

NEWSLETTER OF THE
AMERICAN DIALECT SOCIETY

NADS 31.2

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NADS is sent in January, May and September to all ADS members. Send news and queries to editor and executive secretary Allan Metcalf, English Department, MacMurray College, Jacksonville, Illinois 62650, phone (217) 479-7117 or (217) 243-3403, e-mail AAllan@aol.com. Administrative assistant, Sarah Hitt. See Page 3 for membership information.

ADS Web site (Grant Barrett, webmaster):
<http://www.americandialect.org/>

ADS-L discussion list: To join, send to
Listserv@uga.cc.uga.edu the message:
Sub ADS-L Your Name

From: AMERICAN DIALECT SOCIETY

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Address Service Requested

FIRST CLASS

Culture, Technology, Science, Humanities—and Fellowships

By Joan Hall

ADS Delegate to ACLS

Who owns culture? If information is not free, who should pay for it? If people are sloppy writers of e-mail messages, will they also be careless authors of e-books?

Two days in Philadelphia April 29–May 1 at the annual meeting of the American Council of Learned Societies did not provide answers to these questions, but there was good discussion and, as the diplomats say, “a frank exchange of views.”

Several provocative lectures sparked lively conversations among the delegates. Thomas Trautmann, Director of the Institute for the Humanities at the University of Michigan, gave us a world tour to illustrate varied notions of ownership of culture: the writer of a dictionary of Telegu, for instance, felt that a gift of tax-free land from the East India Company was a better recognition of his scholarship than a simple assurance of copyright (the land, after all, could be passed on to his son); in Melanesia, tradition dictates that songs, dances, and rituals can be traded or even purchased from other tribal groups, resulting in a system of franchises to perform particular rites.

In our own culture, the question of what should be private property and what belongs to the public domain is clearly unresolved as we struggle with balancing the rights of creators and users of cultural materials. A talk by Richard Ekman, secretary of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, addressed some of these contemporary problems with the central question, “How can we ensure that decisions are made based on scholarly and technical considerations as well as simply on the bottom line?”

The public session was devoted to the topic of linkages between “The Humanities and the Sciences,” addressed by a physicist, a historian of science, and a philosopher. We heard about the need of both the poet and the physi-

cist to find felicitous images and exact words; we were told that the scientist, too, must be sensitive to differences in style, presentation of evidence, exact terminology, and effective use of metaphors; and we heard an engaging analysis of the changing self-image of the scientist over the last few centuries. It was quite a leap, for instance, for scientists to acknowledge that an artist’s rendering could be a more effective medical teaching tool than a photograph, even if the photo were a more technically accurate representation.

As usual, a highlight of the meeting was the Haskins Lecture, this year given by Clifford Geertz of the Institute for Advanced Study. Riddled with witty, self-deprecating one-liners, the talk was not only a personal history but a survey of an amazing period in America’s history, “the degreeing of America” made possible by the GI Bill. For Geertz that led to Antioch College, graduate school at Harvard, an ACLS fellowship, fieldwork in Indonesia, and a long career of distinguished teaching and fieldwork. He credited many of his successes to being able to “catch the wave” at crucial points in his career, something he laments is much more difficult in today’s academic world.

For ADS members and other potential recipients of ACLS fellowships, the news from President John D’Arms is good: both the number of fellowships and the amounts offered have been increased. For details, see the ACLS web page at <http://www.acls.org>.

DSNA Meets in Berkeley

As this issue goes to press, the Dictionary Society of North America is convening at the University of California, Berkeley, for its biennial meeting May 27–29.

For DSNA information see <http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/dsna/index.html> or write Executive Director **Luanne von Schneidmesser**, 6131 Helen C. White Hall, 600 North Park St., Madison WI 53706.

Call for Chicago in Y2K

August 16 is the deadline for proposals for the ADS annual meeting in the first year beginning with a 2: January 6–9, 2000, in Chicago with the Linguistic Society of America.

E-mail is the preferred form for abstracts, and 250 words or less is the preferred length. Send abstracts to Program Chair **Dennis Preston**, preston@pilot.msu.edu, with a copy to Executive Secretary **Allan Metcalf**, AAllan@aol.com. If you prefer s-mail, send two copies to Metcalf at the address on the cover of this newsletter.

Words of the Year, Decade, Century, and Millennium: We will have a once-in-a-thousand-years opportunity to discuss and vote on all four. Send nominations and comments to our New Words Committee chair, **Wayne Glowka**, Dept. of English and Speech, Georgia College and State Univ., Milledgeville GA 31061; wglowka@mail.gcsu.edu. For information on our previous choices, see the January newsletter or <http://www.americandialect.org/woty.shtml>.

