

THE LINGUISTIC ATLAS OF THE GULF STATES

THE BASIC MATERIALS, PART I

A MANUAL FOR DIALECT RESEARCH IN THE SOUTHERN STATES

Third Edition

Edited by

Lee Pederson  
Charles E. Billiard  
Susan E. Leas  
Marvin Bassett

A Manual for  
Dialect Research  
in the Southern States

Third Edition

edited by

Lee Pederson, Charles E. Billiard,  
Susan E. Leas, and Marvin Bassett  
Cartography by Borden D. Dent

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## PREFACE

Fieldworkers and other interested students of linguistic geography have often suggested that it would be useful to have an explanation of field procedures and a description of the historical context of large-scale projects before the findings of the research are published. Atlas handbooks are important contributions to dialectology, but they regularly appear with the finished work, such as the one prepared by Kurath, Bloch, and others for the Linguistic Atlas of New England and the works in progress by McDavid and Davis for the Linguistic Atlas of the Middle Atlantic and South Atlantic States and by Allen for the Linguistic Atlas of the Upper Midwest. Since the LAGS Project covers the largest geographical area ever undertaken within the structure of conventional American dialectology, it is reasonable to assume that the fieldwork will take some time to complete and that a considerable number of investigators will ultimately be involved in the collection of data. This manual, then, is prepared for those who will do that research and for others who are interested in the aims and methods of the LAGS Project.

At the 1970 Annual Convention of the NCTE in Atlanta, Raven I. McDavid, Jr., taped a four-hour commentary on American atlas work sheets with particular attention to the items investigated by Guy S. Lowman, Jr., and himself in the Middle and South Atlantic States. This tape was later used by all regular fieldworkers--C. William Foster, Anne Malone, Lee Pederson, and Christine Unger--and by student interviewers in various Gulf States locations. Because that tape provided the example of the most experienced fieldworker in America, explaining

how he investigated individual items in the work sheets and, thereby, clarifying precisely what kinds of information are sought under a given item, the demand for the tape was so great as to recommend a written transcription of that record.

The introductory essays outline the aims and methods of the LAGS Project and the relationships of that research to general linguistics, American dialectology, folklore study, and the teaching of English. These are followed by the complete text of the work sheets with the interviewing techniques used by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., in several Atlas projects, supplemented by those used by Bernard Bloch, Guy S. Lowman, Jr., and Rachel S. Harris in New England and by Lee Pederson in the Gulf States. The maps, the list of counties, the index to the work sheets, and the vowel and consonant tables are included as appendices to assist LAGS fieldworkers.

No attempt is made in this preliminary edition of the manual to provide instructions in either impressionistic phonetics or the full range of problems involving the tape recorder. If readers of this version indicate an interest in those matters, we will surely include appropriate chapters, together with an instructional tape for phonic identification, in a revised edition. For the time being, LAGS fieldworkers will continue to follow Chapter IV, "The Phonetic Alphabet and Other Symbols" by Hans Kurath et al., with an introductory essay and a map index by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., and Audrey R. Duckert, 2nd ed., AMS Press, 1973, and the tapes and transcriptions available in the LAGS Collection at Emory University. The following suggestions of Virginia McDavid, Raven I. McDavid, Jr., and Alva L. Davis in their "Preface to the Second Edition" of A Compilation of the Work Sheets of the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada and Associated Projects, University of Chicago Press, 1969, are strongly

recommended:

- 1) He should be sure that questions are asked that elicit, insofar as the topics are relevant to the local culture, all the desired responses. If he does not try to transcribe simultaneously, he must make notations on some sort of scoring sheet.
- 2) Better yet, even if he is unable to get exhaustive phonetic detail, he should transcribe as much as possible during the interview without interrupting the flow of discourse. It is far easier to fill in the details of a broad transcription than to take all the evidence off cold tape. Besides, even the best recorder sometimes fails to work, and some informants who will accept the fieldworker's notebook will balk at mechanical recordings.
- 3) In listening to the tapes of interviews, the investigators should examine carefully the undirected statements of the informant, including anecdotes and casual remarks. Such spontaneous utterances provide valuable evidence on an informant's natural usage, especially in matters of grammar.
- 4) In conducting the interview, the investigator should not assume that the tape recorder makes it possible to shorten materially the time of an interview. If the interviewer tries conscientiously to get responses--and if he does not try, he vitiates the purpose of the interview--it is doubtful if he could work faster than the interviewers who have proceeded in the traditional manner; some of them have completed the long work sheets in as little as four hours, the short ones in two. Moreover, the very anecdotes which slow up the interview provide evidence not only on conversational usage of items in the work sheets, but also on syntax and suprasegmentals and paralinguistic, to say nothing of local history and folklore. In short, the fieldworker must always use the work sheets in a situation which approximates as closely as possible everyday conversation between two people interested in a common topic.

The vowel and consonant tables are reproduced with the permission of the American Council of Learned Societies and the AMS Press, publishers of the Handbook of the Linguistic Geography of New England, Second Edition (1972).

We express appreciation to Clyde St. Romain and his staff of the Georgia State University Media Center for the preparation of the maps for the LAGS area. We also wish to thank A.L. Davis for permission to borrow extensively from the work

sheet compilation he edited with the McDavids, the Research Foundation of the National Council of Teachers of English, and the Emory University Research Committee for their ongoing support of this work, and, especially, Barbara Respass, Bill McAdams, and Lynn Dorman for their help in typing the manuscript and the School of Education of Georgia State University for its financial assistance in the publication of this manual.

Charles E. Billiard  
C. William Foster  
Raven I. McDavid, Jr.  
Lee Pederson

Atlanta, Georgia  
May 19, 1972



## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The publication of this edition is an opportunity for us to revise the manual in accordance with recent developments in the LAGS Project, to correct the original copy, and to express appreciation for the support that makes the program possible. In the interest of economy, all of that is summarized here in the preface; only minor corrections have been made in the text. Detailed explanations of the substantive revisions will appear in American Speech and Orbis, with the present overview offered as a guide to the aims and implications of this text and the project for which it was prepared.

Current fieldwork in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee recommends a major revision in the research design. After testing the work sheets through 25 interviews in Birmingham, Atlanta, Jackson, Chattanooga, and Knoxville, we now have a better understanding of the requisites for adequate sampling of the urban lexicon in these Southern states. We are now developing supplementary lexical material for the investigation of urban speech, based on those categories outlined in McDavid's "The Second Round in the Dialectology of North American English" (1960) and Pederson's "An Approach to Urban Word Geography" (1971) and consistent with the regional speech of the Middle and Lower South. Additional work sheets will be organized in consultation with other students of American urban speech, whose suggestions we welcome, directly. The investigation of urban communities, however, will be deferred until the rural sample has been completed in all eight states, including the entire state of Arkansas and all of Texas east of the Grand Prairie and south of the Edwards

Plateau. Then a survey of other communities will begin by investigating speech in the types of communities identified in "Southern Speech and the LAGS Project" (1971).

Another revision should also be mentioned here, but this is merely a note of clarification. Since all LAGS interviews are recorded in their entirety on magnetic tape, the functional definition of the term field record in this survey means the complete tape recording made in the field. The phonetic transcription and marginal notes made from the field record in an initial systematic audition comprise a protocol, an index for subsequent auditions of the tapes. Although the protocol will provide the essential material for the composition of the Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States, these forms hold only a small fraction of the data gathered and stored for future retrieval. With the corpus defined in this way, the experimental and descriptive possibilities of the program are considerably enlarged, but so are the responsibilities of the investigator in the field, upon whose skills and patience rest the ultimate success of the survey.

In that regard, a useful reading for LAGS interviewers is W.R. Van Riper's "Shortening the Long Conversational Dialect Interview" in L.M. Davis, ed., Studies in Honor of Raven I. McDavid, Jr. (1972). Although we have no interest in abbreviating the duration of any interview as a matter of course, we strongly recommend Van Riper's suggestions: the development of the field interview from an initial session of free conversation, followed by a careful audition of the tape before returning to complete the field record. This method is consistent with the approach outlined in our text (especially, pp. 45-48) and, reinforced with generalized cues or "shotgun questions," as McDavid calls them, Van Riper's

procedure is an effective means of improving the conversational quality of interviewing under normal circumstances and of efficiently saving time when it becomes a factor.

Shotgun questions--conversational stimuli, initiators, or openers--can be introduced at any point in the interview, and indeed they should be, especially at any time the interviewer finds himself talking too much. Several particularly productive cues are these: "How did you use to build a fire?" (107); "What kinds of buildings do you have on the farm?" (112); "What kinds of animals do you keep?" (129-32); "What kinds of things are made with cornmeal?" (137-38); "What were some of the events that brought people of the community together?" -- to open discussions of weddings, cooperative parties (e.g., corn-shuckings and barn-raising), and funerals. Similar questions relating to cooking utensils, bedding, land and soil types, varieties of flowing water and land elevations are also useful, providing an effortless source of considerable information.

Another matter of clarification concerns the use of the sample questions. As stated elsewhere, these are intended to assist an interviewer in better understanding the information sought and to provide examples of ways the data can be elicited. The sample questions are not to be read aloud mechanically by the interviewer. When they are used, however, follow McDavid's suggestions first. They reflect the broadest experience with Southern speech. Similarly, Pederson's questions are often useful in the examination and interpretation of semantic problems. Occasionally, the questions of Bloch, Harris, and Lowman will be useful, but often they are better suited for the investigation of New England dialects.

Finally, the publication of this edition of the manual is a good occasion

for us to thank the National Endowment for the Humanities for its generous support and to reaffirm our appreciation of the efforts of all participants in the project, especially the work of our regular investigators, Barbara Rutledge, Anne Dunlap, and Edward Crist. We are also especially grateful to Betty Yarborough for her invaluable assistance in typing revisions for this edition.

Charles E. Billiard  
C. William Foster  
Raven I. McDavid, Jr.  
Lee Pederson

Atlanta, Georgia  
November 1, 1973

## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

Since the organization of the LAGS pilot project, a Dialect Survey of Rural Georgia (1968), this survey has been recognized primarily as a training program for students of general linguistics. As stated in the prospectus (1968):

A realistic program for any academic discipline concerned with the collection, analysis, integration, and description of data requires immediate involvement with that subject matter. A lecture course in descriptive linguistics is no less superficial and inadequate than a similar offering in plant systematics or animal ecology. This dialect survey of rural Georgia is designed to provide students at Emory University an opportunity to do linguistic fieldwork and with it to gain firsthand experience with the methods of descriptive linguistics. In the present schedule, advanced undergraduates and graduate students will do a specified number of interviews with native rural Georgians over age 65. Descriptive and contrastive analyses of data collected in those interviews will be reported in course papers, but the material should also lend itself to broader and more significant interpretations.

That survey, subtitled "A Program for English Language Students," provided the initial personnel, intelligence, training, and supplies for the Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States Project, and that cooperative academic effort has been sustained throughout the course of both investigations.

To a greater extent than any other LAGS material, this manual has served as the central text for planning, training, and executing the fieldwork, and all of that was done in the spirit of general education. For that reason, no effort is made here to revise that pedagogical tone of the research. All of the essays of the earlier editions have been preserved, with minor corrections and additional documentation to state the progress of the investigation with

accuracy. The first edition insisted on the appropriate use of student fieldworkers and the total dependence upon the tape recorder in the composition of a permanent, verifiable set of field records. The texts of interrogational styles--Bloch, Harris, and Lowman in New England and McDavid and Pederson in the Middle and South Atlantic States, as well as the Gulf States--were added to the LAGS work sheets with the explicit purpose of assisting student interviewers. The publication of the second edition two years thereafter (1974) was evidence of the usefulness of the text in both the classroom and the field.

Several revisions in the program have been introduced since 1974, and the present edition aims to remain a research instrument for students of descriptive linguistics. The tasks of those students are now directed to the retrieval, analysis, and description of data. Although the fieldwork has been completed and although the manual has been replaced by the Guide (1977/81) as the LAGS editorial book, the present text remains useful for auditors of the field records, readers of the protocols and the concordance, and students of the legendry and maps.

Four of those procedural revisions since 1974 are immediately relevant to the present text. First, the LAGS territory was reorganized in 1975 to include the entire states of Georgia and Arkansas, with the East Texas sectors extended westward to include all communities (counties) east of Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio, and Laredo. To register those changes, all maps in the present edition have been redrawn by Borden D. Dent, and the sector and community lists in the appendices have been revised to make them consistent with all protocol designations.

Second, the investigation of urban speech was added to the project in 1976, with 199 items added to the work sheets. This supplement was developed by Billiard and Pederson with students at Georgia State and Emory conducting experimental interviews in Atlanta, while Barbara Rutledge, the chief LAGS fieldworker, tested the instrument in New Orleans and Houston. Preliminary findings of the urban survey have been reported by Susan Leas (WP #7), and the full set of work sheets is included in the present text, sheets 105-131.

Third, the importance of the protocols as a basic reference makes the LAGS work sheets, as presented here, essential for the interpretation of the data. Since 1977, when the plans for the publication of LAGS were outlined (WP #4), scribes and editors of the data have tried to make explicit all page and line correspondences in the protocols and work sheets. Readers of the protocols will have a general understanding of the contexts in which the information was elicited, and auditors of the field records (the tape-recorded interviews) will have access to the universe of discourse available to scribes and editors.

Finally, the LAGS concordance provides an exhaustive inventory of all forms recorded in the protocols, and this reference, like all other instruments of the project, was prepared according to the page and line number of the work sheets. That finders' list identifies the data and provides the alphabetized index to be published by the University of Georgia Press and the word list from which the legendry will be composed.

The preparation of this edition of the Manual was a cooperative effort of several institutions, many colleagues, and several hundred students of general linguistics. We are proud to express our gratitude to them all, but

we must limit explicit references to the National Endowment for the Humanities, Georgia State and Emory universities, Hiram Johnson, Chairman of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at GSU, who supported the composition of the revised manuscript, Lestine Standifer, who prepared the preliminary draft, and to John Bugge of the Department of English at Emory, who provided both the consonant and vowel tables.

