

Minority Report

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Introduction

Bias in science is unavoidable, and sociolinguistics is no different. In order to combat sources of bias, we must first identify its existence. With this study we aim to:

- Assess whether there is bias towards studying some varieties of English over others.
- Assess whether location in relation to a research institution affect frequency of study of a variety of English.
- Assess other possible geographical/research characteristics (e.g. the existence of corpora/average income of the area where the variety is spoken) that may affects the frequency of studies published.

Methods

In order to meet our aims we:

- Systematically searched for studies on each particular variety of native English as identified by Wikipedia.
 - Search Term: (WC=(Linguistics) AND ((ALL="name of variety") AND ((ALL=sociolinguist*) OR (ALL=varia*) OR (ALL=change))))
 - Document Type: All
 - Timespan: 1982-2019

Are there geographical biases in the study of language variation and change?

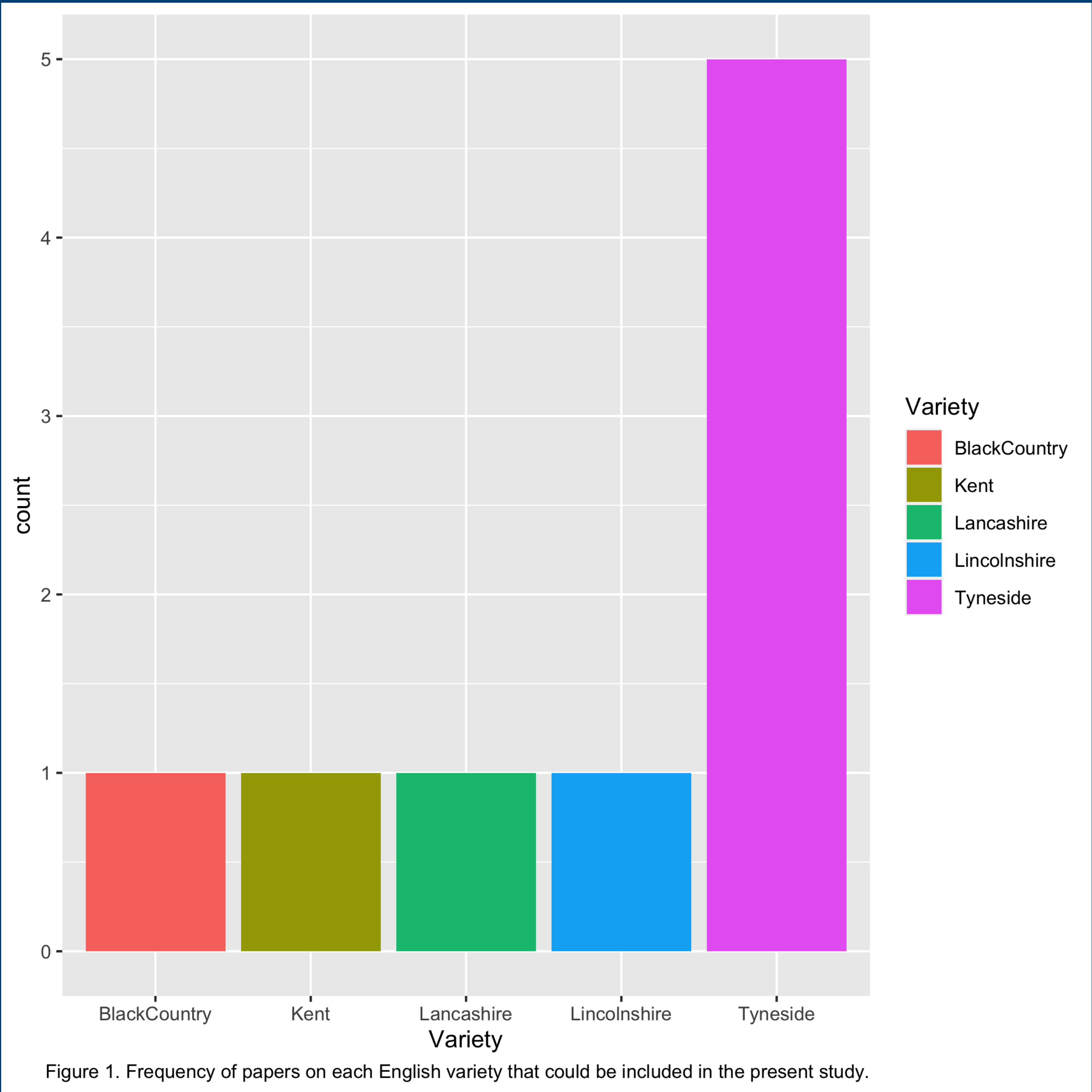
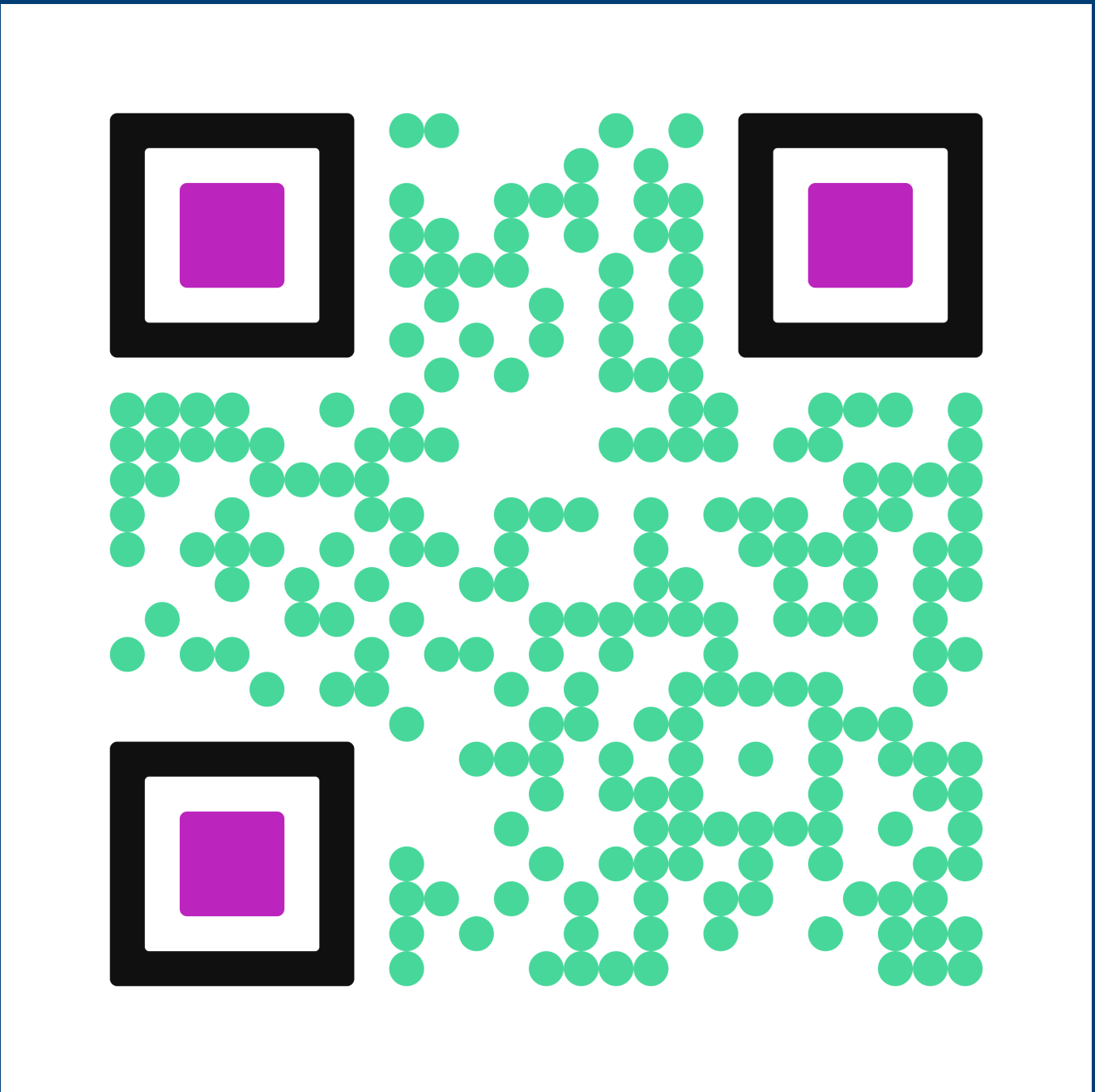


Figure 1. Frequency of papers on each English variety that could be included in the present study.



Scan to access materials for this study on Github.

Methods cont.

- The data from searches was pre-screened and removed if not relevant. Inclusion criteria:
 - the study assesses language variation or change
 - Studies must be studying the appropriate variety of English
- The remaining studies from each search were counted and the frequency of papers found per variety calculated.

Pilot results

Table 1. Poisson glm with area income and corpus existence as predictors of study frequency on a variety.

	Estimate	stand. error
Intercept	4.25	2.52
Area income	-0.14	0.09
Corpus?	0.39	1.35

Questions from the pilot

- How do we narrow down the search terms?
- What do we do about edge cases such as studies of change using anecdotal data?