

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
AMERICAN DIALECT SOCIETY

# NADS 31.3

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**Vol. 31, No. 3      September 1999**

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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. Annual membership is \$35, students \$20; plus \$5 outside the United States. See back page for membership address.

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

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Listserv@uga.cc.uga.edu the message:  
Sub ADS-L Your Name

*From:* AMERICAN DIALECT SOCIETY

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**FIRST CLASS**

## ADS at MLA, Dec. 27–28

At the Modern Language Association convention in Chicago Dec. 27–30, ADS presents:

Session 8: *Engendered Language*. Monday, Dec. 27, 1:45-3:00 p.m. Hyatt Regency, McCormick Room. Chair: **Michael Adams**, Albright Coll.

1. “Happy Campers: Wordplay and Humor in Homosexual Slang.” **Leonard R. N. Ashley**, Brooklyn Coll., CUNY.

Some years ago the author of this paper sold a comprehensive dictionary of sex slang (an outcome of research and publishing on fringe vocabulary) to Stein & Day, then the fourth leading U.S. publisher. But Stein & Day went bankrupt before the book could be published. The material has been constantly augmented and updated since then; now a much larger dictionary of sex slang (U.S., U.K., etc.) is in preparation for another publisher. Out of that has been drawn the evidence for this paper’s examination of the wit and wisdom of camp. The author considers this the easiest to take of all the private and public languages of smut, because it is leavened with wry humor and informed by sometimes brilliant inventiveness. The paper will deal with language play and the psychodynamics behind that in gay and lesbian private lingo. It involves clever coinages, ironic usages, outrageous puns, manipulative nicknames and terms of address, and jokes and catch phrases and vocabulary that reveal the mindset of a subculture and constitute a welcome change from the humorless vulgarity and frank obscenity of much of the rest of American sex talk. Moreover, some of the language of the “alternate lifestyle” (formerly “perversity”) is entering the multicultural mainstream. The paper will be amusing and educational, with redeeming social value.

2. “Sex as Male and Hetero (or Not Female and Not Gay): Metaphors Men Live By.” **Peter F. Murphy**, Murray State Univ.

This essay comes from a book I have completed that examines the discourse of male bonding. It analyzes the metaphorical nature of everyday speech, and in particular tropes men use to describe their sexuality (e.g., faggot, pansy, pussy, sissy, and stud). I focus on the subtleties of what these metaphors mean and how they contribute to the group identity of men in contemporary society articulating a cultural perspective that sees language as a site of change. Some concluding remarks identify alternative metaphors to describe the “heterosexual male experience.”

Heterosexuality as the rule, both in law and as acceptable behavior (such as speech, clothing, and appearance in general) reinforces straight male privilege. The necessity for men to define themselves as not feminine resides at the center of the heterosexual regime. Indeed, the only real man has to be the straight man. Consequently, men must never show any sign of such supposedly feminine traits as,

## Call for ADS at ILA, April 7–9

*January 10* is the deadline for abstracts for the ADS session at the Annual Conference of the International Linguistic Association April 7-9, 2000, Georgetown University, Washington, D. C.

The 45th ILA conference will have as its major theme Language Contact/Language Change. While papers on that theme are especially welcomed, abstracts on any subject in theoretical and applied linguistics are also solicited. Invited speakers: **Lesley Milroy** and Sarah Thomason, both of the Univ. of Michigan, and Lila Gleitman, Univ. of Pennsylvania. Local host: Father Solomon Sara.

Single-spaced abstracts, bearing the title of the paper (but no author), of not more than 425 words should clearly state the problems or research questions addressed, and should give some indication of results or conclusions.

Send abstract via e-mail to the session chair, **Silke Van Ness**, s.vanness@albany.edu.

Simultaneously, send via U.S. Postal Service three camera-ready hard copies of the abstract; plus a 3x5 card bearing name, title of paper, addresses, affiliation, and audio-visual equipment needed, to: Silke Van Ness; LI 94; University at Albany, SUNY; 1400 Washington Ave.; Albany, NY 12222. Submissions on diskettes will not be accepted.

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for example, tenderness, passivity, or care giving, and a man should never find another man attractive.

Hatred of the homosexual man coincides with the male heterosexual’s dread of the feminine. While homophobia expresses fear of one’s own homosexual desires, it also replicates a fear and hatred of the feminine. By treating homosexuals as the Other, straight men confirm their heterosexuality. This corroboration is especially important in all-male groups, where the approval of others can be garnered from the expression of prejudices against gay men. Straight men use homophobic slang as a weapon to signal their true heterosexual masculinity.

Session 212: *Words of the Century and of the Millennium*. Tuesday, Dec. 28, 10:15-11:30 a.m. Hyatt Regency, Atlanta Room. 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**, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana.

# The New '00s With ADS and LSA in Chicago

If the Y2K bug zaps all the lights and curious monsters emerge from all the ocean depths to see what's going on, don't worry, be happy: Get away from those coasts and come to Chicago January 6 through 9 for the first ADS Annual Meeting of the 2000s.

*Hotel:* As before, we are guests of the Linguistic Society of America. We'll be snuggled in the heart of Chicago at the Palmer House Hilton, 17 East Monroe St., Chicago 60603-5605. Write and ask for LSA rates of \$83 single or double, plus \$25 for each additional person. Or phone 1-800-HILTONS or (312) 726-7500, fax (312) 917-1779. There are a few smaller rooms at a special student rate of \$53. But make your reservation by December 23, or there may not be room for you.

*LSA registration:* As guests of LSA, we are expected to register with them, at their members' rate. In return, we get the Meeting Handbook and admission to all LSA meetings. Until Dec. 6, preregistration is available at \$60, students \$25. On-site registration is \$70, students \$30. Send check to LSA Secretariat—Annual Meeting, 1325 18th St. NW Suite 211, Washington DC 20036-6501, phone (202) 835-1714, fax (202) 835-1717, e-mail [lsa@lsadc.org](mailto:lsa@lsadc.org).

You'll find a registration form and further LSA information at [www.lsadc.org](http://www.lsadc.org).

*ADS registration:* Additional and *entirely optional*, but those who attend ADS sessions are encouraged to register with the ADS Executive Secretary for \$20, students \$10. This helps defray the cost of the refreshments for which our meetings are noted and earns you a distinctive decoration for your LSA badge.

*Annual luncheon:* 1:15 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 8. Speaker: John Rickford (see Page 13). Cost is \$30 inclusive. LSA friends are welcome. Make reservations with ADS Executive Secretary Allan Metcalf, by e-mail or using the form enclosed with this newsletter and with membership renewal notices from Duke U. Press.

*Words of the Year, Decade, Century, and Millennium:* This is a once-in-a-thousand-years opportunity to discuss and vote on all four. Send your nominations for any or all of them to New Words Committee Chair **Wayne Glowka**, Dept. of English and Speech, Georgia College and State University, Milledgeville GA 31061, [wglowka@mail.gcsu.edu](mailto:wglowka@mail.gcsu.edu); or to **David Barnhart**, PO Box 2018, Hyde Park NY 12538, [Barnhart@highlands.com](mailto:Barnhart@highlands.com). The nominations will be discussed in advance on ADS-L and also at the Modern Language Association meeting a week earlier (see facing page). For details on our previous choices for the decade of the 1990s, see the ADS website at <http://www.americandialect.org/woty.shtml>.

If you wonder where to start, you will find a nominee for each year of the century in Barnhart and Metcalf's book *America in So Many Words* (Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

*Bring your latest book* to the B.Y.O.B. exhibit and reception after the New Words vote.