Marvin Bassett  
Charles E. Billiard  
Susan E. Leas  
Lee Pederson

Atlanta, Georgia  
July 6, 1981



AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LAGS PROJECT

Lee Pederson

Emory University

FIELD PROCEDURES:  
INSTRUCTIONS FOR INVESTIGATORS,  
LINGUISTIC ATLAS OF THE GULF STATES

Raven I. McDavid, Jr.

University of Chicago

FIELD PROCEDURES: INSTRUCTIONS FOR INVESTIGATORS,  
LINGUISTIC ATLAS OF THE GULF STATES

Raven I. McDavid, Jr.

When the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada was inaugurated in 1929, it was envisaged as a unified continent-wide survey under the direction of Hans Kurath. However, a generation later sees the project far from realization. The discrepancy between vision and reality in no way detracts from the administration skill of Kurath, or from his devotion to the systematic study of regional and social varieties of North American English. It merely reflects a number of external circumstances that have made completion of the work more difficult.

1. The 1929 depression, with the attrition of the endowments of universities and foundations.
2. The interruption of scholarly activities by World War II and later by the involvement of the United States in Korea and Southeast Asia.
3. The mortality of the older generation of field investigators and the lack of replacements.<sup>1</sup>
4. The diversion of younger linguists to other kinds of work, of at least ostensibly more practical interest.
  - a. The intensive language program of World War II.
  - b. The post-Korean programs in the study of strategic languages and in the preparation of materials for the teaching of English as a second language.<sup>2</sup>
  - c. The government interest of the 1950s in machine translation, with its spin-off in generative grammar of various transformational sects.<sup>3</sup>
  - d. The recent profit in poverty, which has led to ad hoc socio-linguistic programs with a limited research base.<sup>4</sup>
  - e. The friendly competition of Frederic Cassidy's Dictionary of American Regional English, a project magnificently conceived and energetically directed, which has received not only generous Federal subventions but the most enthusiastic support ever accorded a dialect project by its host university.

## II

Since the Gulf States are one of the two oldest areas of southern settlement (Tennessee and Louisiana were admitted to the Union before Indiana or Illinois, and Arkansas statehood antedates that of Michigan and Wisconsin), the need for a systematic survey was clear from the beginning of the Atlas project, as McDavid pointed out in 1941 and in 1947. However, except for lexical interviews in Texas (Atwood 1962) and Wood's checklist projects (Wood 1960, 1961, 1963, 1971), the area remains unsurveyed for Atlas purposes, though its lexicon has been admirably covered in the wider-meshed survey of Cassidy's Dictionary of American Regional English.

The first requirement for a successful regional survey of the Gulf States--an experienced scholar in a regional university, able and willing to commit himself to directing such a project--was met when Pederson joined the faculty of Emory University in 1966. Under his leadership, a conference in Atlanta in the Spring of 1968 sketched plans for the survey. Two later conferences in 1970--in Knoxville and Atlanta (the latter in connection with the annual convention of the National Council of Teachers of English)<sup>5</sup>--further delineated the project and suggested ways in which the available resources might be brought to bear on the logistic problems which the region presents.

A survey of the Gulf States encounters problems unlike those found in any of the other regional surveys that have been successfully organized.

1. In Texas, the most affluent of the Gulf States, with its state university offering probably the most distinguished linguistics program in America, there are probably the greatest resources but little interest so far in using them for dialect investigation, even within the state. Atwood (1962) comments wryly on this situation; since Atwood's death the work has devolved upon Rudolph Troike, who has also the responsibility for various projects in social dialects and their pedagogical implications. Since much of the vocabulary (and indeed many of the verb forms) was investigated for Atwood (1962), and the phonological investigation was set up on a basis different from that of the regional linguistics atlases, it is the part of realism to accept the Texas projects on their own merits and hope that Troike and his associates may develop some fieldworkers competent to help handle the investigations in other states.

2. In Louisiana the late C.M. Wise provided more than a hundred field records, the product of interviews by student investigators. As he frequently remarked, these interviews were not intended to provide coverage of the state with the quality expected of a linguistic atlas; nevertheless, the records are there, to start from. Since Louisiana State has found two competent successors to Wise--Claude Shaver in Speech and W.R. Van Riper in English--and since the state Department of Education has expressed its concern with the problems of nonstandard dialects, there is every reason to let the autonomy of the Louisiana work continue, and hope that some of the graduate students at Louisiana State may become interested in fieldwork--perhaps as doctoral dissertation projects--in the other Gulf

States. Since Wise's students used essentially the questionnaire designed for the South Atlantic States, one can expect that at least in vocabulary the data from Louisiana will be generally comparable with what Pederson and his collaborators may gather.

3. Arkansas has the clearest plans for a state survey. Gary Underwood, an associate of Harold B. Allen on the Linguistic Atlas of the Upper Midwest,<sup>6</sup> has recently joined the faculty of the University of Arkansas, with the promise of funds for the investigation of the speech of the state. Since Underwood has been involved in the planning sessions in Knoxville and Atlanta, he is aware of the need to collaborate with other investigations. He has particular problems in providing comparable data, since the Arkansas survey comes not only at the time when fieldwork is beginning in the other Gulf States, but after it has been launched in Texas and Louisiana and completed in Oklahoma and Missouri.<sup>7</sup> Whatever the speed of the work, one would hope to see continued liaison between Underwood and Pederson; in fact, to interpret Arkansas speech patterns, one needs field records in small Mississippi River communities in Tennessee and Mississippi, and collaboration with investigators in metropolitan Memphis.<sup>8</sup>

4. The rest of the area--Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and the western two-thirds of Georgia--will require of its director not only the usual virtues of energy and foresight, but the political skill of eliciting support of various kinds from a number of relatively impecunious institutions and of coordinating a number of local investigations into a regional survey.<sup>9</sup>

### III

The network for the Gulf States should be of about the same density as that for the North Central survey--some 25-35 communities per state, with the county normally the community unit. Perhaps to a greater extent than elsewhere, the plans should include relatively isolated communities, and those with declining populations.<sup>10</sup> The network of communities and the basic selection of informant types will be made by the director. However, the choice of localities and informants will ultimately be made by the fieldworker. He should keep in mind the aims of the survey and the social and the cultural history of the region. Whatever the current mode of interest in dialects may be, it is nonetheless true that the primary purpose of a linguistic atlas is that of historical linguistics, of providing a body of stable local folk evidence, from which one may work backward, comparatively, to set up the affiliations of the dialect regions with those in older settled areas and in the British Isles. To the extent that the method of the survey turns from this purpose toward recent sociological problems--however interesting they may be--it is vitiating the principal argument for its existence. In view of the fact that industrialization, urbanization, and mass education (however uneven it may be in quality) have created a more rapid attrition of folk speech in the

past half-century than ever before, it is more important than ever to see that this speech is adequately represented in the survey of the Gulf States.

The practical problems of education--not only in the Gulf States themselves, but in the Midwestern cities heavily colonized from this region in recent years--would demand a serious effort to interview black and poor white informants in numbers at least proportionate to their present representation in the general population, somewhat greater if possible, since the black proportion of the population has been declining in all states of the regions for the past fifty years (more markedly in Mississippi than in Tennessee). It might be desirable to think in terms of the racial proportions as of the 1930 census, though exacerbated racial tensions and the perennial scarcity of black investigators may make it impossible to achieve this ideal balance. It would probably be most fruitful to select most of the black informants from the Atlas I-A group--older generation and unsophisticated--except in the larger cities--e.g., Memphis, Nashville, and Montgomery--that have always had a black elite. In such cities cultivated black informants should be sought, and the intermediate group as well; some of the latter may also be interviewed in smaller urban areas. But, again reflecting the historical situation and the historical purpose of a linguistic atlas, the overwhelming number of black informants should be old, uneducated and rural. Bearing in mind the importance of getting representative black informants, there should be about 60 white informants per state, with the number of black informants reflecting the 1930 racial distribution. Thus in Tennessee twelve black informants would be adequate, while in Mississippi one would seek out ideally as many blacks as whites.

The questionnaire is likely to be a compromise between those for the South Atlantic and the North Central States, with a few additions (e.g., chigger vs. red bug) suggested by experience in Louisiana and Texas. Since the interviews will normally be conducted with the aid of a tape recorder, there will be room for a number of high-frequency items of morphology and syntax, which should appear in the informants' unguarded conversation.<sup>11</sup>

The fieldworkers will be of several types. There will be a cadre of experienced investigators, but they will be able to do only part of the work. A second group will consist of students, graduate and undergraduate, who will investigate parts of the region as term paper or thesis projects (at least one such investigation is already under way, for a doctoral thesis). Even students with little skill in phonetics may conduct a taped interview in lieu of a conventional term paper. Finally, a few persons--teachers or others--may wish to do some interviewing out of sheer love, perhaps combined with a desire to provide materials for classroom discussion. No help of this kind should be rejected out of hand, but it is imperative to provide careful directions, so that their energy and interest will not be wasted.

With the availability of good recording apparatus and the likelihood that a major part of the interviewing will be done by part-time investigators, the traditional qualifications for a fieldworker need reexamining. Minuteness of phonetic transcription at high speed in the field becomes far less important than the ability to work with people, to keep the interviewing situation relaxed while moving along, and allowing the informant ample time for free

conversation. These qualities--whether natural or acquired--have always characterized the good fieldworker; where most interviews are done by relatively inexperienced persons, they are indispensable, since it is unlikely that an investigator unsure of himself in interpersonal situations can be kept in the field long enough to overcome his timidity. Those with experience in dealing with the public in lay situations--journalists, salesmen and policemen come to mind--are most likely to adapt to fieldwork. The linguist who is chiefly concerned with elaborate theories--whatever the doctrinal bias--is as likely to be ineffective in the field as he was in Gilliéron's time, though few would go so far as Gilliéron did and argue that a professional interest in linguistics is a prima facie disqualification (the investigators for Jaberg and Jud 1925-40 were adequate contrary examples).

The final phonetic transcription will be made from the tape recording. However, since it is always easier to refine and correct a transcription than to transcribe slowly from a cold tape, fieldworkers should be encouraged to transcribe on the spot the responses to direct questioning, insofar as this does not unduly slow down the interviewing (experienced fieldworkers will either let the informant continue talking--a good way to record more evidence in uninhibited grammar--or interject stories of their own). It is particularly helpful to note final consonants--especially the voiceless stops and fricatives--which even the best recording apparatus picks up imperfectly.

#### IV

The basic purpose of a linguistic atlas is to provide a comparable record, so that the affiliations of the dialects of the region may be set up with other regions and with indeed other countries. For this reason, regardless of whatever other types of informants are included, it is imperative that each community include at least one representative of the local folk speech--someone at least seventy, with the minimum of education and travel and other kinds of external cultural exposure. For a long-settled state like Tennessee, it even might be advisable (if funds should be short) to increase the number of communities, and in two-thirds of them interview only the older folk type. Such a procedure was suggested, indeed, by Davis and McDavid for Kentucky, and was discarded only because of McDavid's success in his principal field trips.

The South--old and new--is county conscious; the county rather than a particular point on a grid should be taken as the community unit. It will be noted from Lowman's procedure in the 1930s that the folk informant was normally found in one of the remote sections of the county, and the slightly more sophisticated one in or near the county seat. The more remote a folk informant is from the local center of population, the better the conditions are likely to be for an uninhibited interview.

The type of interview hardest for an investigator to conduct is the one he should be sure to get out of the way earliest in his work in a particular community (county). Just as McDavid, who was uncomfortable with the middle

group and more relaxed with the folk speaker, tried to get the middle group attended to, so as to leave time for a more relaxed session with the folk speaker, a person with inhibitions about the folk interview should concentrate on this--remembering that such an interview will yield the greatest amount of useful data. No community should be considered adequately covered unless such a folk informant has been satisfactorily interviewed, regardless of how many other kinds of informants are included.

It is true that some folk informants may be hard of hearing, or self-conscious about it. The affliction alone isn't necessarily a disqualification if the interviewer is willing to raise his voice and take a little more time than usual; the self-consciousness is, however, and the interviewer on discovering it should slip into his routine for finishing up (apparently) with grace and thanks, and go looking for someone more satisfactory.

The folk informants, by virtue of age and other things, are going to take longer than others to interview. If the average time for a satisfactory long work sheet interview is about six hours (and I would think of that as something like a minimum, since that means nearly six questions a minute without interruption), that for an older folk informant might be considered eight hours--again, allowing nearly two questions a minute. The interviewer must budget at least that much time (more if he has a false start on an unsatisfactory subject), and hope he does better. It's better to plan on five days away from home and occasionally finish up in three than to set a goal of two or three days and find the community done less adequately than one would prefer.

All of Tennessee was settled early, with statehood in 1796. Alabama and Mississippi were states before 1820. One should expect, as a minimum, that every informant be a native of the county and have at least one parent with the same qualifications; normally, the grandparents should also be natives. If this skips black or Chinese or Scandinavian informants, they are likely to be atypical in the county, anyhow. No informant not a native and the child of at least one native parent should be included in the Atlas coverage--though such an informant might be useful for other purposes. Of course a long-held homestead a few miles across the county line is no prima facie disqualification, especially if the adjacent county is not being included in the network. Many old Southern counties have been divided since 1870 for such purposes as control of the state senate; and the thoughts of older citizens--and indeed current marketing habits--may not yet reflect the newer political boundaries.

Informants should be sought in older communities, rather than in the more recent industrial aggregations, such as those around Alcoa and Oak Ridge. Such communities might lend themselves admirably to later sociolinguistic (or ethnolinguistic) investigations in depth, along the lines of those undertaken by Shuy or Labov or O'Cain; but such investigations lie outside the primary aim and scope of a linguistic atlas.

