

“No, Nay, Never”: Negation in Tyneside English

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Introduction:

This paper tests statements concerning patterns of negation in Tyneside English in Beal (1993) against new evidence from the *Newcastle Electronic Corpus of Tyneside English (NECTE)*. This comprises two subcorpora: the *Tyneside Linguistic Survey*, collected in Gateshead in 1969-70, and *Phonological Variation and Change* (Newcastle, 1994). The full *NECTE* corpus will be available in 2005, but we concentrate here on mining data from a subset of speakers recorded in the earlier subcorpus. Our results indicate interesting trends with respect to the trajectory of syntactic change across social and regional space, particularly when compared with those previously uncovered by Anderwald (2002) and Tagliamonte & Smith (2002).

Two distinctive features will be focused on:

- (I) Negative concord:
 - (1) *They **never** learned you **nowt** you were wasting your time*
- (II) Negative vs. auxiliary contraction:
 - (2) *I **won't** be there this week.*
 - (3) *The teacher'**ll not** tell them.*

Results:

- Negative concord is restricted to minimally-educated working-class males, indicating social rather than regional distribution.
- Our findings regarding (II) are similar to those reported in the geographically contiguous, though rural, community described in Tagliamonte & Smith (2002).

References:

- Anderwald, L. (2002) *Negation in Non-standard British English: Gaps, Regularizations and Assymetries*. London: Routledge.
- Beal, J.C. (1993) 'The grammar of Tyneside and Northumbrian English', in Milroy, J. and Milroy, L. (eds.) *Real English: The Grammar of English Dialects in the British Isles*, pp.187-213. London: Longman.
- Beal, J.C. and Corrigan, K.P. (to appear) '“No, Nay, Never”: Negation in Tyneside English', in Y. Iyeyi (ed.) *Aspects of Negation in English*. Kyoto: University of Kyoto Press.
- Tagliamonte, S. & Smith, J. (2002) '“Either it isn't or it's not”: NEG/ AUX contraction in British dialects.' *English World-Wide* 23: 2, 251-281.

