

Language Diversity: A Key to Understanding Human Diversity

Bernard Comrie

Max Planck Institute for
Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig,
Germany

A micro-investigation: North-East
England



| | Standard English | Sunderland (and Tyneside) |
|--|------------------|------------------------------|
|--|------------------|------------------------------|

| | | |
|----|------------|------------|
| a) | I saw him. | I saw him. |
|----|------------|------------|

| | | |
|----|-------------|-------------|
| b) | We saw him. | We saw him. |
|----|-------------|-------------|

| | | |
|----|------------|------------|
| c) | He saw us. | He saw us. |
|----|------------|------------|

| | | |
|----|------------|--------------------|
| d) | He saw me. | He saw us . |
|----|------------|--------------------|

Standard English, Sunderland

a) Are you going with us?

Tyneside

b) Are you going with **we**?

Standard English, Sunderland

- a) This shirt needs mending.
- b) I might be able to help you.

Tyneside

- c) This shirt needs mended.
- d) I **might could** help you.

a) Standard English, Tyneside
help /hɛlp/

b) Sunderland, most non-standard English
of England
help /ɛlp/

- a) Standard English (with plural reference)
You are leaving.

- b) Sunderland
Youse are leaving.

- c) Other non-standard
You lot / You guys / Y'all are leaving.

a) Standard English, Sunderland (with singular,
familiar reference)

Are you leaving?

b) Archaic Standard English

Art thou leaving?

c) Murton

Is thou leaving?

A macro-investigation: Reference tracking

- a) John and Mary went for a walk in the garden. John saw a butterfly. He pointed it out to Mary. She told him that she had not seen butterflies in the garden for a long time. He asked her if she thought it meant that the environment was getting cleaner.
- b) John and Bill went for a walk in the garden. John saw a butterfly. He pointed it out to Bill. He told him that he had not seen butterflies in the garden for a long time. He asked him if he thought it meant that the environment was getting cleaner.

John saw Bill. He ran away.

Adults' versus children's use of pronouns
in English

Switch reference: Haruai

a) Mö hön rg ng ng-**ön**, köpa dwöŋa.

woman pig stone put put-ss leaf went

‘A woman built a pig house, and went for some leaves.’

b) Nöbö mörö wök pg-**mön**, glñŋ gyo gyö r-öŋ-a.

man garden clear get-ds bushfowl gyo gyö did

‘A man cleared his garden, and a bushfowl went “gyo gyö”.’

Obviation (Plains Cree)

Mēkwa ēpimohtē-**t**, ispatināw wāpaht-**am**,
ēāmaciwē-**yit** ayīsiyiniw-**a**, nāpēw-**a**. Ēkwa
kitāpam-**ēw** kitāpākan ēkanawāpākanēhikē-**yit**
ayīsiyiniw-**a** nanātawāpam-**āyit**. Kiskēyim-**ēw**
ahyahciyiniw-**a**.

While he_p was walking, he_p saw a person_o
climbing a hill, a man_o. Then he_p observed him_o,
spying, the person_o who was seeking people_o.
He_p knew him_o to be a Blackfoot_o.

P = proximate

O = obviative

Reference tracking in American Sign Language

Logophoric (Gokana)

- a) Aè kɔ aè dɔ.
'He_i said that he_j fell.'
- b) Aè kɔ aè dɔ-è.
'He_i said that he_i fell.'

Emphatic pronouns (German)

- a) Die Männer begrüßten ihre Freunde und **ihre** Kinder.

‘The men_i greeted their friends_j and their_{i/j} children.’

- b) Die Männer begrüßten ihre Freunde und **deren** Kinder.

‘The men_i greeted their friends_j and their_j children.’

Conjunction reduction: English, Dyirbal

a) I saw you and came here. [sc. and I came here]

b) Nganja nginuna buran, baninyu.

I.nom you.acc saw, came.here

‘I saw you and [you/*I] came here.’

Sonó el teléfono y supo que la iban a matar.

rang the telephone and (he/she/it-)knew that her
(they-)were-going to kill

‘The telephone rang and she knew that they were
going to kill her.’

(Arturo Pérez-Reverte, *La Reina del Sur*)

!The telephone rang and knew that they were going to kill her.

[sc. ... and the telephone knew ...]

Exotic Europe: Relative clauses

- a) I saw the man yesterday. The man left today.
- b) I gave the book to the man yesterday. The man left today.
- c) The man **whom** I saw yesterday left today.
 $_{NP}[\text{the man } _S[\text{whom I saw — yesterday}]_S]_{NP}$ left today
- d) The man **to whom** I gave the book left today.
 $_{NP}[\text{the man } _S[\text{to whom I gave the book — yesterday}]_S]_{NP}$ left today

Spanish, Catalan

la misión [**a la que** ha dedicado su vida —]

‘the mission [to which he has dedicated his life —]’

el llibre [**de què** parlaves —]

‘the book [of which you were speaking —]’

Japanese

- a) Gakusei ga hon o katta.
student nom book acc bought
'the student bought the book.'
- b) [gakusei ga katta] hon
student nom bought book
'the book [which the student bought —]

Persian

a) Ketâbhâ-râ be mardhâ dâde budid.

books-acc to men given you.are

‘You have given the books to the men.’

b) mardhâi [ke ketâbhâ-râ **be ânhâ** dâde budid]

men that books-acc to them given you.are

‘the man [to whom you have given the books —]’

Non-standard English

- a) the girl [that **her** eighteenth birthday was on that day]
- b) You come to a group [that you have to eat certain foods].

Non-standard Spanish

Es el periódico [que en casa estamos suscritos].

lit. ‘It is the paper that at home we are subscribed’

i.e. ‘It is the paper to which at home we are
subscribed’

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