Hotel: Palmer House Hilton in the Loop of downtown Chicago. Ask for LSA rates of \$83 single or double (\$25 each additional person). Phone 1-800-hiltons or (312) 726-7500, or write The Palmer House, 17 East Monroe Street, Chicago IL 60603-5605.

Registration: As guests of LSA, we are expected to register with them, at the LSA members' rate. In return, we get the LSA Meeting Handbook and admission to LSA sessions. *Dec. 6* is the deadline for preregistration by check (\$60; \$25 for students and unemployed) to LSA Secretariat–Annual Meeting, 1325 18th St. NW Suite 211, Washington DC 20036-6501. For more information, see www.lsadc.org.

Future LSA meetings: 2001 Washington, D.C., Grand Hyatt; 2002 San Francisco, Hyatt Regency; 2003 TBA; 2004 Boston, Sheraton.

ADS at MLA

At the Modern Language Association convention Dec. 27–30, also in Chicago, ADS is sponsoring two sessions:

• *Engendered Language.* Chair: **Michael Adams**, Albright Coll.

1. "Happy Campers: Wordplay and Humor in Homosexual Slang." **Leonard R. N. Ashley**, Brooklyn College CUNY.

2. "Insidious Humor and the Construction of Masculinity." **Peter F. Murphy**, Murray State U.

• *Words of the Century and Millennium.* Chair: **Allan Metcalf**, MacMurray Coll.

1. "Notable Words of the Twentieth Century in American English." **Allan Metcalf**.

2. "Notable Words of the Past Thousand Years in the English Language." **Dennis Baron**, U. of Illinois, Urbana.

Future MLA meeting: 2000 Washington, D.C.

For information see www.mla.org or write MLA, 10 Astor Place, New York NY 10003.

Journals at Home at Duke

The move from Tuscaloosa to Durham is complete. From now on all back issues of *American Speech* and *PADS*, as well as all forward ones, will emanate from Duke University Press. So will the dues notices, so if you haven't paid for 1999 or have a question or a claim, address:

Marsha Emmons, Journals Fulfillment, Duke University Press, Box 90660, Durham, NC 27708-0660; phone 1-888-387-5687 or 919-687-3617; fax 1-919-688-2615; mwe326@duke.edu.

Duke accepts Visa, Mastercard, American Express, and bank wire transfers.

Anything sent to the ADS office in Illinois, however, won't be lost; it will be promptly forwarded to Duke. And if you have a membership problem Duke can't resolve, let the executive secretary know.

Methods X to Be Found in Newfoundland in August

The triennial conferences on Methods in Dialectology are always milestones in our field, as well as occasions for leisurely collegiality in idyllic environs. Methods X, August 1-6, 1999, will be held at Memorial University, St. John's, Newfoundland, not too far from where the first conference was held, at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, July 19-26, 1972. Since then it has been to Wales and Germany as well as more westerly in Canada.

This year's theme is "Historical connections: transported varieties and their origins." Full information about the program, registration, accommodation, travel, and other matters, along with abstracts of the papers, is at <http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~methodsx/>.

For information the old-fashioned way write Methods X Organizing Committee, Linguistics Department, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland A1B 3X9, Canada, or e-mail methodsx@mun.ca.

Here is a small sampling of what you'll find on the website and at the conference. In all, there will be more than 100 presentations.

MONDAY, AUGUST 2

"The Demographics of Accommodation to the Northern Cities Shift in Michigan." **Dennis R. Preston, Betsy E. Evans, Rika Ito** and **Jamila Jones**.

"Using the Past to Explain the Present: Tense and Temporal Reference in Early (African) American English." **James Walker**, U. of Ottawa.

"Chance as Cause of Language Variation and Change." **Ron Butters**, Duke U.

"Major Social and Regional Patterns of American English." **Bethany K. Dumas**, U. of Tenn.

"From Mississippi in America to Mississippi in Africa: The Search for Historical African American English." **John Singler**, New York U.

"The Ain't Complaint: Negation That Isn't in Early African-American English Letters." **Gerard Van Herk**, U. of Ottawa.

Plenary Address I. **Shana Poplack**, U. of Ottawa: "Establishing Genetic Relations Among Transported Varieties."

TUESDAY, AUGUST 3

"Accountability in Reconstructing Verbal -S." **Michael Montgomery**, U. of South Carolina.

"Settlement History in the United States as Reflected in *DARE*: The Example of German." **Luanne von Schneidmesser**, *DARE*.

"Sett Out Verry Eairly Wensdy': An Analysis of the Grammar and Spelling in the Lewis and Clark Journals." **Lawrence M. Davis**, Wichita State U., **Charles L. Houck**, Ball State U., and **Clive Upton**, U. of Leeds.

Plenary Address II. **Salikoko Mufwene**, U. of Chicago: "The Founder Principle Revisited: Rethinking Feature Selection into North American Englishes."