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

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## Thursday, January 6: Abbr., Contraband, Sucks

### *Special Session: The Lexicon*

Parlor H, Sixth Floor, Palmer House

3:00-4:30 p.m. Chair: **Wayne Glowka**.

1 • 3:00-3:30: “How to Design a Dictionary of American Abbreviations.” **Robert S. Wachal**, Univ. of Iowa.

First of all any plan has to take into account audience interests, which in some cases may be different from what they once were. Areas of obvious current interest include, but are not limited to, computers, health (the population is aging), and real estate ads. Some areas have been seriously underrepresented in earlier compilations of abbreviations. New areas such as computers, internet chatting, dating ads require consideration.

Methods of collecting include plumbing such sources as a database from an existing general dictionary, specialized dictionaries, published sources, the worldwide web. Publishers specifications and limits are also crucial to the design.

Some of the problems encountered will be discussed and the resulting dictionary will be described briefly.

2 • 3:30-4:00: “Defining Contraband: Specificity and Adequacy in American Dictionaries.” **Michael Adams**, Albright Coll.

“What Johnson had to say about the poet is applicable to the definer,” wrote H. Bosley Woolf, himself one of our century’s preeminent definers. “The definer of the noun *chair* should not try to list all of the materials out of which chairs are made, and the definer of the noun *spade* should not try to enumerate all uses to which spades are put.” Nevertheless, specificity enhances a definition insofar as it can responsibly be achieved, and in no cases would specificity seem more useful than in definitions of words about contraband, items with which speakers and readers may be less familiar than, say, with chairs and spades.

Contraband, one might argue, demands particularly careful defining: for instance, it’s more than likely that one who looks up *bong* in a dictionary has never seen one; one can use bongs to smoke tobacco, and for that reason bongs are sold legally, but most who use them smoke marijuana, instead, and they are sold, not from mainstream tobacco shops or the local Wal-Mart, but from head shops in seedy alleys and college towns. Whether one uses the word *chair* or not, one has experience of chairs, and definitions of chair make sense as they intersect with that experience. But how does one write a definition for *bong* at once methodologically sound and sufficiently specific to instruct those uninitiated in drug-cultural mysteries?

Popular slang dictionaries define *bong* badly; commercial and historical dictionaries define it reasonably well, according to their established defining methods. But we might develop both new expectations and new methods for defining contraband, semi-contraband, and associated terms; indeed, improved defining in slang’s narrow register might lead us to reexamine assumptions about how we should define nouns generally, about the degree of specificity required of an adequate definition.

3 • 4:00-4:30: “Sucks.” **Ronald R. Butters**, Duke Univ.

On April 17, 1991, a twelve-year-old junior-high student in Norfolk, Virginia, was suspended from school for refusing to desist from wearing a tee-shirt on the front of which was printed in very large letters, DRUGS SUCK! School officials argued that the inscription was “inappropriate for school attire” because it is “vulgar,” “derives from a sexual connotation of oral-genital contact,” and hence is potentially disruptive to the maintenance of order in school. The child’s parents sued, insisting that the shirt contained a valuable message of critical importance and that the vernacular language was not “vulgar” but simply contemporary slang which conveyed the message in a powerful fashion to an otherwise quite impervious audience.

The case presents a complex of problems in semiotics, pragmatics, semantics, and historical linguistics. Most speakers of American English today know that “X Sucks!” has a primary colloquial meaning “X is bad.” However, many speakers also attach secondary meanings and even putative etymologies to the slang phrase—both connected to fellatio—which they may find deeply offensive; yet (unlike the Norfolk school officials) they have no difficulty accepting the phrase and even using it themselves. I seek to demonstrate (a) that the etymological connection between “X Sucks!” and fellatio is largely a folk etymology; and (b) that contemporary connotations of fellatio for “X Sucks!” are foregrounded only when the specific issue of putative etymology is raised, thus allowing speakers to accept a phrase that they would otherwise find inappropriate.

## Thursday, January 6 (Cont.): Detroit, Ohio, Southern Folk

### *Special Session: Perception, Identity, Attitudes*

Parlor H, Sixth Floor, Palmer House

5:00-7:00 p.m. Chair: **Ron Butters**

4 • 5:00-5:30: “Construction and Perception of a Sociolinguistic Identity”. **Nancy Niedzielski**, Rice Univ.

Previous research has shown that a great deal of what is perceived as the dialect of a given speaker is a result of what the *listener* in fact expects to perceive (Strand and Johnson 1996; Janson 1986; Willis 1972; etc.). This phenomenon extends to one’s perception of one’s own dialect as well (Niedzielski 1997): the features that are perceived in our own dialect may in fact be composed of a model of what we believe we sound like, rather than a straightforward inventory of actual acoustic facts. The perception of our own dialect is thus constructed socially rather than acoustically. This paper thus examines self-perception from the viewpoint of social constructivism (e.g. Gergen 1994).

Specifically, this paper examines the self-perception of Detroit speakers as speakers of Standard American English (SAE) (e.g., Preston 1987). First, evidence is presented which demonstrates that while Detroiters do perceive phonetic features found in the dialects of speakers affected by the Northern Cities Chain Shift in speakers of some regions (e.g., Minnesota, Wisconsin, Canada, and even Northern Michigan), they do not recognize such features in their own speech (Niedzielski 1997). Second, this evidence is related to the theory of social constructivism. Finally, several constructs that allow Detroit speakers to construct “SAE speaker” as part of their identity are suggested.

5 • 5:30-6:00: “Don or Dawn? Perception and Production of /A~ /in Southern Ohio.” **Beverly Flanigan**, Ohio Univ.

Labov (1999) has observed that informants regularly differ in the degree to which they perceive and produce vowel contrasts in interviews for the Phonological Atlas of North America project. For example, *feel* and *fill* are merged in both perception and production by some subjects, merged in perception only by others, and kept distinct in both modes by still other subjects.

Using a simplified IPA (the “American” version) in introductory linguistics classes taught at a branch campus of Ohio University, the author frequently gives test items which are transcribed by Northern/North Midland speakers with [A] but are transcribed by students from this southern Ohio city and its environs with [ ], the nearest equivalent to the untaught [ ] which they actually produce. Examples include *body*, *follow*, *polish*, and *Chillicothe*. In contrast, central Ohioans (North Midlanders) typically use /A/ in all these words as well as in *fog*, *caught*, and *hawk* (unlike Northern students, who have / / in the last three). A “Don/dawn” story test given in two versions to students at both the branch campus and the main campus in Athens elicits (in answer to a question after the reading) either *Don* or *dawn* from merging North Midlanders if [dAn] is read; but it gets only *Don* from nonmerging Northerners, and usually *Don* from Southern Ohioans, who are sensitive to the distinction made by others even if they would use [d n] for both words themselves. Contrariwise, if [d n] is read in the passage, Southern Ohioans vacillate between *Don* and *dawn*, Northerners hear their own “open oh” and write *dawn*, and North Midlanders, aware of a distinction made by others if not by themselves, accommodate to the Northern pattern and choose *dawn* as well.

Results of both the above perception test and a production test on contrasts and mergers in other /A~ / words (such as *cot/caught* and *hock/hawk*) will be presented. Recognition by users of one variant of other users’ alternate variants is evident only to a limited degree in the typically mixed student population of this university community.

6 • 6:00-6:30: “Linguistic Perceptions of Southern Folk.” **Susan Tamasi**, Univ. of Georgia.

