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THE INFORMANT

An interdisciplinary newsletter distributed by the Department of Linguistics at Western Michigan University to provide information about developments in linguistics to students, staff, and friends in the field.

A Dialect Study of Trenary, Michigan*

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I began my dialect study of Trenary, Michigan, as a Waldo-Sangren Award project in April 1970. Dr. Arnold Nelson, a member of the Western Michigan University English Department, was my supervisor. During the months between May and September, I selected and interviewed seventeen residents of Trenary.

In the following year, I worked with Mr. Earl Herrick, a member of the WMU English faculty, until July 1972, when he left for Kingsville, Texas. He and I sorted my data through a computer. In the last half of 1972, I analyzed my data, researched other dialectologists' reports, and compared their results with my own.

I think it was extremely helpful that I was familiar with the people of the community. I had lived in Trenary eighteen years and was acquainted with everyone. I was also familiar with the day-to-day life style of the individual informants and the community attitudes as a whole. This helped me in two ways. First, I didn't have to rely on someone else's judgment in the selection of informants. Secondly, the informants were more at ease with me than they would have been with a stranger. This knowledge of the community and its people is fundamental to the study of a dialect area.

As dialectologist Alva Davis says, one should be acquainted with the settlement history of the area being studied, because the linguistic history runs parallel to the settlement history. (Alva L. Davis, A Dialect Study of the Great Lakes Region. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Univ. of Mich. Press, 1948.) I completely agree with Davis. In the following section I will acquaint you with the history of Trenary.

The History of Trenary

Trenary, Michigan, is a hamlet in Alger County in the Upper Peninsula, situated centrally, about thirty miles from Marquette, Escanaba, and Munising. Trenary is sometimes referred to as the "Hub of the U.P." by the residents, because of its central location.

*A paper delivered on January 23, 1973 at the Winter reception for Linguistics Department students, faculty, and guests.

The nearby town of Winters was founded in 1885 by homesteaders from Canada and Indiana. These homesteaders first had to cut trees, clear land, and build houses before they could receive their property titles and settle in a community they called Winters. In later years, Winters decreased in population and the town of Trenary was started just a mile or so south. The site on which Winters was located is today a rural area outside Trenary.

Mrs. Edith Walls Kallio was the daughter of one of the first homesteaders. In the following passage she recalls some history of Trenary:

In 1898 a little village of Trenary sprouted up. School was built, soon stores, saloon, blacksmith shop, dry good store, a church, barber shop, and last and most important we have a doctor. The Soo line railroad came into Trenary once a week. (Edith Walls Kallio, Residents of Trenary, Michigan. Historical Society of Alger County, Michigan.)

The second generation was a mixture of people. Immigration increased the Upper Peninsula's population greatly. Most of the immigrants came from Yugoslavia, Finland, Sweden, Italy, and Canada. "The Finns began to arrive about the turn of the century.... As late as 1930, about 1/4 of the population of the U.P. was foreign born." (Willis Dunbar, A History of the Wolverine State. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965, p. 514.)

Most of the immigrants who came to Trenary at this time spoke little, if any, English. They learned English from the homesteaders, and many became homesteaders themselves. Most of the people worked on their farms, and a few had their own private businesses--like the blacksmith, the dry-goods storekeeper, and the barber. Dances at the school, at people's houses, or at the saloon were big social events.

Trenary today has about five hundred people. Most of the adults commute to work in one of the surrounding cities, or they farm or have small businesses of their own.

The last few years have brought a new kind of immigrant: that is, one from the city. Most of these "new immigrants" are retirees, but an increase of younger people is beginning.

The majority of students graduating from high school who choose to continue their education are able to attend Northern Michigan University in Marquette or Bay de Noc Community College in Escanaba.

The Questionnaire and Informants

My study consisted of a 307 item questionnaire, which included vocabulary and syntax, and three passages containing 57 sound items. The vocabulary items consisted of definitions to which the informants responded with a labeling term. The syntax consisted of given sentences or parts of sentences. The informant filled in the missing part or completed the sentence. The phonological (or sound) part consisted of three passages which were read by the informants. I tape-recorded and transcribed the 57 sound responses. What I hoped to find were vocabulary, phonological, and syntactic changes taking place from one generation to the next, the number of such changes in progress, and the specific items changing. Because the two parts of the questionnaire took about four hours for each informant, it was necessary to divide the interview into two sessions.

