

# Levelling versus Flipping in Tyneside English Strong Verbs

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## Patterns in Tyneside English Tenses

# Tyneside English Tenses

Dialect of English spoken in the North East of England.

On the surface, tenses in Tyneside English (TE) are identical to those in Standard English.

- Preterite does not require an auxiliary verb.  
“He **went** to see the orchestra at The Sage.”
- Perfect tenses require an auxiliary ‘have’ plus a “participle”.  
“She **has written** 3 novels.”

# Strong Verbs

- Verbs with distinct morphological forms for the preterite and participle.
  - sing
  - see
  - beat

Present	Preterite	Participle
<i>sing</i>	<i>sang</i>	<i>sung</i>
<i>see</i>	<i>saw</i>	<i>seen</i>
<i>beat</i>	<i>beat</i>	<i>beaten</i>

# Levelling of Verbal Paradigms

TE strong verb paradigms are reduced so that the simple past and perfect participle are the same (see Hughes & Trudgill, 1996; Beal, 2010)

- (1) a. swim<sub>Pres</sub> – swam<sub>Pret</sub> – swum<sub>Part</sub> (SE)  
       swim<sub>Pres</sub> – swam<sub>Pret</sub> – swam<sub>Part</sub> (TE)
- b. come<sub>Pres</sub> – came<sub>Pret</sub> – come<sub>Part</sub> (SE)  
       come<sub>Pres</sub> – came<sub>Pret</sub> – came<sub>Part</sub> (TE)

Speakers who level do not differentiate (morphologically) between the preterite and participle (see Dressler, 1987; Bybee, 1988, 2007)

# Morphological Flipping

“Flipping” differs in that there are two distinct forms for the preterite and perfect participle.

- (2) a.  $\text{sing}_{Pres} - \text{sang}_{Pret} - \text{sung}_{Part}$  (SE)  
       $\text{sing}_{Pres} - \text{sung}_{Pret} - \text{sang}_{Part}$  (TE)
- b.  $\text{ring}_{Pres} - \text{rang}_{Pret} - \text{rung}_{Part}$  (SE)  
       $\text{ring}_{Pres} - \text{rung}_{Pret} - \text{rang}_{Part}$  (TE)

Here, speakers still have two distinct forms but the inflectional paradigm mirrors that of the standard.

# Examples Tenses

## (3) Tyneside English Preterite (DECTE)<sup>1</sup>

- a. Yeah this is my phone that **rung**. [Y10i013b]  
‘Yeah this is my phone that **rang**’
- b. Shut up man. He only **drunk** nearly a full bottle of Jack Daniels. [u=2011\_SEL2091\_0884]  
‘Shut up man. He only **drank** nearly a full bottle of Jack Daniels.’

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<sup>1</sup>The examples in (3) have been taken from the Diachronic Electronic Corpus of TE (DECTE) (Corrigan et al., 2012).



# Example Tenses

## (4) Tyneside English Present Perfect (DECTE)

- a. We've **saw** the amateur production or the semi amateur production of Calamity Jane that was at the Tyne Theatre.  
 (2017\_017a)

*'We've **seen** the amateur production [...]*

- b. I've **beat** her once and she's **beat** me once.  
 [u=2012\_SEL2091\_003a]

*'I've **beaten** her once and she's **beaten** me once'*

# Research Goals

- ❶ Establish what patterns of flipping/levelling exist:
  - Which verbs level and which verbs flip?
  - What constraints are there on this “morphological flipping”?
- ❷ Are levelling patterns affected by different contexts
  - Is the preterite also used as a participle in other perfect tenses, e.g. past and modal perfects?

## Speaker Survey: Patterns of Flipping and Levelling

# Investigation One: Patterns of levelling in common strong verbs

- Survey investigating the acceptability of analogical levelling and morphological flipping in common strong verbs amongst speakers of Tyneside English.
- This investigation has two main aims:
  - 1 establish which verbs can undergo levelling and flipping
  - 2 whether flipping and levelling is perceived as more acceptable in some verbs than in others

# Method

- We conducted an online survey of 30 speakers of Tyneside English.
- They were presented with approximately 108 short sentences which the speakers were tasked to rate as acceptable or unacceptable.
- All speakers were native speakers of Tyneside English and grew up in the North East of England.

