



**2nd International Workshop on
Social Networks and English Sociohistorical
Linguistics**

**Palacio de Valdeparaíso, Almagro (Spain)
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**Non-standard 18th century London language as evidenced by
shopkeepers', footmen and coachmen's bills**

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This paper considers some morphological and phonological features of non-standard London English as evidenced by tradesmen and servants' bills. People who shopped formed a social network, albeit a large one (although the main shopping areas of London were far, far smaller than today). My reason for claiming this is that shoppers who participated in the network could read the city's shopping streets by making sense of buildings' signs and multiple names, such as *the Indian Queen and Tea Cannister* (Grocers Alley, Poultry, 1737), for example. They knew that the sign of the Indian Queen signified a mercer, but as the current business was that of a china and glass dealer they would have been able to infer that the premises was formerly owned by a mercer and now also sold tea and coffee, a pairing possible in the eighteenth century although less likely today. However my main focus is on those who billed the customer, be they shopkeepers or servants (especially footmen and coachmen). They too participated in a social network in that their bills form a single text type, which this presentation will examine. Typically, such bills contain lexical, morphological and phonological information about the non-Standard southern English of the day. I will suggest that these bills provide us with information about the speech of the upper working classes, and I will focus on morphology (such as zero-marked possessives) and phonology (such as front-glide insertion).

Session 5 (17:00-18:15)

Salón del Conde de Valdeparaíso (2nd floor)