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"Scouse" but not "Scouser"? Embedded enregistered repertoires for adolescent girls on The Wirral
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Abstract:	Liverpool English, or "Scouse", is reportedly spreading into surrounding areas including the Wirral. Interviews with adolescent female speakers on the Wirral revealed that certain language features are perceived as sounding more or less "Scouse". Some features were also strongly associated with a stereotypical "Scouser" identity that speakers evaluated negatively and explicitly denied. Others were associated with sounding like a Liverpool speaker and evaluated positively. We conclude that there are multiple and embedded repertoires perceived by these speakers: a "Scouse" repertoire associated with solidarity, locality (Liverpool) and coolness and the repertoire of a "Scouser" which is associated with being unintelligible, non-posh and annoying.
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JOURNAL SUBMISSION COVER LETTER / TITLE PAGE

Dear Professor Dunker,

Enclosed is a manuscript to be considered for publication in Language and Communication on behalf of myself and my co-author, Dr Sofia Lampropoulou. The research reported in this manuscript was funded by the University of Liverpool. The title of this manuscript is:

"Scouse" but not "Scouser"? Embedded enregistered repertoires for adolescent girls on The Wirral

I am the corresponding author of this manuscript and will handle all correspondence at all stages of publication. My details are as follows:

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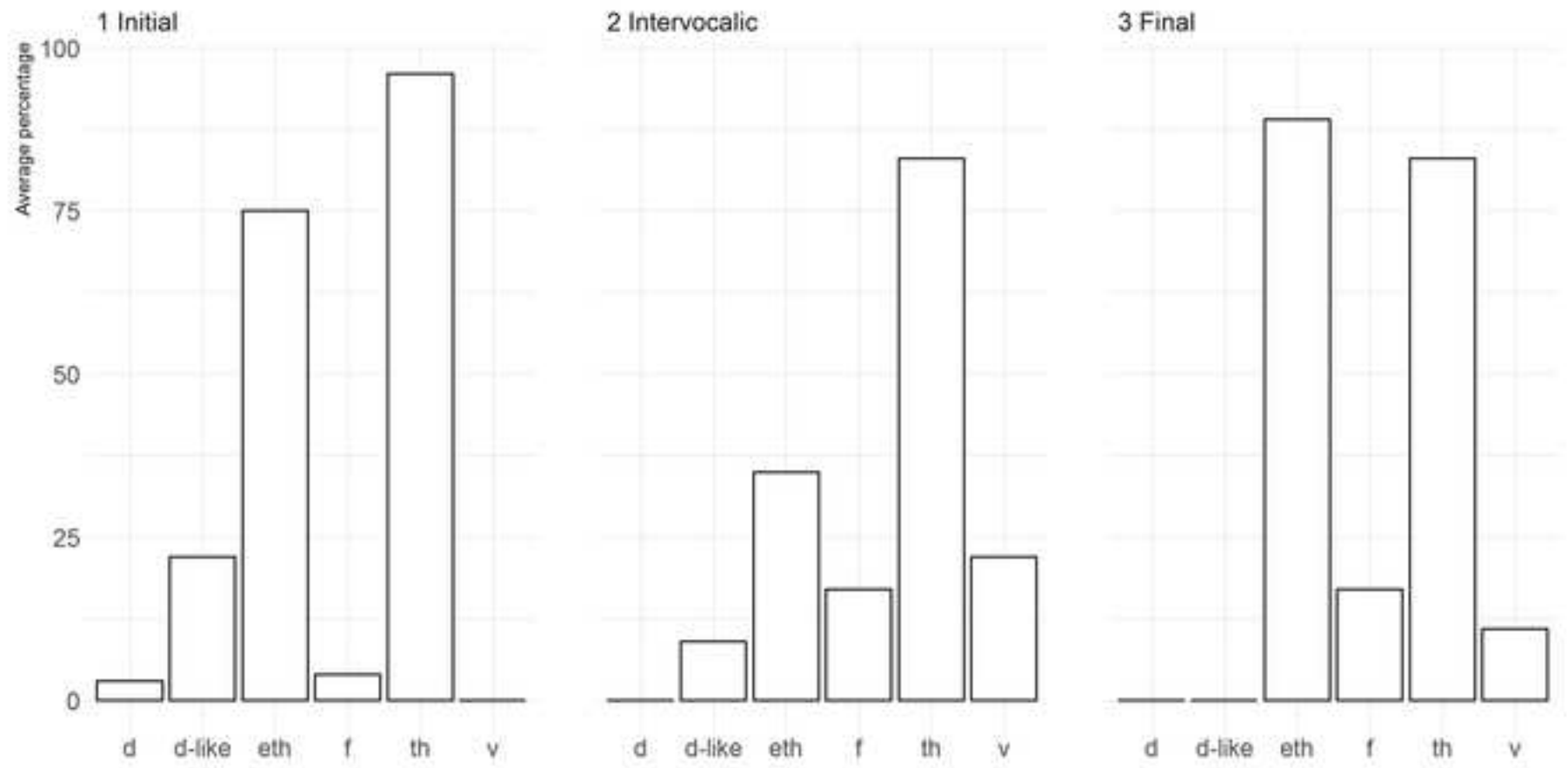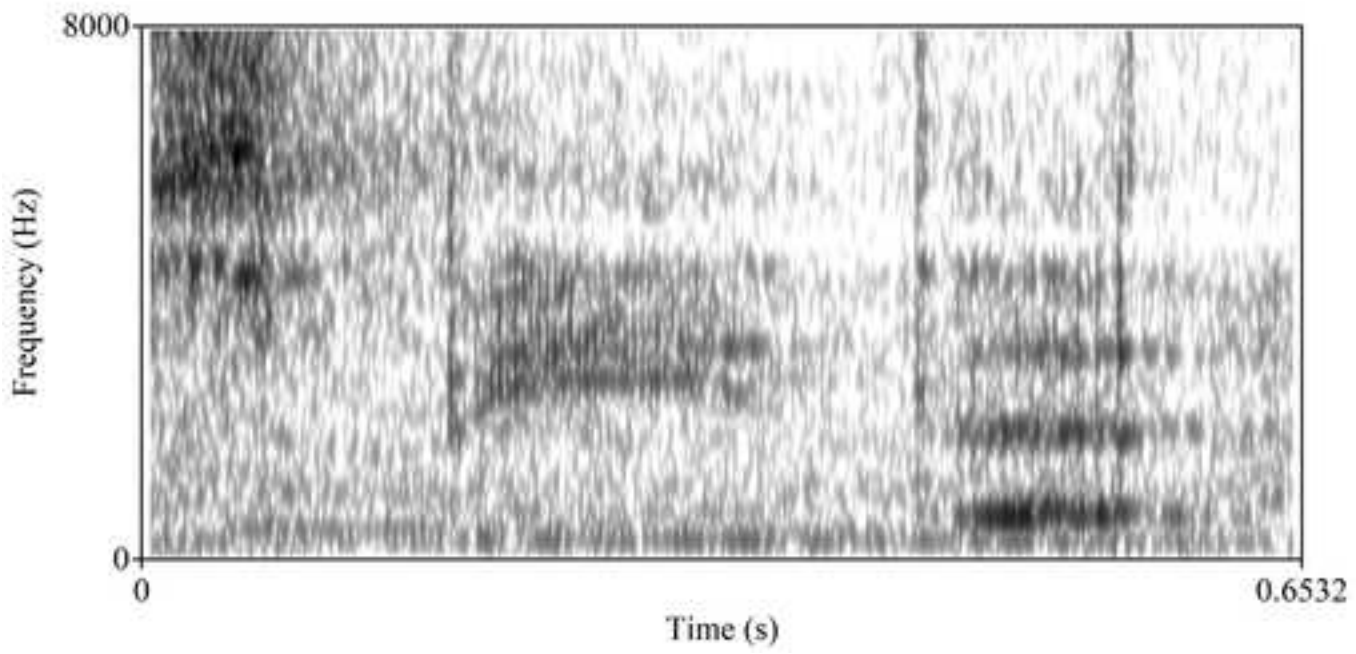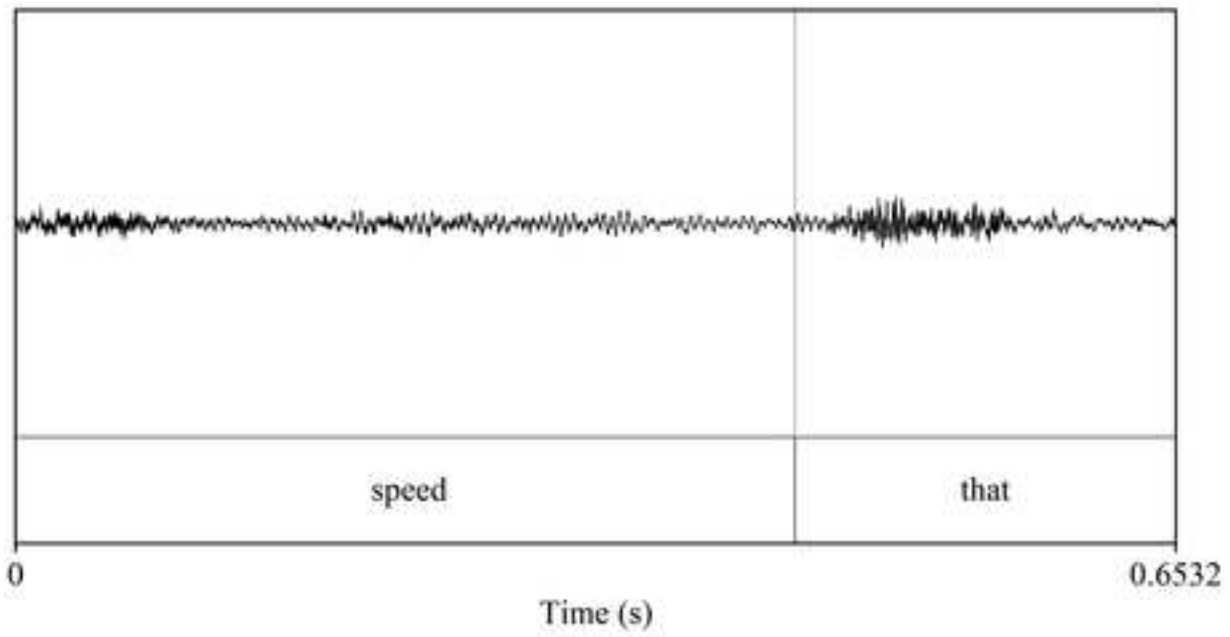L69 7ZG