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4

"Computer Plotting and Mapping and Related Statistical Processing of Areal Linguistic Data." **William A. Kretzschmar, Jr.**, U. of Georgia.

Plenary Address III. **Sali Tagliamonte**, U. of York: "Back to the Roots: What British Dialects Reveal about North American English."

THURSDAY, AUGUST 5

"Regionality as an Independent Variable." **Jack Chambers**, U. of Toronto.

"Y'all/You All: Regional and Social Distribution." **Natalie Maynor**, Mississippi State U.

"On the Comparability of American Linguistic Atlas Data: A Case Study in the Southeastern United States." **Thomas Schoenweitz**, U. of Bayreuth.

Plenary Address IV. **Merja Kytö**, Uppsala U.: "Old Language in a New Setting: Forces and Directions of Development in Early American English."

"The Rhetoric of Region: Uses of Southern Belle Speech by Contemporary Texas Women." **Barbara Johnstone**, Carnegie Mellon U. and **Judith Mattson Bean**, Texas Woman's U.

"Reconsidering Rural Dialects: A Historic and Ethnographic Approach." **Natalie Schilling-Estes**, Old Dominion U.

Plenary Address V. **Peter Trudgill**, U. de Fribourg: "New-Dialect Formation and Drift: The Making of New Zealand English."

FRIDAY, AUGUST 6

"Rhyming Slang World-wide: Homegrown or Imported?" **Manfred Görlach**, U. of Köln.

Plenary Address VI. **Walt Wolfram**, North Carolina State U.: "Principles of Donor Dialect Attribution."

Cats, Acadia, -ology, Shakespeare, Baseball, Structure, Schools

If you have recently published a book, send pertinent information to Executive Secretary Allan Metcalf (address on cover), and we'll mention it here.

Christine Ammer. *Cool Cats, Top Dogs, and Other Beastly Expressions.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999. 272 pages. ISBN 0-395-95730-3. A thousand animal words and phrases and their sources.

Christine Ammer. *Fighting Words from War, Rebellion, and Other Combative Capers.* Chicago: NTC/Contemporary Books, 1999. 284 pages. ISBN 0-8442-0285-1. \$15.95. Second edition of 1,000 terms from military history.

J.K. Chambers and Peter Trudgill. *Dialectology.* 2nd edition. Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics. Cambridge University Press, 1998. 201 pages. ISBN 0-521-59646-7 (paperback). The old standby, continuously in print since 1980, reappears with brand new sections on dialectometry, multivariate methods and multidimensional mapping, new data illustrating implicational scales, age-correlated variables and lexical replacements, and wide-ranging citations reflecting the revitalization of the field since the first edition was published.

Dale Coye. *Pronouncing Shakespeare's Words: A Guide from A to Zounds.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998. 724 pages. ISBN 0-313-30655-9. Cloth \$99.95. A pronouncing guide to all the "hard" words in Shakespeare, arranged by act and scene in the order they appear. Includes a list of the 50 most common "hard words" and all proper names. Based in part on a survey of professors from the US, UK, and Canada with regional differences noted.

Paul Dickson. *The New Dickson Baseball Dictionary.* Harvest Books (Harcourt Brace), Feb. 1999. 576 pages. ISBN 0-15-600580-8 (paperback) \$20; 0-15-100380-7 (hardcover) \$35. An encyclopedic reference to more than 7,000 words, names, phrases, and slang ex-

pressions of the national pastime. Revision of his 1991 book with updated terms, new definitions, a thesaurus, and new illustrations.

Edward Finegan. *Language: Its Structure and Use,* 3rd ed. Paul Frommer and **Edward Finegan,** *Looking at Languages: A Workbook in Elementary Linguistics,* 2nd ed. Harcourt Brace, 1999. Both are thorough revisions of the earlier textbook and workbook, respectively. The textbook has separate chapters on dialects, registers, and the history of English, as well as the expected fare. Each chapter now also has a discussion of "Computers and . . ."—dialects, morphology, syntax, etc. And each chapter has a guide to appropriate Internet links.

Louise Péronnet, **Rose Mary Babitch,** **Wladyslaw Cichocki** and Patrice Brasseur. *Atlas linguistique du vocabulaire maritime acadien.* Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1998. 684 pages. ISBN 2-7637-7578-0. Cdn \$40. Part 1 is a dialect atlas with over 350 maps documenting lexical variation in the Acadian French spoken by fishermen in the Maritime Provinces of eastern Canada. Part 2 presents quantitative dialectometric analyses of the lexical database as well as several brief comparisons with lexical usage on the Atlantic coast of France.