The seventeen informants were chosen as carefully as possible, with several aims in mind. All had to be native born, with a limited amount of travel. There were three age categories of informants: I. Old, II. Middle Aged, and III. Young. These age groups were further sub-grouped by education: A. completed 8th grade, B. completed high school, and C. completed (or attempted) college--thus making nine possible groups. My initial intention was to obtain two informants per group. This would have given me eighteen informants. I was unable to interview an elderly person with four years of college, because there are no native-born, elderly citizens with a college education still living in Trenary. There is one elderly informant with a year of college; the other three have high school diplomas. All of the middle-aged informants have graduated from high school, and two have had some college. The six informants in the youth category fit my initial grouping the best: two have had an 8th grade education, one has had a 12th grade education, and three have had some college.

INFORMANTS

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|-------------|----|----|----|----|----|---------|----|----|----|----|
| Informant Number | 7 | 8 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 13 | 16 | 15 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 12 | 11 | 14 | 17 | 9 |
| Education No. of Yrs. | 8 | 8 | 12 | 13 | 15 | 16 | 12+ | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 16 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 13 |
| Age | 13 | 13 | 18 | 19 | 21 | 25 | 33 | 41 | 42 | 44 | 46 | 50 | 51 | 60 | 67 | 72 | 68 |
| | Young | | | | | | Middle Aged | | | | | | Elderly | | | | |

From my total of 307 questions, nine pertained to sound change and will be discussed later. Twenty-two were omitted for various reasons, including: a) confusion concerning the questions, b) the inability to elicit responses to certain questions, and c) the unfamiliarity with items involved in the question. For example, Item #162 is, "What is the grass strip between the sidewalk and the street called?" Most of the informants looked puzzled and answered, "I don't know" or "I don't have a term." Another example is Item #290. The interviewer must ask for a word to fill the sentence, "The boy _____ his father." The word is "resembles," or some other synonym. It was difficult to elicit a useful response in this case.

Changes in Vocabulary

Of the 276 items remaining, ninety-three, or 34%, were in the process of changing from one generation to the next. By the "process of change," I mean that one can look at the data and see a trend in the item regarding its usage or pronunciation through generations. For example, in Item #40, concerning a musical instrument played by the mouth, all the elderly informants gave "mouth organ" and three gave "harmonica"; and of the six young informants, one gave "mouth organ" and five gave "harmonica." This example illustrates a change in the usage of a labeling term--specifically, the substitution of "harmonica" for "mouth organ."

The vocabulary categories that were changing most rapidly were those concerning school, clothing, and the home. Those changing least were urban, food, and nature terms. Some examples of changes were band to rubberband,

bathing suit to swim(ming) suit, creep to crawl, coupe and sedan to two-door, mongrel to mutt, rinn to rind, and outdoor movie and outdoor theater to drive-in.

VOCABULARY CATEGORIES IN THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

| <u>Category</u> | <u>Number of Items Changed</u> | <u>Number of Items In Category</u> | <u>Per Cent Changing</u> |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| school | 3 | 5 | 60 % |
| clothing | 3 | 6 | 50 % |
| home | 21 | 49 | 43 % |
| games | 4 | 10 | 40 % |
| automotive | 2 | 6 | 33.3 % |
| nature | 12 | 38 | 31.3 % |
| foods | 4 | 37 | 29.7 % |
| urban | 4 | 21 | 19 % |

There are several important reasons for the changes, and one of the biggest is education. More advanced educational achievement resulted in an increase of what Kurath calls "book terms," or literary terms: that is, those terms that one incorporates into one's dialect either alongside the local and regional expressions or at the expense of the local terms. This happened in such words as macadam road and composition road for blacktop road, harmonica for mouth organ, and gutters for eaves, eavestroughs, spouts, and spouting.

