Sofia Lampropoulou, Paul Cooper, Camila Montiel McCann
& Rachel Byrne (University of Liverpool, UK)

The "Scouse bird"
Enregistered dialect, gender and social identity on *Twitter*

This study explores the persona of a "Scouse bird", a female, working class speaker of Scouse with a set of traits and associated social values (Agha 2003) that has recently become available for public consumption. Liverpool English or Scouse is one of the most recognisable varieties of the British Isles and, at the same time, one of the most stigmatised ones (Coupland & Bishop 2007). Social values that came to be associated with Scouse include being working-class, urban, and male (Crowley 2012). Awareness of these by English speakers even outside Liverpool points to the enregisterment of the variety, namely "processes through which a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms" (Agha 2003: 231). Such registers become associated with a social identity often via "characterological figures" (Agha 2007: 177) that is social personae who are linked with its usage. An archetypal "Scouser"' is a male, working class persona from Liverpool that has been popularised via phrasebooks and TV shows (Crowley 2012) and enregistered as embodiment of "real" working-class masculinity (Moita-Lopes 2006) via links to, among others, football, competitiveness, aggression and associations with manual labour and strength. Research by Cooper & Lampropoulou (2021) shows that female middle-class adolescents from the wider Merseyside react to this stereotype by distancing themselves from it.

We focus on data from *Twitter* supplemented by metapragmatic comments from interviews with Liverpool speakers to explore the emerging "Scouse bird" persona in juxtaposition with the more widely available male "Scouser". We address the language features and respective social values that represent a female Scouse speaker. We then focus on the interaction between gender and social class in the portrayal of a female Scouser in Liverpool speakers' and *Twitter* users' metapragmatic comments. We argue that the "Scouse bird" conforms to a hegemonic postfeminist identity comprising aspects derived from feminism and normative femininity (Lazar 2014). While male and female Scouse personas seem to share similar dialect features, the "Scouse bird" is represented or talked about in terms of normatively feminine traits, including a conventionally feminine appearance, heterosexuality, consumerism, and sexualisation. This is commodified and becomes available for public consumption via social commentary, branding, and pop culture. We conclude that the links between the Scouse dialect, social class, and gender are deeply enregistered, pointing to multiple enregistered repertoires pertaining to both masculinity and femininity.

References
Agha, Asif. 2003 The social life of cultural value. *Language & Communication* 23(3–4). 231–273.
Agha, Asif. 2007. *Language and social relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cooper, Paul & Sofia Lampropoulou. 2021 "Scouse but not Scouser?" Embedded enregistered repertoires for adolescent girls on *The Wirral*. *Language & Communication* 78. 109–121.

Coupland, Nikolas & Hywel Bishop. 2007. Ideologised values for British accents. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 11(1). 74–93.

Crowley, Tony. 2012. *Scouse: A social and cultural history*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Lazar, Michelle. 2014. Recuperating feminism, reclaiming femininity: Hybrid post-feminist I-dentity in consumer advertisements. *Gender and Language* 8(2). 205–224.

Moita-Lopes, Luiz P. 2006. On being white, heterosexual and male in a Brazilian school: Multiple positionings in oral narrative. In Anna De Fina, Deborah Schiffrin & Michael Bamberg (eds.), *Discourse and identity*, 288–313. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.