Walt Wolfram, Carolyn Temple Adger, and **Donna Christian.** *Dialects in Schools and Communities.* Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Jan. 1999. 264 pages. ISBN 0-8058-2862-1 (cloth) \$49.95; 0-8058-2863-X (paper cover) \$24.95. An updated and expanded version of *Dialects and Education* (1989) by Wolfram and Christian. Chapters on Language Variation in America, Exploring Dialects, Communicative Interaction, Language Difference Does Not Mean Language Deficit, Oral Language Instruction, Dialects and Written Language, Language Variation and Reading, and Dialect Awareness for Students. Appendix: A Selective Inventory of Vernacular.

REGIONAL MEETING PROGRAMS, FALL 1999

Rocky Mountain

In association with RMMLA, Oct. 14–16; Santa Fe, NM, DoubleTree Hotel.

1. "Spanish Verb Simplification in Contact with English: A History of Narrative Syntax in the U.S. Southwest." **Glenn Martinez**, Univ. of Massachusetts at Amherst.

2. "Problems of Mexican-American Representation in the Chicano Tradition." **Lorelei Ortiz**, New Mexico State Univ.

3. "The Ebonics and Bilingualism Controversies: An International Perspective." **Luisanna Fodde**, Univ. of Cagliari, Italy.

4. "Ergativity and Ectoplasm: Strategies of Passivization in Poltergeist Narrative." **Thomas Du Bose**, Louisiana State Univ.-Shreveport.

Chair: **Mary E. Morzinski**, Dept. of English, Univ. of Wisconsin-La Crosse, La Crosse, WI 54601; phone (608) 785-8300, fax (608) 785-8301, morzinsk@mail.uwlax.edu.

ADS Regional Secretary 1998–1999: **Mary E. Morzinski**.

Membership in RMMLA is \$30 individual, \$20 student. Write RMMLA, Washington State Univ., P.O. Box 642610, Pullman, WA 99164-2610; rmmla@rmmla.wsu.edu; <http://rmmla.wsu.edu/rmmla/guest/aboutrmmla.asp>; phone (509) 335-4198, fax (509) 335-6635 ext. 54198.

Future meetings: 2000 Oct. 12–14 Boise, Idaho, DoubleTree Hotel; 2001 Oct. 11–13 Vancouver, Sheraton Wall Centre.

South Central

In association with SCMLA, Oct. 28–30; Memphis, Crown Plaza Hotel.

1. "Reconsidering the Tradition: How Huckleberry Finn Subverts/Deconstructs a Dialect Pattern." **Derek Foster**, independent scholar.

2. "The Southern Dialect and Survey Methodology." **Guy Bailey**, Univ. of Texas at San Antonio.

3. "Spanish Borrowings in Contemporary

English." **Michael Dressman** and **Dan Jones**, Univ. of Houston-Downtown.

4. "A Linguistic Look at One Family's Folklore: North Louisiana Dialect in an Urban Setting." **Rebecca Farabough**, Univ. of Memphis.

Chair: **Lisa Abney**, Louisiana Folklife Center, Northwestern State Univ., Natchitoches, LA 71497; phone (318) 357-4332; fax (318) 357-4331; e-mail abney@alpha.nsula.edu.

ADS Regional Secretary 1998–1999: **Charles B. Martin**, Dept. of English, Univ. of North Texas, P.O. Box 13827, Denton, TX 76203-3827; phone (817) 565-2149, e-mail cmartin@facstaff.CAS.unt.edu.

Membership in SCMLA is \$20 full professors, \$15 associate and assistant professors, \$10 instructors and students. Write Jo Hebert, SCMLA, Dept. of English, Texas A&M Univ., College Station, TX 77843-4227; phone (409) 845-7041; fax (409) 862-2292; <http://www-english.tamu.edu/scmla/scmla@acs.tamu.edu>.

Future Meeting: 2000 Nov. 9–11 San Antonio, Camberley Gunter Hotel.

Midwest

In association with MMLA, Nov. 4–6; Minneapolis, Marriott City Center.

1. "Puerto Rican Literature in Georgia: The Intersections of Language, Place, and Gender in Judith Ortiz Cofer." **Darlene M. Pagan**, Univ. of Texas at Dallas.

2. "Is Linguistic Anglocentrism Resurgent?" **Thomas Chase**, Univ. of Regina, Canada.

3. "Linguistic Variation and Shift in the Adoption of an Emerging Standard." **Bruce Spencer**, Univ. of Michigan.

Chair: **Beth Simon**, CM 109, Dept. of English and Linguistics, IPFW, Fort Wayne, IN 46805; fax (219) 481-6985; e-mail simon@ipfw.edu.

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ADS Regional Secretary 1999–2000: **Beth Lee Simon**.

Membership in MMLA is \$25 full and associate professors, \$20 other faculty, \$15 students. Write MMLA, 302 English-Philosophy Bldg., U. of Iowa, Iowa City IA 52242-1408; phone (319) 335-0331; mmla@uiowa.edu; <http://www.uiowa.edu/~mmla/>.

