



*Invitation to all faculty, staff and students*  
*This event is sponsored by School of Linguistics and Language Studies*

**Work that -S!**  
**Drag queens, gender, identity,**  
**and traditional Newfoundland English**

**Gerard Van Herk**  
Assistant Professor of Linguistics  
Canada Research Chair in Regional Language and Oral Text  
*Memorial University*

**Monday, February 8, 2010**

**11:45 – 12:45 p.m.**

**Room 415 Southam Hall**

*(Light lunch will be served)*

In this talk, Dr. Van Herk discusses the adoption and adaptation of a traditional Newfoundland English speech feature, non-standard verbal *s*-marking (as in *We knows a lot of people* or *I loves it*), by social groups not usually associated with traditional dialect: young urban women and drag queens. Using quantitative data from sociolinguistic interviews and language surveys, he shows that the form is both decreasing in frequency and progressing from a strictly grammatical function to a resource for the performance of gender and affiliation with local and urban identities.

Gerard Van Herk is an Assistant Professor of Linguistics and Canada Research Chair in Regional Language and Oral Text at Memorial University. He received an M.A. in Applied Language Studies from Carleton University and a Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Ottawa. Before joining the faculty at Memorial University, Dr. Van Herk held visiting positions at the University of Ottawa and at York University. His research interests are in sociolinguistics, language change, and varieties of English.