Field procedures get to be systematized with experience; where the training of new investigators can be spread out over a summer school or longer, as happened with the earliest fieldworkers in New England and with the



first group for the North Central States, much can be picked up incidentally. But where there will be a continual use of relatively inexperienced volunteers, these matters should not be left to chance.

Before going into a community any fieldworker should take several steps to prepare himself.

1. First, he should begin gathering a list of those who might help him find good informants. Which ones may be most effective will vary from place to place, and the decision as to which should be approached first may be postponed until the fieldworker arrives in the community. But a letter beforehand is never amiss, and may get the local contact actually thinking about the kinds of informants who would be most useful.
2. At this stage it is advisable to find out as much as possible about the history and traditions of the community. Even if the fieldworker is a native of the community, as will often happen with student interviewers, he can refresh and deepen his knowledge; it is impossible for him to know too much, and dangerous to know too little. He should at least be aware of the situations in which the community may have acquired undesirable notoriety. Since the grandfather of an excellent informant may very well have promoted a lynching, with the acquiescence of the most respectable citizens and the duly constituted authorities, it is as desirable to know what kinds of questions one should not ask as what to ask, or where the investigator should give a diplomatic brushoff to an apparently shocking opinion. Or in a peculiar way, one should know the kinds of things of which the community and informants may be proud, and exploit this pride.<sup>12</sup>
3. The fieldworker should of course take advantage of the experiences of his predecessors, from the New England Atlas on, in developing his own line of questioning. Anything he can learn about the local or regional use of key words and constructions should be exploited. He should also make use of the experience of other fieldworkers in framing questions so as to get the most characteristic and natural responses. Lowman and Bloch and Harris put on record their characteristic questions for New England: McDavid has more recently put on tape his line of questioning for the South, Upstate New York, and the North Central States. And the taped interviews currently available for the South not only give examples of the useful kinds of questions but of the tactics in interviewing that interfere with natural responses.<sup>13</sup> No investigator should go into the field without listening to some of these tape interviews, and the more the better.
4. Since the fieldworker is almost certain to be conspicuous--and the smaller the community, the more conspicuous--he should adopt a style that does not give unnecessary offense to local mores. If anything, dress and grooming and general decorum should be a little more conservative than the community standard. Even if the interviewer does not regularly go to church, he might find church attendance convenient--especially if he is invited. Church is a good place to observe people and mores; and the fieldworker's presence will be helpful in identifying him with the community as someone natural to talk to, and informally vouchsafed as safe and respectable.

5. If the fieldworker is to do a large number of interviews and utilize his transcriptions for a serious study, he should have a great deal of practice in transcribing, both in the field and from tapes, regardless of whether he makes the final transcription on the spot or after the interview. A common period of phonetic training, and simultaneous transcription with an experienced fieldworker under field conditions, can do much to reduce the personal differences that inevitably arise in impressionistic recordings.<sup>14</sup>
6. At least as valuable preparation is the joint interview situation where an experienced investigator works a new one into the routine of asking the questions; where this is impractical, as in a seminar for which every student is expected to provide a field interview, the recorded practices of investigators make a tolerable substitute, as we have already indicated.
7. All potential fieldworkers should rehearse the questions they expect to use for eliciting responses. They should try to develop casual techniques of interrogation, either on their own or with the precept and example of experienced investigators, so that there will be a natural flow of questions and answers, such as one would have in a conversation.

## V

When the fieldworker arrives in an unfamiliar community, he should get the feel of it as quickly as possible. He may even wish to look over the community before checking in at his hotel (if he has a reservation) by driving across town and back on a couple of main routes. (This may also help him make up his mind about where to stay, if he doesn't have a reservation). On this crisscrossing he can update his knowledge of the community by looking for signs of recent affluence or decay and then for important landmarks and family names which may be useful props in his conversation.

The choice of accommodations is sometimes limited, but it is generally advisable to stay in a relatively small establishment, identified with the community and patronized by local people, rather than a chain motel. That a hotel's dining room is used for the luncheons of Rotarians, Kiwanians, and the like is usually a good sign of its local identity; such groups may even be exploited as a source of informants. And of course the manager of a local hotel can help the fieldworker evaluate suggested informants or can suggest further names; he may even be a good informant himself, of the second or third class. There are two further practical considerations in looking for a hotel rather than a chain motel: 1) the hotel usually has better facilities for writing; 2) a hotel's rates are likely to be lower.

As soon as the fieldworker has established himself a base, he should call on those who may direct him to possible informants. As already indicated, it is useful though not indispensable for him to have written ahead. Various kinds of people can be helpful; the one thing that all have in common is their knowledge of the community and its people, and the value of their name and office in attesting the legitimacy of the fieldworker's mission.

1. Personal friends, and friends of personal friends (including one's students and their families) are best. They will also provide an introduction to other contacts in the community.
  2. Elective county and local officials, who have to run for office at regular intervals, therefore have to keep in touch with their constituents and know backgrounds and idiosyncrasies. Moreover, since the local records are in their custody, such officials as the clerk of court and judge of probate ("ordinary" in Georgia) are in a position to know who the old families are. Each state has a legislative manual listing the principal county officials. In urban areas the ward committeemen and precinct captains serve analogous functions.
  3. The farm and home demonstration agents, career people, are not necessarily natives of the county where they work, but their duties bring them in close contact with the people who know the traditional culture. Since the agents are under the supervision of the agricultural extension service at a state university, it is easy to get their names. They are possibly better for Type II informants than for the older and less sophisticated, but their travels at least make it possible for them to identify both groups.
  4. Local historians and historical societies vary in their usefulness. Few states can match New York, where by law each county, township and incorporated village is entitled to one historian, who receives a small honorarium in return for performing a few chores, and who is encouraged to pursue his scholarly interests. Over the years, with the help of the New York Historical Association and the Cooperstown museums, this arrangement has developed a body of local historians who are concerned with their subject in the broadest sense, and who have themselves often turned out laudable studies. Since local historians of this background have already worked with live informants, they may be able to suggest people who not only know and use the local vernacular but who know how to cooperate with fieldworkers.
- Not all local historians are as useful as those in New York State. In many communities--especially in parts of the South--history is still evaluated in terms of the glorious deeds of heroic ancestors, so that historians may find it incredible that a serious scholar should be interested in the humdrum activities of ordinary people (ordinary, like common, is derogatory in the eyes of many Southerners). Nevertheless, such historians can provide introductions to cultivated speakers, to say nothing about the bibliography of local history. In other words, the fieldworker should always consult the local historian or historical society, though the use he makes of them depends on how they exercise their profession.
5. Local newspapermen, like local elected officials, need to know their community in line of duty. They are likely to be objective about local mores and values, even if they don't display this objectively in public.

Furthermore, since the usual small-town weekly is starved for fresh news, the presence of the fieldworker in the community practically assures a story with a new local angle, so that it is the editor's interest to help the fieldworker. The fieldworker, of course, may write the story himself, with a local angle--though of course preserving the official anonymity of his informants--and turn it over to the newspaper as he leaves town.

6. In smaller communities the local banker--who knows where his loans are placed and how they are secured--may be very helpful. In Midwestern agricultural communities some fieldworkers have been led to informants through dealers in farm machinery or agents for farm insurance. And in many ethnic communities an understanding saloonkeeper or barber may put a fieldworker in contact with a natural, reliable and gregarious informant in a situation where natural conversation is assured.

7. A Roman Catholic priest, especially in an ethnic parish, may be very valuable as a contact, since most parishes have members of all social classes. (The fact that sometimes a priest may be overly protective of his flock, especially in a troubled urban area, does not alter the potential usefulness). Protestant clergymen, however, are less useful--except, again, for an ethnically-oriented congregation, like many of the subspecies of Lutherans. Episcopalians and Presbyterians have a disproportionate percentage of upper classes, and even among the Baptists and the various pentecostal sects, the typical cleric is likely to be an upward-mobile person who looks upon the folk idiom as something he is happy to have escaped; the platform style of Billy Graham is an example of this distortion. Schoolteachers, especially English teachers--a notoriously untesticulate profession, heavily seasoned with petty sadists and frustrated old maids, both in panties and in pantaloons--are likewise of little help, and librarians are if anything worse. To be sure, an individual preacher or teacher or librarian may have had particular training or interest to make him useful, but this proceeds ex persona rather than ex officio.

Whoever the talent scout may be, the fieldworker should be utterly frank about his purpose. Often enough, informants--or their families or neighbors--may be suspicious about an apparently inquisitive stranger, and an informed (if informal) local sponsor can dispel suspicion. It is also good to present the project at first as a matter of research into oral history rather than into language per se, and to eschew the word dialect, which is often misunderstood. At least at first, any connection with English teaching ought to be kept at a minimum; nobody wants informants to watch their grammar.

In asking for suggestions about possible informants, the fieldworkers should emphasize certain general qualifications: local origins, family identity with the community for as many generations as possible, alertness of mind and willingness to talk. Then one should stress the particular qualities desirable in each class of informants:<sup>15</sup>

- Type I: Oldest living generation with the minimum of education, travel, and other cultural exposure outside his family.<sup>16</sup>
- Type II: Someone of the middle-aged group, with up to a high school education and somewhat more cultural exposure.

Type III: In about a fourth or a fifth of the communities (the particular locations being determined at the time the network is arranged), a cultivated informant, representing the best cultural traditions of the community.<sup>17</sup>

The ethnic composition of a community must be taken into account. In the South this means a sampling of Americans of African descent, especially in the areas where plantation agriculture was important, and in the larger industrial centers.<sup>18</sup> In other communities a group with a history of a language background other than English may be important enough to sample. Here, of course, as Cassidy has observed about his own work, one must be sure that every informant is a native speaker of English, regardless of whatever other languages he may speak.<sup>19</sup>

The investigator should encourage his talent scouts to talk at length about the various possible informants of each type, and should rank them informally as the conversation develops. One advantage in using more than one local contact is that they can not only supplement but support each other; and if the second contact doesn't mention someone already recommended, then the name can be casually introduced and an opinion obtained of his suitability. One cannot have too many names to choose from; some potential informants may be out of town, ill or otherwise unavailable; others will be suspicious themselves or constrained by suspicious relatives; still others may become ill, grow tired, or lose interest. A long list to start from will let the work proceed whatever contingencies arise (actually, as a fieldworker acquires experience he learns how to judge from the recommendations so that he has few refusals and fewer occasions to break off an interview and seek another informant).<sup>20</sup>

## VI

Meeting a new informant is always a challenge; no matter how many interviews a fieldworker has conducted, he is likely to feel a little nervous on beginning another. (This experience is familiar to other types of interviewers, including psychiatrists. See Pittenger, Hockett, and Danehy 1960). The success of the interview depends on the ability of the investigator to win the confidence of the informant and to establish himself as a friend and neighbor if not quite a member of the extended family. The interview should veer away from language questions and especially away from usage, and concentrate on history and folklore and the like; this is particularly true at the beginning, when the tone of the interview is set.<sup>21</sup>

The form of the interview should be kept as conversational as possible. With experience, an investigator learns some of the social cues he didn't have beforehand. But since many projects (especially the survey of the Gulf States) may depend on relatively untrained interviewers, a few cautions are in order. An examination of the tapes of previous interviews, by other fieldworkers, will--as indicated before--provide at least some general hints of what not to do.

1. The more conversation the better, not only in the introductory gambit but throughout the interview. In a sense, the less conspicuous the field-worker, the better.
2. The informant should be encouraged--where he is able (and most Americans are able)--to look before and after, to the usage of the older generation and that of the younger, and to comment on it freely.
3. The interview should be organized around topics, descriptions of events and situations, rather than become a series of discrete questions in quiz format. A familiar complaint of informants--especially the less educated--is that they feel as if they are being subjected to an "Intelligence Test"; and nothing is more likely to reinforce this reaction than a series of questions of the type "What do you call . . .?"<sup>22</sup>
4. The questions should be put as informally as possible and avoid excessively formal language. The cultivated informants will not mind a touch of informality (in fact, this will encourage them to use their natural, relaxed speech), and the uneducated will not respond naturally to any other approach. Thus castrate and its synonyms (36.1) are offered more naturally in response to "What do you do to a pig if you don't want it to grow up to be a boar?" (It may even evoke an anecdote, useful for future interviews) than to "What do you call the process of rendering a pig sterile?"
5. When an informant is in the process of answering a question--especially where many synonyms and variants may be involved (such as 44.4, 44.7, dealing with different kinds of bread), the fieldworker should never cut in, but wait for a pause and then ask the next question.<sup>23</sup> For those items where multiple answers are likely, he should have the definitions and descriptions clearly in mind, so as to keep the dialogue moving. For instance, in dealing with corn bread of various kinds, he might ask for the following:
  - a. A large cake of plain corn bread (pone).
  - b. Corn bread with wheat flour and egg (egg bread).
  - c. A soft kind of corn bread, cooked in a deep pan or casserole and ladled onto one's plate (spoon bread).
  - d. A kind of corn bread cooked in the ashes (ashcake).
  - e. A kind of corn bread cooked on a board in front of the fire (johnnycake).
  - f. A large flat cake cooked on a griddle or in a skillet (hoecake).
  - g. A kind of corn bread shortened with the scraps left over from rendering lard (crackling bread).
  - h. Small hand-shaped cakes, usually three or four cooked in a skillet at once (hobbies, corn dodgers--in the uplands).

- i. Small spheroidal cakes, cooked in deep fat or other seafood (hush puppies, red horse bread, corn dodgers in South Georgia).
- j. Something boiled with turnip greens or the like (dumplings; corn dodgers in the coastal plain).
- k. Corn battercakes (pancakes); occasionally corn dodgers.

It has been the experience of some fieldworkers that some informants will know all of these, and have their other varieties besides (corn muffins, corn sticks). It is the business of the fieldworker to see how much he can find out.