Future meetings: 2000 Nov. 2–4 Kansas City, Missouri, Hyatt Regency Crown Center; 2001 Nov. 1–3 Cleveland, Sheraton City Centre Hotel.

South Atlantic

In association with SAMLA, Nov. 4–6; Atlanta, Hyatt Regency.

1. "Community Unity and African American Discourse." **Deborah Zeringue**, Georgia State Univ.

2. "The *wh/w* distinction in Southern American English." **Cynthia Bernstein**, Auburn Univ.

3. "Southern Dialect and the Linguistic Survey of North Louisiana." **Lisa Abney**, Northwestern State Univ.

4. "The Limits of Linguistic Self Reports." **Jan Tillery**, Univ. of Texas at San Antonio.

5. "Error Gravity in the Corporate World: Are There Regional Differences?" **Larry Beason**, Univ. of South Alabama.

Chair: **Guy Bailey**, Univ. of Texas at San Antonio, 6900 N. Loop 1604 W., San Antonio TX 78249; gbailey@utsa.edu.

ADS Regional Secretary 1999–2000: **Michael Picone**, Dept. of Romance Languages and Classics, Univ. of Alabama, Box 870246, Tuscaloosa AL 35406-0246; mpicone@ualvm.ua.edu.

Membership in SAMLA is \$35 individual, \$25 student. Write SAMLA, Georgia State Univ., University Plaza, Atlanta GA 30303-3083; phone (404) 651-2693; www.samla.org.

Future meetings: 2000 Nov. 10–12 Birmingham, Ala., Sheraton Civic Center; 2001 Nov. 8–10 Atlanta, Peachtree Plaza; 2002 Nov. 15–17 Baltimore, Omni Inner Harbor.

NWAVE Invites Proposals

June 15 is the deadline for abstracts for NWAVE 28, the annual conference on New Ways of Analyzing Variation, to be held in Toronto Oct. 14–17. York University and the University of Toronto are the hosts.

(E in the acronym used to stand for "in English," but nowadays the conference does not limit itself to variation in the English language.)

Plenary speakers will be Deborah Cameron, Strathclyde U.; **William Labov**, U. of Pennsylvania, and David Sankoff, U. de Montréal. There will be symposia on language change in real time, language variation and formal theory, language variation and second language acquisition, language and sexuality, and public access databases.

Abstracts are invited in all areas of linguistic variation theory. They should be e-mailed without attachments to newwave@yorku.ca. The e-mail should include the title and an abstract of no more than 500 words including bibliography, followed by the title and the author(s)' name, address, e-mail, fax, and phone numbers. Indicate whether the abstract is for a 20-minute presentation or a poster or either. The author(s)' name should not appear in abstract or title.

If you cannot e-mail, fax a fully-formatted hard copy of the abstract and one copy of a separate identification page to: 416-736-5483 (attn Ruth King), and mail two copies to: NWAVE, c/o DLLL, South 561 Ross Building, 4700 Keele Street, York University, Toronto, Ontario M3J 1P3, Canada.

Further information in both English and French is available at <http://momiji.arts-dlll.yorku.ca/linguistics/NWAVE/NWAVE-28.html>.

Sessions will be held at the Toronto Colony Hotel, Chestnut Street at City Hall. Rooms at Cdn \$139 single or double may be reserved by calling 1-800-387-8687 or (416) 977-0707, fax (416) 585-3157, www.toronto-colony.com, TORDOHS@ATTMail.com.

DARE Pestles Around for Perjinkety Words

If you can help with any of the following words, please send your information (including date and place of use) to *DARE* Associate Editor **Joan Hall** at 6125 Helen White Hall, 600 N. Park St., Madison WI 53706, or by e-mail at jdhall@facstaff.wisc.edu.

penny berry—from a recent Pennsylvania word list, where it is defined as “a small ground plant with edible berry.”

pent road and pentway—“A minor road that may be closed off by gates.” This used to be common in New England, especially Vermont; we would like to know if it is still known.

percolator—Apparently at one time a name for a “(house)-rent party” in Chicago. If you know this, do you know why it is so called?

perjinkety—This British dialect word for “persnickety” turns up in a 1930 novel set in South Carolina.

pestle around—“Putter around.” We have three examples, all from Vermont.

red-man—“To inflict summary justice on.” We have a single example from the southern Appalachians: “They red-manned [him] because he was allus beatin’ his wife.”

reef—“To tug, a tug.” We have a scattering of examples, but not enough to establish any regional pattern.

red-top cane—Two Texas informants gave this, one in response to the question about kinds of grass grown for hay, one in response to the question about other plants grown for hay.

rock bait, sandstoodle—Both terms were elicited from a Georgia informant by the question about kinds of worms used for bait. We suspect that both refer to the larva of a caddisfly, which surrounds itself with a shell of sand grains or other small objects, but we have no further evidence.