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Yours sincerely,

Dr Paul Cooper

Highlights

- Speakers discuss a stereotypical Scouser identity and enregistered Scouse repertoire
- Some adolescent female speakers in The Wirral deny the Scouser identity
- Being from Liverpool indexes positive social values but being a Scouser is negative
- Elements of the Scouse repertoire are positively evaluated
- They avoid being Scousers by selectively drawing on the Scouse repertoire
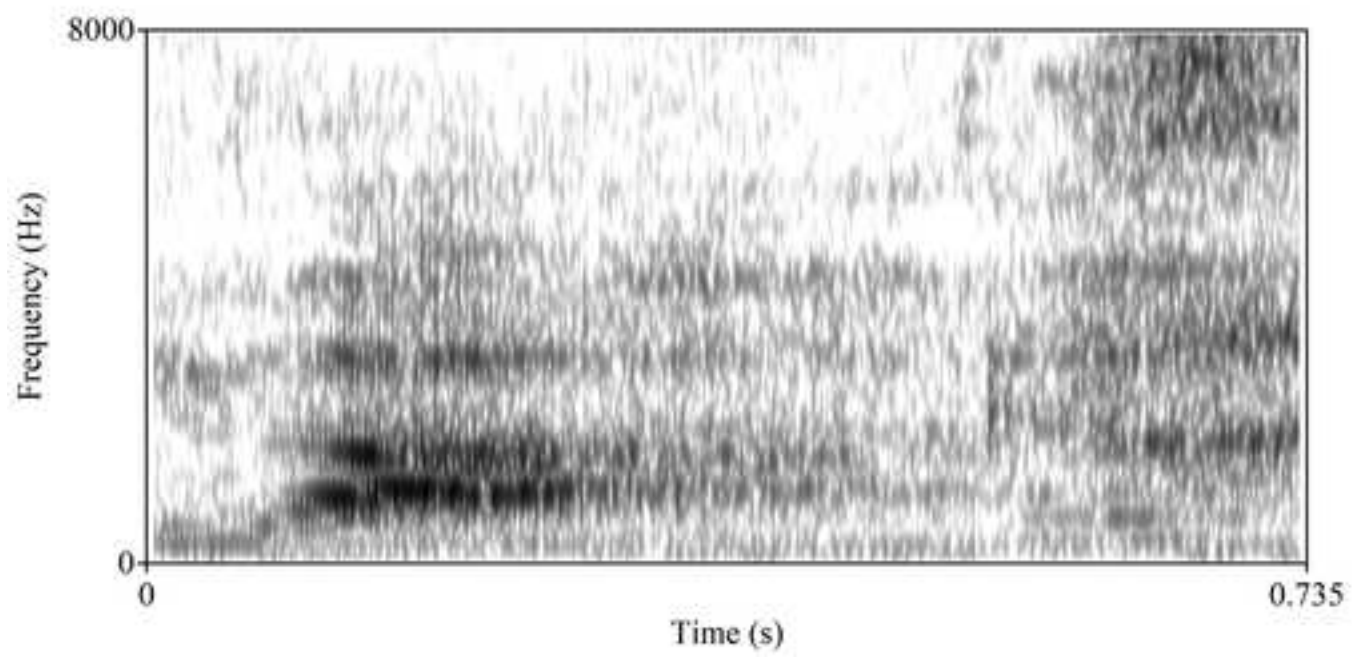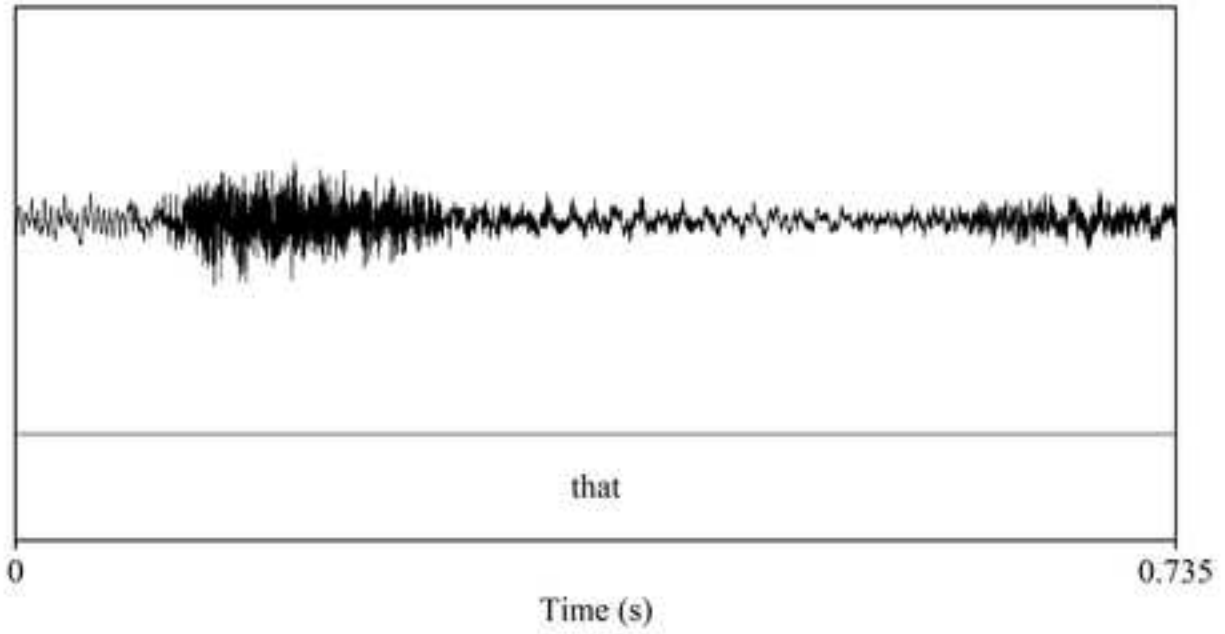
Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 5

Figure 6

Liverpool

authentic

SCOUSER ———/——— NOT A SCOUSER

solidarity

born in Liverpool   born outside Liverpool

cool

negative concord ———/——— no negative concord

not posh   correct

t→h ———/——— [t] or [ʔ]