Perceptual work in the Mid-West has given great insight into the beliefs Americans have about language, but this work needs to be extended to the rest of the country. Previous studies (eg. Preston 1993, 1997) have shown that the South is the region of the U.S. most commonly distinguished by informants, with a high percentage of participants drawing some type of Southern region in their linguistic maps. However, this is also the region which has been rated the lowest in terms of “correctness” and “pleasantness” by the Mid-Western informants. Due to these results, the next logical step is to research the Southern point of view.

This paper discusses the findings of a perceptual study conducted in North Georgia. For this particular study, I chose to move out of the classroom and into the streets and talk to common Southern folk about their linguistic beliefs. Thirty-two Georgia natives were asked to look at a map of the U.S. and draw boundary lines between the areas where people speak differently. They were then asked to return to the map and mark the areas where the most “correct” English and the most “pleasant” English are spoken. I found that these participants indeed rated the states differently than did the Mid-Westerners; the Georgia residents gave strong ratings for “pleasantness” to the states in the South. The ratings for “correct” speech, however, reveal a strong linguistic insecurity; states in the North were frequently rated higher than

## Thursday Afternoon (Cont.) and Friday Morning

those in the South. In this paper I also analyze the regions which emerged through the participants' responses. These boundaries give insight into not only the Southern view of America but also the stereotypes into which Southerners group Americans and their speech.

7 • 6:30-7:00: "The Framing of Dialects in Children's Literature." **Anne Curzan**, Univ. of Washington.

Whether or not children hear dialect variation in the voices of their elementary school classmates, a number of their books import the notion of dialect variation as well as dialects themselves into the classroom, along with the process of learning to read and write. This paper examines the written presentation of dialects to elementary school children in both prescriptive and descriptive contexts. It begins by surveying treatments of dialect and Standard English in children's dictionaries, spelling books, and grammars. It then turns to children's literature, specifically the books in the American Girl Collection, to analyze the ways in which these texts incorporate American dialects. For example, some of the stories weave Spanish words into the prose while others include dialogue among Black English speakers. The paper concludes by addressing the larger, pedagogical question that arises out of the study of these specific texts: whether or not teachers and parents are equipped with an adequate understanding of language variation to navigate these representations of dialect and to make these books effective teaching tools.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 7

### *Executive Council*

Parlor G, Sixth Floor, Palmer House

8:00-10:30 a.m.: Open meeting; all members welcome. Coffee will be served. Presiding: ADS President **Ronald Butters**.

The Executive Council discusses and sets policy for the Society and hears reports from officers, editors, committee chairs, and regional secretaries. To get an advance copy of the agenda in early December, write or e-mail the Executive Secretary

### *Words of the Year, Decade, Century, and Millennium*

Parlor G, Sixth Floor, Palmer House

10:30 a.m.-12:00 noon: New Words Committee. Chair: **Wayne Glowka**, Georgia Coll. and State Univ. Review of new words of 1999, and of nominations for Words of the Year, Decade, Century, and Millennium. (See Page 3.) Final candidates will be identified in preparation for the afternoon vote (see Page 9).

### *General Session I: Dialects of American English*

Parlor H, Sixth Floor, Palmer House

1:00-3:00 p.m. Chair: **Joan Hall**, Dictionary of American Regional English.

8 • 1:00-1:30: "Contraction in American English: Evidence from the LDC Megacorporus." **Malcah Yaeger-Dror**, Univ. of Arizona, **Sharon Deckert**, Univ. of Arizona.

A study is underway to compare disagreement strategies in different social situations. In the process of analyzing a large corpus of non-face to face interactions, we have discovered that within American middle class conversational discourse, choice of contraction type [e.g., *we're not* vs. *we aren't*] is at least partly dialectal. Both dialect of the speaker and social situation appear to influence the realization of contraction of negatives in these corpora.

The LDC {Linguistics Data Consortium} includes both many casual phone conversations between intimates ['CALL HOME', 'CALL FRIEND'], as well as phone conversations between strangers ['SWITCHBOARD II'] and speech from more informative situations ['Boston Radio News', and air to ground interactions between pilots and control tower]. The present study will compare data from these three radically different situations. The analysis will permit us to analyze the degree to which contraction is triggered by need to convey critical information, by the wish to express agreement or disagreement, and the degree to which other variables [dialect and degree of acquaintance] must be taken into consideration. The use of verbal contraction vs. not-contraction in these different corpora is compared, and conclusions for understanding the importance of dialect to this form of linguistic variation will be drawn.

9 • 1:30-2:00: "Literary Dialect Analysis with LinguaLinks Software." **William A. Kretschmar, Jr.**, Univ. of Georgia.

## Friday, January 7 (Cont.): Software, New Hampshire

Finding appropriate software is one of the common problems with any attempt to use computer tools to analyze a body of textual data, whether a planned corpus or a single literary text. Some common and usable programs, like WordCruncher, have not been regularly supported and available, and other programs, like Tact, have remained available even despite a poor user interface and the obsolescence of the DOS operating system on which they were based. This paper describes my attempt to use LinguaLinks software, available from and supported by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), for text analysis. LinguaLinks provides a full-featured environment for linguistic field work, in particular for the preparation of dictionaries for undocumented languages. However, I used it in a doctoral seminar on literary dialect and stylistics, as a platform for my students to study analyze nonstandard language in literary works. Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* was the primary text; students also worked on Morrison's *Beloved*, Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, and other works. The key to effective use of LinguaLinks was help from Gary Simon of the SIL staff to enable uploading of SGML files to the program. While the learning curve for the program was difficult, and despite the fact that students did not use all of the features of the program, the final papers for the course demonstrated a command of the facts of the use of literary dialect in the subject works which exceeded that found in the published literature. It was therefore possible for the students to refute convincingly the arguments of a number of writers who made claims about literary dialect in particular works, for example to show that Twain's use of literary dialect in *Huckleberry Finn* was both consistent and apparently realistic.

10 • 2:00-2:30: “Merry, Marry, Quite Contrary, How Does Your Dialect Go?” **Naomi Nagy**, Univ. of New Hampshire.

It is popularly believed that, under the influence of nationalized media and increased mobility, regional dialects are being leveled. Numerous studies have indicated that, in spite of this belief, cities retain distinct phonological patterns (cf. Labov 1994:29), but rural dialects have received less attention. The focus of this paper is the rural state of New Hampshire (NH) and northeastern Massachusetts (MA). With respect to several phonological variables, the regions of NH near Boston are not succumbing to Boston speech patterns. The two variables under consideration are (1) the existence of low central /a/ distinct from low back /ʌ/ and (2) the merger of vowels before /r/. The data has been collected via written surveys from 467 life-time residents of NH and MA in 1998-99. The survey includes questions about language attitudes, vocabulary, and pronunciation, plus material to establish a social profile for each respondent. I contrast responses from the two states for a subset of the phonological queries and show the maintenance of a distinct rural NH dialect.

The first question examined is, “When you say *father* and *bother*, do they rhyme, like *feather* and *weather*?” 80% of MA respondents say those words are distinct, indicating the (perceived) existence of a low central vowel in their phonemic inventory—the notorious “pahk the cah in Hahvahd Yahd” vowel. Within MA, the regions closest to Boston show the highest existence of this broad “a” phoneme, ranging from 80-95% “no” (unmerged) responses. In contrast, only 60% of NH respondents say, “no,” indicating a lack of (perceived) distinction for almost half the speakers. The NH regions closest to Boston show the lowest numbers of “no” (unmerged) responses (50-60%), while those regions that are farther away from Boston show a range from 60-80%. In NH, physical proximity to Boston engenders greater linguistic distance from Boston.