Another cause for change is generalization. At any given time there exist a number of objects of a relatively common function, yet retaining individuality. As the function becomes more identical among the objects, one term will label them all adequately. Therefore, one particular label is generalized to the group. One example of this is the different labels given for a place to hang clothes--like wardrobe, rack, and clothes closet. All these terms are being grouped together under one label in Trenary--closet. Another example is peaches. Unless one cans or grows peaches, the distinction between freestone and clingstone ceases to exist. In Trenary, peaches are not grown, and only a few people can peaches. Those are the informants who made a distinction. The lack of distinction between types of peaches also indicates the historical development of a technology which has eliminated the need for such knowledge.

Borrowings, Relics, and Localisms

Another category of items that concerns vocabulary change in the community is Finnish terms brought to Trenary by the Finnish immigrants. The most popular is sauna, which is a Finnish steam bath. Other Finnish terms like Aiti "mother," Isa or Paba "father," and vilja "soured milk" are used by informants with Finnish backgrounds. Most of these terms, except sauna, have dropped or are dropping out of the dialect. The younger generation of Finnish-Americans are using more and more terms from their American peer group and fewer Finnish terms used by the older Finnish generation. Sauna probably won't change for quite a while, if ever, because both Finnish-American families and families of non-Finnish backgrounds have adopted the term as a label for the steam bath--which itself is a popular activity for Trenarians in general.

The percentage of changing vocabulary terms does not include relics, which are words preserved in a dialect after a new term has taken its place. Also excluded from the number of terms changing were unique responses or those given by only a single informant. Limited sample size did not allow me to put these unique responses in the context of the local dialect, because I had no conclusive evidence as to their origins. I have categorized certain unique responses of elderly informants as relic terms, because of my general knowledge of their distribution among the population from which I drew my sample. If I had counted the relics and the unique responses, 119, or 43%, of the items were in a state of change.

Some of the relics are: lumberjack matches for matches that will strike any surface, forenoon for morning, and pump for water fountain. The unique items include bringed up for raised, supply pastor for lay minister, and cobbler cheése for cottage cheese. Some of the items were unfamiliar to the younger informants because they were no longer in contact with such things as whetstones or hones, midwives, salt pork, sugar bush, or coal scuttles, due to social-technical change.

There are several terms used by the informants because of the size of the community. Fire hydrants do not exist in Trenary, so this is probably a literary word. Since there is only one type of store in town, very few informants use anything other than just store, unless they are asked for a distinction among different types of stores. Then they say grocery store, etc. There is one novelty store, but it is most often called Harris' Store or the Corner Store. In fact, many of the businesses are so closely identified with the owner that they are referred to by the owner's name. The following examples were not included in my study. They are only my own observations. The bars in town are a good example. One is called the Silver Dollar, yet more people call it Steve and Theresa's or Malnars', because that is the name of the owners. Another is called the Trenary Tavern, yet it is more often called Norbert's, Norbert and Kate's, or Webers'.

Changes in Categories and Syntax

From the data on the categories of adjectives, pronouns, and articles, I think there is a trend toward the increasing usage of generally known terms and away from the local or regional terms. For example, in the adjective category, which is experiencing the most rapid change, there is a decrease in the usage of poisoned or poison and an increase of poisonous in the context of "The berries are _____."

There were very few examples of items in the process of change in the adverb category. The best example was Item #240, "You can find these almost _____." Something like anywhere, anywheres, and anyplace are the answers given throughout the U.S. Some of my elderly informants gave: "You can find these most anywhere." The data suggest the disappearance of most and the addition of almost, a more widespread form.

Within the agreement category--containing verb conjugations, plural formations, and number agreement between subject and verb--the most rapid change is with the verb conjugations and plural formations. I believe the most important reason for the change in this category is the increase of formal education. An example of the change is from "I have began to sew" to "I have begun to sew."

GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES IN THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

| Category | Number of Items Changed | Number of Items In Category | Per Cent Changing |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| adjective | 5 | 8 | 62.5 % |
| verb conjugation | 26 | 45 | 57.7 % |
| plural formation | 6 | 12 | 50 % |
| preposition | 10 | 20 | 50 % |
| pronouns | 1 | 8 | 12.5 % |
| articles | 1 | 5 | 20 % |
| adverbs | 1 | 8 | 12.5 % |
| conjunctions | 0 | 4 | 0 % |
| matters of agreement | 0 | 1 | 0 % |

The most interesting item in the area of syntax was the one asking the informant how he would invite a member of his family to go with him to the Finnish sauna. Those without any Finnish background responded, "Let's go take a sauna," or "Let's go to the sauna." But those with Finnish backgrounds, even the second generation Finnish-Americans, responded, "Let's go sauna." Notice that the preposition "to (the)" is absent from the Finnish-American sentence. In the Finnish language, locatives are expressed by suffixes, and not by individual words as we know them in English. I believe that the Finnish immigrants, when switching from Finnish to English, continued to leave out individual prepositions in some cases. The extent of this omission cannot be inferred from my data, but would require a more specialized sample, i.e., from the Finnish-American community alone.

Changes in Pronunciation

The sound change study, as I said before, consisted of three reading passages containing fifty-seven items. Four of the items were duplicated in the passages to indicate possible variations which sometimes appear in an individual's speech. Two examples were /ɔr/ and /ar/ in sorry, and /r/ and /u/ in roots. Of the 55 items remaining, I found that eleven, or 20.7%, were in the process of sound change. The most notable changes were /I/ to /i/ in creek, /ɔr/ to /ar/ in sorry, and /ɔ/ to /a/ in caught. Dr. Raven McDavid also noted in his study of the Atlantic states, that /a/ and /ɔ/ have several variants--such as /ɔ/, /ɒ/, /d/, and /a/--among informants in a certain geographical area and also within one informant's response. (Hans Kurath and Raven I. McDavid, The Pronunciation of English in the Atlantic States. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1961, p. 14.)

I would like to point out that part of my study was designed to show that the /a/ is very prominent in the speech of this region. Certain words were picked because of the possibility of a variation that might exist between /ɔ/ and /a/. The /a/ vowel appears not only in words in which it might be expected, such as caller, collar, Don, hocked, and park, but most importantly, it appears in many words which are generally placed in the /ɔ/ category, especially by native West Michiganders. These include dawn, caught, fog, hawk, hog, logs, dog, paw, washed, wasp, and water. (See chart, "Phonological Items," p. 10.)

Dr. Hendriksen, Associate Professor of Linguistics at W.M.U., believes that I use /b/ in words such as bought, bot, caught, cot, sought, sot,

taught, and tot. This is a very low-back vowel with lips unrounded and the back of the tongue flat. I would say that there is a great possibility that my informants also use this vowel /ɒ/. Unfortunately, I was not aware of the /ɒ/ when I did my study. Hans Kurath and Raven McDavid suggest that the /ɔ/ and the /a/ have been merged together to form the phoneme /ɒ/. The /ɒ/ also occurs in New England and Western Pennsylvania. (Kurath, Ibid.) This is a good observation, yet it lacks explanation. In Trenary I suggest that it may be due to the Finnish influence, although a valid criticism of this hypothesis is that such a change is a widespread phenomenon. I would point out, however, that in Finnish, low-back vowels are very common, and I believe that they could have been transferred to English as the Finnish immigrants learned English. The Finnish influence on the /ɒ/ vowel was passed down to succeeding generations, and they have influenced the non-Finnish-American children who now use it too.

Comparison of Results with Davis' Study

After I finished analyzing my data, I compared my results with studies by three other dialectologists. The first one was that of Alva L. Davis. Dr. Davis completed a study of the dialect of the Great Lakes Region in 1948 for his doctoral thesis at the University of Michigan. His study contained only vocabulary. His aim was two-part: 1) to gather clear evidence of the dialect of the area, 2) to test the "mail questionnaire," which he had devised, against data gathered by fieldworkers. He had one group of responses gathered by fieldworkers who carried out one-to-one, question-and-response sessions. He also mailed questionnaires to other informants who later sent back their responses. He was very satisfied with his "mail questionnaire," because the results were quite close to the fieldworkers' results. He realized that the mailed questionnaire would not be as good as the fieldworkers' first hand interviews, but he felt that because it was fairly accurate, it would be an inexpensive and fast method of dialect study.