rock sallet—One Kentucky informant describes this as a wild green that comes up early in the spring and has a purple flower.

run (a net, trotline, or trapline)—“To go along (a net, trotline, or trapline) checking for captured fish or animals, rebaiting, etc.” We have a fair amount of evidence for this sense—which is surprisingly absent from standard dictionaries—but not enough to establish any regional pattern. Earlier printed examples would also be welcome, especially for *run a trapline*.

scoggin(s)—“Fool, butt of ridicule.” We have a Massachusetts example from 1890 and a Georgia example from 1938. (This is interesting not only in itself, but also as a possible source of *scoggin* as a name for various long-legged wading birds.)

scotch—“To help, second, assist” and “Of a horse: ?to splay out the legs.” For the first sense (and the corresponding agent noun *scotcher*) we have a scattering of examples beginning in 1860, but only one later than 1915. The second is used several times in a memoir of Texas cow-country as if everybody would know what it means—but we don’t!

scratchback—“A type of corn pone.” We have a number of examples, but it is not clear what the essential feature is that distinguishes this from other types.

Nominations Invited

Propose a student for a four-year complimentary Presidential Honorary Membership with a letter of recommendation to ADS President **Ronald Butters**, English Dept., Duke Univ., Box 90018, Durham NC 27708-0018; RonButters@aol.com.

Propose a colleague or yourself for a four-year term on the ADS Executive Council with a message to Nominating Committee Chair **Lawrence M. Davis**, Dept. of English, Wichita State Univ., Wichita KS 67260-0014, davis@wsu.uc.twsu.edu.

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Call for Submissions

The ADS Teaching Newsletter invites you, your colleagues, and your students to submit book reviews, video reviews, short articles on pedagogy, notes on teaching ideas, and other related discussion. If you or a colleague has (or might be persuaded to compose) an item for the newsletter, please contact Alan Manning, Dept. of Linguistics, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602. E-mail: alan_manning@byu.edu

The Utah Dialect Project

Paul Baltes and Diane Lillie
Brigham Young University

Introduction

The Utah Dialect Project presents the first general synchronic description of spoken English in Utah. The Project was started in January 1994 by Paul Baltes, Assistant Professor of English Language and Linguistics at Brigham Young University. As a graduate student at Purdue University, Paul Baltes had been involved in the creation of the Indiana Dialect Project under the direction of Doctor Becky Brown, who had received her training as a graduate student on the Texas Dialect Project at the University of Texas at Austin. Diane Lillie joined the project as a graduate student in the Fall of 1996 and wrote her Master's Thesis on the Utah Dialect Survey (1998 Brigham Young University).

The project has been supported by grants from the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, the Fritz Burns Foundation and Brigham Young University. Diane has additionally been supported by a Clark-Harris Graduate Achievement Award and a Brigham Young University Graduate Research Grant.

Although English dialect research has been completed to some degree in much of the United States, Utah has been almost completely overlooked, and yet, the state is ideal for linguistic research since it was settled in the late 1840s and 1850s in a carefully planned pattern. Most of the records on the original settlers, including their National and international origins and genealogy are still available. In addition, most regions have remained fairly stable in their

composition, with descendants of the original settlers still comprising the majority of the population. In these areas, relative isolation and the close-knit oral community have slowed dialect leveling.

The first goal of the project was to establish a baseline set of data which could be used to describe the current variety/varieties of English spoken in Utah and with which future researchers could use for comparative studies to measure any linguistic change in the variety/varieties. Similar to other dialect studies, we began with the following research questions:

- 1) What assumptions do Utahns have about their language?
- 2) Is there an American English dialect characteristic of Utah? Are there multiple Utah dialects? Where are the boundaries of a Utah dialect or dialects?
- 3) What characteristic features differentiate Utah dialect(s) from other American English dialects?
- 4) What social factors influence language variation in Utah?

Methodology: Phase I

The first phase of the project involves collecting data through two traditional research strategies, recorded interviews and dialect surveys. Thus far more than one hundred interviews have been recorded (the vast majority of them conducted by Don Norton, Associate Professor of English at Brigham Young University) where informants volunteer to have their personal histories recorded in exchange for a tape recording and written transcript of the interview. Since family history is important within the state (due in large part to the predominant culture; members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, i.e. Mormons, currently make up sixty six percent of the state's population, more in rural areas, and accounted for up to eighty percent of the population just twenty years ago), this has been an excellent way of extracting data from native Utahns (talking about growing up and family life also helps the informant relax and revert to a casual mode of discourse).

Of course these interviews are subject to the usual problems associated with collecting data this way: they require a great deal of time, there are only a small

number of investigators, trying to elicit the data during the natural course of conversation.