This trend is on the rise, not disappearing. I contrast speakers of different ages in southern NH and northeastern MA. In northeastern MA, virtually all respondents claim the distinctive broad A for their inventory. There is no significant difference between old and young speakers, indicating a stable variable. In the NH regions near Boston, while older speakers categorically claim the distinction, only about 50% of younger speakers do so. Over time, it appears that NH will resemble MA less and less in this respect.

The second variable is examined via questions framed as “Do \_\_ and \_\_ sound the same or different?,” comparing pairs like *Mary* ~ *merry* and *berry* ~ *Barry*. 50% of the NH respondents said that the members of each of these pairs sound the same, showing two pre-rhotic mergers: tense /e/ with lax /ɛ/, and lax /ɛ/ with low front /æ/. In contrast, fewer than 10% of the MA respondents indicated that the vowels sound the same. Comparison across age groups and sex for this variable will also be presented, showing that NH is not assimilating to the Boston patterns.

Post-coronal jod-dropping (as in the variation between [tuzdej] and [tjuzdej]) is currently being examined in a similar vein. Interestingly, for the two variables examined, respondents from northern NH, too distant for frequent contact with Boston, show the same patterns as Bostonians for both variables, distinguishing them from southern NHites. A social explanation of the divergence may be offered - southern NHites have opted against a big city, liberal (read locally as “high taxation”) lifestyle, as evidenced by their frequent scornful reference to “Taxachusetts” and “Massholes,” and use linguistic features (subconsciously) to demonstrate their independence from the nearby metropolitan giant.

## Friday, January 7 (Cont.): American Patterns, Spanish

11 • 2:30-3:00: “Identifying Social and Regional Patterns of American English.” **Bethany Dumas**, Univ. of Tennessee-Knoxville.

For over fifty years, linguists and lay persons have asked, “How many dialects of American English are there?” There can be no definitive answer to the question, yet it is frequently asked (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998:92). Answers depend upon the linguistic level focused on, the research perspective of the responding linguist, and the degree to which change in progress is considered.

A popular lay perception is that there are two basic patterns, “Southern “ and what is still sometimes called “General American.” Linguistic Atlas materials have long suggested that there are three basic patterns—Northern, Midland, and Southern. As soon as social dialects were included with regional dialects, we had at least four: Northern, Midland, Southern and AAVE, originally called Negro Nonstandard.

Randolph and others early discovered that individuals in the Ozarks and Southern Appalachia were a subcategory of Southern. More recently we have asked what we do with other subcategories of Southern and patterns west of the Mississippi, Charleston English, the Ocracoke Brogue, Virginia Piedmont English, and Hawaiian English, to name but a few of the contenders. And Hispanic English has been widespread in the southwestern U.S. for a long time, and it is growing rapidly in importance in the southeast today. And if we add discourse practices, the complexity of the pattern is increased.

This paper explores the rationale for concluding that there are twelve to fifteen social and regional patterns of American English that require description in any comprehensive response to the question, “How many dialects of American English are there?”

### *General Session II: English and other Languages*

Parlor H, Sixth Floor, Palmer House

3:30-5:00 p.m. Chair: **Robert Bayley**.

12 • 3:30-4:00: “Spanish Phonetic Features in the English of Retired Caucasian El Pasoans.” **Anne Marie Hamilton**, Univ. of Georgia.

El Paso, Texas has always been characterized by the influx of new inhabitants, but it was not until large scale immigration from Mexico following World War II that Hispanic culture began to dominate the city’s character. As expected, the English of native Caucasian El Pasoans who came of age during World War II shows little influence from Spanish, even though they are exposed to Spanish daily. What is most interesting is that this generation shows any Spanish influence at all.

This paper analyzes the occurrence of Spanish phonetic features, such as realization of {-s} as [s] where [z] is expected, in the speech of a sample of forty native Caucasian El Pasoans between sixty-five and eighty-five years old. The discussion suggests explanations for the presence of Spanish phonetic features in the speech of individuals and the sample as a whole.

13 • 4:00-4:30: “Language Attrition and Innovation in a Contact Situation.” **Almeida Jacqueline Toribio**, Pennsylvania State Univ.

In his (1989) paper, “Deterioration and creativity in childhood bilingualism,” Seliger proposes that language attrition or loss in the context of bilingualism “does not result simply in deterioration and shrinking of language ability, but also in the creation of forms which are unique to the first language of the speaker” (174). The present work seeks to examine the language performance of an ‘attrited’ Spanish-English speaker to determine whether the Spanish language productions in evidence deviate from those of the fully developed native speaker and from those of the developing child and older adult second language learners. In doing so, the work addresses several issues relevant to the study of first language attrition, among these, the social and psychological factors that encourage first language attrition, the linguistic processes that are involved in the dissolution of first language abilities, and the contributions of the particular languages in contact. The study is based on the linguistic patterns attested in the oral monolingual-Spanish and written and oral Spanish-English code-switching texts elicited from a thirty-year-old Spanish-English bilingual. While our ultimate interest is in analyzing the speaker’s Spanish-language grammar, the potential insights afforded by her code-switching behaviour will significantly inform our study of attrition and loss. For while ‘balanced’ bilinguals, i.e., those who maintain native-like abilities in each language, may alternate between the languages in their repertoires in accordance with the ‘observables’ of the interaction (e.g., community norms, specific setting, interlocutor and other participants), thereby producing code-switched speech in which the morphological and syntactic integrity is maintained within identifiable unilingual segments,



## Friday, Afternoon (Cont.) and Saturday Morning

an ‘attrited’ bilingual may “lose a sense of what is grammatical for one or both of the languages and not be able to control the mixing of the two. That is, the bilingual may not be aware of the transfer and mixing of elements from one language to another and the creation of new forms in the ‘host’ language” (Seliger 1989:176).

14 • 4:30-5:00: “Discourse Markers Across Genres of Discourse: Native versus Non-Native Speakers.”

**Janet M. Fuller**, Southern Illinois Univ.

This study seeks to assess two aspects of discourse marker use in interviews and casual conversations: first, the differences between patterns of discourse marker use by native speakers (NSs) in these two genres of discourse, and second, the differences between NSs and non-native-speakers (NNSs) in production of discourse markers in these contexts.

The preliminary analysis shows that the native speakers use certain discourse markers at different rates according to the speech genre. Of the seven discourse markers analyzed (*well*, *y’know*, *oh*, *I mean*, *okay*, *like*, and *anyhow*, only one (*oh*) is used at much the same rate in both the interview and the casual conversation (17% and 15%, respectively). The most striking differences in usage across speech genres can be found in the use of the discourse markers *well* and *y’know*. In these data *well* was used at a much higher rate in the casual conversation data (36%, as compared with only 13% in the interviews). In contrast, *y’know* accounted for 42% of all discourse markers used by NSs in the interviews, but only 10% in the casual conversation. This finding may be linked to the function of *y’know* as a strategy to establish common ground, with the interviewer, who they knew only slightly.

The NNSs showed far less differentiation between speech genres in their use of discourse markers. There were two main distinctions between the NSs and the NNSs. First, the NNSs used discourse markers which mark casual interactions for the NSs (*okay* and *like*) at approximately the same rates in both interviews and casual conversations, indicating that they do not view these discourse markers as stylistic markers. Second, they use the discourse marker *y’know* at a high rate in both interviews and casual conversation (47% and 42%, respectively), a finding that indicates that this marker does not hold the same socio-pragmatic value for NNSs as it does for NSs. That is, while NSs use *y’know* to establish common ground, NNSs may use it more as a general filler or turn-holding strategy in all genres of discourse.

### *Words of the Year, Decade, Century, and Millennium*

Parlor H, Sixth Floor, Palmer House

5:15-6:30 p.m. Discussion and voting on nominations determined in the morning (see Page 6). All present are invited to vote. We’ll do this again a thousand years hence.