Fifty-seven vocabulary items of the one hundred items in Davis' study were also used in my study. Thirty-two, or 56%, agree with the conclusions that Davis and his fieldworkers made. Thirty-eight, or 67%, agree with the conclusions that Davis' questionnaire established. The "mail questionnaire" and my study seem to correspond more than his fieldworkers' study and mine.

COMPARISON WITH DAVIS' STUDY

| Terms Agreed On | Terms Not Agreed On | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| | Davis' Responses | Robinson's Responses | |
| afternoon | poison ivy | wood shed | shed or storeroom |
| sunrise | teeter-totter | coal bucket | bucket |
| sunset | raised (children) | comfort | quilt |
| mantel | midwife | wishbone | wishbone and breastbone |
| window shades | baby buggy | light bread | homemade or store bread |
| attic | rock | clabber milk | buttermilk or vilja |
| faucet | thunderstorm | cling peach | peach |
| bedspread | porch | hull (gr. of walnut) | (no response, unfamiliar) |
| head cheese | (wood) shed | sweet corn | corn-on-the-cob |
| sauce | snack & lunch | maple grove | sugar bush |
| shell (walnut) | garden | sick at his stomach | sick to & in his stomach |
| lightning bug | shell (peas) | cherry seed | cherry pit |
| spider('s) web | relatives | peach seed | peach (stone & pit) |

There are two very good reasons why Dr. Davis and I don't agree on more individual items than indicated by the percentages. The first reason is the difference between the dates of his study (1948) and mine (1970). They are a generation apart. Davis also makes the statement that the "native element of the population in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan has always been yankee." (Davis, Ibid.) In the case of Trenary, this isn't true. Men and women from Indiana came at the same time as those from Canada. Davis, of course, wasn't examining each small hamlet for his study but wanted generalized conclusions about the Great Lakes area. He does say that his investigation "provides... a framework as a preliminary to further research on narrower regional or specifically local problems." (Davis, Ibid.) I have tried to do just this.

Comparison with Underwood's Study

Gary Underwood's study of the "Vocabulary Change in the Upper Midwest" (Publication of the American Dialect Society, No. 49, April 1968. University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1968.) was the second survey that I compared to my study. He was concerned with vocabulary--not only its distribution, but also the changes and the amount of change that was going on in the Midwest.

COMPARISON WITH UNDERWOOD'S STUDY

| Terms Agreed On | Terms Not Agreed On | |
|--|--|---|
| <u>Decreasing</u> | <u>Increasing in Robinson's Responses;</u> <u>Decreasing in Underwood's Responses</u> | <u>Stable in Robinson;</u> <u>Decreasing or Increasing</u> <u>In Underwood</u> |
| off of (the bus) kettle angleworm peach stone stone lunch creep spread crawfish mouth organ | in the stomach (sick) shell spider ('s) web (outdoors) string beans lightning bug | head cheese ways (long or short) play hookey (tied) quilt armful matches tool shed garden ditch baby buggy thunderstorm |
| <u>Increasing</u> dragon fly country hick belly flop sunrise sunset rock coal bucket gutters sour milk bread cottage cheese living room bacon | <u>Decreasing in Robinson's Responses;</u> <u>Increasing in Underwood's Responses</u> slick electrical storm cobweb (outside) seven forty-five sauce stubborn drouth green onions | Mom rubberband teeter-totter dish towel muskmelon he is <u>at</u> home mantel blacktop as far as anywhere Dad |

In comparing my study to Underwood's, I used only the 76 items he found in a state of change, either what he terms "increasing" or "decreasing." Increasing means "used more frequently by younger, better educated speakers"; and decreasing means "used less frequently by younger, better educated speakers." To Underwood's 76 items, I compared the 76 identical items in my study. Eighteen, or 24%, of the responses which Underwood received were either not given as answers in my study, or there weren't any clear indications of change among my informants. Twenty-two, or 29%, were definitely stable, as contrasted to his findings of change for these items. Twenty-three, or 30%, of his items agreed with the type of change indicated in my study. Thirteen, or 17%, of my items were changing in the opposite direction of Underwood's findings; i.e., some of my thirteen items were either increasing in usage while his were decreasing in usage, or were decreasing in usage while his were increasing.

