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.
- whether location in relation to a research institution affect frequency of study of a variety of English.
- other possible geographical/research characteristics (e.g. the existence of corpora/average income of the area) that may affects the frequency of studies published.

Methods

In order to meet our aims we:

- Systematically searched Web of Science 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?

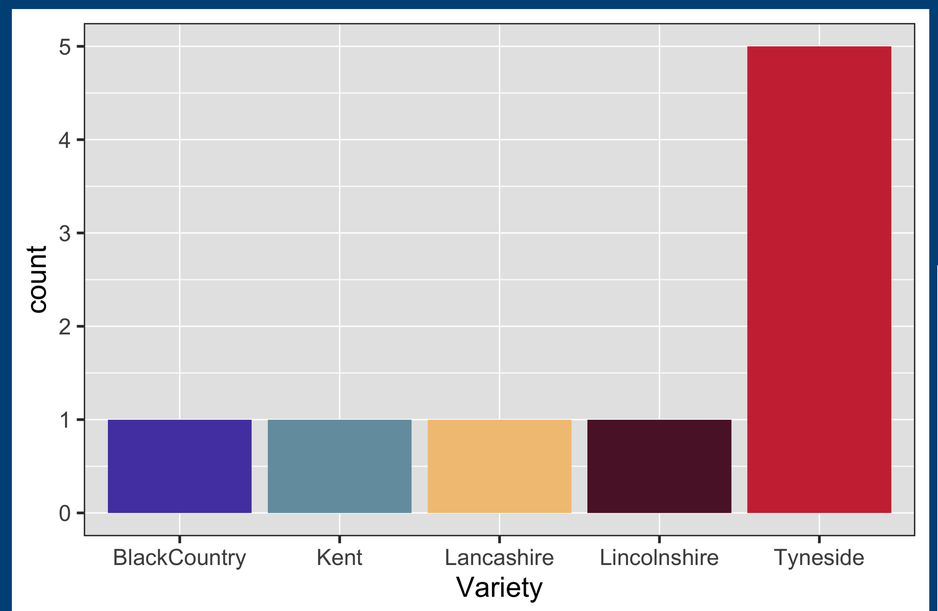

Figure 1.Frequency of papers by region (from pilot search), after pre-screening.

Scan to access materials for this study on Github.

Methods cont.

- pre-screened the resulting list and removed based on the inclusion criteria:
  - the study assesses language variation or change
  - study assesses the variety of English specified in the search
- 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?