### *Bring-Your-Own-Book Exhibit and Reception*

Parlor F, Sixth Floor, Palmer House

6:30-7:30 p.m. Tables will be available to display your books and order forms. Refreshments will be served. A night to remember!

## SATURDAY, JANUARY 8

### *Annual Business Meeting*

Parlor H, Sixth Floor, Palmer House

8:00-8:45 a.m.: Election (see below); report of yesterday’s Executive Council meeting; as time permits, reports of officers, editors, committee chairs, regional secretaries. Most of the business of the Society is conducted at the Executive Council meeting (8 a.m. Friday, open to all members; see Page 6).

### **Nominating Committee Report**

The Nominating Committee, consisting of elected member Natalie Maynor and Past Presidents Walt Wolfram and Lawrence M. Davis (chair), proposes for Executive Council member 2000 through 2003: **Kirk Hazen** of West Virginia Univ. Additional nominations may be made by a petition with the signature of at least ten members. It must reach the Executive Secretary by December 22.

## Saturday, January 8: Modals and Missouri

### *General Session III: Variation and Change*

Parlor H, Sixth Floor, Palmer House

9:00-11:00 a.m. Chair: **William A. Kretzschmar, Jr.**

15 • 9:00-9:30: “You Must Talk It, You Got to Speak It: Insights from the Modal Auxiliary System in English Dialects.” **Sali Tagliamonte**, Univ. of York.

Variation in the use of *must*, *have to*, *have got to*, *got to*, and *gotta* to express obligation, requirement, or necessity, as in (1-5), is an area of grammar that has not been extensively documented in English dialects, especially in spoken data.

1. You must have a daycare and teachers to teach your children. (Nova Scotia)
2. You have to park on the side 'til the other one go. (Georgia)
3. You've got to think deep to find out. (Nova Scotia)
4. You got to put so much baking-powder in anything today. (Dominican Republic)
5. You gotta be careful who you're marrying. (Nova Scotia)

The construction with *must* (2) has been around since Old English (Warner, 1993: 159). *Have to* (2), on the other hand, has been dated to late Middle English (1450) (Crowell, 1955; 1959). *Have got* (3), (Rice, 1932: 286), and particularly *got to* (*gotta*) (4), are 19th century phenomenon. Labeled “colloquial” and even “vulgar” (OED) (Visser, 1963-73:1479), these forms are reported to be rapidly increasing in contemporary usage (Coates, 1983; Krug, 1998; Mencken, 1962). Indeed, the modal auxiliary system of English is said to be undergoing “wholesale reorganization” (Bolinger, 1980).

This scenario of long-term evolution of forms for the same function, yet apparently recent and rapid change, presents an interesting area for study. First, because the forms entered the language at very different points in time, their distribution across dialects may shed light on the stages of development of the modal auxiliary system and thus the nature of linguistic change in this area of English grammar (Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca, 1994). Second, because the evolution of modal *gotta* is another case in which a highly stigmatized feature is winning out over more conservative competitors. It can therefore be used to track the interrelationship between grammatical and social factors in language change. Finally, through comparisons with patterns extrapolated from the historical and synchronic literature this information can be used to track varying trends across dialects as well as to shed light on community origins and development.

In this paper I consider these issues by examining the variation in (1-5) in four North American dialects. Each has evolved in conditions of social and geographic isolation, providing optimal conditions for the maintenance of conservative features. Preliminary results reveal that *must* is present, but rare. However, there is robust variability amongst *have to*, *got to*, and *gotta*. In order to assess the grammatical function(s) of these forms and thus their status in each community, I test the effects of linguistic features associated with the development of the modals of obligation/necessity, particularly *got to* (*gotta*), including epistemic vs. agent-oriented modality, clause type, generic vs. specific reference, negation, etc. (Bybee et al., 1994; Quirk et al., 1985; Visser, 1963-73). I then correlate these parameters with the different variants in the data using quantitative techniques and the comparative method to assess their direction of effect, significance and relative importance in each variety.

The results reveal that the “slice in time” represented by each community is reflected, not only in the varying distribution of forms, but more strikingly in their patterns of use. This provides some insights into what earlier points in the trajectory of development of this area of the modal auxiliary system may have been like and how internal grammatical constraints, ongoing change in other areas of the grammar, and social factors, conspired to propel the emerging modal *gotta* to dominance in the evolving modal system of contemporary mainstream vernaculars.

I discuss how studies of such actively changing features of the English language applied to enclave situations can provide valuable evidence, not only for the role of linguistic variation in language change, but also the part played by social isolation and community identity in that process. I also emphasize the value of contemporary non-mainstream dialects to success in this enterprise.

16 • 9:30-10:00: “The Pronunciation of *Missouri*: Variation and Change in American English.” **Donald M. Lance**, Univ. of Missouri.

A popular linguistic “debate” that appears periodically in the popular press concerns the pronunciation of the final vowel in *Missouri*. Because this word was included in the questionnaire for the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada, we have records of over 2000 pronunciations of *Missouri* (as well as *Cincinnati* and *Miami*) by Americans from Maine to Georgia by Americans born between 1833 and about 1910. LANE, LAMSAS, LAGS, LAUM, LANCS, and LAPNW data strongly suggest that the schwa pronunciation of this vowel developed as part of a general lowering and

## Saturday, January 8 (Cont.): Texas, Michigan, ASL

centering of vowels in unstressed vowels in the eighteenth or nineteenth century in western new England and Midland dialects. Another possibility, “supported” by three LANE records, is that some schwa pronunciations may have developed as this final vowel was interpreted as a “long i”—i.e. eighteenth-century “uh-ih” rather than current “ah-ee.” In the nineteenth century the competing vowels in the final syllable of *Missouri* were “ih” and “uh.” The “ee” pronunciation appears in the LANE and LAMSAS records only rarely, but it is the predominant pronunciation used by Americans under 60 years of age currently. Temporal analyses of Linguistic Atlas data suggest that tensing of final unstressed high front vowels in American English has contributed to the continued loss of the schwa pronunciation in *Missouri*.

17 • 10:00-10:30: “Ghost Town or Bustling Port? A Field Report on the Status of Texas Shrimping Communities and their Local Linguistic Norms.” **Lisa Ann Lane**, Texas A&M Univ.

Anyone who has ever ventured out to the docks of many of Texas shrimping communities has undoubtedly asked: Am I in the right place? Did fishing fold here? Where is everyone? While this is not a new phenomenon for Texas ports (cf. esp. Maril 1983), it remains an important question for anthropologists, rural sociologists, and especially (ethno-) dialectologists. This paper asks, what is the present-day status of Texas maritime communities and how are the local linguistic and social norms faring?

According to the US. Department of Commerce (1980) and Maril (1983:ix, ff.), “the shrimp industry is the most important fishing industry in the US.” While Texas shrimping industry has been big business since the 1940s (\$119.9 million in 1980, the third largest in volume in the US), Texas shrimpers have yet to unionize; Texas’ seemingly deserted and tourist-unfriendly docks remain in striking contrast to those of the West and East coast harbors; and new environmental and economic battles challenge the viability of fishing, especially for family owned businesses. Given these facts, are the social and linguistic systems of Texas maritime communities endangered? This paper is a field report on the status of three communities (Aransas Pass, Galveston, and Port Bolivar), examining the ways macro-economic changes have impacted the micro-economies that affected the social constructs and the local dialects. This paper will present a summary of previous dialectological and ethno-sociological work and then present the initial findings from ongoing data collection from the field sites in order to address the above questions.