unintelligible   proper

TH-stopping ———/——— no TH-stopping

dumb

annoying   *yous* ———/——— *you*

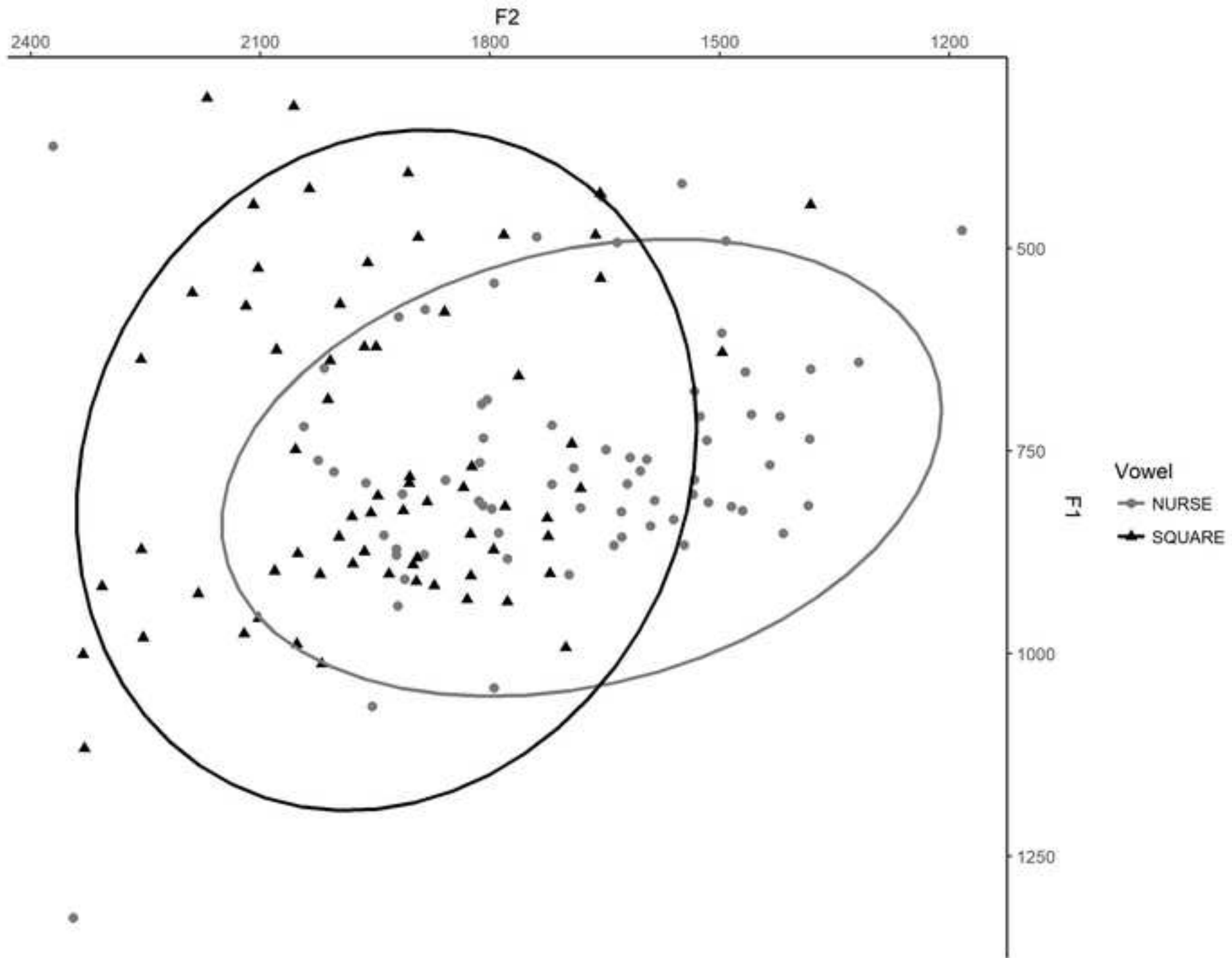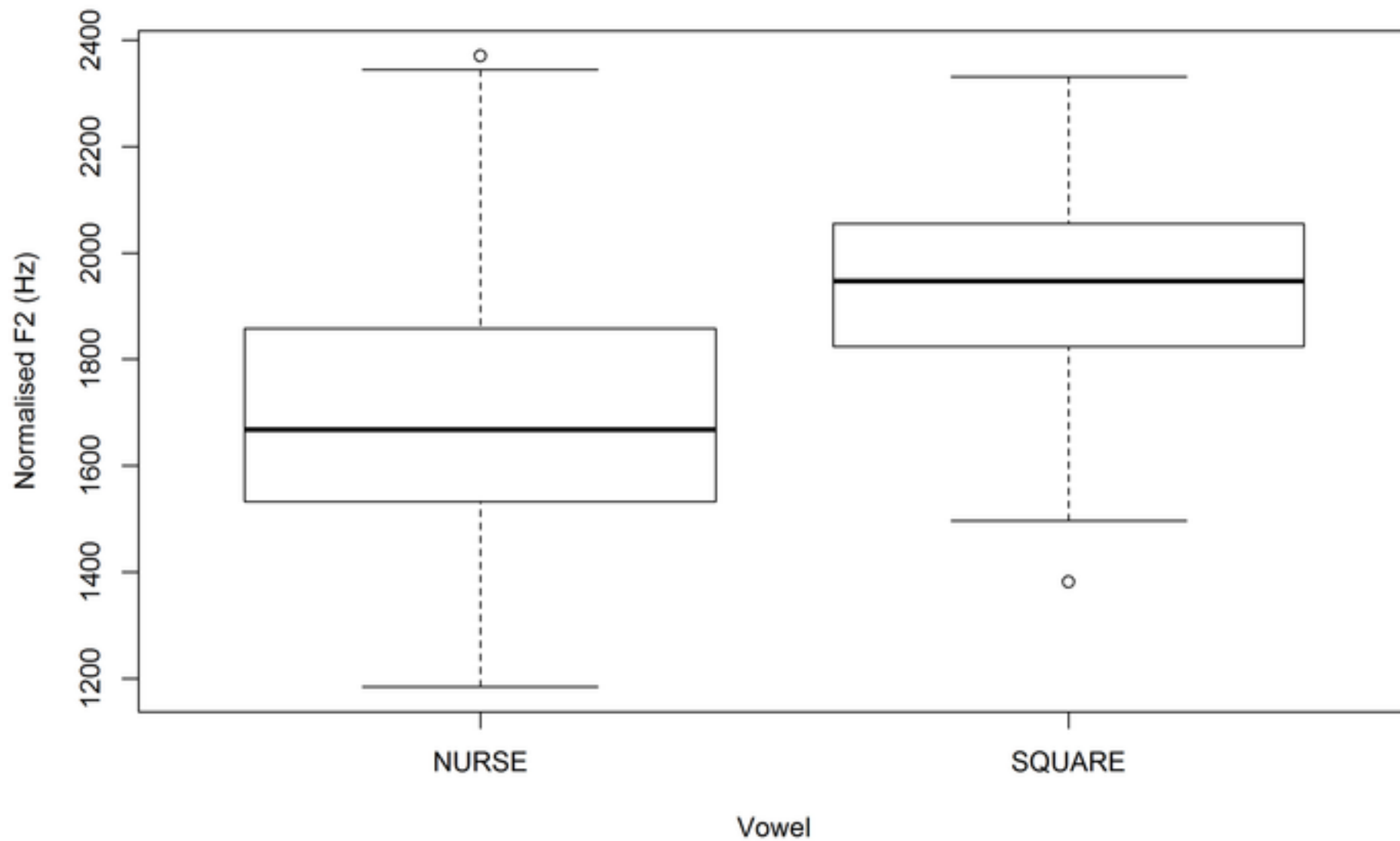cook [kʉːk], book [bʉːk]

dead (very)

more "Scouse" ———/——— less "Scouse"

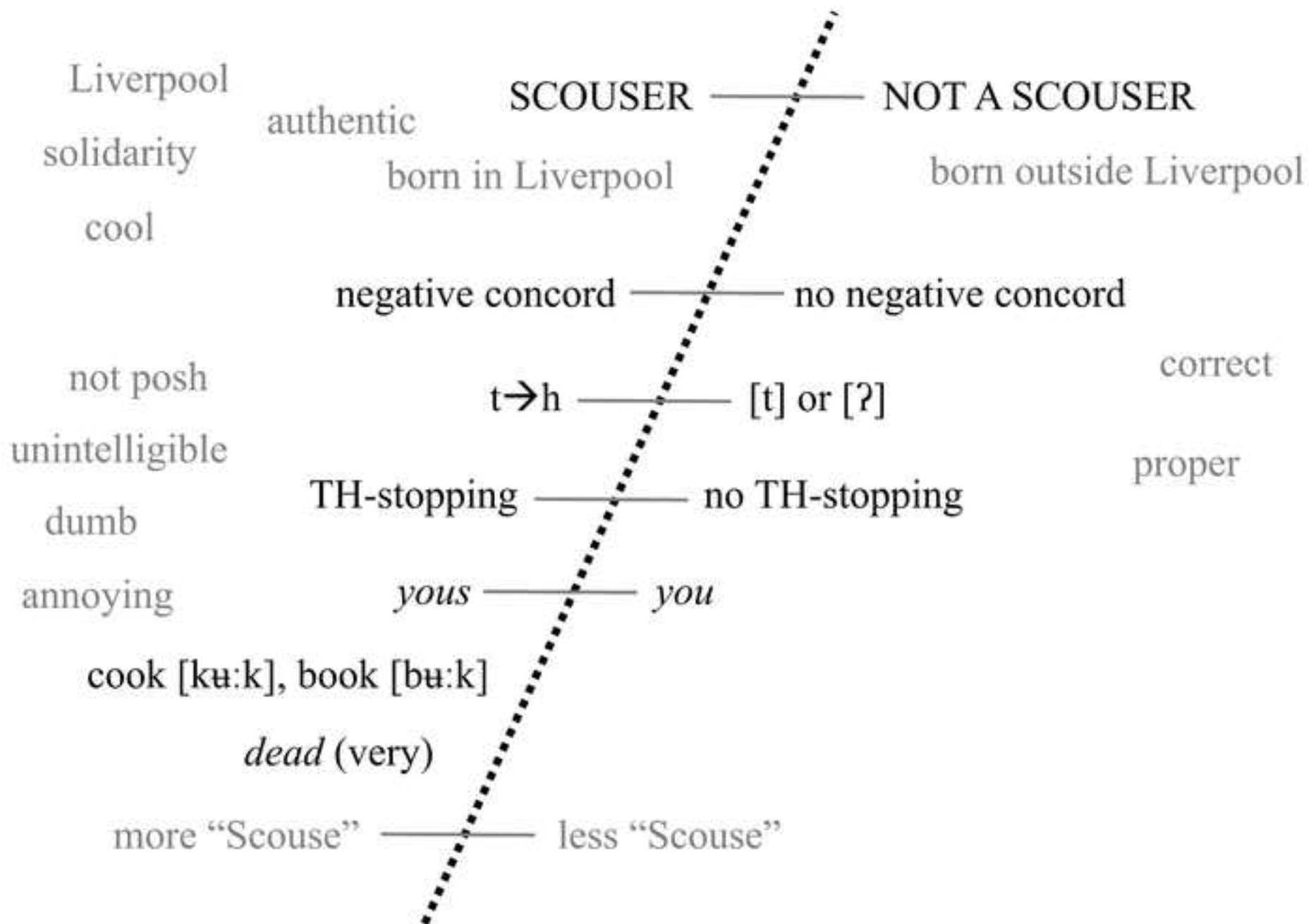**"Scouse" but not "Scouser"? Embedded enregistered repertoires for adolescent girls on The Wirral**