# Method

- Some example sentences included:
    - different types of perfect tense in which the preterite was used instead of the past participle, (5a-b).
    - past tense utterances in which the past participle was used instead of the preterite, (5c).
    - distracter sentences that should have the same grammaticality judgement in SE and TE, (5d).
- (5)
- a. He's gave her flowers every day this week.
  - b. He'd sang in choirs since he'd been a young boy.
  - c. Last week he thrown away all of his old clothes.
  - d. She was waiting to the bus.

# Verb Selection

The tested verbs were all strong, and were divided into 3 groups based on the classification system set out by (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002):

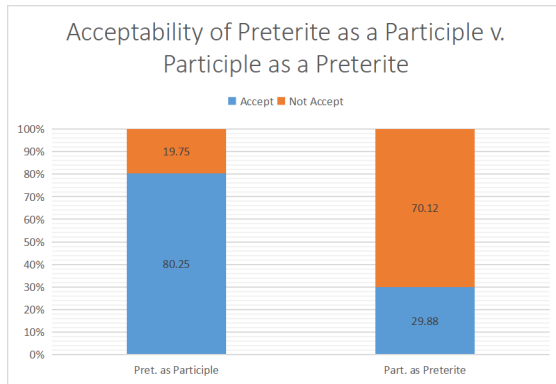
- **Ablaut Only** verbs – verbs that implement only a vowel change as their tense inflection.
- **-n** verbs – verbs that are monosyllabic and are affixed with *-n* on the standard participle.
- **-en** verbs – generally bi/polysyllabic and are affixed with *-en* on the standard participle.

# Verb Selection

Class	Verbs
<b>Ablaut Only</b>	come, drink, ring, run, sing
<b>-n</b>	do, draw, fly, go, know, see, throw, wear
<b>-en</b>	beat, break, choose, drive, eat, fall, forget, give, hide, shake, speak, steal, wake, write

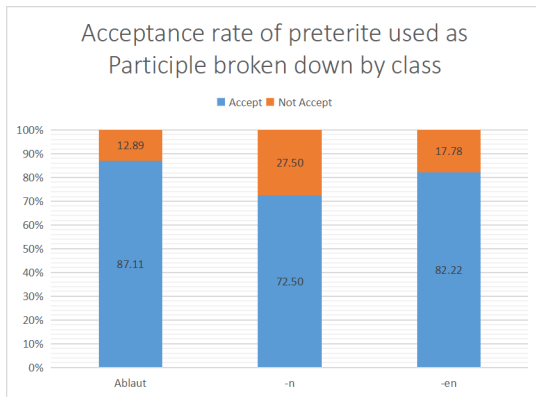


# Results



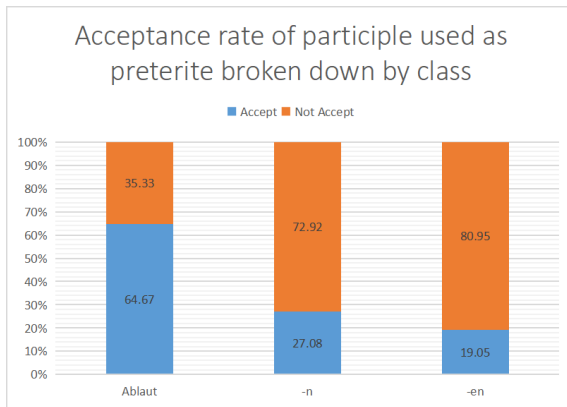
*Figure 1: Acceptance rate by tense form*

# Results



*Figure 2: Acceptance rate of preterite used as Participle broken down by class*

# Results



*Figure 3: Acceptance rate of participle used as preterite broken down by class*

# Investigation One Conclusions

- Levelling appears to be more widespread than flipping.
- Flipping is perceived to be most acceptable among the Ablaut Only verb class.
- -n and -en verb classes behave similarly – morphological constraint rather than phonological.

## Corpus Study: Contexts of Preterite to Participle Levelling

## Investigation Two: Contexts of preterite-based levelling

- This analysis focuses solely on data taken from the DECTE Corpus.
- No judgements from native speakers were used.
- **Goal:** investigate contexts where a speaker levels in one instance but uses the SE variation in another (partial levelling).