18 • 10:30-11:00: “Low-front Vowel Raising among African-Americans, Rural Residents, and Appalachian Immigrants in Michigan.” **Betsy Evans**, Michigan State Univ., **Rika Ito**, Michigan State Univ., **Jamila Jones**, Michigan State Univ.

African-Americans in Lansing, Appalachian immigrants in Ypsilanti, and rural residents in south-central Michigan are all latecomers to the urban-centered Northern Cities shift, yet all three groups are participating to some extent in at least the first step of this shift—low-front vowel tensing and raising. This presentation compares and contrasts these three groups in the area of social embedding of the first stage of the shift. What demographic characteristics (age, sex, status, and network in particular) characterize advancement in this shift? Do all three groups show similar progress in such groupings?

### *General Session IV: Variation in ASL*

Parlor H, Sixth Floor, Palmer House

11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Chair: **Bethany Dumas**.

19 • 11:30-12:00: “Grammatical Conditioning of Phonological Variation: The Case of ASL.” **Ceil Lucas**, Gallaudet Univ., **Robert Bayley**, Univ. of Texas-San Antonio, **Mary Rose**, Stanford Univ., **Alyssa Wulf**, Univ. of California-Berkeley.

In this paper, we test Liddell and Johnson’s hypothesis (1989) that the variable segmental structure exhibited in American Sign Language (ASL) could be accounted for by the features in the surrounding phonological environment. We examine grammatical conditioning of three phonological variables: (1) the sign DEAF, which varies in its location (i.e. it can be signed from ear to chin, from chin to ear, or as a contact on the cheek); (2) a class of signs represented by the verb KNOW, which in citation form (the form which appears in dictionaries and is taught in sign language classes) is produced on the forehead but which may also be produced at various points below the forehead including the cheek and the space in front of the signer; and (3) signs produced with a 1 handshape (in citation form, index finger extended, all other fingers and thumb closed), which exhibit a wide range of variation, e.g. thumb open, all fingers open. Our analysis is based on nearly 10,000 tokens extracted from videotaped conversations with a well-stratified sample of 207 white and African American signers from seven sites across the United States. The database includes both working class and middle class signers ranging in age from 11 to 93.

## Saturday, January 8 (Cont.): American Sign Language

Multivariate analysis of this extensive corpus of ASL conversational data disconfirms Liddell and Johnson's hypothesis. VARBRUL analyses of 1618 tokens of DEAF, 2862 tokens of location signs, and 5356 tokens of 1-handshape signs show that grammatical constraints are the most significant factors conditioning variation in all three phonological variables. A model that accounts for ASL phonological variation exclusively, or even primarily, by appeal to features of the preceding or following segments is therefore clearly inadequate. Rather, we suggest multiple explanations of the role of grammatical influences on ASL phonological variation. In the case of DEAF, prosody seems to be the most likely explanation. In ASL, predicates are phrase-final, and thus are more likely to be stressed. Signs in a stressed position may be more likely to be in citation form. Variation in the class of signs exemplified by KNOW appears to be a case of change in progress, in which interrogative signs lead, while nouns, verbs, and adjectives are less likely to be realized in non-citation form. Finally, for 1-handshape signs, the first person pronouns favor non-citation form, second and third person pronouns are neutral or favor citation form, and nouns, adjectives, and verbs favor citation form. These findings suggest that a scale of indexicality influences the variation in 1-handshape signs. Pronouns, which literally point to entities already present in the discourse, allow for greater handshape variation. Lexical signs, which are not indexical, allow for less variability in handshape.

The result of this study highlight the importance of basing claims about the likely causes of variation on empirical studies of broadly representative samples of data collected in the language community. This caution is particularly applicable to signed languages such as ASL, where the study of variation is still in the early stages and where differences in modality may well limit the applicability of explanations based on the study of spoken languages.

20 • 12:00-12:30: "Lexical Variation in American Sign Language." **Ceil Lucas**, Gallaudet Univ., Washington, D.C.

This paper will present an analysis of lexical variation in American Sign Language (ASL). The analysis is based on the signed responses to 33 stimuli (pictures and fingerspelling) by 139 white and African American signers in 3 age groups and at 2 socioeconomic levels, a subset of the population (n=3D207) of an on-going study of sociolinguistic variation in ASL. Interviews were videotaped with the signers in seven locations around the U.S. The selection of the 33 stimuli was motivated by earlier work on lexical variation in ASL (see, for example, Shroyer and Shroyer 1984) which shows most lexical variation to be with nouns, particularly in signs for food and animals. The thirty-three stimuli include twenty-five nouns (9 for food, 4 for animals, 4 for clothing, 3 relatively new technology-related concepts—COMPUTER, MICRO-WAVE, and RELAY—2 signs for geographical locations and 3 other miscellaneous stimuli), 5 verbs, 2 adjectives, and 1 adverb. The new technology-related stimuli were included to determine what strategies for lexical innovation have been chosen among fingerspelling, inventing new signs, and borrowing from other sign languages. The stimuli for geographical locations were included because, probably as a result of increased interaction among Deaf people all over the world, new signs are replacing established signs for many countries, as we see with JAPAN. Furthermore, with the growth of awareness and empowerment in Deaf communities, some signs considered to be patronizing or racist, such as the established ASL sign for AFRICA, are being replaced with signs considered to be more appropriate and respectful.

This paper will focus on three questions: 1) what is the relative proportion of lexical variation to phonological variation within lexical items. That is, is a given concept represented by a number of lexical items that are unrelated to each other phonologically or is a given concept represented by one or two lexical items, each of which shows several phonological variants? ; 2) in terms of phonological variation, can we see any evidence of change in progress? For example, based on earlier research (See Woodward and DeSantis 1977, Woodward, Erting, and Oliver 1976), we expect to see, with younger signers, 2-handed signs becoming one-handed or signs produced on the head moving to the hands; 3) in which of the 4 groups examined (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) do we see the most variation, is it lexical or phonological, and specifically within the noun group, can the hypothesis that the most variation is found with food and animals be confirmed? And what of the signs for technological innovations and geographical locations- how does innovation appear to be proceeding? Examples of the lexical variants will be provided as warranted.

21 • 12:00-1:00: "Variable Subject Presence in ASL Narratives." **Alyssa Wulf**, Univ. of California-Berkeley/Gallaudet Univ., **Paul Dudis**, Univ. of California-Berkeley/Gallaudet Univ., **Robert Bayley**, Univ. of Texas-San Antonio, **Ceil Lucas**, Gallaudet Univ.

This paper examines subject behavior in ASL (American Sign Language). In ASL, a sentence may be produced with or without a subject. This is not unique to ASL as studies of subject pronouns in several other languages show (see, for example, Cameron 1992 on Spanish, Huang 1989 on Chinese, Lira 1982 on Brazilian Portuguese). Such studies also demonstrate that there are a variety of linguistic and social constraints that can influence subject behavior, but the particular constraints that apply to ASL have not yet been identified.

## Saturday, January 8 (Cont.): Soul, Comedy, AAVE

As is the case in many other languages, information about the subject of an ASL sentence is sometimes provided through morphology. Certain verbs allow changes in form (i.e., in their use of space) that indicate the person and/or number of their subject. In other cases, the verb form itself includes no information about the subject—these have been referred to as “plain” verbs (Padden 1988). Although we might expect that the latter type would require a separate manual subject, they also show variable subject presence. We focus on the behavior of subjects occurring with plain verbs in this study.