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Introduction

Liverpool English (henceforth LE), also known as "Scouse[i]", is one of the most widely recognised varieties of British English (Montgomery, 2010). There are also many widely-held beliefs about Liverpool and its speakers, which we can see expressed as explicit links between language features and social values that have led to the variety becoming enregistered (Agha, 2003; Honeybone and Watson, 2013). However, many prominent stereotypes of "Scouse" speakers index (Silverstein, 2003) associations with being urban, working-class, and male, as seen in media representations as well as physical depictions of "Scousers" (Boland, 2008). Moreover, perceptions of "Scouse" amongst younger, middle-class speakers have been largely unexplored although there is some evidence that ideas about the variety are changing and that younger speakers are starting to conceive of multiple identities, including "Scouse" and "northern" (Juskan, 2017). This paper addresses the questions of how Scouse is enregistered among adolescent female speakers on The Wirral, what features they associate with the variety, and which social values are indexed by their use. Specifically, we observe that our speakers consistently deny the stereotypical identity of a "Scouser" but present themselves as occasionally drawing upon a Scouse repertoire in selected and very specific contexts. We therefore argue that Scouse in our data emerges as embedding multiple enregistered repertoires compared to a single enregistered variety. These repertoires correspond to the construction of a fluid, multi-layered identity displayed by our Wirral adolescent girls.

Indexicality and enregisterment

The explicit linking of language features with social values is described by Agha (2003, p.231) as the 'processes through which a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms'. Such social values often include a geographical location, particularly in the case of regional dialects, but may also include notions such as authenticity, aesthetics, social class, friendliness, gender, and so on. For instance, Johnstone, Andrus, and Danielson (2006, p.83) discuss "Pittsburghese", which is associated with the city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. They note that certain features of this variety, in particular the monophthongal realisation of /aw/ in *house* as [æː], can convey 'someone's being from that area, working class, and/or male'. The features of

"Pittsburghese" are described in relation to Silverstein's (2003, pp.212-213) schema of indexical order which, he explains, interact with enregistered repertoires in an observably ordered manner:

> The existence of registers, we can immediately see, is an aspect of the dialectical process of indexical order, in which the n+1st-order indexicality depends on the existence of a cultural schema of enregisterment of forms perceived to be involved in n-th-order indexical meaningfulness; the forms as they are swept up in the n+1st order valorization become strongly presupposing indexes of that enregistered order, and therefore in particular of the ideological ethno-metapragmatics that constitutes it and endows its shibboleths with n+1st-order indexical value.

Johnstone et al. (2006, pp.82-83) recontextualise this into three orders of indexicality. First-order indexicality includes correlations between language features and social values such as region, class, gender, etc. but are generally below speakers' level of consciousness. Second-order indexical links become available for overt commentary, which allows speakers to style shift, using or avoiding certain variants in particular contexts. The social meanings attributed to second-order features are 'shaped mainly by ideologies about class and correctness', but can also be associated with locality. Finally, third-order indexicality involves the linking of the most frequently and consistently noticed language features with a particular identity. This draws on the 'idea that places and dialects are essentially linked (every place has a dialect)', following which people are then able to 'use regional forms drawn from highly codified lists to perform local identity, often in ironic, semiserious ways'. The increasing levels of speaker awareness that accompany the association of certain features with particular social values therefore mean that variants which demonstrate both second and third-order indexical links can be described as enregistered. Moreover, the ways in which social meanings come to be associated with language features are observable via what Agha (2005, p.51) terms 'metapragmatic activity', whereby social messages related to language are transmitted. Johnstone et al. (2006, p.80) note that this can include explicit 'talk about talk', which may be observed by directly discussing language with speakers, as well as metapragmatic commentary on language seen in newspapers, cartoons, broadcast media, etc. Beal (2009a) also discusses the role of dialect dictionaries in enregisterment, since these comprise the kind of highly codified lists of language features mentioned above. She explains that in the enregisterment of "Geordie" and "Sheffieldish" dialects in the north-east of England and Yorkshire respectively, dialect dictionaries serve to outline which features are perceived to

comprise these varieties, as well as to transmit and reinforce ideas surrounding social stereotypes of their respective speakers.

The links between language features and social values have also been illustrated by Eckert (2008) in her work on indexical fields. In her discussion of Campbell-Kibler's (2007) work on variable (ing) in words like *hiking*, *camping*, etc. in American English, Eckert diagrammatises the relationship between language features and the social values they index, creating an indexical field of social meanings. For the two variants of (ing) in Campbell-Kibler's findings, [ŋ] and [n], Eckert (2008, p.466) maps the associations of the velar variant with social values like 'educated', 'formal', 'articulate/pretentious', 'effortful' in direct opposition to 'uneducated', 'relaxed', 'inarticulate/unpretentious', 'easy going/lazy' for the alveolar variant. This mapping allows for the visualisation of the various indexical links activated by particular linguistic items. A slightly different approach was taken by Beaton and Washington (2015, p.5) who centre their field on the lexical item *favelado* 'slum-dweller', and argue that 'lexical items with referential value function primarily to index things in the world rather than the attitude or identity of the speaker'. This allows them to map both the positive and negative social values indexed by this term, which range from examples like 'bad-mannered', 'poor', and 'violent' on the negative side to 'street-smart' and 'badass' on the positive side. In addition, they also include the social types associated with *favelado*, which include negative ones like 'slut', 'redneck', 'drug dealer', but positive ones like 'warrior'. These labels are similar to what Agha (2003 p.243) describes as 'characterological figures', where language features are explicitly associated with different social types, which then become conceptual 'exemplar' speakers of particular language varieties. The data discussed in this paper suggests that taking a similar approach to mapping the indexical links activated by "Scouse" can help us to better understand the relationships between language features and complex, multi-layered social personae.

Where enregistered repertoires are associated with characterological figures we frequently see descriptions and depictions of physical characteristics of speakers associated with language varieties. For example, Johnstone (2017, p.297) highlights the existence of plush dolls named *Yappin' Yinzers[ii]*, which are stereotypical representations of both male and female "Pittsburghese" speakers. The dolls are accompanied by demographic information which suggests that they are working-class, which is similarly suggested by the way the dolls are dressed, and they produce examples of "Pittsburghese" dialect when squeezed. This not only has the effect of explicitly linking local language features to a physical depiction of an

ideological speaker but it is also, as Johnstone goes on to note, evidence of "Pittsburghese" moving away from simply 'being a representation of a way of speaking that people remember, to being an icon of a persona linked with a way of life'. Similar discussions of characterological figures were noted by Cooper (2019) in relation to Yorkshire dialect, where informants associated particular variants with social personae that were described as being 'broad'. These included stereotypical concepts of Yorkshire speakers with traditional occupations, such as farmers and miners, as well as older speakers who were all perceived to use 'old fashioned' Yorkshire dialect. Cooper (2020) goes on to discuss the emergence of distinct characterological figures associated with different areas within Yorkshire as observable in nineteenth-century Yorkshire dialect writing. These figures were associated with quantifiably different repertoires of "Yorkshire" features and illustrate that there can be multiple stereotypical personae associated with sub-sections of a wider geographical region. As discussed further below, this also appears to be the case in Merseyside, to which we now turn our attention.

