

Second-person plural forms in World Englishes

A Corpus-based Study



Irrelevant

7 hrs · 🌐



Good morning to everyone except
people who don't gain weight when
they eat whatever they want, I hate y'all

Outline

- ▶ Definition and classification of second-person plural forms
- ▶ Theoretical background
- ▶ Research questions
- ▶ Methodology and the corpus - GloWbe
- ▶ Results
- ▶ Conclusion

Second-person plural forms

"Frankly, if you ask me, *yous* are *all* mad."

(IE G daft.ie)



Second-person plural forms (2PP)

- ▶ Definition:

Second person pronominal form (*you*) to which some **linguistic material** is added in order to be interpreted as a plural in the context.

Examples: *yous*, *yez*, *yinz*, *you guys*, *y'all*, *y'uns*, etc.

- ▶ Linguistic material: **morpheme** or **NP** => **classification**

Classification of second-person plural forms

1. Morphological

Regular plural suffixation:

NP + -s (or -z)

- ▶ *Yous*
- ▶ *Youse*
- ▶ *Yiz*
- ▶ *Yez*
- ▶ *Yus*
- ▶ (...)

2. Analytic

You + NP (pl.)

- ▶ *You guys*
- ▶ *You all (y'all, yall)*
- ▶ *You ones (y'uns, yinz)*
- ▶ *You lot*
- ▶ *You girls*
- ▶ *You fellas*
- ▶ (...)

Classification of second-person plural forms

3. Double and triple marking

Combination of categories 1 and 2

- ▶ *Youse guys*
- ▶ *Yous all*
- ▶ *Youse lot*
- ▶ *All youse fellas*

Theoretical background

- ▶ 2PPs and the literature
 - ▶ Suffixed forms => Irish origin (Gaelic 18th century), especially reduced-vowel variants (*yiz/yez*) (Wright 1961; Cassidy 1954, Gramley and Pätzold 1992, Algeo 2001, Corrigan 2010)
 - ▶ Analytic forms? (work in progress)
- ▶ 2PPs in dictionaries and grammars
 - ▶ Hardly mentioned because "non-standard"
 - ▶ Very short entries or footnotes (see next slide)
 - ▶ No mention in learner's dictionaries (but *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* 2005)

2PPs in dictionaries and grammars

- ▶ Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (Biber *et al.* 1999: 330)

“The dialectal form *yous* is a second-person plural pronoun, filling the gap left by the absence of number contrast for *you* in modern standard English:

*I am sick to death of **yous** - all **yous** do is fight and ruck and fight - do you ever see a house like it Albert? (conv)”*

- ▶ Oxford Dictionary on-line

youse

Line breaks: youse

Pronunciation: /ju:z  /

(also **yous**)

PRONOUN

DIALECT

You (usually more than one person).

MORE EXAMPLE SENTENCES

'I don't know how youse drink it.'

'No wonder youse boys are always rioting;'

'I hope youse guys like it.'

- ▶ Collins English Dictionary on-line

yous or youse (ju:z)

- ▶ Definitions

pronoun

(not standard) refers to more than one person including the person or persons addressed but not including the speaker ⇒ *yous have all had it now, I'm fed up with yous*

- ▶ Example Sentences Including 'yous'

I got a nice round of applause and thank yous from the other passengers and a thank you with four bottles of wine from the crew.
NEW ZEALAND HERALD (2003)

Functionality of Codification of Plurality

1. Youse



Second Person Plural.

A grammatical necessity which is sadly lacking in the English Language.

French has "vous" (informal and formal) and German has "ihr" (informal) and Sie (formal).

The southern USA version is "you all"

Youse are too many to all get into the one car.

by baligecko September 21, 2010

<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Youse>

Research questions

- ▶ Do we **know enough** about 2PPs in English?
 - ▶ Frequencies and distribution
 - ▶ Functions: is it all about number marking?
 - ▶ Collocates and patterns: semantic preference? Semantic prosody?
 - ▶ Pragmatics
- ▶ Is there a **grammaticalisation/pragmaticalisation** process going on?
- ▶ Are there any **world-wide trends** in the use of 2PPs?