6. Suggested responses ("Did you ever call it A?") and forced responses ("Would you call it X or Y?") are to be used sparingly, and only as a last resort. A dozen times in an interview is more than enough, if the fieldworker is a good conversationalist, and willing to give the informant a chance. Such techniques should be used, if at all, in probing for old-fashioned synonyms. Even for this purpose they are not as useful as a shift of attention to a homely context. For instance, if the informant offers the literary term dragonfly, the investigator may ask, "What did you call it when you were a boy playing along a creek?"

If suggestions are offered, they should be relatively few, and emphasize responses that are likely to be productive--that is, known to be used in nearby communities. The Hudson Valley olicook 'doughnut' is not likely to get any kind of response in Georgia. Occasionally, of course, a skilled investigator may suggest the most implausible synonym and thereby elicit the informant's natural usage; responses obtained in this way are not "suggested" and should not be so marked. In any event, the casual tone of an interview should be carefully maintained during the process of suggestion.<sup>24</sup>

Inadvertent suggestion--that is, referring in the eliciting question to the item sought--is difficult to avoid, especially for beginners. A little forethought--thinking over the items, setting up situational stimuli in the conversation, and examining the usual ways experienced investigators have asked the questions--will probably avoid most of these mishaps.

7. It is well to handle the grammatical questions lightly, especially in one's first interviews. Even Guy S. Lowman, Jr., with a thousand interviews to his credit, always deferred pages 12-13 and 24-25 to the end of the interviews. McDavid, in principle, tried to get in free conversation most of the responses for these pages, and also for 40, 42-43, 57-58, 70, and 88, asking directly for them only at the end of the interview.<sup>25</sup> With tape recording of the interview the normal procedure, it should be possible to get the greater part of the grammatical evidence without direct questioning, if the informant is given an adequate chance to talk.

The pace of the interview, in the last analysis, is always determined by the informant. If he gets tired, the investigator should adjust his schedule

accordingly. If he wants to tell a story, the investigator should be happy; after all, it provides more evidence for conversational usage, breaks up the sense of a quiz, and helps incorporate the fieldworker into the informant's circle of friends (especially for older informants, a fieldworker is considered fair game for all the stories with which the informant has bored his family and neighbors, and should welcome the role). Of course, a very talkative informant may make the interview a slightly frustrating experience, but a skillful investigator can ultimately steer the conversation on to the next topic.<sup>26</sup>

The conversation may take unexpected directions. The interviewer should always treat as confidential any opinions or personal matters that are revealed to him.<sup>27</sup> And however repugnant may be the informant's opinions on any topic--religion, politics, morality, or race--the investigator should accept them as part of the record and go on with the interview. A representative older-generation uneducated white informant in rural Alabama is very likely to have voted for George Wallace.<sup>28</sup>

As mentioned earlier, fine phonetic transcription on the spot is less important in the day of tape recordings than it used to be. Nevertheless, the investigator should note troublesome problems, like the voiceless stops and spirants, and he should keep a record of what questions have been answered, so as to be able to pick up the residue at the end of the interview.

## VII

Although it is natural to ask what the length of an interview should be, there is no hard and fast answer. It should simply take up enough time to get natural responses in a relaxed situation. A questionnaire like the long work sheets for the Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States has about 800 items; the shorter work sheets, like those for the North Central States, have a little under 600. Either will involve questions for synonyms, false starts, anecdotal digressions, family interruptions and miscellaneous accompaniments to conversation.<sup>29</sup> Clearly, one should not count on completing the interview in a single session, especially in interviewing older informants.<sup>30</sup>

With most informants the productive length of a session--allowing for human fatigue, of both informant and fieldworker, and other commitments of the informant--is between two and three hours. At a fair pace this means that an interview with the long work sheets should take two or three sessions for an experienced fieldworker, more for a beginner.<sup>31</sup>

However, the time between sessions need not be considered wasted. The fieldworker will soon find that he needs a little time to rest and recover; this is more evident the longer a field trip happens to be. One may do ten communities on a month's trip (as R. McDavid did in eastern Kentucky in 1954) and not be ready for another interview for several months. Two weeks or so seems to be the normal upper limit for a field trip; after that, there is



enough material on hand for a month's editing.

But welcome as mere rest may be, the interlude between sessions has more productive uses. Before tape recorders were available, the fieldworker would try to check through his notes from free conversation and put the forms in the proper places in the field book; today, with most of the actual transcription deferred, the interviewer still needs to note where he has got what conversational responses, and determine whether this has eliminated the need for direct questioning or only (as usually happens) provided cues for more effective questioning when the topic is reached in the interview. The time spent playing back the tape--for listening, observation, and planning--is usually much more productive than prolonging an interviewing session past the point of weariness. And if there still should be time between sessions, the interviewer can spend it in learning more about local history or in casual listening, against the need for an additional or supplementary interview, or just to verify his feelings about local speechways.<sup>32</sup>

Needless to say, it is even more important to attend to the social amenities in the interview than in other relationships with the community. Although the idea of the interview is that of casual conversation between friends, it is the informant who will grant the friendship, and the interviewer should avoid any activities that might spoil the relationship--particularly of giving the impression of familiarity he has not yet been granted. Even lighting a cigarette can well be deferred until the informant makes it clear by his own actions that he has no objection. On the other hand, an interviewer should be happy to accept hospitality--of food or drink--so long as he makes sure he is treated as one of the family and not as special company. It is aptly said that the unofficial combat decoration for an experienced fieldworker is the Order of the Purple Stomach.<sup>33</sup>

Informants are often generous with their time, and in their pride may reject indignantly any offer to pay them. Some, however, expect compensation--in line with practices of many surveys. Others could clearly use money or its equivalent, if it can be tactfully given. And even the well-to-do informant may find a spare afternoon or evening to complete an interview if the interviewer offers a donation to a church or favorite charity. Since such a gesture may save a few days' waiting in a community (remembering that one should allow two days per interview, hoping that he doesn't have to use them all), a fieldworker should not hesitate to offer compensation when the situation calls for it--first assuring, of course, the completion. And a note of thanks later, or a Christmas card, will always be appreciated. People like to be remembered.

### VIII

Not every community or interview goes smoothly. Sometimes the talent scouts cannot be located; sometimes they cannot immediately think of good informants. Sometimes informants refuse to talk, or break off the interview for various reasons. Some informants will complete an interview without enthusiasm, only from a sense of duty; some will never let their guard down;

some will be so enthusiastically garrulous that the interviewer wonders if he will ever finish. But most of them will cooperate, and many will even thank the fieldworker for talking to them. And the fieldworker in turn will get a sense of pride (especially if he's a city boy) on being told: "You must've spent a lot of your life on a farm to be able to talk about things the way you do." Or he will be touched to hear an elderly informant say, "You know, you got me talking about things I hadn't thought about in years." And even the least imaginative investigator will come to realize from his work that language is more than a series of abstract formulae--it is the interaction of all kinds of human beings in all kinds of situations.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Of the nine investigators for New England, four of them--Chapallaz, Hanley, Hultzén, and Joos--had no further association with fieldwork. Reynard made six field records in Ohio, in 1933, and then left the scene. Lowman continued in the field until his death in 1941; he also participated, with Kurath, in the seminar in field methods at the first Ann Arbor Linguistic Institute (1936). Harris provided most of the training for the Iowa fieldworkers for Harold Allen's Linguistic Atlas of the Upper Midwest (Allen 1972). Bloch was the most productive in developing fieldworkers: inter alios, Allen, Frederic G. Cassidy, Henry Collins, A.L. Davis, Norman Eliason, Raven McDavid, Virginia Glenn McDavid, Carroll E. Reed, David W. Reed, Lester Seifert. In addition to A.L. Davis and R. McDavid, who have assumed responsibility for the Atlantic Seaboard materials since Kurath's retirement, Bloch helped train five directors of regional surveys: A.H. Marckwardt (North Central States), Allen (Upper Midwest), C. Reed (Pacific Northwest), D. Reed (Pacific Southwest), and E. Bagby Atwood (Texas; see Atwood 1962). Inexplicably, the obituary of Bloch in Language (Joos 1967) barely mentions his twelve-year association with the Atlas project.

Many recent sociolinguistic projects have used relatively untrained investigators who (even more than other fieldworkers) have had to learn their skills on the job (e.g., Shuy, Wolfram and Riley 1967). That such projects generally overlook the background material available in the regional surveys is understandable, if undesirable.

<sup>2</sup>The latter program, supported by the American Council of Learned Societies and sponsored by the Foreign Service Institute of the Department of State, naturally drew upon the analysis of English in Trager and Smith, 1949. As salutary as this activity was for the development of American linguistics, it had two unfortunate side effects for linguistic geography, in addition to the diversion of interest and personnel: (1) the notion, uncritically accepted as late as Nist 1966 (32-48), that the Trager-Smith analysis could accommodate all the contrasts in all varieties of English; (2) the charge, *arsiversily*, that the field records of the Linguistic Atlas are inadequate because they do not lead inevitably to the Trager-Smith analysis.

In truth, Trager-Smith 1949 is clearly tentative, and calls for testing against many regional and social varieties of English. Despite its transformational refinements in Sledt 1966, it still seems inadequate for the segmental phonemes of many Southern and South Midland dialects; for stress and pitch and juncture (whether these are "phonemes" or not is a matter of one's linguistic faith; compare, e.g., Kurath 1965) there is still no systematic comparable evidence.

<sup>3</sup>Much of this activity (e.g., Chomsky 1957 and 9 of the 23 papers in Fodor and Katz 1964) has been supported by the Department of Defense and its external fiscal agencies; see also Mehta 1971: 50.

<sup>4</sup>The fiction of a monolithic Nonstandard Negro English or Black English (with the syntactic monstrosity Child Black English as a sub-species) is a byproduct of this activity. In the chomskemic tradition (Udell 1964) the perpetrators of this fiction seem immune to data, though solid contravalent evidence has been available for years in the linguistic atlases, and indeed in the historical records from the British Isles.

<sup>5</sup>Stimulated by Charles C. Fries, the NCTE was the first professional organization to support the original Atlas project. It is also the first to contribute financial aid to the Gulf States project and to the editing of the materials from the Middle and South Atlantic States.

<sup>6</sup>Underwood's dissertation (Minnesota 1969) dealt with the speech of the Mesabi Range, and was based on original fieldwork.

<sup>7</sup>Fieldwork in Oklahoma was completed by Van Riper 1957-63, in Missouri by Gerald Udell in 1970; editing is proceeding on both projects. Udell used, essentially, the work sheets for the North Central States, Van Riper a modification, with some items from the Upper Midwest version and some suggested by Atwood's work in Texas. Wise's Louisiana work sheets were an adaptation of the expanded version used by Lowman in his preliminary survey of the South Atlantic States (1933-35). See Davis, McDavid and McDavid 1969.

<sup>8</sup>Williamson 1968, 1970.

<sup>9</sup>Pederson's students are currently completing a survey of smaller Georgia communities, with an abridged set of work sheets.

<sup>10</sup>Preliminary networks for Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and Western Georgia were sketched in the summer of 1970.

<sup>11</sup>Among these items are types of multiple negation, omission of relative pronouns, omission of the copula be and the auxiliary have, and the use of be as a finite verb.

<sup>12</sup>World values and community values may differ sharply. Traveler's Rest, in Greenville County, South Carolina, has produced no citizen more distinguished than the behaviorist psychologist John Broadus Watson, and the county very few; but though I grew up in Greenville, the first time I heard of him--at the apogee of his career--was in a psychology course at Furman University, taught by a Canadian-born philosopher. Although Watson was a Furman alumnus, he did not appear on campus officially while I was there. In contrast, everybody in the community knew and talked about Shoeless Joe Jackson, who plummeted from baseball stardom to disgrace as a result of his implication in the World Series Scandal of 1919.

<sup>13</sup>Mannerisms not noticeable ordinarily, or even to a colleague participating in an interview, are painfully obvious on a tape. A good training exercise would be to take an interview tape at random, ask the student to listen and report, pointing out what has gone wrong (if anything) and suggesting how he might do better--and then check his own performance.

<sup>14</sup>Detailed comparisons are found in Kurath et al. 1939; less detailed in Shuy, Wolfram and Riley 1967. Empirically, those who received intensive training from Bloch, such as A.L. Davis and the McDavids, transcribe remarkably like each other, even in minute details.

<sup>15</sup>Kurath et al. 1939: 41-44. Some sociolinguists are perturbed that the judgment of social class is made by the fieldworker on the basis of unquantifiable imponderables. However, an anthropologist would point out (as my colleague Julian Pitt-Rivers has frequently done) that (a) the fieldworker already knows something about the community, (b) that the preliminary evaluation is made by members of the community--those who direct the fieldworker to the types of informants he is seeking, and (c) the final evaluation comes after a long face-to-face conversation in the community setting, and a chance to observe the kinds of people with whom the informant associates--a surer guide in the long run than house location or income.

<sup>16</sup>For the old-fashioned type, the older the informant the better, so long as he is able to stand two or three sessions of interviewing. Satisfactory informants have been found as old as 104. The best ones are still often found on marginal farms some distance off the main highways.

<sup>17</sup>The selection of cultivated informants today is more difficult than it was in 1931, when a much smaller proportion of the population attended college and when those who attended were assured of a serious exposure to the liberal arts tradition. Today almost everyone graduates from high school and about half go on to some form of college. To assure that the records represent the community traditions of cultivated speech, the fieldworkers must understand the status of the family and make use of both historical records and local evaluations. A Ph.D. of Ukrainian background who is the first member of his family to get through high school is less cultivated, in the broadest sense, than the daughter of an old family who attended a private finishing school and then got married.

<sup>18</sup>Older generation rural Afro-Americans of Type I are a particularly important group for the historical record, in view of recent discussions of the origins of the speech of urban Negroes in the North; they are the ones who would be most likely to retain authentic Africanisms as well as older English folk speech-forms. Authentic informants of this group are still fairly easy to locate; the same is true of the middle group in small towns--craftsmen and storekeepers. Because educated Afro-Americans often have cultural antipathies toward many things Southern, including Southern speechways, it is often difficult to get good natural community-based speech from a member of this group; and educators and other public performers are even less likely than their white counterparts to be good informants. In terms of a Southern proverb, one should be wary of the person who turns his back on his raising, linguistic or otherwise.