# Method

(6) Speaker 2007\_GWa:

- a. they would **have took** me I was accepted I passed the medical and everything (**Modal Perfect**)
- b. my daughter she's erm er well she's a nursery school head and er not now she's reti... she's **taken** early retirement (**Present Perfect**)

(7) Speaker 2007\_GMa:

- a. I once went to watch Newcastle United play Portsmouth only because I happened to be stationed in Portsmouth when I was doing my National Service and Newcastle **had came** down to play them (**Past perfect**)
- b. Our next door neighbour's got a daughter who lives in Australia and they **have** just **come** back from a month there (**Present Perfect**)

# Method

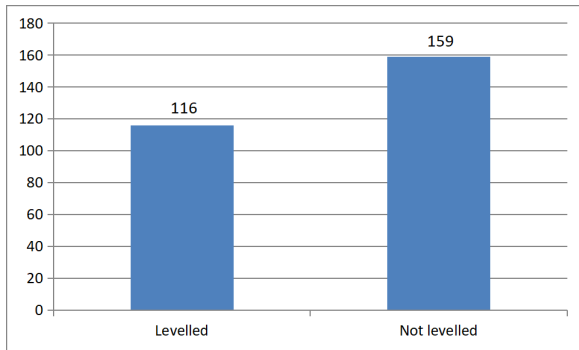
- We only tested data from speakers who use both the dialectal and standard tense forms – those who level in every context, or those who don't level at all, were excluded from the analysis.
- The verbs that we investigated were those that had the highest frequency and showed levelling in the corpus, namely *go*, *come*, *do*, *see*, *give*, *take*.
- Data comes from the interviews collected between 2007-2017 – 275 utterances from 92 speakers, 116 contain the non-standard levelled form (42%).



# Variables

- tense (present perfect, past perfect, modal perfect)
- clause (main, subordinate)
- person (1st, 2nd, 3rd)
- negation (negative, affirmative)
- final (final, not final)
- split (split, no split)

# Results



*Figure 4: Number of utterances showing levelling or no levelling*

# Results

## Mixed-Effect Model (Tagliamonte & Baayen, 2012)

	Estimate	Std. Error	Z Value	P-Value
(Intercept)	0.46401	0.59972	0.774	0.439103
Tense [Past Perfect]	0.07783	0.43033	0.181	0.856479
Tense [Pres. Perfect]	1.20536	0.35821	3.365	0.000766
Person [2]	-0.12732	0.48158	-0.264	0.791479
Person [3]	-0.05557	0.28008	-0.198	0.842731
Clause [Subordinate]	0.22949	0.28650	0.801	0.423136
Negation [neg]	0.30052	0.42761	0.703	0.482190
Finality [non final]	-1.12202	0.46910	-2.392	0.016763 *
Split [split]	0.11984	0.41362	0.290	0.772022

*Figure 5: Mixed Effects Model of Levelling Contexts*

# Results

Variable	Odds Ratio	CI Low	CI High
(Intercept)	1.5904369	0.4909457	5.1522800
Past Perfect	1.0809378	0.4650505	2.5124723
Present Perfect	3.3379602	1.6541443	6.7357957
2 Person	0.8804481	0.3425979	2.2626788
3 Person	0.9459479	0.5463412	1.6378362
Sub Clause	1.2579550	0.7174520	2.2056536
Negative	1.3505620	0.5841561	3.1224833
Sentence Final	0.3256215	0.1298417	0.8166046
Split	1.1273162	0.5011498	2.5358521

*Figure 6: Odds Ratios of Levelling Contexts*

# Investigation Two Conclusions

- The tense of the utterance appears to influence the likelihood that a speaker will level.
- More specifically, partial levellers are more likely to level in the past or modal perfect than in the present perfect.

## Final Conclusions And Discussion

# Conclusions

- Explored the differences between levelling and flipping:
  - flipping is most natural/acceptable when an ablaut only verb is used.
  - -n and -en verbs are more often levelled rather than flipped.
- For speakers who use both the standard and dialectal tense constructions, the variation they use is dependent on the tense
  - past and modal perfect more likely to show dialectal variant, whereas the present perfect is more likely to be the standard.

## Further Questions

- Why does the present perfect show a preference for the standard?
  - Does markedness play a role?
- Is it the -en and -n suffixes that block flipping?
  - Are theses affixes incompatible when used as a preterite.



# Thank You For Listening!

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