before examining Clare's use of it in more detail.

'Howay' is a dialectal form that is unique to the north-east of England. In the Teesside data 'howay' was used more frequently in Ironstone Primary than in Murrayfield (42 occurrences of 'howay' at Ironstone Primary; 7 at Murrayfield Primary) and occurred only in peer-group interaction – again a familiar pattern. Referentially, it means something like 'come on' and it functions generally as a directive (e.g. 'Howay, let's go'), but the precise meanings associated with this form are indeterminate. When Clare uses 'howay' on line 12 of Extract 1, for example, it's impossible to understand the meaning of her utterance apart from the surrounding context and co-text. We need to know, for example, that the girls are

embroiled in yet another debate about food trades. We have to take account of the fact that Clare is responding to Danielle's claim (in lines 4-6) that she has given her share of Clare's much coveted chocolate bar to Tina, and also to Tina's denial (on lines 7-9). And we need to pay particular attention to the first part of Clare's reply. Clare's initial response on line 10, 'what're you eating now then', is interrogative in form but does not appear to function as a question (this is confirmed later in lines 14 to 16, where it becomes clear that Clare already knows what Danielle is eating, and thus could not have been asking a genuine information seeking question on line 10). Instead Clare's utterance has the force of a directive (e.g. 'Show me what you're eating') or a challenge (e.g. 'Prove you haven't got a piece'). The use of clause-final 'then' supports the idea that this is a challenge, because it sets up a contrast with Danielle's previous utterance. Clare's use of 'howay' on line 12 reformulates and further intensifies the challenge. This use of 'howay' might be glossed as something like 'Come on then, show me what you're eating'. Taken together, Clare's stance on lines 10 to 12 is fairly aggressive and the challenge obvious, but Danielle appears not to take it too seriously, perhaps because of her superior standing within the peer-group. She treats Clare's utterance as a straightforward question when she replies on line 13 and laughs playfully.

There were other examples in the Teesside data where speakers used 'howay' to take authoritative stances, including several that were taken more seriously than Clare's. My next (and final) example nicely illustrates the social and pragmatic utility of 'howay'. It was recorded when Ironstone Primary pupil Robert was wearing the radio-microphone. Robert was Danielle's counterpart amongst the boys at Ironstone Primary. He was a leader in the peer group, well-liked by everyone, active in playground games, and rated highly by his teacher. In this extract we get a brief glimpse of the way Robert's position as leader was collaboratively constructed in interaction, based upon his own behaviour and the way others (such as Sam) orient to him.

Extract 2: A game of bull dog

Nine-year old Robert is in the playground during the morning break and is involved in a game of 'Bull Dog'. This is a 'tag-based' game common across England in which one or two players are selected to be the 'bulldogs' and must stand in the middle of the playground. The other players stand at one end of the playground and try to run to the other end without being caught by the bulldogs. If they are caught then they must also become bulldogs. As the extract begins, Robert is in a tricky situation because he is being unfairly marked by the bull dog.

- 1 Robert: howay you need to let u::s
 2 Sam: you need to let us out
 3 (1.7)
 4 Sam: if I did that-
 5 Hannah you're on
 6 Hannah: I know I am
 7 Sam: so you have to let us out
 8 Robert: you can't just stand there
 9 (1.2)

10 you need to actu-
 11 see what I mean
 12 Nathan's just ran
 13 (2.7)
 14 Robert: no if you get me here then it doesn't count
 15 coz you're just letting everyone go except for me
 .
 (*(1 minute 55 seconds later)*)
 .
 16 Robert: howay you can't guard
 17 (*(Background noise - 3.7 seconds)*)
 18 Robert: someone at least-

Robert's utterance on line 1 is directed to the bull dog because that person is standing right in front of Robert and Sam, not giving them a fair chance to try to run. So the utterance means something like 'come on, you need to move out of the way and at least let us try'. Sam builds on Robert's utterance, repeating 'you need to let us out' (line 2) and then 'you have to let us out' (line 7), thus demonstrating alignment with Robert. Together they take a collaborative stance against their interlocutor, who is negatively evaluated as flouting the implicit rules and 'spirit' of the game. Robert goes on to explicate these rules in lines 8-15, and makes the authoritative judgement, 'no if you get me here then it doesn't count coz you're just letting everyone go except for me' (lines 14-15).