Perhaps the biggest reason why Underwood and I agree on only 30% of the items is that his study was on the Midwest, whereas mine was centered on a small town in the Northern Great Lakes Region. Underwood only recorded those items he found changing. Therefore a comparison of the percentages of changing and stable items in our studies is impossible.

Comparison with Kurath's Word Geography

The third and last comparison was made with Hans Kurath's Word Geography of the Eastern United States. (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1967) This is the largest dialect study in the United States, directed by Kurath from 1931 to 1949. Many studies, including Davis's, Underwood's, and my own, were carried out along the lines of Kurath's dialect study.

Kurath concluded that the eastern United States was separated into three major dialect areas by dialect boundaries called isoglosses: the Northern, the Midland, and the Southern. From this study, he could demonstrate to which area an item belonged according to its greatest frequency.

My study contained 65 vocabulary items in common with his study. The following percentages and numbers represent a division of the 65 shared items found in my study into Kurath's dialect areas. I have categorized my shared 65 items either Northern, Midland, or "uncategorized," using the most frequent response given by my seventeen informants as representative of the specific item. I have then placed this representative response according to Kurath's findings.

Thirty, or 49%, of my 65 items were Northern. Two, or 7%, were not clearly Northern, in that the responses given by my informants shared about the same frequency, falling into three categories--Northern, Midland, or uncategorized. Thirteen items, or 19%, were Midland items, and the responses to one, or 2%, of the items placed it either Northern or Midland. Fourteen items, or 21%, were neither Northern or Midland. They were not categorized by Kurath. Three, or 4%, of the items were given by Kurath as both Northern and Midland terms, meaning no distinction between areas.

Most of the terms within each category were stable. The Northern and Midland areas have the greatest amount of change in progress, though I don't think the amount is especially high. The total percentage of change for the combined areas is only 11.3%.

From this comparison we can see that Trenary would be placed in the Northern area, just as it is located geographically. The relatively high percentage of Midland terms can be explained by the Indiana settlers in this region. I think that one of the most interesting things about the results is the high percentage of terms that are neither Northern nor Midland. Perhaps the best explanation for this is the growing use of what Kurath calls "urban terms," or terms found throughout the whole U.S. and not unique to one area.

Kurath and his associates also did a phonological analysis. Our studies shared 25 items. Twenty-one, or 84%, were Northern, and 4, or 16%, were Midland. According to Kurath's division, my data is overwhelmingly Northern.

PHONOLOGICAL ITEMS--CHANGING

| From Northern to Midland | From Midland to Northern | Neither to Northern nor Midland |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| /r/ → /u/ <u>roof</u> | /I/ → /i/ <u>creek</u> | /ɔ/ → /a/ <u>cot, caught</u> / / → /p/ <u>pumpkin</u> /r/ → /u/ <u>root</u> /əu/ → /u/ <u>route</u> /ɔr/ → /ar/ <u>sorry</u> |

PHONOLOGICAL ITEMS--STABLE

| Northern | Midland | Uncategorized |
|--|---|---|
| /a/ <u>dog</u> <u>washed</u> <u>fog</u> <u>wasp</u> <u>hog</u> <u>water</u> <u>logs</u> | /u/ <u>sooty</u> /ɔr/ <u>horse</u> <u>mourned</u> | /a/ <u>caller</u> <u>hawk</u> <u>collar</u> <u>hocked</u> <u>college</u> <u>paw</u> <u>dawn</u> <u>swallow</u> <u>Don</u> |
| /u/ <u>coop</u> | | /ə/ <u>aunt</u> <u>radish</u> |
| /s/ <u>greasy</u> | | /I/ <u>diplomas</u> |
| /ar/ <u>borrow</u> | | /I/ <u>hungry</u> |
| /ɔr/ <u>forty</u> <u>war</u> | | /ə/ <u>Escanaba</u> |
| <u>fourteen</u> <u>warm</u> | | /s/ <u>peninsula</u> |
| <u>morning</u> <u>wharf</u> | | /ɔr/ <u>door</u> <u>sore</u> |
| <u>orange</u> | | <u>orange</u> |
| /ɛr/ <u>marry</u> | | /ar/ <u>park</u> |
| <u>merry</u> | | /nɪ/ <u>mangy</u> |
| <u>Mary</u> | | |

It is interesting to note the changes in the Northern and Midland sound items. In the Northern items, 90% are stable, 5% are decreasing in favor of Midland pronunciation, and 5% are questionable. In the Midland phonological items, although they are only a small percentage, 75% of the items are stable, and 25% are being replaced by Northern pronunciations.