The data for this study are taken from nineteen narratives produced by nineteen ASL users aged 16 to 84. The narratives selected were produced spontaneously during conversations recorded for an ongoing study of sociolinguistic variation in ASL, in which 204 White and African American ASL users of varying age, gender and socioeconomic status were videotaped in 7 sites across the United States.

All tokens were coded for a number of factors, including person and number, switch reference and sentence type (e.g., declarative, yes/no question). We also coded for whether the token occurred within constructed action or dialogue or within utterances marked by obvious English influences. We also considered the claim (Bahan 1996) that sentences without overt manual subjects are in fact produced with specific non-manual signals that indicate subject, and tested it against a subset of our tokens.

Overall, results indicate that subject presence with plain verbs is indeed variable in ASL, with subjects more often absent than present. The influence of switch reference on subject behavior is supported by our data, with tokens in a same-referent situation showing a marked preference for subject absence. We discuss the role of this factor and of the other factors considered, as well as the role of non-manual signals.

### *Annual Luncheon*

Parlor F, Sixth Floor, Palmer House. Please make reservations in advance; see Page 3.

1:15-2:45 p.m. Speaker: **John R. Rickford**, Stanford Univ. “Spoken Soul in American Comedy.”

In this talk I’ll explore the extent to which and the ways in which what Claude Brown called “Spoken Soul”—the vernacular of African Americans—has figured in American comedy. I’ll begin with the White minstrel tradition of the nineteenth century, consider the “Toby” performances of Black comedians (usually in blackface) in the 1920s, the humor of mid-century figures like Moms Mabley and Redd Foxx, and the routines of the most modern practitioners like Richard Pryor, Bill Cosby, Chris Rock, Steve Harvey, and Adele Givens. I will also touch briefly on the humor generated by the recent Ebonics controversy, much of it stereotypical and distinctly different from the Black comic tradition in content and form.

Comedy is not a genre to which linguists have paid much attention, but as I hope to show, it can be a valuable source of data on language use and language attitudes in America. In contrast with literature (which linguists have considered somewhat more), comedy—especially stand-up comedy—is spoken, live, much more spontaneous, and much more sensitive to audience feedback. This makes it a potentially rich exemplar of a wide range of speech styles, and it also makes it a powerful reflector and shaper of language attitudes. One of the questions I will consider is what use various individuals and groups make of the linguistic features and speech event traditions of Spoken Soul, what attitudes their varying uses reflect, and what effects (if any) their uses have on larger public stances towards dialect use. Long after it died out, the minstrel tradition in particular had negative effects on attitudes towards the public recognition and literary use of Spoken Soul. And in several cases (e.g. Redd Foxx, Bill Cosby) individual artists reflect in their articulated positions and/or use on different occasions the push-pull, love-hate relationship that America has with Spoken Soul and other vernaculars.

### *General Session V: African American English*

Parlor H, Sixth Floor, Palmer House

3:00-5:00 p.m. Chair: **John Baugh**

22 • 3:00-3:30: “Stressed Stay: A New AAVE Aspect Marker.” **Arthur K. Spears**, The City Univ. of New York (CUNY).

Stressed STAY (written with caps to emphasize stressing) occurs in sentences such as

1. He STAY flossing. ‘He’s always/frequently dressed very well.’
2. She STAY pregnant. ‘She is frequently pregnant.’

## Saturday, January 8 (Cont.): AAVE Style, Syllables, Liberia

It is a new aspect marker that has been observed in the speech of the New York City area and most probably exists throughout the northeast and perhaps other areas of the country as well.

STAY expresses FREQUENTATIVE, ITERATIVE HABITUAL aspect and should not be confused with “save-face” *stay*, which appears to be more widespread age-wise. This second *stay* is exemplified as follows (showing also the distinctively AAVE agentive preposition *from*):

3. You gone stay hit from him? ‘Are you going to allow him to hit you and get away with it?’

STAY has the grammatical features associated with most auxiliaries distinctive to AAVE (Labov 1998). It may become a permanent feature of AAVE or turn out to be nonpermanent, as was *steady* (which in any case was not an auxiliary).

23 • 3:30-4:00: “Style Shifting Revisited: Informant Roles Across Interview Contexts.” **Patricia Cukor-Avila**, Univ. of North Texas.

The working assumption in the study of sociolinguistics is that the data we collect in linguistic interviews reflects the typical linguistic behavior of our informants. However, the “observer’s paradox” (i.e., the skewing of linguistic behavior towards norms of correctness as a result of the mere presence of a fieldworker) undermines this working assumption and potentially creates significant questions of validity for the entire sociolinguistic enterprise. If the linguistic fieldwork on which most of our research is based is skewed towards norms of correctness, it surely fails to reflect informants’ typical linguistic behavior. In spite of its possible problems of validity, though, the interview is central to sociolinguistics and remains the primary vehicle for obtaining linguistic data. In the absence of another mechanism for gathering data, sociolinguists have no alternative but (1) to develop mechanisms for ameliorating the observer’s paradox and (2) to develop measures of the effects of various characteristics of interviewers and interviewees on the data.

This paper addresses the second of these issues by exploring the roles speakers play in various interview contexts and to what extent these roles affect the data collected in these interviews. Previous research on the dynamics of the linguistic interview has typically focused on the role of the audience (i.e., Bell 1984) or on the effect of interviewer characteristics, for example addressee status (Baugh 1979; Coupland 1984), gender (Walters 1989), insider versus outsider status (Russell 1982; Rickford 1983), and most recently, the race of the interviewer (Rickford and McNair-Knox 1994; Cukor-Avila and Bailey 1999). However, analyses of interviews over time with the same speakers (Cukor-Avila and Bailey 1997) reveal that interview participants don’t always play the same role. The present study, therefore, examines the notion that speech varies according to participant role through an analysis of two types of interview contexts recorded in the Springville, Texas corpus: (1) traditional sociolinguistic interviews where the fieldworker is present (individual and group settings) and where the role of the informant is that of interviewee, and (2) recordings made by community members where the fieldworker is not present and the informant’s role is that of fieldworker. The analysis compares African American Vernacular English (AAVE) grammatical features used by two “participant fieldworkers” in the interview contexts mentioned above. Preliminary results suggest that while speech varies according to participant role, the consequences of this variation are not necessarily found in the use of AAVE features. Moreover, the presence or absence of the fieldworker does not significantly effect the use and distribution of these features.

24 • 4:00-4:30: “Syllable Structure in AAVE.” **William Stone**, Northeastern Illinois Univ.

In this paper, I provide evidence that basilectal AAVE as spoken in Chicago today has a different syllable structure to Standard English. The literature on AAVE discusses at length features such as *-t* and *-d* deletion and word-final cluster simplification. I propose that these features, as well as the omission of other consonants from word-final syllable codas, can be explained most economically by the analysis that basilectal AAVE has a syllable structure that doesn’t allow consonants in the coda. In this way it is similar to ‘other’ creole languages. The difference in syllable structure can also partially explain certain aspects of copula omission. I propose that the existence of coda consonants in mesolectal AAVE is due to progressive insertion. The data on which this study is based come from self-collected recordings of 18-24 year olds in Chicago.

25 • 4:30-5:00: “‘Since my Last, things has Takeing quite an other aspect’: Verbal *-s* in Early Liberian Settler English.” **Gerard Van Herk**, Univ. of Ottawa, **James A. Walker**, Univ. of Ottawa.