Around two minutes later, the same situation arises again, and Robert again intervenes: 'howay you can't guard' (line 16, meaning 'you can't stand in front of us'). The use of 'howay' here, and elsewhere, marks a change in interactional footing, defined as 'a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance' (Goffman 1981: 128). There is a subtle change in 'production format' in these utterances: Robert remains 'animator' and 'author' of his words, but now speaks on behalf of a wider moral authority (a change in the 'principal' of the utterance), in the name of 'we' not merely 'I'. Robert is appealing to a shared sense of what is considered right, fair, and acceptable within this game and within the peer-group (perhaps also within the local community more generally), and 'howay' encapsulates this appeal. So the meaning of 'howay you can't guard' (line 16) is actually something like 'come on, don't stand guard over us; it's not fair, *and you know it*'.

The precise meanings indexed by 'howay' were continually (re)negotiated by the children as they interacted together. But analysis of all 49 occurrences in the data set did reveal some consistency in use. It was commonly used by speakers to restrict or police the behaviour of interlocutors, often with an appeal to some shared sense of what is considered reasonable behaviour. This comes out quite clearly in the bulldog example, but it is also evident in Extract 1, where Clare tries to police Danielle's behaviour (even though she is fairly unsuccessful in her efforts). As with right dislocated pronoun tags, 'howay' was often used

to assert authority and negotiate boundaries and hierarchy within the peer-group. The speakers who used both of these forms most often across both schools were the confident, outgoing children; that is, those who were most likely to take assertive and authoritative stances

Discussion

Use-value not just exchange-value

Both of the linguistic forms that I've presented in this paper were interactionally very useful to the children who participated in my study, so I begin this final section of my talk by suggesting that such features are resilient in the face of pressure from the standard because they have 'use-value' (Skeggs 2004). This notion of 'use-value' can be compared with the more commonly used concept of 'exchange-value', associated especially with the work of Bourdieu. Using Bourdieu's metaphors of capital, standard English and prestige accents (such as RP) have symbolic capital because they are legitimated by wider society. This symbolic capital can be 'exchanged' for formal educational qualifications and prestigious occupations, and thus for economic capital. School teachers (like the Teesside headteacher I mentioned earlier) are aware of this fact. They therefore strive to increase their pupils' symbolic capital by eradicating non-standard ways of speaking (which lack positive exchange value) in favour of standard English and prestige pronunciations. This model of exchange-value is useful in that it points to the relation between vernaculars like 'Teesside dialect' and other varieties within the symbolic economy (and certainly as Irvine (2001) has shown, linguistic forms and styles derive meaning in their distinctiveness from other styles). But a model based only on exchange value ignores the important *use* value of vernacular speech forms. Linguistic forms such as, 'right-dislocated pronoun tags and 'howay' may not operate as forms of capital, but they do have value for those who use them in interaction; they have value beyond the exchange relations of the standard language market.

Notions like 'covert prestige' and 'solidarity' recognise the positive local value of vernacular forms, but only in relation to the dominance of the standard language market. I don't want to suggest that the children in my study were immune from the workings of this market (indeed the fact that they used fewer non-standard and low prestige forms in formal school contexts suggests that they were not), but I do want to open up the possibility that some features of their local dialect may have a use value that is not derived solely through opposition to the standard language market; that there may exist for them an alternative, but not oppositional, set of meanings and values. The extracts that I've presented show speakers absorbed in activities in which they don't appear to be thinking about mainstream values. Danielle, Clare and Robert were focused on local hierarchies, rather than on global/class hierarchies. They used dialect forms that *lack* status within the dominant sociolinguistic economy, but show that these forms can be used to *assert* status in local interactional use.

Use-value can of course only be understood if we observe linguistic forms actually being put to use, which means we need to examine the communicative effect of linguistic forms in interaction. And here we discover that dialect forms do not necessarily index values like solidarity and reciprocity; in fact they may index quite the opposite. Even highly salient features of the local dialect, such as 'howay', can be used to assert authority and restrict the behaviour of others, rather than to convey a sense that we're all in it together. This does not

mean that dialect forms will never index solidarity of course – it's perfectly possible that the features I've talked about today will be used by some speakers in certain kinds of context to do just that – but more or less solidary relations are achieved interactionally; we cannot determine meaning apart from situated use.