Liverpool English, "Scouse", and "Scousers"

LE or "Scouse" is strongly associated with the city of Liverpool in the north-west of England. As Honeybone, Grant, and Grey. (2007, p.110) note 'Liverpool English is the form of speech that is characteristic of Liverpool, Birkenhead and adjacent areas of urban Merseyside'. Due to its location in the linguistic north, LE shares some features with several other northern varieties such as a lack of distinction between vowels in the FOOT and STRUT lexical sets (Wells 1982), with both including [ʊ], as well as the short vowel [a] in BATH words as opposed to [ɑː] found in many southern varieties. However, LE includes features that serve to distinguish it not only from other varieties of northern English, but from varieties of British English more broadly. These are predominantly phonological in nature, such as TH-stopping, 'the absence of contrast in the SQUARE and NURSE lexical sets' and the lenition of /t/, /d/ and /k/ (Honeybone et al. 2007, p.107). The first of these features, TH-stopping where /ð/ and /θ/ can be realised as [d] or [t] respectively, is further discussed by Honeybone and Watson (2013, p.326), who illustrate its representation in contemporary humorous localised dialect literature (which they abbreviate to CHLDL) relating to Liverpool. They note that we can see representations including '*the* <de>, *then* <dthen>, *another* <anudder> for the spelling of /ð/ and *think* <tink>, *nothing* <nutt'n> for the spelling of /θ/'. They argue that this is a salient feature in the representation of LE given the fact that it occurs in Liverpool CHLDL with a high degree of frequency and consistency. This has also contributed to the enregisterment of

TH-stopping as a "Scouse" feature since the explicit association with Liverpool is established and reinforced by the inclusion of TH-stopping representations in CHLDL texts. The lack of contrast between NURSE and SQUARE is similarly above speakers' levels of awareness and has been extensively discussed by Watson and Clark (2013, p.298) who note the occurrence of a monophthongal realisation of SQUARE as [ɛ:] in the north-west of England. They go on to explain that in some cases this can merge with NURSE, giving 'homophonous pairs of words such as *her–hair*; *fur–fair*; *stir–stare*; *purr–pair*'. Their study investigates speakers' reactions to merged realisations of NURSE and SQUARE, where they conclude that the overall response to nonstandard variants was generally negative. This appears to stem from the fact that the merged variants deviate from the standard pronunciations where the vowels are distinct and has led to an association of the merged variants with 'not sounding posh'. However, explicit awareness of this merger is discussed by Juskan (2017, p.156), who illustrates that middle-aged speakers show greater awareness of merged NURSE and SQUARE than younger speakers. This appears to reflect broader attitudinal changes relating to LE between middle-aged and younger speakers, discussed further below. Finally, 'Liverpool lenition' of /t/, /d/, and /k/ is discussed by Watson (2006, p.61) who explains that /t/ is one of the most frequently-lenited sounds in LE, and has become characteristic of the variety, particularly in relation to the realisation of syllable-final /t/ as [h], which Watson labels 't➔h'. He goes on to illustrate that 't➔h' realised as [h] tends to occur in 'monosyllabic words with short vowels' as well as 'polysyllabic words which end in a syllable with a weak vowel' including *but*, *that*, *what*, *biscuit*, and *chocolate*.

In addition to "Scouse" being associated with the geographical location of Liverpool, we also see strong associations with numerous social values. For instance, as Honeybone et al. (2007, p.110) explain, "Scouse" is 'currently consistently rated low in 'aesthetic' rankings'. However, they go on to note that 'there is clearly covert prestige attached to the variety, as is currently spreading to be spoken in rural areas around Merseyside'. This is also discussed by Newbrook (1999) who records the spread of LE features to neighbouring area West Wirral. He focuses on the areas of Hoylake, West Kirby, Heswall which comprise West Wirral, which was incorporated into Merseyside in 1974. Newbrook records that interview informants who had greater contact with Liverpool tended to have increased rates of LE features and that younger female speakers were leading the introduction of them into Wirral dialect. The factors which have contributed to the spread of LE features include migration to West Wirral from inner Merseyside as well as increased commuting into Liverpool. This had

the subsequent effect of speakers associating many nonstandard variants with "Scouse" when asked about language variation in the area. Newbrook also recorded generally positive attitudes towards LE, with speakers claiming that they used certain LE features, which constituted over-reporting of their actual usage, which is an example of what Trudgill (1972) calls 'covert prestige'. As a result, Newbrook predicts (1999, p.105) that West Wirral will become 'virtually indistinguishable from that of other parts of Merseyside'.

However, we can also observe more negative social values associated with "Scouse" that align with the low aesthetic rankings alluded to by Honeybone et al. For instance, an interview conducted as part of the BBC Voices survey (2005) between adolescent female speakers from Liverpool includes the following commentary. This occurred as part of a discussion where students were talking about their teacher's attitudes towards LE and the students' use of it in public while they were on a school trip:

> Don't talk like that, don't talk like you're from Liverpool, […] it's like she was saying to us [...] talk like you're from somewhere else [...] It's cos she just expects us to be posh [...] when we're not

There is a clear association with lower social class membership here, particularly in the description of LE speakers as 'not posh'. Additional negative commentary was also recorded by Cheshire and Edwards (1998, p.67), where one informant stated that 'they moan at me when I start to speak like a Scouser'. This has the effect of conveying the association of "Scouse" being 'incorrect', as well as a perceptual distinction of LE from "Scouse". This is also commented on by Crowley (2020, p.131), who discusses statements made by Frank Shaw, writer of a popular, humorous text that focuses on Liverpool English, *Lern yerself Scouse: How to talk proper in Liverpool*. Shaw stated a preference for the name "Liverpoolese", which he distinguishes from "Scouse", where he viewed the former more positively than the latter. This distinction is important, particularly in relation to the way "Scouse" is enregistered, as this label is associated with a specific characterological figure and certain social values. This is explored by Juskan (2018, p.14), who discussed the 'Scouse industry', which he describes as the third-order indexical linking of certain features with an urban, working-class identity. This is distinct from other varieties of LE, which are not as strongly associated with the working class. Juskan (2018, p.19) goes on to note that the economic and social decline of Liverpool in the latter half of the twentieth century may have contributed to the negative social values associated with Scouse:

It would not be surprising if an "internal image problem" impacted on people's (socio-)linguistic behaviour, i.e. if at least some speakers tried to tone down their local accent a bit because they felt it to be somewhat contaminated by the negative associations attached to the city

These associations appear to have persisted, particularly among younger (middle-class) speakers. Juskan (2017, pp.156-157) also discusses changing perceptions of Scouse according to age, as well as the notion that there are multiple Scouse varieties. He illustrates that older and middle-aged speakers tend to perceive 'stronger' and 'milder' Scouse accents, where stronger accents are associated with youth, social deprivation, and being unintelligible. Milder accents are particularly viewed by middle-aged speakers as being more positive and acceptable. Younger speakers have the least cohesive perceptions of Scouse, again defining 'stronger' and 'lighter' accents, and an association of stronger accents being unintelligible. Alongside this, younger speakers also display an additional discourse of authenticity, where some of the stronger accents are labelled as 'inauthentic' or 'plastic Scouse' due to a perception of overusing Scouse. Moreover, Juskan notes that his speakers primarily view themselves as being either Scousers or Liverpudlians, but younger speakers also have a secondary conceptual identity as 'northern' speakers, whereas middle-aged speakers see Scouse as culturally unique. Similar findings were also noted in Watt (2002: 58) in his discussion of identity among young people in the North East, where he records younger speakers increasingly orienting to a 'General Northern British English' identity alongside a Tyneside one. For the Wirral girls, we ultimately see perceptual distinctions between LE and "Scouse" as language varieties, as well as differing social values being indexed for different speakers according to age and social class.

These kinds of comments highlight that there is a stereotypical characterological figure associated with "Scouse" that indexes the social values listed above. The stereotypes surrounding Liverpool and "Scousers" are discussed by Boland (2008) who illustrates that we can see associations with social values relating to sense of humour, and a tendency towards being emotionally volatile. He goes on to explain that the latter association was widely broadcast on UK television in the 1990s as a result of comedian Harry Enfield's *Scousers* sketch, where the characters' catchphrase was 'calm down, calm down'. Boland also notes that there are physical characteristics associated with the "Scouser" characterological figure, which are almost universally male, include permed hair and moustache, and wearing either football shirts or tracksuits. This appears to have been similarly influenced by the

aforementioned Harry Enfield characters. Additional social values linked with stereotypical "Scousers" can be seen in the discourses of criminality and violence that Boland identifies in media discussions relating to the city and its inhabitants. He concludes that media outlets such as newspapers as well as news and entertainment television shows are important in the transmission of ideas about Liverpool, and that these have contributed to the city, and by extension speakers of LE, becoming associated with the social values mentioned above. Due to the strong associations of "Scouse" not only with the geographical area of Liverpool, but also both positive and negative social values, as well as the apparent distinctions between "Scouse" and other varieties of LE, our analysis focuses on the indexical links activated by "Scouse" for middle-class (MC) adolescent female speakers.