<sup>19</sup>These observations about informant-types are particularly applicable to an overall dialect survey (such as the regional atlases in the United States and Canada) which aims to provide a framework for establishing the affiliations of regional dialects with each other and with the dialects of the ancestral country (in this instance, the British Isles). For other types of investigation one may need to have many more gradations of informants, and types unsuitable for a regional atlas, including recent arrivals in the community and bilinguals

of various degrees; the selection may approach that of a random sample. (Shuy, Wolfram and Riley 1967 attempted a random selection, but abandoned this in order to assure representation of important ethnic groups). Nevertheless, the interpretation of the data obtained in such studies should utilize the framework provided by the regional surveys; ignoring that framework has led to many misrepresentations of the significance of the features of a particular dialect--most notably in a number of urban sociolinguistic studies (Paddock and McDavid 1971).

<sup>20</sup> If there are several interviews in a given community, it hardly matters which one the investigator starts with. All things being equal, R. McDavid preferred to start with the intermediate type, which for him was the hardest to interview, since its little learning produced more cultural anxieties than felt by the less corrupted folk speaker or the assured genuinely cultivated. Other investigators have other preferences; practically, the interviews will be spaced out over several days according to the times when the informants are available, and one likes to get to work as soon as possible.

Sometimes--as with R. McDavid in Newberry, South Carolina (1946)--a fieldworker may have as many as four interviews going at a time. This, however, is more strenuous than ordinarily recommended, since it does not allow time to relax, or to play back the tapes to discover what items (particularly grammatical ones) have already been picked up in conversation. In any event, what should determine the fieldworker's schedule is the availability of his informants. As a rule of thumb, one should allow two days in a community for each required interview, and hope for less.

<sup>21</sup> Exceptions occur, to be sure. Self-assured cultivated informants--particularly in the Old South--often smile at matters of alleged linguistic propriety. Since they are also likely to be sensitive to language variety, they may catch on rather early to the purpose of the interview. But even with them it is best to delay a discussion of the project till the end of the interview. For one thing, interspersed mini-lectures interrupt the flow of what should be a close approximation of a conversational situation. For another, the promise of a full discussion--and it should be as full as the informant wishes (since the discussion will provide further conversational evidence)--may keep the informant attentive and cooperative.

<sup>22</sup> A fieldworker is hardly omniscient about folk culture; nor does he always have an opportunity of trying out his techniques first on a relative or old friend who grew up on a farm. But he can talk to regional historians; he can examine museums of folk culture, like that at Clemson College; he can examine entries in say, Kurath (1949), Mathews (1951), P. Nixon (1947), and Atwood (1962); he may obtain suggestions about the format of his questions from the practices of Lowman and Bloch and Harris for New England [see LAGS work sheets] or McDavid for the South Atlantic States [see LAGS work sheets and McDavid, 1981 (WP #2)]. With experience he will develop his own routine; if he is a student investigator, with only one or two informants to interview, he will probably work in a community where he is known and will be able to keep his informants' cooperation till he has gathered his data.

<sup>23</sup> A good indication of the success of an interview is the relative amount of time taken up by the informant and the interviewer--something easy to discover by playing back the tape. The smaller the part taken up by the interviewer the better, so long as the responses are obtained.

<sup>24</sup> Some investigators are more reluctant than others to elicit by suggestion. Lowman did it freely. R. McDavid preferred to keep the situation conversational; his proportion of responses from free discourse is perhaps the highest of all investigators, though he worked before tape recorders were available. He would rather blank an item than force an unnatural response or inhibit the conversation of an informant. With good lightweight equipment, such as the Uher-4000, the conversational technique should be even more effective now than it used to be.

<sup>25</sup> Ideally, it is desirable to have both direct and conversational responses for items that are judged to be socially diagnostic--however accurate the judgment may be.

<sup>26</sup> One of the longest interviews by R. McDavid after he acquired experience as a fieldworker (early interviews proceed more leisurely, of course, since the interviewer is feeling himself out) took place on Beaver Island, Michigan. As an experiment--since he was introducing a new investigator to the mysteries of fieldwork--he challenged local legend by interviewing the oldest and most garrulous native of the island. For practically every direct question, the informant responded with a story, so that the interview took seven three-hour sessions with the short work sheets. As the investigators left the island, a deputation saw them off, with the remark that this was the first time anyone had outlasted the old man in a conversation. A tape recording of the interview would have been a priceless record of syntax, to say nothing of local history and folklore.

<sup>27</sup> The informant should know from the outset that even his name will never be revealed.

<sup>28</sup> Here, too, surprises occur. In 1947, an illiterate Middle Georgia informant showed a deeper understanding of world affairs than the Eastern intellectuals who were then organizing the Cold War.

<sup>29</sup> Other investigations (e.g., Shuy, Wolfram and Riley 1967 and O'Cain 1971) are designed with a shorter questionnaire and a fixed time limit. Under those circumstances the tension between completeness and naturalness is, if anything, aggravated.

<sup>30</sup> Again there are exceptions. Lowman is reported to have completed a long work sheet interview in a single four-hour session. In Livonia, New York, R. McDavid completed such an interview in a single six-hour session (followed by two hours of conversation until 3 A.M.); in Elmira, he completed interviewing a cultivated speaker in less than five hours, but in two sessions. Using the short work sheets, he was several times able to do an interview in a single long session of four hours or so, and once--with a cultivated Canadian--in slightly more than two; on two occasions, using the short work sheets, he did two interviews in a day. However, in all these situations there were experienced investigators

who had worked out their routine of questioning. Lowman did a thousand interviews before his death; McDavid has done nearly six hundred.

<sup>31</sup>As pointed out, in arranging a working schedule one should allow an average of two days per interview, or four for a community, though experience, skill and luck will often shorten the time. Conversely unexpected difficulty in scheduling interviews, or even in identifying and locating informants, may stretch out one's stay in a community. For the earliest communities, or for the first communities in a region new to him, an investigator would do well to allow additional time.

The tape recorder does not materially shorten the time of interviewing. It provides a permanent record and catches more conversational responses than even the best fieldworker can note and write down. On the other hand, it cannot ask the question or probe for additional or alternative responses or think of future questions. What time is gained by not writing down the responses as they are given is far less than the time required to listen to a tape, transcribe, note conversational responses, and enter them in their proper places--perhaps four times the length of the interview itself (some time, of course, is spent under any conditions in transcribing the conversational responses in their proper places). But the division of effort between interviewing and transcribing is often profitable, since the skills of eliciting and impressionistic transcription do not always come together.

<sup>32</sup>For instance, casual conversation in many small Southern towns has indicated that education rather than age determines whether a person uses folk grammatical forms. Consequently, an investigator who discovers that the same cultural gradation occurs whether the informant is 91 or 19 may choose the former. Thus in some communities the Type II informant may be older than the Type I, and still adequately reflect the local social and linguistic situation.

<sup>33</sup>Even in rural areas, hospitality is not offered as generously as it was in the 1930s, when the self-sufficient family farm with a well-stocked pantry was more common; in cities it is unusual, though there are pleasant exceptions. The fieldworker should aim at reaching a natural break in the interview somewhat before the informant's normal mealtime. On some occasions it may even be possible to take the informant to lunch or dinner in a neighborhood restaurant, or to bring the makings of a meal. But if food or drink is freely offered, it should be taken in the same spirit--whether it is fried hog liver, squirrel stew, or homemade corn whiskey. It is the highest compliment--and an indication of the rapport that makes for a successful interview--when an informant or one of the family says, "We could've gone and kilt a chicken, but I 'lowed as how you didn't want to be treated like no preacher."



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FOLKLORE AND THE LAGS FIELDWORKER

Charles W. Foster

Florence State University

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Charles W. Foster

To the student of dialect geography, a discussion of folklore in a manual such as this should come as no surprise, despite the fact that the interest of what Raven McDavid has called the younger generation of structural linguists in sociological, psychiatric, and anthropological aspects of linguistics has obscured the close relationship between linguistics and folklore, and has fostered in some individuals the attitude that the folklorist is no more than a collector of oddities--a compiler of lists, as it were, who is seldom helpful and sometimes harmful to "serious" linguistic study.

The dialectologist knows, however, that there is a close relationship between linguistic science and the study of folklore, and the relationship is both old and honorable. Both disciplines have a common source in the eighteenth-century European interest in the culture of the common man and in the assertion of his dignity in the face of the waning neoclassicism. The nascent period of both disciplines is dominated by men equally well-known in folklore and philology. The Grimms were the first European scholars to approach folklore systematically and analytically, thus setting it apart and making a place for it as a separate field of study. Jakob Grimm is as familiar to the folklore student as the collector of Hausmärchen as he is to the linguist as the scholar who revealed the systematic nature of the developments of the Indo-European consonant system,<sup>1</sup> and Max Müller's studies in Sanskrit led him to develop the theory of folklore that later came to be known as the theory of solar mythology ascribing differences in myths to the growing varieties of Indo-European dialects which were ultimately to become languages.<sup>2</sup> In Europe, linguists and folklorists have maintained their mutual interest; in America, collaboration has been to some extent obscured by differences in concentration and in the interpretation of data. But fieldworkers for the Atlas project have found the folklorists most helpful, and Kurath encouraged his fieldworkers to contact professional folklorists as soon as possible after going into a new territory.

In its earliest stages, the study of American folklore was influenced primarily by the British folklorists and their orientation toward the collecting and preserving of the customs, speech, and manners of the common man. Mid-nineteenth-century romanticism included in its glorification of the common man a strong nostalgic interest in the homely aspects of life, which were believed to be dying out. In 1846, William Thoms observed, in the article in which he presented his newly-coined folklore as a term to replace popular antiquities:

No one who has made the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, etc., of the older time his study, but must have arrived at two conclusions:--the first, how much that is curious and

interesting in these matters is now entirely lost--the second, how much may yet be rescued by timely exertion.<sup>3</sup>

The attitude which grew out of such a conviction was one almost of panic. The student worked, as it were, with the winged chariot ever at his back, trying heroically to snatch from oblivion every song, every remedy, every proverb, only to feel a crushing sense of loss at the informant's admission that he remembered only a fraction of the many songs or proverbs known to his mother, or to his grandmother. The belief that the study of folklore was literally a race against time and the concomitant appeal to the general public for volunteers to gather material in their home areas brought into the field what one scholar has called the "country vicar" type of collector--the amateur who saturates himself in the lore of a limited area, often pursuing items of personal interest and ignoring a great deal of other important material. In Britain, the antiquarian attitude still prevails, to some extent. In America, this concern over the passing of old ways led at first to intensive studies of "picturesque" regions such as the Appalachian Mountains, and the emphasis was too often placed on collecting the strange at the expense of the pertinent but mundane data.

The development of the study of folklore as a science did not greatly alter its concentration on antiquarian interests. Such monuments of scientific and scholarly folklore research as the works of Child, Frazer, Sharpe, and Thompson<sup>4</sup> reflect the concern with tracing the evolution of the current form from the ancient lore. Whether or not one wholly supports what Dundes has called "the devolutionary premise"<sup>5</sup> in folklore theory, the fact remains that many scholarly studies--some of them recent--are devoted to such projects as tracing nursery rhymes back to sacred rituals. In America, this tendency is reflected in the not-so-scholarly studies purporting to find "pure" Elizabethan English in Appalachia, or tracing the development of a comic ballad to an origin deep in the complexities of Elizabethan politics.

The antiquarian interest in American folklore is of course a valid one and has, to be sure, produced valuable studies. To deny the premise of Thoms and his many later followers is to refuse to face reality, for many of the old ways are passing with alarming speed, and the attempt to record and preserve them before they vanish forever should be an important part of the study of folklore. Henry Glassie's scholarly study on the types of cabins<sup>6</sup> is representative of the many folklore studies valuable in their preservation of passing forms, styles, and crafts. The Southern Highlands Literary Fund publishes Foxfire, a magazine devoted to the collection of folklore of a relatively small area in Georgia, and the various folklore bibliographies frequently list studies concentrating on vanishing aspects of folk culture which merit scholarly study. The romantic notion that only the odd, the picturesque, or the antique deserves collection and analysis in folklore, however, has reigned supreme until recently, leading to the neglect of some current aspects of folk-life.

A recent trend in American folklore studies has been away from the devolutionary theory. Scholars contesting this theory are for the most part adherents to what has become known as the "American folklore school" of folklore study.<sup>7</sup> The basic premise of this group is that the phenomena of American history

have created an indigenous American folklore, no small parts of which are mass culture and industrialization. The chief proponent of this premise, Richard Dorson, concludes his American Folklore (Chicago, 1959) with the assertion that "[t]he idea that folklore is dying out is itself a kind of folklore."

To the scholars who make up this movement, the concept of folklore is that it is in a continuous state of becoming. City-dwellers, exposed to such mass-culture phenomena as saturation advertising, television, and motion pictures, develop a folklore of their own. Immigrants bring folklore from other regions and from other nations, and it merges in varying patterns as they gravitate to the cities. Schoolchildren and college students (as well as members of the faculties) partake of or participate in a folklore which is reproduced in the oral tradition in the same way as the weather signs and proverbial lore of the popular antiquities, and the desk-top scribblings in an American classroom are as much a part of tradition as barn-symbols in Pennsylvania Amish communities.<sup>8</sup> Traditions develop in the urbanized trades and professions, and where tradition is established, one always finds a growing corpus of folklore--speech, tales, and songs. The folklore of occupations has been subjected to a good deal of study, but much is yet uncollected.<sup>9</sup> The recognition, however, that the lore of a modern, urbanized, industrial society is a modern folklore just as the machinists or laborers are modern folk is an indication that the area of concentration in American folklore is broadening to include an alignment with modern cultural trends.