I want to emphasise that I am not trying to erase the contrastive status/solidarity concepts from the picture altogether, and I'm certainly not disputing their relevance to the studies I cited at the beginning of this talk; but as a general theory in the terms set out by Woolard – i.e. to account not only for the 'social use of language' but also to be used as 'a guiding theory of social relations' (Woolard 1985: 739; see also Milroy 1980: 176-177) – I think they have some limitations. I agree with Erickson (2001) that, we should not give up on our data analysis too soon, even when explanations from existing theory appear tempting. Here for example we've seen at least two different ways in which social status relations may be conceived and we have to be clear about which is our focus. In terms of relations within wider society, status (or class) is a social attribution, a judgement that is imposed on individuals and groups from outside. In terms of relations within smaller communities, status is something that is interactionally achieved and related to patterns of power at a micro-level.

The 'total linguistic fact': form, situated use and ideology

As an alternative, I'm not suggesting that we should retreat into interactional analysis, but rather that an integrated approach may be helpful. Over the last couple of years I've heard Ben Rampton refer to Silverstein's 'Total Linguistic Fact' (TLF) in a number of talks he has given, but I don't think I really fully understood its significance until now. Here's what Silverstein says:

'The total linguistic fact, the datum for a science of language, is irreducibly dialectic in nature. It is an unstable mutual interaction of meaningful sign forms, contextualised to situations of interested human use and mediated by the fact of cultural ideology'

(Silverstein 1985: 220, cited in Rampton 2011: 290).

Working within the parameters of the TLF, the aim is to understand vernacular speech as an interaction of form, situated practice, and ideology (Rampton 2011). Scholars of language variation have begun to do this, particularly those working within Eckert's 'third wave', though such work hasn't always considered situated use (Nik Coupland's body of work is an important exception; see also Kiesling 2009; Moore & Podesva 2009; Podesva 2007, 2011)

The significance of the TLF in relation to this talk is that it reminds us that use-value is linked to cultural ideology. In trying to understand this link I find Ochs' (1992, 1996) 'Indexicality Principle' helpful. Ochs shows us that in interaction linguistic forms index a range of situational dimensions, such as affective and epistemic stances, social acts (e.g. requests, compliments, commands), and social identities. These different indexical dimensions are related to one another through a network of cultural associations, norms and expectations, which Ochs refers to as 'culturally constructed *valences*' (1996: 417). It is via these links or 'valences' that the direct indexing of one particular situational dimension (such as an affective stance) may invoke other situational dimensions (like a particular identity).

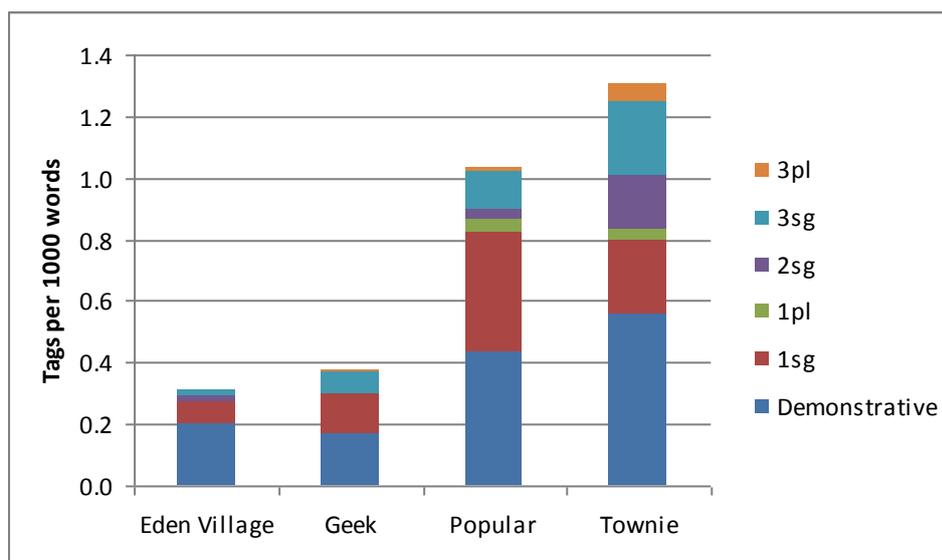
Going back to the data I've presented today, it is possible that ideologies of solidarity are part of the wider indexical valence of Teesside dialect forms, even though it is more immediate indexicalities of stance and act that are most relevant for speakers/hearers when these forms are used in interaction. This is perhaps most clearly seen with 'howay'. The contexts in which 'howay' emerged – which often involved an appeal to some sense of justice or appropriate behaviour – suggest a link, somewhere in its indexical history, with ideologies of working class solidarity, egalitarianism and fair play. We could therefore say that the larger valence of Teesside dialect forms is something like 'working class community / solidarity / we-code'. This might feed into interactional use in a range of ways, such as authenticating a speaker or softening a command. For example, when Robert uses 'howay' in Extract 2 his stance is quite confrontational, but some more general sense of ingroup solidarity may serve to mitigate the inherent face-threat, and thus retain the spirit of camaraderie in the playground game (cf. Bucholtz's (2009) analysis of the Mexican American youth slang term *güey* and Kiesling's (2004) analysis of *dude*).