Data and setting

The data used in this paper was collected as part of a larger project funded by the University of Liverpool exploring the use of Scouse in educational contexts in the wider Merseyside area. The project focused on style-shifting, the social meanings of Scouse and the associated identities that are projected in the school context. Following previous studies on non-standard language use in education, we collected data from secondary schools as it has been observed that by the age of adolescence there is conscious differentiation between standard and non-standard language that often enables style shifting (Williams, 2007; Cheshire, 2005). Specifically, our data comes from two girls' grammar schools located in middle class neighbourhoods on The Wirral in Merseyside. Our data comprises classroom recordings and follow-up group interviews with students and teachers. In this paper we discuss audio recorded informal interviews with 11 female adolescent students (two groups of 4 and one group of 3), aged 13-14 who attend the same school. The interviews were conducted by a research assistant who was an English language undergraduate University student at the time of data collection. The research assistant initially recorded classroom-fronted talk over a period of around one month. During this time, she interacted with students in the classroom acting as a teaching assistant. The interviews took place after this initial period of classroom interaction, so students were therefore familiar with the broader scope of the project and with the research assistant herself. It should also be noted that the research assistant was born and lived in The Wirral. The students were interviewed on a voluntary basis in groups and were asked to offer their views and attitudes on Scouse in relation to school expectations but also when speaking with peers. Due to the informal and voluntary nature of the interviews, the

research assistant's input was minimal as most of the students were taking up the floor to answer questions and elaborate on theirs or other students' comments.

Salient "Scouse" features for the Wirral girls

When asked what language features students associated with Scouse, they explicitly mentioned multiple negation, *dead* as an intensifier, c.f. *dead good* 'very good', the plural second-person pronoun *yous*, and both TH-stopping and 't➔h' as exemplified in *dah* 'that'. Of these features, multiple negation is only discussed and doesn't actually occur in the students' speech. *Yous* only occurs once outside of the students' discussions of it, but the student who says it is referring to the other students in the group when she does (see extract 19 below), and *dead* only occurs 7 times in the interviews, as discussed below. There were 291 tokens of words where 't➔h' could potentially occur and 350 tokens of the variable (th) in the students' speech. As noted above, Honeybone and Watson (2013, p.319) point out that TH-stopping is a salient feature of LE, whereas Watson (2007) notes that TH-fronting is diffusing geographically throughout many varieties of British English and that LE is resisting this. Given the geographical proximity of the Wirral to Liverpool we might expect that these students would demonstrate these features, particularly in light of Newbrook's (1999) and Trudgill's (1999) suggestions that the Liverpool dialect area will spread to include the Wirral. Yet, the results illustrate that the trend towards LE appears to be being resisted, as shown in Figure 1, which highlights a clear preference for the standard variants [ð] and [θ] in all 3 environments. The "Scouse" variants which would indicate TH-stopping are clearly in the minority, although there are some instances of [d] and a 'stop-like' variant in the initial and intervocalic positions. The 'stop-like' variant is similar to that discussed in the work of Zhao (2010, p.2009), who describes a variant of /ð/ in American English that is most commonly preceded by either silence or a plosive consonant, but also occurs in 'various other segmental contexts, such as in word-initial /ð/ that is preceded by fricatives, affricates, liquids or vowels'. This variant is characterised by a shorter duration than /ð/ as well as observably distinct formant frequencies when compared to /d/, particularly when it occurs before a vowel where F2 for the 'stop-like' variant is lower. Zhao goes on to note that on a spectrogram 'stop-like' /ð/ exhibits a lack of acoustic energy followed by an acoustic burst. Although Zhao is discussing American English, the variant demonstrated by the Wirral students (extracted in Praat (Boersma and Weenink, 2017)) displays similar acoustic properties, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 1. Percentage of (th) variants in word-initial, intervocalic, and word-final positions

The second pattern illustrated by Figure 1 is that examples of TH-fronting variants occur in all 3 positions in words like *through, something,* and *maths*, where we see [f] in place of [θ], alongside *another* and *with* where [v] replaces [ð]. This suggests that the association of TH-stopping with LE has led to these students either avoiding or not adopting this feature to any large extent, opting instead for the supra-local TH-fronting forms that are diffusing to areas except Liverpool (Watson, 2007). Unlike with TH-stopping, though, TH-fronting was not explicitly commented on by students illustrating that this feature is below their levels of conscious awareness. The status of TH-stopping as a "Scouse" variant is explicitly highlighted by the students, as discussed below.

Figure 2. Spectrogram showing 'stop-like' word-initial /ð/ following word-final [d] in speed that

't→h' did not occur in the students' speech, where students showed a clear preference for the glottal stop in the word-final position, as this occurred in 99% of cases. This represents the opposite pattern to that found by Watson (2006, p.59) in LE, where he records 'not a single case of a glottal stop' in place of word-final /t/. The closest realisation to an instance of 't→h' was an example of preaspirated [t] demonstrated in the word *that*, which illustrated aspiration as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Spectrogram showing preaspiration of word-final [t] in that

This kind of preaspiration was also recorded by Watson (2007) in LE, where similar spectrographic results were observed for a 15-year-old working class female speaker. However, Watson (2006, p.56) also notes the possibility for what he labels 't→[ʔ]', or the glottal replacement of /t/ in LE as a result of broader processes of levelling and diffusion. This same pattern was also described by Beal (2010, p.80), who describes the widespread evidence for this phenomenon in urban varieties of British English and states that 'there is evidence of glottalisation in West Wirral, it is largely absent from Liverpool'. Watson concludes that the lower rates of t-glottaling in LE are a result of the strong sense of identity associated with the variety and that Liverpool speakers are resisting certain diffusing sound

changes. This is not the case with the Wirral girls' speech as we can see glottal stops occurring not only word-finally, but also intervocalically and is exemplified in words like 'little', 'started' and 'debating'. These are not considered here as 't→h' does not occur intervocalically in Scouse where lentition of /t/ would be more likely. The Wirral girls' production of intervocalic glottal realisation of /t/ further indicates that they are not orienting towards Scouse, and overall this illustrates that these students are orienting towards a more geographically diffuse young, urban identity in their use of features like TH-fronting and glottal replacement of /t/. The same pattern was noted by Beal (2009b, p.238) in her discussion of *Arctic Monkeys* singer Alex Turner in his use of traditional Yorkshire dialect features alongside more recent features in both his singing and spoken styles. She explains that TH-fronting and glottalisation of /t/ are strongly associated with a 'youth' identity and index 'modern-ness'. It is through the use of these features that Turner 'avoids the association of local features with traditional, old-fashioned values' and is able to portray his identity as a modern Yorkshire speaker. The simultaneous association with and distancing from overlapping identities is therefore demonstrated in the combination of certain features that have a longstanding association with 'traditional' Yorkshire dialect as well as others that are associated with modern, younger speakers. A similar pattern is demonstrated by the Wirral girls, although their distancing from Scouse is more explicit than Turner's from traditional Yorkshire dialect, as discussed further below.

The patterns in these data suggest that the more salient features associated with Scouse are not as prevalent in the speech of younger female adolescents in the Wirral. This is corroborated when we consider these speakers' realisations of an additional salient Scouse feature, the merger of NURSE and SQUARE (see also Watson and Clark, 2013; Honeybone and Watson, 2013; Juskan, 2017). Although this feature was not explicitly highlighted as a "Scouse" feature by the students, its salience as a marker of LE would likely mean that they would not demonstrate it based on the analysis above. However, analysis of these speakers' F1 and F2 measurements for NURSE and SQUARE illustrated that there is a degree of merging to be observed for these speakers, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Formant frequency plot for NURSE and SQUARE (normalised to Labov et al., 2006)

The pattern depicted in Figure 4 shows that the merging of these two vowels is incomplete for these speakers and is likely due to the fact that these students attend a grammar school in

a predominantly MC area. This has the effect of placing Scouse in the position of an ideological and semiotic other which is not associated with scholarly or societal success. Indeed, although there is some overlap demonstrated here, when only the range of F2 frequencies are considered we can see that, as Figure 5 shows, NURSE and SQUARE are essentially distinct for these speakers.

Figure 5. Degree of F2 fronting for NURSE and SQUARE (normalised to Labov et al., 2006)

When we consider the average F2 frequencies for NURSE and SQUARE as shown in Figure 5 we can see that they do not overlap to a large extent. This further highlights the merger of NURSE and SQUARE is incomplete for these speakers as well as the general trend away from stereotypical "Scouse" features demonstrated by these speakers. This is similar to Juskan's (2018) finding that youngest Scouse speakers have a steadily increasing F2 from formal to informal styles but some hypercorrection occurs in the most formal style for young working class (WC) speakers. This indicates that the merging of NURSE and SQUARE is above students' levels of conscious awareness, and they tend to avoid it when they are speaking more formally and paying more attention to their speech. The same pattern appears to be emerging for other stereotypically "Scouse" features such as TH-stopping and 't→h'. This can be explained by the students' comments regarding Scouse and how it relates to their notions of how language forms a part of their own identity.