Because these interviews would not have yielded the amount of data we needed in order to draw reliable conclusions about the way English is spoken in Utah, we also elicit data from informants, who responded to one of two field instruments: an interview survey conducted by undergraduate research assistants and an online questionnaire. We identified linguistic features through preliminary research which included the previously mentioned interviews, informal interviews with native Utahns, our own observations, and the stereotypes and exaggerations from comedians, writers and non-native Utahns. We also examined the few available academic publications including, Stanley Cook's 1969 dissertation examining two phonetic characteristics of "an emerging urban dialect in the Salt Lake valley", a 1970 master's thesis, *A Study of One Phonological Variable in Urban and Rural Utah*, Karl Krahnke description of what should be studied about the Utah vowel system, eight articles on Mormon language, and several articles from Mariana Di Paolo, concerning specific grammatical and phonetic characteristics of Salt Lake speech communities.

We modeled the first instrument, the interview survey, on similar questionnaires developed at Purdue and the University of Texas at Austin. The interview survey gathers biographical information about each informant, including age, education, occupation, religion, dialect genealogy, a history of places lived, and foreign languages spoken. The survey questions elicit phonetic information by providing definitions for which informants are likely to supply a specific word (for example, "What do you call a writing utensil that contains ink?" generally elicited [pen] or [pIn]). After each of these, the investigator asks the informants to please use the word in a sentence, so that the investigator hears the elicited words in sentential context. Lexical items are elicited by more open-ended questions, such as, "What do you call an unusually heavy rain that doesn't last very long?"

Each question underwent usability testing to verify how listeners would interpret the question, as well as whether we would elicit the data we were trying to examine. We tested the instrument to determine the

survey's usefulness and effectiveness, and we examined the learning curve and attitudes of the informants with respect to the instrument. We modified each question accordingly. For Question 9, for example, Diane tried three different questions, each of which was designed to elicit variations of the pronunciation of "pit". We finally settled on "What do you call an open quarry from which gravel is taken?"

We also conducted two pilot studies. The first instrument had thirty-six questions. We used thirty investigators and gathered 115 surveys. We increased the second instrument to forty-two questions and gathered information from 407 surveys from 173 investigators. These allowed us to further examine our training methods as well as the instrument itself. The current survey contains forty-seven questions.

The interview surveys themselves are conducted by Diane, Paul and linguistics students at Brigham Young University, the University of Utah, Westminster College, and Southern Utah University between August 1996 and April 1997. As of this writing we have over nine hundred interview surveys completed. A second instrument, an online questionnaire, elicits the same data, however, phonetic questions are presented differently because the survey is self-reporting. Many answers are based on rhyming words similar to questions on the Texas Dialect Survey (The Linguistic Survey of American Pronunciation currently uses the same technique).

The project has served as an important teaching tool for both undergraduate and graduate students at each of the above mentioned universities and colleges. Students are able to experience field research first hand. They learn that they're part of an ongoing project with real world implications, and that each of their names is recorded in the project records. Diane credited 262 such students in her master's thesis (*The Utah Dialect Survey*, 1998, Brigham Young University). The feedback from both the students and the instructors has been overwhelmingly positive, and we are able to use many of these interviews. If there are any mistakes or omissions of any kind, we do not include the results in the database.

Each student usually conducts three interview surveys. To help ensure consistency, only Paul and

Diane train students how to become linguistic investigators using the interview questionnaire (with Diane training the vast majority of the students at institutions other than Brigham Young University). We provide both oral and written instructions on both interviewing and recording answers and biographical data. To make the process easier for each investigator, we have included the most likely responses as possible answers on the interview survey so that students can mark the answer they have heard, or, in case the answer is unique, simply write in the answer the informant gave. That answer is then checked against its use in a sentence. The data is then coded and recorded on scantron pages and independently checked against the answers on the interview survey.

Training student investigators includes instruction about the importance of helping informants to feel comfortable and relaxed before starting the actual interview. Many students let their informants know that they are doing this as a class project since we have found that people are often very willing to help students with their schoolwork.

We are careful to help students understand that they should not do anything to influence the informant's responses or to change their speech in any way. They shouldn't laugh or express disbelief of any kind. We instruct them never to read the possible responses on the instrument to the informant. We also ask them never to repeat informants' answers for verification. Instead we discuss other ways of either getting the informants to repeat an answer for verification or for clarity. Also investigators never interview one informant in the presence of another.

In addition, we specify the types of informants that we want to get data from (see below). We caution them against interviewing school teachers, professional speakers, professional clergy, music performance majors or professionals, and linguists and linguistics majors because of the conscious or unconscious use of language which may interfere with their native speech. After they turn in their surveys we have recently begun to send back a synopsis of the survey results for Utah as a whole and for the work they contributed.

Informants are chosen based on the following criteria:

- Each must be a native of Utah (born and raised)
- Each must have spent most or all of his/her adult life in Utah. Out-of-state residence for military, church or similar service are allowable, but were noted
- Each must have spent most or all of his/her life within a twenty-five mile radius, especially from age six to sixteen.