The use of transplanted varieties to reconstruct prior linguistic stages is standard in historical linguistics but has recently proven controversial in the African American English (AAE) origins debate. While studies of verbal *-s* marking have generally confirmed its parallel conditioning across corpora of early AAE and contemporaneous nonstandard British dialects (e.g. Poplack & Tagliamonte 1989, 1991; Montgomery et al. 1993; Montgomery & Fuller 1996), recent studies (e.g. Clarke 1997; Singler 1999) have called into question the transmission of British dialectal constraints to AAE. On the basis of data from Liberian Settler English (LSE), Singler (1999) argues that such constraints were only

## Saturday, January 8 (Concluded): Liberian Letters

transmitted to early AAE in the “fringe agricultural areas” of the U.S., since LSE speakers from Sinoe, which was settled predominantly from the “Deep South,” do not use the British Northern Subject Rule (NSR), which requires *-s* if the subject is not an adjacent personal pronoun.

In this paper, we test Singler’s argument by examining verbal *-s* in antebellum letters of African Americans who settled in Sinoe and elsewhere in Liberia. Preliminary results show that, although Sinoe and non-Sinoe settlers differ in the overall distribution of verbal *-s* across the grammatical paradigm, the linguistic constraints—grammatical person, aspect, subject type, and the NSR—are virtually identical. These findings argue that the constraints found in other corpora of early AAE were also brought over by the first Liberian settlers, and suggest that the present differentiation of Sinoe LSE is the result of subsequent internal linguistic change.

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### Directory of Members, September 1999

**Duke University Press** now collects dues and maintains the *American Speech* mailing list. But mailing labels are still available from the Executive Secretary for ADS purposes such as calls for papers. Listings by locality are available to members who would like to get to know their neighbors.

Special categories include ∞Life Membership, available for \$700 (minus the current year’s dues, if paid); §Emeritus Membership, free to retired members, but including only the Newsletter; \*\*Presidential Honorary Membership, awarded to three students annually by the ADS President, and \*Student Membership, including all publications, at \$20 per year for as many as three years.

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# REGIONAL MEETINGS, FALL 1999

## Rocky Mountain

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

ADS Session 3:15-4:15 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 14, Suite B.

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, Marriott--Downtown.

ADS Session 12:45-2:15 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 30, Room 303.

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 En-

glish." **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.

*Registration* by Oct. 18 is \$45, students \$10. *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.

ADS session 10:15-11:45 a.m. Friday, Nov. 5, Lafayette Bay Room.

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.

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

## Midwest Meeting (Cont.)

Registration is \$40 reg. (includes 18 papers), \$50 joint (includes 18 papers), and \$20 special (no papers). 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.

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## South Atlantic

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

ADS Session 8:30-10:00 a.m. Friday, Nov. 5, Chicago B.

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](mailto: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](mailto:mpicone@ualvm.ua.edu).

Registration by Oct. 4 is \$45, students \$25. 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](http://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.

## Books: The World, Jamaica

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

**Allan Metcalf**. *The World in So Many Words: A Country-by-Country Tour of Words That Have Shaped our Language*. Houghton Mifflin, 1999. xviii + 298 pages. ISBN 0-395-95920-9. Hardcover \$19. Maybe you know that *penguin* comes from Welsh and *hooch* from Tlingit, not to mention *boondocks* from Tagalog and *dynamite* from Swedish (yes, the inventor did borrow a bit from Greek), but where else will you learn that the Turkmen language has given ours *Akhalteke*, and what it means? This is a tour of the more than 200 languages English is indebted to for its gargantuan vocabulary. From Europe through Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas, the tour pauses at one representative word from each language, along with information about the language and its total contribution to English. It's just for fun, but you might learn something.

**Peter L. Patrick**. *Urban Jamaican Creole: Variation in the Mesolect*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1999. xii+317 pages. ISBN 1 55619 448 X. Hardcover \$110. A synchronic sociolinguistic study of Jamaican Creole as spoken in urban Kingston, this work uses variationist methods to closely investigate two key concepts of Atlantic Creole studies: the mesolect, and the creole continuum. One major concern is to describe how linguistic variation patterns with social influences. The second chief aim is to elucidate the nature of mesolectal grammar. Drawing on a year's fieldwork in a mixed-class neighborhood of the capital city, the author (a speaker of JC) describes the speech community's history, demographics, and social geography, locating speakers in terms of their social class, occupation, education, age, sex, residence, and urban orientation. The later chapters examine a recorded corpus for linguistic variables. The Jamaican urban mesolect is portrayed as a coherent system showing stratified yet regular linguistic behavior, embedded in a well-defined speech community; despite the incorporation of forms and constraints from English, it is quintessentially creole in character.

## DARE Hunts for Roman Cannon, Saddlebag House

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](mailto:jdhall@facstaff.wisc.edu).

**pegger back** (or **peg 'er back?**)—Given by a single Wisconsin informant as the name of a bat-and-ball game for a small number of players. Does anyone know this, and can you describe it?

**pen(-type) barn**—Four informants, all from Michigan and Wisconsin, gave this term. It appears to refer to a barn without stalls, in which the animals can roam freely. Can anyone give a more precise definition?

**penny pup, penny dog, penny feist**—"A small dog; a noisy, worthless person; a tagalong or toady." Our evidence is mostly from the Appalachian region. We would like to have more data on the distribution of these forms and their meanings. Is anyone familiar with any of them as a verb?

**perch bug**—Two NY state informants offered this, one as a term for dragonfly and the other for a dragonfly nymph (used for fish-bait). Does anyone else know this term? Is it really applied to the adult insect as well as the larva?

**Persian apple**—"Rhubarb." We have 19th century evidence for this; does anyone know if it is still in use?

**Peter's mudhole**—Four informants, all from Georgia and three of them Black speakers, used this term in reference to storm clouds, rain, and wind. Can anyone give us more information on what this means and how it is used?

**red pea**—Does anyone know this as a specific term for a type of pea—perhaps a black-eyed pea?

**Robin Adair**—"Jack-in-the-pulpit." This was given by a single Indiana informant and is apparently unknown to the botanical literature. Has anyone heard this?

**Roman cannon**—A firework; presumably the same thing as a Roman candle, but none of our informants states this explicitly. Does anyone know this term?

**runout**—This term is used repeatedly in a 1953 book about life on the Mississippi, apparently to

mean a flash flood in a tributary stream. Can anyone supply further information?

**saddlebag house**—Our earlier quotations (1934>) apply this term to a dogtrot house—i.e. one consisting of two main rooms under a single roof, but separated by an open breezeway. A number of later quotations—which may, however, reflect the terminology of architectural historians rather than the folk who live in such houses—apply the term to a house consisting of two main rooms arranged around a central chimney. If you know this from experience rather than books, please tell us what it means to you.

**salad pea** (or **sallet pea**)—"Green pea with an edible pod." Our only evidence comes from the Smoky Mountain region. Is it known anywhere else? Is it so called because it is put in salads or because it is eaten as a "sallet" (an edible green)?

**Shrimp moth**—A *LACS* informant from central Louisiana says that these fly for two days, then return to the water and become grass- or river-shrimp. An Arkansas informant mentions, without further details, a shrimp fly, which may be the same thing. Has anyone heard either of these terms or heard this remarkable metamorphosis attributed to an insect known by some other name?

### 120 x 92 = FGC Celebration

To celebrate his 120 semesters (60 years) at the University of Wisconsin, as well as his 92nd birthday, *DARE* Chief Editor Frederic G. Cassidy was honored by the *DARE* staff and the English department at a party October 9. The Wisconsin Humanities Council took the occasion to present him with the Governor's award for Excellence in Public Humanities Scholarship.

### Membership & Dues

If you owe ADS dues for 2000, you will already have received notice from our publisher, Duke University Press. Memberships are still \$35, students \$20, but now there's a \$5 charge for members outside the United States. 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](mailto:mwe326@duke.edu).