Defining "Scouse" language features

On several occasions the students discussed which language features made them 'sound Scouse'. As mentioned above, one such feature that is strongly associated with Scouse is *dead* used as an intensifier. This occurs spontaneously in the students' speech, that is, they use this feature when they are not explicitly discussing Scouse. As a result, we see examples like 'in school normally I'm like dead loud', 'I'm like dead scared', 'I'm always like dead higher when you're talking to teachers', and 'at home I'm like dead quiet'. However, in extract 1 we can see this feature explicitly associated with Scouse.

1) it depends what you're saying really because when you're saying hello miss you don't sound Scouse but if you're saying like I'm dead good at this subject or something makes you sound Scouse

This is described as a feature of LE by Knowles (1973, p.41), who records it as 'an intensifier for adjectives and adverbs', listing 'dead good, dead carefully or dead slow' as examples. Crowley (2017, p.75) and Wales (2006, p.163) similarly list *dead* used in this way as being a Liverpool feature. TH-stopping and 't→h' are similarly described as "Scouse" features, as illustrated in extract 2.

2) when I'm writing she doesn't do that [ðat] then I'm speaking and I go she don't do that [dah] so it's more Scouse and you say *dah* [dah] instead of that

These features have also been recorded in relation to LE, particularly as a marker of Liverpool identity, which is described by Honeybone and Watson (2013, p.333) as a 'highly localised feature' that is 'not shared with other dialects in mainland Britain'. They go on to explain that this contributes to the local salience of TH-stopping, which they record in greater numbers for nonstandard respellings suggesting the pronunciation of word-initial [ð] as [d] than for [θ] realised as [t]. The same strong association of TH-stopping in this context with Liverpool is demonstrated in the Wirral girls' interviews. Later in this discussion one student goes on to mention *yous* as having the effect of making a speaker 'sound Scouse', as shown in extract 3.

3) yeah I mean sometimes it's like yous and some people do write yous as opposed to like you they'll say I'll see yous later

Like *dead*, *yous* is also recorded in LE (see Crowley, 2017, p.249-250; Beal, 2010, p.30; Wales, 2006, p.119), but only occurs once in the interviews when the students aren't discussing Scouse (see below). However, in addition to the association with Scouse, in extract 4 we can also see perceptions of *yous* in relation to notions of correctness.

4) and then you put yous then obviously that's incorrect grammar and you're gonna have to change it

Although the comment in extract 4 evaluates *yous* relative to the Standard English grammar, the association with incorrectness frequently appears alongside the association with Scouse. This can similarly be seen with the use of double negatives as illustrated in extract 5.

5) Student 1: you just used a double negative sentence that makes you sound Scouse stop using double negatives
Student 2: I don't know what a double negative even is

Student 1: well you have two negative words in a sentence like I don't want no homework that makes you sound Scouse

This extract also includes commentary illustrating the perception that negative concord should be avoided due to its association with Scouse. Unlike TH-stopping and t→h, negative concord is not widely associated with LE. Indeed, as Beal (2010, p.30) notes negative concord is rarer in varieties of English from the north of England than the south, although the construction is socially stigmatised. Because the use of negative concord is generally not regionally restricted (despite being rarer in the north), the students' association of it with Scouse likely stems from some of the negative social values they tend to associate with the variety more broadly.

Social values associated with "Scouse"

Much of the students' commentary on "Scouse" highlighted that they tended to associate it with negative social values.

6) my auntie she changed her voice because she lived in Liverpool and she worked really hard to get a full-on Scouse accent and it sounds really dumb
7) there's like a group that definitely speak properly and then there will be quite a few groups that speak full force Scouse

The association of Scouse with not speaking 'properly' is also illustrated in extract 8, where Scouse is explicitly linked with being the polar opposite of 'proper' speaking. The same student goes on to present additional commentary on this in extract 9, which indirectly implies that there is some covert prestige associated with Scouse.

8) some people do speak very very properly and other people do speak very very Scouse
9) Don't know why it's not cool to speak properly but you know

Although in 8 Scouse is negatively evaluated and presented as a sub-standard variety, in 9 its authentic nature is presupposed as being 'cool' implies, among others, being real. This is associated with covert prestige. In addition to the language features mentioned above, one further feature is described in extract 10, where it is explicitly associated with being annoying.

10) you know what really annoyed me cos my dad and my nan are from Liverpool and they say cook [kʉːk] and book [bʉːk] and oh it annoys me so much

The occurrence of fronted vowels in words like *cook, book, look* is attested in LE, particularly amongst older speakers (see also Watson 2007, p.358), so it is perhaps unsurprising that the student references her father and grandmother ('nan') here, rather than her associating it with speakers her own age. Watson goes on to illustrate that this realisation is recessive amongst younger speakers and that it is more frequently associated with working-class speakers. Given that the speakers in this study are younger female speakers from predominantly middle-class areas of the wider Merseyside area, we may suggest that the comment in extract 10 is evidence of an orientation away from a pronunciation that is strongly associated with traditional, working-class social values, since these are strongly associated with a stereotypical "Scouse" identity (Crowley, 2012; Juskan, 2018).

The comments shown in extracts 11-13 illustrate associations with somewhat less overtly negative social values, but which suggest a semiotic othering of "Scouse" and indicate that this is not the students' 'own' variety.

11) when they speak like fast Scouse I can't understand it
12) sometimes Scouse can slip into the barrier of being another language if you say it quick enough
13) there are a few girls in our class who have really thick Scouse accents and when they're like trying to read it they do put the accent on some of the words and it doesn't work sometimes

Although these extracts do not include explicit negative evaluation towards Scouse, attributing the variety to others (11 and 13) creates an 'us versus them' divide. At the same time, remarking its intelligibility (12) 'others' and 'exoticises' the dialect, establishing it as a variety that is external to them. The notion that a dialect can be seen as another language and unintelligible as a result is also discussed by Cooper (2019), whose informants made analogous comments about Yorkshire dialect. The main distinction with extracts 11 and 12 is that the students make explicit reference to a rapid rate of speech which contributes to the relative unintelligibility. Rapid speech rate is also more broadly associated with LE, as discussed by Juskan (2018, p.200, italics in original), who states that his informants 'seem to believe, as explicit comments revealed, that speaking *fast* is a typical feature of Scouse'. A further similarity with Cooper's findings is the description of a 'thick Scouse accent' in extract 13, which occurred in discussion of the appropriateness of using Scouse to read Shakespeare in class. Cooper notes that informants believe a 'thick' Yorkshire accent to be

similarly unintelligible, and they believe that using the dialect is inappropriate in certain contexts. The same kind of comment is observable in extract 13 with the perception that Scouse is an inappropriate accent for the reading aloud of Shakespeare.

The most striking finding to emerge from the interviews is the explicit denial of "Scouse" as it relates to the students' sense of identity. Extracts 14-16 illustrate a definitive orientation away from "Scouse" as well as the emergence of a narrative where that identity is applied to them by others. This has the effect of rendering "Scouse" as the dialect of an ideological out-group.

14) Student 1: you talk Scouse
    Student 2: I don't
    Student 1: yeah you do
15) people think that I'm Scouse but I'm not
16) I'm not a Scouser I weren't born in Liverpool and they all say that I am a Scouser

Similar commentary was recorded by Clark and Watson (2016, p.57), where one of their informants from Skelmersdale in Lancashire, which is 13 miles northeast of Liverpool, expressly states that he is not a "Scouser". This statement occurs as part of a discussion surrounding the informant's weekly trips to Liverpool, and that he has friends from the city, which often lead to him being mistaken for a Scouse speaker. His comment of 'I don't like being classed as a Scouser cos we're not' directly mirrors that of the Wirral students. Moreover, in order to negate their membership in the "Scouse" out-group, the students then go on to define membership characteristics. Being born in Liverpool is introduced as a key tenet of being "Scouse" in extract 16 and is subsequently reinforced as a criterion in extract 17 when the students discuss Clara, who is not present in the interview.

17) yeah Clara's a proper Scouser because she was born in Liverpool

This is similar to the 'genuine Geordie' commodities recorded by Beal (2009a), and in particular the 'Geordie birth certificate', which certifies the holder as a 'genuine Geordie', thus confirming that they were born in Newcastle. This same discourse of authenticity tied to being born in the city is seen here in relation to Liverpool.

Ultimately, we see an outright denial of Scouse as an identity and an explicit distancing of the variety from the girls' own sense of identity. However, they go on to explain that "Scouse" is

an identity that is often imposed on them, usually as a result of another speaker hearing their accent and identifying it as LE, as shown in extract 18.

18) I went to Stoke for like a football thing and they said are you from Liverpool so I think to other people from outside Liverpool we sound Scouse but to us it sounds different

This illustrates how the students are identified as "Scousers" by outsiders even though they don't identify as Scouse themselves. Yet, they don't go on to explain what their identity explicitly is, in a similar manner to Jansen's (2013, p.209) informants in Carlisle who could largely only define their dialect as being distinct from "Geordie" and Scottish English, stating that it was 'nothing really; at least not identifiable'. Although the students do go so far as to describe their dialect as 'not identifiable', they suggest that the identification of their dialect as "Scouse" is inaccurate, since they perceive it to be different from Scouse. Moreover, in extracts 19 and 20 "Scouse" emerges as a label more explicitly associated with a social identity rather than language features.