In matters of evaluation and interpretation, the science of folklore also has made several changes. The early "country vicar" type of collector tended to be led away from any sort of analysis or evaluation of his material by the emphasis placed on collecting the strange rather than discovering the pattern. As McDavid points out:

If the amateur is often able to catch a dialect word, or the formula for a folk remedy, which the scholar has not had a chance to observe, he as often does not distinguish between the truly local and the general; if the amateur is able to saturate himself in the speech and culture of a limited area and study it exhaustively, he often is unaware of the affiliations of his favorite community to the culture as a whole.<sup>10</sup>

This is not to say, of course, that the folklorist should conduct his fieldwork with the exclusive aim of discovering patterns, for the lore of an area, whether it is limited to that area or not, or whatever may be its distribution, is the primary concern of the collector. But he should be at pains to distinguish those aspects of his collected material which his area shares with the general culture from those which by their peculiarity set it off. The fact that children's skip-rope rhymes in a given area seem primarily to have evolved from the language of Old World religious rituals is significant only in its relation to the skip-rope rhymes of children in other areas, both adjoining and distant. In the forward to American Folklore, Dorson laments the fact that, among the current approaches to American folklore is that of "... regional collectors, who drift into parochialism."<sup>11</sup> And Jan Brunvand, after listing nine questions, the answers to which should be the basic goal of folklore



research, admits that

. . . because past folklorists have tended to be specialists in one genre or region or technique, studies seldom considered more than one or two of these matters at a time, and very few specific types of folklore have been subjected to more comprehensive research.<sup>12</sup>

The establishment of programs on university campuses, and the growth of the American folklore school led by Dorson has provided discipline through recognition of the importance of systematic scholarship. Consequently, much attention has been given to the systematic identification and classification of material gathered in the field, and the modern folklore scholar has access to reference works on motifs, superstitions, tales, proverbs, ballads, and riddles. These standard reference works are consulted by folklore archivists in arranging and annotating their materials, which are often cross-indexed by region and by ethnic background.

The existence of such folklore archives on college campuses has facilitated interdisciplinary exchange of material, and students can now share methods and perspectives with other closely-related fields. The geographic study of the Ozark culture-region by Joan W. Miller is an example of such interdisciplinary use of technique and materials. Using material gathered by Vance Randolph as well as that resulting from her own fieldwork, Miller identified a distinctive culture region of 11 counties in the Ozarks. In the abstract of her study she asserts that materials gathered by folklorists

. . . are of value to the cultural geographer as a source of documentation of settlement processes and may contribute to an understanding of the continuum of the changing occupancy of what is often a misunderstood and misrepresented region.<sup>13</sup>

No longer is the professional folklorist regarded as a sort of antiquary. The willingness of many modern folklorists to accept current professions and trades, urbanized groups, or socio-political movements as legitimate areas for the study of folklore, in combination with the development of rigorous standards of collection, analysis, and classification of material, antiquary and modern, has brought the science of folklore to the forefront as a serious enterprise in its own right, and has made it a valuable field of reference and consultation for related disciplines in the humanities as well as in certain of the sciences. But the path has been circuitous.

Before the organization of the American Dialect Society in 1889, studies of folk speech had concentrated, like the early folklore studies of speech, on oddities or antiquities, or they were conducted with an eye to gathering a body of "degraded" forms for condemnation and proscription. The ADS brought to the study of American speech an awareness of the importance of careful documentation and of maintaining a proper perspective regarding the relation of parts to the whole. The practice of collecting for its own sake, into which many early folklorists fell, was implicitly discouraged in dialect fieldwork. A circular prepared by the Society during its first year stressed the importance

of determining both the range of the usage collected and the provenience of the informant. An expanded statement, issued in 1912, revealed an awareness of the significance and value of the new as well as a deep reverence for the old and vanishing usages:

Many [dialect usages] are survivals from older periods--decayed aristocrats of the language, perhaps worthy to be restored to their heritage; many are new words formed or adapted to meet a new need arising from new conditions, and so have gained, or are sure to gain, a place in standard English.<sup>14</sup>

Such early precautions, plus the obvious fact that the dialect geographer's field of study does not encompass as wide and varying a range of forms, or genres, as the folklorist's, have often protected dialect geographers from the pitfalls into which unwary folklorists stumbled. And although their paths have diverged, the distance between them has never been great. The American Dialect Society had its genesis at Harvard, the birthplace of the American Folklore Society, and followed it by only one year. Francis James Child was one of the key figures in founding the Society, and George Lyman Kittredge was a charter member. Both men were to become well-known as ballad collectors and editors. W.W. Newell, President of the American Folklore Society, attended the first organizational meeting and stated that ". . . the two societies could exist without overlapping and that they might profitably cooperate."<sup>15</sup>

The condescension with which many linguists regard the folklorists' work in regional and occupational speech is undeserved. Folklore studies have much to contribute to the study of dialects.<sup>16</sup> The concern of the folklorist with the collection of older traditional materials of a region's folklore, and his knowledge of the importance of preserving such material, is paralleled in dialect geography by the inflexible rule that at least one folk speaker (type I-A) be interviewed in every community in the grid system, no matter what the distribution of other informant types, so as to insure the value of the atlas in comparative studies and in tracing the movement of speech forms across regional and even national boundaries in diachronic studies. Folklore studies, even when not conducted with the precision of a professional scholar, usually aim at older natives of the area as sources of information, and provide a corpus of folk speech from which dialect geographers might draw. Collections which are based on intensive interviewing and recording, such as those of Wilson, Wood, and Randolph,<sup>17</sup> may, despite minor faults in perspective, provide useful material for the dialect geographer. Interviewing for atlas records is conducted by wide sampling of representative informants, and studies which cover the area with more frequent sampling may contribute valuable supplementary material, clarify the social spread of usages, or suggest alterations either in the questionnaire or in the interviewer's approach or technique.

The folklore journals contain a good many essays on dialect by folklorists and dialectologists alike, in which the overlapping and cooperation of the two fields may be studied as partial preparation for work in the field. An understanding of the relationship of the two disciplines and a knowledge of what one has to offer the other should enable the fieldworker to follow through on possible openings for the pursuit of additional material, should such openings

occur during the interviews.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps the best illustrations of the close relationship of folklore and dialect geography, as well as some of the most productive references for atlas fieldworkers, are the various publications dealing with fieldwork methodology. One cannot read the fieldwork guide by Goldstein<sup>19</sup> without seeing its many similarities with the McDavid essay in this manual. And the instructions and precautions put forward in the folklore articles on fieldwork are suggestive and may frequently be used, with very little adaptation, in dialect geography fieldwork.<sup>20</sup>

Generalized folklore studies of the dialect of areas within the atlas region vary considerably in their value to the dialect geographer, partly because of the early concentration on strange or picturesque speech or because of the wide range of interpretations given the term dialect. But the fieldworker may find that such studies are nevertheless useful in providing a general idea of the folk speech of the area, and in allowing him to anticipate problem areas in the interview. The reader who wishes to use such studies should refer to Charles Haywood's A Bibliography of North American Folklore and Folksong (New York, 1961), which although it contains some errors, is useful; to Abstracts of Folklore Studies, published since 1963 by the American Folklore Society, and containing the Society's annual bibliography since 1964; or to the annual bibliography in Southern Folklore Quarterly.

Items included in the atlas questionnaire are aimed, in specific sections, at eliciting folk speech on farming terms, household terms, calls to animals, fence types, types of foods, etc. Such terms also fall naturally into the domain of the folklorist, and studies devoted to the investigation of the variety and spread of such terms have been published in various journals. There will come a time in practically every interview when the fieldworker will sense that the informant is "open" to detailed questioning along certain lines, but when the interviewer is at a loss as to how to pursue it. A discreet verbal nudge from time to time may guide the informant into revealing a wealth of materials that he had not mentioned because he had forgotten it, or because, in his attempts to second-guess the fieldworker or to anticipate the "correct answer" for which the interviewer is looking, he had neglected such material and had discarded it as irrelevant. Simply knowing enough about a subject to lead the informant into a discussion will often reward the collector considerably.<sup>21</sup>

The fieldworker who has some knowledge of the folklore of the region in which he is interviewing will usually find it a valuable aid for luring the informant into the free conversation which is so important a part of the interview. The intense regional and local pride shared by all Southerners will usually thaw the most reluctant informant, for a man who can see no reason for the fieldworker's interest in his speech, and who therefore is suspicious, will not question a similar interest in the region or the community itself. I once recorded nearly two hours of practically uninterrupted monologue from an informant concerning a local sheriff who was something of a folk hero in his area, and whose name I happened to mention during the conversation following the interview. Informants who deny outright that there is any "dialect" in their area acknowledge and take pride in the fact that their community has a particularly interesting

haunted house, an outstanding banjo-picker or buck-dancer, a fine pack of coon hounds, or a bottomless lake. Such a line of questioning is productive in that it reverses the roles of the interview, making the informant the expert, and in this capacity he is more relaxed and his speech is more natural and free.

The study of dialect geography in the United States has made greater strides than the study of folklore merely because dialect research has been carefully managed from its outset and has produced better cooperation among groups of scholars working on large-scale projects. Had the study of folklore had the same concentration and cooperation, an atlas of American folklore might just as easily be in preparation as an atlas of American dialects. The recent use of folklore material by scholars in the social sciences has demonstrated the valuable contribution that folklore can make in interdisciplinary studies. Dialect geographers, however, have long known that folklore research could facilitate their work in regional speech, and the recent scholarly work done in both fields leads folklorist and fieldworker alike to look forward to a time when their cooperation will lead to a better understanding of regional America.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Grimm also postulated a common Indo-European ancestor for all European folktales analogous to the common ancestor from which Indo-European languages descended. This theory is no longer accepted.

<sup>2</sup>Although Müller's philological theories on Aryan mythology are now discounted by folklorists, his eminence as a scholar of the late nineteenth century brought a great deal of publicity to the study of folklore through his debates with Lang, and folklorists still regard much of his work highly. See Dorson (1955).

<sup>3</sup>Thoms (1846).

<sup>4</sup>Child (1882-1898); Frazer (1907-1915); Sharp and Campbell (1917); Thompson (1955-1958).

<sup>5</sup>Dundes (1969). The devolutionary premise assumes that, from the time of the golden age, folklore has undergone steady decay or degeneration, partly through the process of oral transmission, partly because it descends from higher to lower strata of society.

<sup>6</sup>Glassie (1968).

<sup>7</sup>Rysan (1971), 3.

<sup>8</sup>See, for example, Brunvand (1966); Dirks (1963); Dorson (1949, 1959); Passin and Bennet (1943); Toelken (1968). Dorson (1959) discusses "Folklore of the Big City," "The Folklore of College Students," and "G.I. Folklore" in one chapter.

<sup>9</sup>McCulloch (1958); Freud (1954); Allen (1964); Splitter (1956); and Nettl (1957).

<sup>10</sup>McDavid (1958), 244.

<sup>11</sup>Dorson (1959), 5.

<sup>12</sup>Brunvand (1968), 11.

<sup>13</sup>Miller (1968).

<sup>14</sup>Pound (1952), 6.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>16</sup>For the general area of the LAGS project, the fieldworker should handle Brown (1952) volume I.

<sup>17</sup>Wilson (1965); Wilson has several chapters on folk speech in Thompson (1968). See also parts V and XII Wilson (1964, 1967). Also Wood (1954-1962). These contain materials resulting from Wood's work in the upper Gulf States area. Primarily lexical. Also Randolph (1953).

<sup>18</sup>A brief list would include Burgess (1961); Pound (1945); Cassidy (1953); McDavid (1958, 1968).

<sup>19</sup>Goldstein (1964, 1968).

<sup>20</sup>For example, Harder (1955); Leach and Glassie (1968); Wood (1953).

<sup>21</sup>A few studies which might be helpful: Meredith (1951); Sherwood (1949); Prescott (1938); Harder (1959, 1962); Boshears (1953); and Boone (1955).

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LINGUISTIC GEOGRAPHY AND THE CLASSROOM TEACHER

Charles E. Billiard

Georgia State University

## LINGUISTIC GEOGRAPHY AND THE CLASSROOM TEACHER

Charles E. Billiard

In the English teaching profession, there is an increasing awareness of regional and social dialects as significant dimensions of language instruction. Appointment of a committee by the Commission on the Study of the English Language at the 1971 NCTE Convention to study dialect differences and the teaching of standard usage is evidence of this growing concern. Throughout the decade of the Seventies, the problem of how teachers and educational institutions should respond to the variety in students' dialects has attracted increasing attention. For instance, in 1974 the Conference on College Composition and Communication adopted a resolution affirming that students have a right to their own varieties of language:

We affirm the students' right to their own patterns and varieties of language--the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style. . . . A nation proud of its diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm that teachers must have the experiences and the training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language.<sup>1</sup>

The controversy set off by the CCCC resolution has not yet subsided nor have the educational problems related to dialect diversity diminished. In Georgia, the State Board of Regents' Rising Junior Examination, requiring proficiency in reading and writing, has been repeatedly criticized as being biased against blacks with its emphasis on standard English. From the college to the elementary classroom, the problem persists. In a recent Federal court order, teachers in the Ann Arbor, Michigan school system were ordered to "take into account" the dialect of children when teaching them to read.<sup>2</sup>

The interest among educators in the research of dialectologists promises much for improving the teaching of English and, consequently, for enhancing the social and economic opportunities of individuals handicapped by inadequately developed speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills. Furthermore, as English teachers become more knowledgeable concerning scholarly research in American dialects and more sophisticated in their attitudes toward language differences, they should become more effective in combatting the language prejudices of the general public.

