

# Language Diversity: A Key to Understanding Human Diversity

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A micro-investigation: North-East  
England



	Standard English	Sunderland (and Tyneside)
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- |    |             |                    |
|----|-------------|--------------------|
| 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 <b>us</b> . |

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<sub>p</sub> was walking, he<sub>p</sub> saw a person<sub>o</sub>  
climbing a hill, a man<sub>o</sub>. Then he<sub>p</sub> observed him<sub>o</sub>,  
spying, the person<sub>o</sub> who was seeking people<sub>o</sub>.  
He<sub>p</sub> knew him<sub>o</sub> to be a Blackfoot<sub>o</sub>.

P = proximate

O = obviative

# Reference tracking in American Sign Language

## Logophoric (Gokana)

- a) Aè kɔ aè dɔ.  
'He<sub>i</sub> said that he<sub>j</sub> fell.'
- b) Aè kɔ aè dɔ-è.  
'He<sub>i</sub> said that he<sub>i</sub> fell.'

## Emphatic pronouns (German)

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

‘The men<sub>i</sub> greeted their friends<sub>j</sub> and their<sub>i/j</sub> children.’

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

‘The men<sub>i</sub> greeted their friends<sub>j</sub> and their<sub>j</sub> 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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