Importantly, the use of these dialect forms in interaction involves more than just 'a metaphoric extension of the we/they code opposition', to use Gumperz's phrase (1977: 30). If that were the case, local dialect forms would not be used to assert power, status and authority. Instead, we have to 'distinguish the range of situational dimensions that a form ... *potentially* indexes from the range of situational dimensions that a form ... *actually* indexes in a particular instance of use' (Ochs' 1996: 418; see also Erickson 2001: 161).

The idea that solidarity may belong in the larger meaning potential or valence of a form/variety explains the robust findings from language attitudes research, which has shown consistently that reactions to standard versus non-standard and regionally marked speech tend to cohere around the dimensions of status and solidarity. The recordings used in matched-guise tests cannot capture the subtle nuances of interactional use (for obvious reasons); thus what participants are reacting to is the wider cultural ideologies associated with those ways of speaking (cf. Rampton 2006, supplementary materials).

The focus on ideology is also important in trying to explain the wider statistical patterns and generalisations uncovered in variationist work. On this point I'd like to briefly return to my analysis of right dislocation. This was a feature that Emma Moore had previously analysed in her Bolton High School data (Moore 2003). We put our two data sets together, and the consistency in class-based differences was striking (Figure 3; for detailed analysis see Moore and Snell 2011):

Figure 3. Distribution of right dislocated pronouns at a Bolton high school



In the interests of time I don't want to get into the details of Emma Moore's study, but briefly, she was a participant observer in a High School, following girls from a single year group who were aged 12-13 at the start of the study and 14-15 when the last data was collected. She identified four 'communities of practice' within this year group: the Eden Village girls; Geeks; Populars; and Townies. She described the adolescents in the 'Popular' and 'Townie' communities of practice as being 'working-class oriented', while those in the 'Eden-Village' and 'Geek' communities of practice were 'middle-class oriented', based on criteria like the forms of practice the girls engaged in and their contact with other communities beyond the school. What you can see in Figure 3 is broadly the same pattern uncovered in my data. While all communities of practice included some first person pronoun tags in their discourse, second and third person tags were generally avoided by the Eden Village and Geek girls (just like they were by the Murrayfield Primary children). The Townies and Populars, on the other hand, frequently used these tags to take evaluative stances, just like the children in Ironstone Primary. Since the Bolton teenagers appear to share very similar communicative preferences with regards to right dislocated pronoun tags as the children in my study, it seems that these differences in linguistic usage are linked to ideologies of class in a complex way – too complex, I'm afraid, for me to fully unravel today. Emma and I have presented some hypotheses (in Moore and Snell 2011), but I don't think I'm doing either of us a disservice if I say that we have really only scratched the surface and have not yet had the opportunity to test these hypotheses extensively. With regards to my data, I think I'd need to go back to all of my radio-microphone recordings and engage in the kind of extensive listening that Rampton (2006: 32) has described as 'a process of "mediated", repeated and repeatable, ethnographic observation'. I'd have to approach the data with different questions from those that motivated my original analyses. I'd want to know, for example, in what ways the Murrayfield Primary participants engaged in the 'marketplace of popularity' and how they used language to construct peer-group hierarchies (cf. Goodwin 1990, 2006). In doing so, I might get a bit closer to learning about social class as a 'lived experience' as well as learning about the social meaning of language variation.

A final point on ideology is that it can change over time (and those changes can work from the bottom up i.e. from situated use). We might want to consider, for example, the extent

to which working-class life is nowadays still especially solidary. It might have been in the 60s and 70s, but with the decline of the trade unions and so on, maybe an ideology of solidarity is being gradually replaced with an ideology of individualism. How do such changes interact with language use?

Practical implications

In closing, I'll just make one final point, which links back to the story about the Teesside headteacher. I'd suggest that if we want to influence wider debates about language, class and educational failure, we cannot ignore the use value of dialect forms. If we do this we risk misinterpreting children's continued use of these forms, and our own misunderstandings will not help to counter wider public prejudices, nor will they help teachers to understand that even though they have the best intentions when trying to stamp out the use of local dialect (i.e. to increase working-class children's social capital) they may actually be doing quite a lot of harm.

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