As a carefully designed, systematic investigation of the speech of the Gulf States, the LAGS Project is basic research starting with the existing scholarship in the field and moving into the unknown--the regional and social language variations in a largely uninvestigated area. For the English teacher in elementary and secondary schools, such research may seem remote in terms of the everyday problems of classroom teaching. As with all scientific ventures, the dis-

coveries that will have practical value cannot be predicted with certainty but only partially anticipated. That the investigation will give a more accurate and complete description of the living language of the region than is available today and will help dispel myths is quite adequate justification for enthusiastic interest in the LAGS Project by English teachers, school administrators, and the general public.

Far too many half-truths and myths about American English still prevail among teachers and the educated public. In a recent edition of the Atlanta Journal and Constitution, a well-known columnist tells of John Wesley's battle against the Southern drawl. Wesley, the father of Methodist hymnody, is quoted from the preface to his book Sacred Melody, printed in 1761, as urging his congregation to overcome their laziness which he believed contributed to their slow singing of church hymns:

Take care not to sing too slow. This drawling way naturally steals on all who are lazy and it is high time to drive it out from us and sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first.

The columnist then concludes that the hot climate prevailed, giving "the world one of its most pleasant accents as well as some of the longest sung hymns."<sup>3</sup> The dialectologist would detect three myths implied in the columnist's conclusions: (1) that climate directly affects dialect variations, (2) that Southern speech is "slow", and (3) that one dialect or language is intrinsically more beautiful than another.

Unfortunately, in many school and college English classrooms in America, a monolithic concept of English usage persists, admitting no reality to the lively presence of regional and social dialects. Consequently, the cultivation of delight in cultural differences reflected in dialect variations and an awareness of the implications of dialect differences for the teaching of language arts and skills are largely unrealized. For instance, in Charlotte Mayerson's Two Blocks Apart, Juan Gonzales, a seventeen-year-old high school senior, says, "I'm not going out into the street and talk like that. They won't believe me." Juan, keenly sensitive to differences between the language of the classroom and his "real world," has learned to shift from one dialect to another as the occasion requires. For use in his world of reality, he rejects classroom language because he knows its use there would make him socially unacceptable. In speaking to his friends in the streets, he feels comfortable in saying "I ain't gonna do that."<sup>4</sup> Juan's use of nonstandard language is appropriate and necessary, necessary possibly even for survival in his relations with his peers. Insistence on the use of "standard English" for all communication in the classroom and a derisive attitude of the teacher toward the student's language often turn the classroom into a linguistic prison.

Too often the "standard English" of the classroom has little correlation with the realities of cultivated language usage in the school community. Womack and Stoakes have found wide discrepancies between the facts of language and the opinions held by teachers concerning what appropriate usage is or should be. Womack's investigation "Teachers Attitudes toward Current Usage" demonstrates that the majority of teachers participating in his study still reject most usages that

scholarly information shows to be acceptable.<sup>5</sup> On the basis of a survey of usage attitudes among teachers in Florida, Stoakes concludes that secondary teachers differ so much among themselves on specific points of usage that their counsel becomes meaningless.<sup>6</sup> Compounding the problem, many elementary and secondary English textbooks fail to take into account variations in regional and social dialects. Jean Malmstrom's study of 205 textbooks reveals a discouraging lack of application of recent scholarship in dialectology as reflected in an uncompromising right-wrong dichotomy on usage matters in these texts.

Intensifying the need for teachers to be knowledgeable about variations in American English is the confrontation of regional and social dialects in both inner-city and suburban classroom resulting from a highly mobile population seeking social and economic advancement in American urban centers. Negroes of a rural Southern background, migrating to Northern cities, transplant a regional dialect which often becomes a social dialect labeling the cultural level and limiting the economic opportunities of its users. Mexican-Americans, trying to escape the migrant stream, remain in urban centers after the harvest season, seeking employment. The cultural and language conflicts experienced by these workers and their children are often traumatic. Likewise, rural Southern and Appalachian whites, American Indians, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans find their dialects a handicap in new speech environments.

Why should children and adults, especially those who are economically disadvantaged, find themselves discriminated against in our society because of the way they use language? In recent years educational strategies for dealing with the language of poverty children have been based on two opposing theories: (1) that the language of poverty children is deficient and (2) that the language of these children is merely different from that of middle-class society. As an antidote for poverty the deficit theory recommends a strategy of cultural injection, the earlier the better. Preschool compensatory education, such as the Head Start Program, has attempted to give poverty children the language skills of middle-class children and those required by the educational system. The deficit theory puts the onus on the individual and his particular subcultural group. On the other hand, the difference position holds that language variations among various groups of people is a manifestation of cultural differences and that one dialect or language is as good, as well developed, as systematic as another. Insofar as education can help break the poverty cycle, the difference theory recommends major changes in the schools. The onus is placed on society and the schools, not on the individual and the subcultural group of which he is a member. Thus the difference position calls for polyculturally-oriented schools which accept the language and culture of the children rather than try to change the language of children to conform to a mythical middle-class standard of usage.

The regional dialect investigations of the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada Project have produced a wealth of evidence which discourages language prejudices and encourages respect for language variations in American English. A comprehensive description of Southern speech to be produced by the LAGS Project should further promote respect and admiration for the varieties of American speech spoken in many parts of the United States.

The importance of the teacher's attitude toward the language of the child can hardly be overemphasized. Williams summarizes extensive research which supports the hypothesis that a person's subjective responses to speech are stereotyped versions of his attitudes toward the individuals using that speech.<sup>7</sup> Further, research shows that the expectations of the teacher have a profound influence upon the performance of his students. Rosenthal and Jacobson in Pygmalion in the Classroom report evidence which supports a self-fulfilling prophecy of the teacher for his students. The teacher's expectations of his students' behavior can become a more accurate prediction simply because such a prediction has been made.<sup>8</sup> One of the significant generalizations from this research is that a part of the dynamics of a child's being disadvantaged is manifested in the attitudes of those around him; thus, if the teacher expects little of the child because of his use of nonstandard language, such a prophecy in effect will work against the child.

Rist's report of an observational study of one class of ghetto children during their kindergarten, first- and second-grade years corroborates the findings of Rosenthal and Jacobson. His study demonstrates the impact of teacher expectations based upon several subjective social criteria. One of the criteria--the use of language within the classroom--was considered a major factor by the kindergarten teacher in grouping the students. Students placed at the first table (the group for whom the teacher held the highest academic expectations) spoke primarily in "standard" English; whereas the children at the last two tables most frequently responded in "black" English. Within a short period, members of the group at the first table were "continually being called upon to lead the class in the Pledge of Allegiance, read the weather calendar each day, come to the front for 'show and tell' periods. . . ."<sup>9</sup> The first-grade and second-grade teachers continued the grouping of children on the basis of subjective social criteria and on the basis of past performance. By the end of the second year, the academic performance of the first group clearly fulfilled the prophecy of teacher expectations. The lower groups were socialized by the teachers for a role of lower expectations, and these students did indeed fulfill this prophecy. Rist concludes that such classroom practice, based in part upon language prejudices, maintains class barriers which perpetuate social and economic inequities in American society.

To enhance the life possibilities of minority groups who speak a non-prestigious dialect, several educational strategies based either on the deficit or the difference theory are commonly advocated: (a) educate the general public to respect and appreciate the dialects of minority groups; (b) train speakers of non-prestigious dialects to acquire as a second dialect the standard dialect of the community while retaining their original dialects; (c) attempt to extinguish the original dialect with the standard dialect. The practical-minded educator will not dismiss, as an objective in speaking-skills, mastery of the standard dialect while he wages a campaign to enlighten the general public about the validity of all American English dialects. It is equally unlikely that the idealistic-minded educator could be satisfied with rigorously training his students in the use of the standard dialect while dismissing the task of cultivating respect and admiration for the dialects of minority groups in his community. In fact, "to be tolerant toward--at times even to cherish--pronunciations and dialects different from one's own" is one of the representative



objectives that leading English teachers posit, as reported by Lazarus and Knudson.<sup>10</sup> Research in linguistics, particularly dialectology, provides guiding principles for dealing with both problems.

Inferences concerning the social and cultural significance of dialect differences should be based on careful observation of actual usage. The LAGS Project will provide bedrock data needed for making intelligent generalizations concerning Southern speech. As McDavid has observed, personal bias and theory unsupported by data simply will not do the job in the English classroom:

It is easier to understand differences when they are specified, and it is easier to do something about them. Once we know how two or more varieties of the language differ in a given community, it should be easier to work out devices for ascertaining what speech features of the underprivileged group actually create the greatest interference with their social acceptance in the dominant culture. Once this is achieved, we may focus on those details; too much of our teaching of "correct usage" is ad hoc, based on tradition and personal bias, not on what the facts of the case happen to be.<sup>11</sup>

If teachers are to be effective in helping students develop skills in shifting language style for various social occasions, they must first listen to the dialects they would teach others to respect. They must also learn to distinguish specific features of the standard dialect of the community and the dialects of culturally different groups. Teachers should maintain wide-ranging contacts with various social and economic groups so that they can continuously refine their sensitivity to actual usage in the speech community.

The facts of actual usage thus discovered may be a revelation to many English teachers and present a challenge to revise instructional techniques and curriculum content in usage. For example, a black informant, a domestic having a lifetime association with a cultivated family in rural North Georgia, was found by an interviewer in the Dialect Survey of Rural Georgia to have preterit and past participle inflections for irregular verbs more closely approximating what most teachers would consider "standard American English" than the forms used by most high school graduates interviewed in North Georgia.<sup>12</sup>

Awareness that usage is not fixed but changes and that it is not completely uniform even at the most highly educated levels makes untenable any claim to moral sanction for particular usage. For example, Quintilian assures us that ". . . usage is . . . the surest pilot in speaking, and we should treat language as currency minted with the public stamp."<sup>13</sup> He further assures us that educated Romans were not agreed in usage practice.

Unfortunately, it seems persons of every age must rediscover the dynamic nature of usage. The chorus of outrage following the publication of Webster's Third New International Dictionary has hardly yet subsided. In analyzing the critical reaction in the United States to the Webster's Third, Marckwardt considers one of the major causes to be the failure of educators: "Actually, the furor over Webster III is a sad commentary on how inadequately the dictionary

has been presented in the English classrooms of the nation, and how insufficiently English teachers are informed about one of the principal tools of their profession."<sup>14</sup> The front matter of Webster's New International Dictionary (Second edition) apparently had not been read by most English teachers, for this material clearly expresses the editors' descriptive attitude toward language. Webster's Third continues the descriptive approach, merely expanding the principle in actual practice. For example, the influence of the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada projects on Webster's Third is reflected in the adaptation of the terms for major dialect areas.

Intelligent use of LAGS data should promote a more reasonable, informed attitude among educators toward language change. Data gathered in the Dialect Survey of Rural Georgia strongly support such expectations. For example, Pederson reports evidence that the preterit dove is extending itself southward and westward in a region where the Middle and South Atlantic Atlas data show the preterit dived to predominate. The survey shows the past tense of drag to be drug among all types of informants in the upper Georgia area, and also provides information on regional and social distribution of other verb forms: be (positive and negative status, first and third singular, and first plural, present and preterit forms); do (third singular, present, preterit, and past participle forms); have (positive and negative status, third singular, preterit forms); should (negative status), and eight other verbs which are frequently realized in different ways in the preterit and participle forms by native speakers of American English. These include buy, climb, drink, eat, grow, ride, ring, and rise.<sup>15</sup>

The potential usefulness of the LAGS Project and other atlas surveys in dealing with authoritarian attitudes toward language can be illustrated with examples from The Oxford English Dictionary (OED), based unequivocally on the principle of objective description. OED records, for example, that the preterits dived and dove have long competed as standard forms:

1867, Hayes Open Polar Sea: "The whole herd . . . dove down with a tremendous splash"; 1882, New York Herald: "Women dove headlong from the crosstrees into friendly and convenient nets"; 1889, Jessupp Coming of Friars: "I at once dived into one of the boxes."<sup>16</sup>

Variations have also long prevailed in the past-participle form of the verb drink. For instance, the OED records the following variant forms:

1750, Johnson Rambler No. 49: "He had . . . drunk many a flaggon"; 1813, Col. Hawker Diary: "We having nearly drunk the landlord out of both his English and French wine"; 1884, Tennyson Becket: "Ye have eaten of my dish and drunken of my cup for a dozen years."<sup>17</sup>

The verb drown is also shown to have variants according to the OED:

1727, Swift Past Dial.: "In my own Thames may I be drowned"; 1838, Dickens Nicholas Nickleby: "Just fill that mug up with lukewarm water, William, will you? . . . Why the milk will be drowned"; 1869, C. Gibbon R. Gray: "My father drooned"; 1894, The Daily News: "Deserted cottages,

whose tenants had . . . been drowned out."<sup>18</sup>

Knowledge of the diversity and change in language usage provides an excellent basis for combatting unreasonable and narrow-minded attitudes toward persons who speak differently.

Common sense tells us that if we don't like the way a person speaks, we may "tune him out." Research verifies that an unfavorable attitude of the listener toward the language of the speaker results in ineffective listening.<sup>19</sup> Since more than half of the time in a typical classroom is spent in speaking and listening, the attitudes of both students and their teacher toward language differences affect the teaching-learning situation. First, then, the teacher and students must be willing to "tune in" on the language of every member of the class. Second, the teacher must learn the specific features of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation which tend to interfere with basic oral communication within the classroom. In surveys conducted by this writer in undergraduate and graduate English education classes, both experienced teachers and student teachers indicate they often have difficulty understanding the oral language of their students. One experienced high school teacher remarked, "After asking a student to repeat an answer, I feel embarrassed to ask him to repeat it a third time." Student teachers working with pupils from culturally different backgrounds express fear of not being able to understand these students. These student teachers report that it often takes them several weeks in the classroom to achieve effective oral communication. The LAGS Project will provide useful baseline data on contrasting features of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical structure for an indigenous population that is now on the move from rural communities into large urban centers in both the South and the North. For example, most of the recent Atlanta immigrants are from the South. Approximately half of these arrivals during the period of 1960 to 1965 came from rural Georgia.<sup>20</sup> Although Southern teachers should be encouraged to rely upon their knowledge and appreciation of language variations within their native regions, the mobility of the population and the gradual breaking down of the caste system may present the teacher with students having unfamiliar speech features. A keen, sympathetic ear will help, but the teacher could be materially aided in understanding the speech of his students by a systematic knowledge of the regional and social varieties of Southern speech.