19) Student 1: everyone needs a Scouse friend

    Student 2: yous have got Clara I don't need to be Scouse

20) I can't be posh they all say you can't be posh like you're just a Scouser

In 19, we see a seemingly positive comment, namely a "Scouser" owns such personality traits that renders them a friend. This comment corresponds to previously attested attitudes towards Scouse which include friendliness and trustworthiness (Wales, 2006; Coupland and Bishop, 2007; Juskan, 2018). Although these positive attributes are acknowledged here, they are presented as belonging to an abstract 'other' rather than the speaker herself. This implication is followed up by the conflicting denial of the "Scouse" identity occurring alongside the use of *yous* which, as we have seen, has strong associations with the Scouse variety. The denial of the "Scouse" identity is explained somewhat by the comment in extract 20 which highlights associations with low social class and an overall negative evaluation of the label "Scouser". This illustrates the perception of "Scouse" as a social persona that is more prominently associated with certain social values than it is with a repertoire of language features. Based on the discussion above, we can conclude that this persona indexes 'dumb', 'annoying', 'improper', and 'not posh', which are characteristics these students seek to distance themselves from.

However, despite this we can see evidence of some positive social values indexed by Scouse for these speakers. For instance, we see a discourse of solidarity emerging in extracts 21 and 22.

21) it's like say you're in a different country and you hear someone with a Scouse accent you like exaggerate it more and hope that they recognise you

22) like sometimes there is pressure to sound a different way like yeah in front of friends and stuff it's usually to sound more Scouse

In 21, the student recognises that having access to Scouse can function as a solidarity marker between speakers who find themselves in a geographically foreign environment, highlighting the fact that in-groupness in terms of locality can be enforced in juxtaposition to an external other, namely a non-local outgroup. These comments relate to Llamas' (2001) work on identity in Middlesbrough, in particular her identity questionnaire question that asked informants whether they felt they had something in common with a person they overheard on holiday who spoke with their accent. Llamas explains that where informants answered this question in the affirmative it illustrated a strong and positive sense of local affiliation and identity. Moreover, the pressure to sound 'more Scouse' when speaking with friends highlights that there is some covert prestige associated with this variety for these speakers. So, these comments illustrate some positive regional affiliation in some contexts (i.e. when locality/ region or social contact matters) but they have an aversion to "Scouse" as an identity. This is likely due to the negative, low social class, urban social values indexed not necessarily by Liverpool, but by an ideologically-othered characterological figure embodied by "Scouse". The above comments, combined with those in extract 18 suggest that they want to avoid the associations with the Scouse identity, but not the accent of the Liverpool region. This is comparable to the findings of West (2015, p.322), who highlights that younger MC speakers from Ormskirk viewed both Liverpool and LE positively and were generally happy to have their accent mistaken for Scouse. However, the Wirral girls' comments only align with West's data in certain contexts, illustrating that their engagement with "Scouse" and its associated social values and personas is more nuanced and complex, as they appear to draw a distinction between Scouse as a repertoire of language features and the identity associated with the term "Scouser".

Indexical field for "Scouse"

To aid in our understanding of this distinction, we can make use of Eckert's (2008) concept of the indexical field. When we consider the indexical field for "Scouse" as shown in Figure 6, we see that the features the students identify as "Scouse" are different from what we might expect given the salience of some of the more widely-recognised "Scouse" features discussed by Honeybone and Watson (2013) and Juskan (2018). Indeed, negative concord in particular is associated with urban, working-class speakers more broadly, rather than with "Scouse" specifically. This illustrates semiotic distinctions between different varieties of LE that relate to notions of class as well as locality. "Scouse" clearly indexes urban, working-class status that correlates with multiple negative social values from which the students seek to distance themselves. Sounding as though they are 'from Liverpool' is observably more complex, though, as this semiotic category overlaps with "Scouse" to a certain extent. As a result, we see the students struggle to reconcile this, as they talk positively about sounding like they are from the Liverpool area, which occasionally includes sounding 'more Scouse' but is not necessarily dependent on it. It seems that for our Wirral students "Scouse" is a resource they can selectively dip in and out of. This practice corresponds to the shaping of their identity as a 'more Scouse' person or a 'non Scouser'.

Figure 6. Indexical field for "Scouse" where black = language features, grey = social values, capitals = social types; dotted line separates 'more "Scouse"' from 'less "Scouse"'

The pattern shown in Figure 6 also highlights the fluidic associations of "Scouse" features with varying social values. It illustrates that the students don't perceive being 'a Scouser' to be categorically negative, nor do they see being 'not a Scouser' as categorically positive. The use of the language features associated with being 'more Scouse' simultaneously index positive and negative social values depending on context. For instance, we see positive associations such as solidarity and authenticity, but these indexical links will only be activated when speaking with friends or on holiday in the hope of the accent being recognised in the former case and when a speaker is born in Liverpool in the latter. At the same time, we see negative associations such as sounding 'annoying' or being unintelligible, particularly where a speaker is trying to sound 'Scouse' and when Scouse speakers demonstrate a rapid speech rate, respectively. This is similar to Johnstone's findings (2017, p.297) where she explains that the social values indexed by the Yappin' Yinzer dolls can be understood in different ways. One evaluation is positive and draws on traditional working-class values. The

other is negative and 'is as an image of the stigmatized post-working-class Pittsburghers of the present'. The Wirral girls' evaluations of "Scouse" highlight their positive evaluations are associated with Liverpool and their negative ones with the stigmatised image of the "Scouser", which they view as an ideological 'other'. Additionally, there are shades of difference in the repertoires they associate with each, as talking like 'a Scouser' is linked with specific language features that are negatively evaluated more widely than just in Merseyside, such as negative concord, TH-stopping. However, sounding like they are from Liverpool is evaluated positively, does not attract any overtly negative comment, and may include more widely salient LE features.

Conclusions

The Wirral students' consistent denial of the Scouse identity shows that this is not something with which they themselves identify. In many of the cases described in this paper the students are having the label "Scouse" assigned to them, which prompts their denial of it. However, the fact that no self-identifying label emerges instead of "Scouse" for these students highlights both the strength of the "Scouse" identity as well as the positive associations students have for sounding like they are from Liverpool. It appears that their denial of "Scouse" is founded in a perceived lack of authenticity that results in applying that label to someone who was not born in Liverpool. Yet, in their in-group students are more accepting of 'sounding Scouse' because they understand that their variety is actually not Scouse, even though it is mistaken as such by outsiders. Being from Liverpool is not necessarily synonymous with being either "Scouse" or 'a Scouser' for these students, so in their own perception of their dialect they are able to avoid the negative social values they associate with those labels, whilst ideologically aligning themselves with the positive social values associated with Liverpool more broadly.

Two different and contrasting repertoires are therefore emerging from our findings: a Scouse repertoire which indexes solidarity, locality (Liverpool) and coolness and the repertoire of a "Scouser" which is associated with being unintelligible, non-posh and annoying. There is also no evidence that the students conceive of a 'northern' identity like the one described by Juskan (2018). This ultimately means that in the construction of their identity the Wirral girls orient towards the use of some features of the enregistered "Scouse" repertoire due to their positive evaluation of sounding like they are 'from Liverpool' specifically rather than from a broader 'northern' area. The adolescent girls' identities are shaped by selectively drawing

upon the Scouse repertoire to a greater or lesser extent, whilst at the same time by explicitly denying the repertoire of a 'Scouser'. It follows that the repertoire of a 'Scouser' is more concrete as it is directly linked to the Scouser characterological figure which they specifically and consistently reject; on the other hand, the Scouse repertoire is more abstract as it is synthesised by a pool of resources that the Wirral girls occasionally, but not consistently, draw upon and that do not necessarily include the most salient features of LE. This illustrates that there are multiple and embedded enregistered repertoires that are perceived to exist in the wider Merseyside region and highlights the need for further work in this area, since the social values associated with both "Scouse" and LE are more finely graded than those previously observed for "Scouse". This practice results in the construction of a fluid, multi-layered identity which can be labelled as 'sometimes Scouse/ more or less Scouse but not Scouser' that corresponds to the embedded repertoires that emerge for Scouse.

Acknowledgements

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[i] "Scouse" is defined by Wales (2006: 120) as being derived from "from *lobscouse* meaning 'hot-pot' to sailors". She goes on to note that, in the 19th century, "Scouse" was used as a "lingua franca" by people who worked on the waterfront, which eventually created a sense of in-group identity. Honeybone *et al*. (2007) also illustrate that the development of "Scouse" occurred between around 1830 and 1889 based on direct commentary from contemporary observers.

[ii] www.yappinyinzers.com