As the data for the first phase was collected, Diane compiled a spreadsheet and analyzed the information using SPSS[®] software; first performing frequency analysis to identify the most common answers for each question, and next using cross-tabulation to find correspondence between informants' answers and demographic information (chi-square test values of less than .05 identified significant relationships). She completed geographic analysis through a combination of statistical correspondence and hand-plotting dialect features on a map of Utah divided by county.

Based on the findings of 733 surveys, we concluded the following:

1) **Assumptions.** During the preliminary design of the survey, we asked Utahns to describe Utah speech. Many native Utahns feel that Utah has no distinguishing language markers. Another large group commented on the dialect of other regions of Utah (generally north vs. south) or pointed out a rural/urban difference, although they could not describe the difference. Some respondents claimed that Utahns "don't speak proper English" or are sloppy in their speech. Again, when asked for clarification, most respondents could not provide examples.

Others were more specific in their comments. For example, many natives of Utah recognized the tendency to use euphemisms rather than swear words (non-Utahns also identified this habit). Also, many pointed out that Utahns often confuse the /o/ and /a/ phonemes, especially before /r/. Others noticed that vowels have a tendency to "shift" or "blend." Although these last comments were ambiguous, the words used as examples ([sɛl] for *sale*, [ʃɔr] for *sure*, etc.) show that the respondents were describing a laxing of tense

vowels. Analysis of the data collected during the survey, however, shows that the majority of Utahns do not predict their own speech habits accurately. Their assumptions are based on the most distinct language patterns rather than on common usage.

2) Utah Dialect Divisions. Utah English can be divided into three regional dialects and two major social dialects. Geographically, the state has two strong dialect areas (north and south) with a transitional central region that is less defined but still distinct. Northern Utah aligns closely with Midland and Western American dialects. Southern Utah differs significantly from northern Utah both phonetically and lexically. Central Utah is differentiated most significantly by phonetic realizations. For almost every item tested, central region informants produced a higher percentage of stereotyped pronunciations than did the other areas. Although the difference between central and southern responses is not significant in every case, the overall pattern proves significant enough to differentiate between regions.

The major social division in Utah speech relates to age, with young speakers using a significantly different dialect than their elders. Although the dialectal boundary is not abrupt, the most significant change occurs around 30 years of age. This division derives from both phonetic and lexical differences. Utah speakers also break into significant dialect groups based on population density. Small population areas (less than 1000 people) are more likely to produce stereotyped phonetic realizations and to deviate from standard Utah terms.

3) Characteristics of Utah English. The most significant characteristic is the laxing of tense vowels. Front vowels are generally laxed before /l/, and back vowels are often laxed before /r/. Other prominent characteristics include a tendency to pronounce *creek* as [kɹɪk] and *crayon* as [kræn], and to use creative euphemisms. Phonetic characteristics significantly present in younger speakers, include the laxing of tense back vowels before /l/, the laxing of tense front vowels before /r/, a transition from [or] to [ar] in words such as *war* and *corn*, a central offglide in *pit* and *pet*, and the

pronunciation of [pɪn] for "pen." In most other respects, Utah follows the phonetic and lexical patterns common to other areas in the western United States.

Significant lexical terms and their variants in Utah include a distinction between *living room* (where guests are entertained) and *family room* (where family gatherings occur). Sweet, fizzy, non-alcoholic beverages are called *pop*; *coke* and *soda* are significant variants. *Canning* is the preferred term for long-term food preservation. The road which runs immediately alongside a major highway is called a *frontage road*. Water pours from a *faucet* into a sink; *tap* is a significant variant. Fishing worms are called *nightcrawlers*. A *downpour* is an unusually heavy rain that doesn't last very long. *Stop light* describes the electronically operated device of colored lights which control traffic at intersections; *traffic light* is a significant variant. A nauseated Utahn would say "I'm sick to my stomach," and 4:45 would be a quarter to five. One of the most interesting lexical markers is the use of *anymore* as in "It rains alot anymore," to mean "It rains a lot more than it used to."

4) Social Factors Influencing Utah Speech.

Age seems to be the best predictor for phonetic characteristics, with a strong difference between the responses of the oldest and youngest informants. Gender plays an interesting role in Utah English, as women are more likely to produce stereotyped pronunciations than are men. Although the difference between the female and male responses is also not statistically significant for most individual phonetic features, the overall pattern deserves attention. Female informants responded more frequently with nonstandard pronunciations than did male informants (on ten out of fourteen characteristics for vs. four out of fourteen for male informants). This pattern reverses the predictions of current linguistic theory, which expects women to maintain standard usage more consistently than men.

The Future of the Project

The project is ongoing, with the eventual goals of creating a linguistic atlas of Utah English and of recording language change in the state.