Believing in the viability of the language of all his students, the teacher would encourage oral expression without censorship of speech forms. Indeed a strong case can be made for no overt, deliberate meddling with the oral patterns of children for at least the first two or three years of school. Stimulated to speak, to listen to each other, to act out their feelings and ideas, to feel comfortable in the use of their native speech within the classroom, at least an atmosphere of acceptance and expectation of success can be established for many children. Within such a classroom climate, the teaching of reading and writing may well begin.

Certainly one of the most crucial and controversial issues facing American educators is how to cope more successfully with the problem of teaching inner-city children to read. Baratz and Stewart contend that the disadvantaged black child is faced with an almost insurmountable task when asked to decode material written in middle-class standard English. He must, they maintain, not only decode

the written words but also translate them into his own dialect. To perform this task, he must deal with a greater mismatching of letters (graphemes) and significant sounds (phonemes) in his dialect than must the middle-class child. He also must grapple with a syntactic system that has features unfamiliar to him. On the basis of a sentence-repetition experiment indicating that whites were superior to blacks in repeating standard English sentences, and on the other hand, that blacks were far superior to whites in repeating black non-standard English sentences, Baratz recommends the use of initial reading materials written in the black child's dialect and "transition readers" that gradually move the child into reading texts written in standard English.<sup>21</sup>

Further research by Ames, Rosen, and Olson on the interference effect of the black child's dialect when attempting to read standard English texts raises serious doubts about the generalization made in the Baratz study.<sup>22</sup> These and other reading researchers point out that the Baratz study does not measure the students' reading comprehension of the sentences used in the text nor the students' comprehension of connected discourse. Whether the black child's decoding of the standard text into his dialect actually interferes with the processes involved in understanding concepts and ideas symbolized in print is a question that remains unanswered. What the Ames, Rosen, and Olson research does suggest in effect is that reading teachers must guard against confusing students' reading comprehension problems with dialect decoding variations; thus teachers should concentrate on teaching reading (comprehension), not on "correcting" the child's speech.

The language experience approach offers another alternative to preparing reading materials in the dialect of the individual learner or to using materials written in standard dialect which the pupil is encouraged to translate into his dialect without penalty. This approach is based upon the view that reading can be most effectively taught when the materials accurately reflect the learner's own experiences as described in his own language. The technique introduces the child to reading instruction by means of stories he dictates to the teacher. From such pupil-dictated stories, the child develops an initial sight vocabulary peculiar to his experience and oral language abilities.

From such an approach to work the teacher must (1) believe in the worth of the pupil's experience, (2) evidence respect for the learner's language, and (3) understand and accurately reproduce the speaker's language. For example, the teacher must be willing to accept the sentence "They bikes, they go fast" as an accurate and meaningful translation of the printed words "Their bikes go fast." The deletion of /r/ with the subsequent modification of the vowel makes the possessive pronoun their identical to the personal pronoun they and the insertion of they, traditionally considered word recognition errors, must be considered a meaningful reading of a standard English sentence.

Proponents of the language experience approach maintain that the method capitalizes upon the interrelations of the language arts. The initial student writing experiences grow out of, or are related to, the pupil-dictated stories used to develop reading skills. Thus the first writing attempts of the child will be in his dialect. Growth in word recognition, spelling, speaking, and listening will be fostered as students engage in writing individual experience

stories and reading them to their classmates.<sup>23</sup> Initiating reading and writing instruction among nonstandard speakers by means of the language method clearly requires the teacher's acceptance and understanding of the children's dialect variations.

Whatever the outcome of this controversy regarding teaching strategies and materials, additional regional dialect fieldwork in the South will be important in helping the language arts and reading teachers. If the Baratz theory is eventually verified, then a much more exact knowledge of regional dialects will be needed. It cannot be assumed that the sociolinguistic data for Detroit, Chicago, New York, or Washington can be extrapolated with accuracy to uninvestigated regions of the country. On the other hand, if one of the major problems in the teaching of reading is that many teachers cannot or do not discriminate between reading errors and dialectal variations and thus discourage students unnecessarily by correcting pronunciation and syntactic "errors," then a critical need exists to provide accurate descriptions of regional and social dialects in the Gulf States. Likewise, the teachers using the language experience approach should be aided materially by concise descriptions of speech differences in the South.

Beyond aiding in the teaching of basic language skills, the LAGS Project has significant implications for the study of literature. At least two educationally useful possibilities come to mind: (1) generation of interest in how the literary artist uses dialect to reveal character and (2) stimulation of the systematic study of the literary dialects in the works of such authors as Rawlings, Warren, and Faulkner. In the study of literary dialects, Ives, Downer, Foster, and others<sup>24</sup> have made use of linguistic atlas findings in other parts of the country, and it is reasonable to expect comparable work to be done in the Gulf States when the evidence from the fieldwork is interpreted.

Whenever a person in literature speaks, he reveals a multi-layered set of dialectal features and clues to help readers understand him. The possibilities of challenging students to examine language carefully for clues to meaning, to delve beneath the surface for meaning, are suggested by Lazarus:

Whenever a speaker in literature or life makes an utterance, he always reveals one (or more) of the following: his historical era, his geographical stance (county, region, locality), his age (infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, senility), his sex (male, female, effeminate, tomboyish), the age and sex of his audience, the nature of his audience (from intimate to public), his formal education (lack of education, half education . . . ), his socio-economic status (a continuum from slave through various kinds of followers . . . leaders . . . power elites), his cultural milieu's values, sports, and pastimes.<sup>25</sup>

An appreciation of dialect differences and an understanding of how language reveals character can indeed be achieved through the study of major works of literature. Skillful writers often make subtle use of dialect to convey meaning in delineating and contrasting characters and creating local color and humorous effects. Among many works especially appropriate for this kind of study on the secondary level are Shaw's Pygmalion, Faulkner's The Town, Salinger's

The Catcher in the Rye,<sup>26</sup> and many of the works of Mark Twain.<sup>27</sup> In studying The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, for example, students can be asked to find characteristic dialect features--vocabulary, pronunciation and eye dialect, and grammatical structure--in each character's speech; to contrast the speech of various characters; to determine the cultural level and functional variety of utterances--i.e., to make inferences about the education, environment, and socio-economic status of the speaker. A study of the language of the Duke and the Dauphin, for example, can provide much linguistically educative fun and profit. In giving instructions to the Dauphin for playing Juliet, the Duke, though comparatively more literate than the Dauphin, reveals certain idiosyncrasies:

You mustn't bellow out Romeo! that way, like a bull--you must say it soft, and sick, and languishingly . . . she (Juliet) don't bray like a jackass.<sup>28</sup>

Here the vocabulary, aside from the humor, reveals the Duke's personality. Something of the charlatan and half-educated is revealed in these words, particularly in the incongruity of his vocabulary. The predominance of such words as bellow, bray, bull, and jackass betray a dialect of a rural background, while the word languishingly sounds strangely alien if not pretentious in this context. The study of language within the context of a literary work offers many possibilities for sharpening the students' sensitivity to cultural levels and functional varieties of language as well as increasing their ability to read imaginative literature with greater understanding and enjoyment. For the literary or linguistic scholar, the LAGS Project should provide the basic framework for objective study of the literary dialects in such works as Faulkner's Light in August, Warren's All the King's Men, and G.W. Harris' Sut Lovingood's Yarns.

The investigation of regional and social dialects of the Gulf States offers an unusual opportunity for linguistic and literary scholars, English teachers, school administrators and publishers of educational materials to engage in useful communication and support of each other. Too often in the past English teachers, school administrators, and publishers have failed to use the basic research available in American English. It is not too much to hope that the language data produced by the LAGS Project will be applied to the development of more realistic and effective English programs in the schools.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Background work on the CCC resolution on language, adopted by members in April 1974, was begun in 1971. Realizing the highly controversial nature of the resolution, the Executive Committee appointed a special committee to write a background statement citing sociolinguistic research undergirding the resolution. As a result of this committee's work, a special issue of College Composition and Communication, "Students' Right to Their Own Language," was published in Fall, 1974. The supporting bibliography in the issue is particularly useful for its pedagogical treatment of sociolinguistic problems spanning elementary through college levels.

<sup>2</sup>In the Ann Arbor court case (Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School Children v. Ann Arbor School District Board), the parents of 15 black children brought suit against the school system for failing to take the language of the children into account in teaching them to read standard English. Judge Charles W. Joiner ruled in their favor and instructed the school system to make the descriptive data on black dialects available to the teachers at Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School. He further ordered the school system to instruct these teachers how best to use the knowledge of black dialects to teach reading.

<sup>3</sup>For a comprehensive discussion of the factors contributing to the development of regional dialects, see McDavid (1963).

<sup>4</sup>Mayerson's case studies of two teenagers, Peter Quinn of middle-class Anglo-American background and Juan Gonzales of lower-class Spanish-American origin, demonstrate the power of social pressures in determining language usage.

<sup>5</sup>Philip Gove defines standard English usage as "the English that with respect to spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary is substantially uniform though not devoid of regional differences, that is well-established by usage in the formal and informal speech and writing of the educated and that is widely recognized as acceptable wherever English is spoken and understood." Gove (1967).

<sup>6</sup>E.g., Stoakes in his Florida usage survey reports that on six items out nineteen, the teachers divided almost evenly with the range of acceptance running between 45% and 55%. He also observes that when teachers reject usage items, they are much more likely to discredit the findings of scholarly studies than to accept the evidence presented in such investigations. Stoakes contends that teachers simply have not been educated adequately in the content area of usage and are generally unaware of the reputable body of knowledge about usage, especially the findings concerning usage recorded in the linguistic atlases of the United States and Canada.

<sup>7</sup> Considerable evidence for the stereotype hypothesis has been gathered by Wallace Lambert and his associates at McGill University, Canada. Williams (1970) further speculates that stereotypes have an effect upon speaker and listener behavior in relation to each other and how they perceive each other's messages.

<sup>8</sup> Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968), hypothesizing that an experimenter's attitudes could inadvertently bear themselves out by influencing the behavior of experimental subjects, told teachers that certain students were "spurters" or "bloomers." These students were actually selected at random. Gains in IQ scores and other achievement indexes were found to favor these designated students as compared with the remaining students.

<sup>9</sup> Rist (1970), 411-51. Williams (1970) supports Rist's finding and places the responsibility on the mainstream of society for reducing conditions which perpetuate and increase ethnocentrism. For example, the child of the mainstream society should learn in school to recognize and respect cultural differences; thus antipoverty preschool programs should incorporate insofar as possible the full range of children in American society, rather than isolating minority group children and stereotyping them as disadvantaged.

<sup>10</sup> Lazarus and Knudson (1967), 2.

<sup>11</sup> For a further discussion of the need for linguistic description in devising instructional strategies and language materials, see Shuy (1972), 331-45.

<sup>12</sup> Pederson (1972). This information gathered in the Dialect Survey of Rural Georgia, the experimental program preceding the LAGS Project, further emphasizes the need for a comprehensive description of Southern speech.

<sup>13</sup> The principle of appropriateness of usage was recognized by the ancient classicists. Aristotle, for example, suggests in contemporary vein, ". . . to each class and habit there is an appropriate style. I mean in reference to age--child, man, or old man; to sex--man or woman; to country--Lacedaemonian or Thessalian." Aristotle [c. 320 BC] (1947), 379.

<sup>14</sup> Marckwardt (1963), 339. Evans (1963) in answering adverse critics of Webster's Third New International Dictionary implies criticism of English teachers for failing to teach the proper purpose and use of the dictionary. The hostility of many reviewers seemed to indicate that they did not know how to use a dictionary and were "unable to read the Third International and unwilling to read the Second."

<sup>15</sup> Pederson (1972).

<sup>16</sup> Murray et al. (1933), Vol. III, 547.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 667-68.



<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 668.

<sup>19</sup>E.g., Nichols (1967) in discussing major factors contributing to ineffective listening identifies criticism of the language of the speaker as one of the worst listening habits in America today. In a study directed by McDavid and Austin (1966), the reactions of Chicago natives to various pronunciations of single words were analyzed to determine which pronunciation is a significant linguistic feature in eliciting negative and positive attitudes in listeners. These researchers suggest testing tentative conclusions reached for the Chicago metropolitan area for applicability in other inland Northern, Eastern, and Southern communities.

<sup>20</sup>In addition to these demographic considerations, Pederson (1970) outlines the social problems and points out other factors which complicate the dialectal situation for Atlanta (e.g., its position on a probable dialect boundary between Upcountry Lower Southern and South Midland Speech; its influence as a potential focal area positioned on the fringe of several relic areas).

<sup>21</sup>Baratz (1969), 92-116.

<sup>22</sup>Ames, Rosen, and Olson (1971), 63-70. Anastasiow and Hanes (1976) found that inner-city children, when asked to repeat sentences, changed them to conform to their own dialect patterns, but when tested for comprehension of these sentences they performed at a high level of achievement. Anastasiow suggests that in teaching beginning reading we have focused on peripheral aspects of language (phonology and morphology) rather than on more central matters of semantics and syntax.

<sup>23</sup>Cramer (1971), 33-39.

<sup>24</sup>E.g., Ives (1950a, 1950b, 1954, 1955), Downer (1958), C.W. Foster (1968), and several titles described by McMillan (1971), 151-160.

<sup>25</sup>Lazarus (1965), 2.

<sup>26</sup>See, e.g., Costello (1959).

<sup>27</sup>For discussions of literary dialects in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, see Pederson (1968).

<sup>28</sup>Twain [1885] (1961), 70.

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