The corpus: GloWbe

- ▶ 1.9 billion words
- ▶ Mark Davies (Brigham University), 2013
- ▶ Snapshot corpus
- ▶ 20 varieties of English
 - ▶ Inner Circle (Kachru 1985) - 6 varieties: AU, IE, GB, US, NZ, CA
 - ▶ Outer Circle (Kachru 1985) - 14 varieties: IN, LK, PK, BD, SG, MY, PH, HK, ZA, NG, GH, KE, TZ, JM
- ▶ Websites + blogs

Methodology

- ▶ Qualitative analysis of instances of 2PPs (Frequencies, functions, syntax and semantics) in a single variety
- ▶ Comparison between varieties
- ▶ Comparison between Inner and Outer Circle
- ▶ Control sample (*you*)
- ▶ Collocates and patterns => AntConc
- ▶ Statistics
 - ▶ T-score (Variety vs Average; IC vs OC)
 - ▶ Chi-square (2PP vs *you*)

Results (suffixed 2PPs)

▶ Frequencies

- ▶ Most frequent variants: *yous* and *youse* (*yous(e)*) (0.3 pmw)
- ▶ All 20 varieties show instances of *yous(e)*
- ▶ More frequent in IC rather than OC (0.34 vs 0.09 pmw)
- ▶ IC: more frequent in IE and NZ (0.8* pmw, 0.5 pmw)

Results (suffixed 2PPs)

▶ Functions

▶ **Plural** - more than two

I adore yous (GB G)

▶ **Singular** - emphatic/empathetic (see pragmatics)

▶ - *Are yous the new librarian?*

- *Who?*

- *Yous. (IE G)*

▶ **Possessive** - determiner/pronoun

You made my day by helping realize how much greater my world view is than yous (US G)

It ain't worth yous health (MY G)

Results (suffixed 2PPs)

- ▶ Distribution of functions

- ▶ IC => PL < SG < Poss(A/P)

- ▶ OC => PL < Poss(A/P) < SG [*institutional function playing a role?*]

Results (suffixed 2PPs)

▶ Collocates

- ▶ Prepositions: *of** (cf patterns), *to**, *for** => **Benefactive** (cf. Pragmatics)
- ▶ Verbs: *keep**, *hope**, *love*, *wish*, *enjoy*, *will*
 - Keep youse posted
 - Hope youse enjoy catching up with Brian (AU)
 - Love youse all!
- ▶ Conjunctions: *if**
- ▶ Negation*

▶ Structures

- ▶ Partitive: *some of youse*, *those of youse*, *any of youse*, *the two of youse*
- ▶ Hypothetical/conditional (+ negation): *if youse don't do it now, you'll never do it again*

Results (suffixed 2PPs)

- ▶ **Semantic traits associated with 2PPs**

- ▶ Benefactive
- ▶ Involvement
- ▶ Commitment
- ▶ Future
- ▶ Condition (negative)

=> **Pragmatics of 2PPs**

Results (suffixed 2PPs)

▶ Pragmatics

▶ Identification

▶ Attention-getting devices:

Oh youse. Stop giving her a hard time. (US)

No more games yous. (US)

▶ Social categorisation (*yous(e)* + NPpl.) => associativeness/negative connotation

Youse Anglo-bastards (AU)

▶ Expression of positive and negative politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987)

Results (suffixed 2PPs)

▶ Pragmatics

- ▶ Expression of **positive politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987)** =>

Face enhancement

- ▶ Compliments: Yous fuckin' rock (US)
- ▶ Congratulations: Well done to yous and more success (IE)
- ▶ Gratitude: Thank youse (IE)
- ▶ Blessings: May God give yous strength (GB)
- ▶ good wishes: Good luck to yous (GB)
- ▶ Forgiveness: I forgive yous (MY)
- ▶ Participation/sharing: I'm with youse guys on this (SG)

Results (suffixed 2PPs)

▶ Pragmatics

- ▶ Expression of **negative politeness** (Brown and Levinson 1987)

Avoiding face-threatening acts - Rituals of departure (Leech 2014)

Main semantic trait: promising (involvement + future)

Linguistic expression: routinised expressions and formulae

- ▶ See youse there (AU)
- ▶ Let youse know (IE)
- ▶ See youse (US)
- ▶ Will keep yous posted (GB)

Results (suffixed 2PPs)

- ▶ Differences between *yous(e)* and standard *you*
 - ▶ *Yous(e)* more likely to be plural than *you* + pragmatically charged
 - ▶ *You* more likely to be singular and impersonal (generally not pragmatically charged)

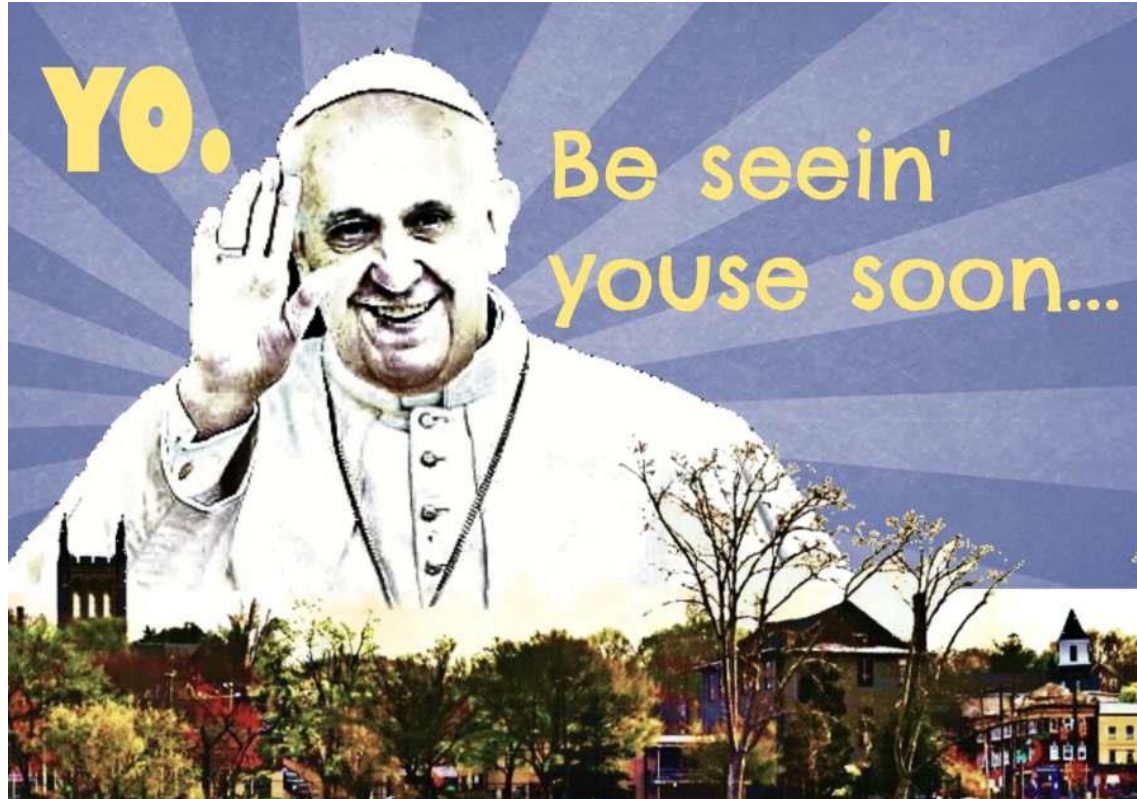
Conclusion

So, when do we use suffixed 2PPs?

- ▶ Express plurality
- ▶ Emphatic identification of referents (or class of referents)
- ▶ Positive politeness
- ▶ Negative politeness
- ▶ Spoken interaction => Social comity

Can we talk about **pragmaticalisation**? Yes

Grammatical marker (PL) > Pragmatic marker (Emphasis + Politeness)



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Thank you!

Questions?

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