Conclusions

Language is always in a state of change. It is probable, therefore, that the 34% vocabulary change I found in my study is not unusually high. What is interesting are the causes for change. The most important factor is the settlement history of Trenary. Canadians, Indianians, Finns, and now urbanites have all changed the dialect by lending it their own special features.

A cause of change that may possibly be correlated with urban migration is the mass communication system of radio, television, newspapers, and magazines. This mass media factor brings a common store of expressions and forms to both Detroit and Trenary. Combined with a trend toward standardized formal education and more years of schooling, the media expose the rural community to national terms. One might say that the media are creating a national dialect.

The interaction among children whose parents come from different socio-ethnic backgrounds also causes change. This was best illustrated in my study by the influence of the non-Finnish peer group on the young Finnish-American informants.

It is also important to note social and technological change as a factor influencing vocabulary change. Rural children today are unfamiliar in many cases with objects of widespread use in the past. As the era of home-canning and coal-burning furnaces falls behind and the era of "consumerism" advances in rural Northern Michigan, so too, the accompanying vocabulary is altered.

Yet Trenary has retained some small-town atmosphere because of its relatively small growth rate, which enables it to absorb new residents and social change without all-out change. An illustration is the very personal identification between businesses and their owners: We call the supermarket Finland's, after the owner's name, and not the Red Owl, which is the chain-store name.

Trenarians today are gradually losing the distinctive Indiana, Canadian, and Finnish items in their vocabulary. The community is taking on what Kurath calls "urban terms," or terms found in urban areas throughout the United States. (Kurath, Ibid.)

Limitations of the Study

There were a number of limitations in my study which I will mention briefly:

1) the phonological survey was very restricted and did not provide exhaustive coverage of vowels and consonants. A more complete survey could provide such coverage.

2) the sociological relationship between the ethnic communities in question was evaluated more on the basis of my personal experience than on a formal analysis. A more complete investigation of the relationship between non-Finnish and Finnish-American youngsters would be interesting, as well as an investigation of influences between generations in the Finnish-American community.

3) A more complete analysis of the Finno-Americans' English grammar would be necessary before I could draw any strong conclusions regarding the omission of prepositions and the conditions under which prepositions are omitted.

4) Unique responses by informants in my study could not be adequately dealt with because of the lack of a general Upper Peninsula survey with which to evaluate such items. Even a two- or three-county survey would have provided me with a certain degree of confidence to treat unique responses as local or individual idiosyncracies or as less frequently found regional characteristics.

5) Last, but not least, historical research into the locality's past, in terms of technology and culture, might provide many interesting relations between general social change and dialect change in Trenary.

* * * * *

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Western Michigan University is deeply honored to have been chosen to host the Annual Meeting of the Michigan Linguistic Society this fall. The meeting will take place on Friday, October 5, 1973 in the West Ballroom of the University Student Center. Both faculty and students in the linguistically-related departments are invited to attend. For further information call or visit the Department of Linguistics, 410 Sprau Tower, phone (38)-30958 or -30064.

FALL ENROLLMENT

The Department of Linguistics is delighted to announce that the enrollment for Fall 1973 exceeds that for Fall 1972 by 42% and marks an increase of 69% over last Winter's enrollment. Broken down into General Linguistics and Critical Languages, the General Linguistics courses enrolled 28% more students than last Fall, while the Critical Languages courses increased by 74%. The largest General Linguistics class is the new "Nature of Language" offering; the largest Critical Language class is again Swahili. Enrollment records were set in both the General Linguistics and Critical Language areas.

1973 GRADUATES

April Commencement:

Wally Biber (former student), B.S.; Diane Bugis (Minor), B.A.; Lynn Daugherty (Minor), B.A., cum laude; Candy Hines (Minor), B.A., April 1972 (our apologies); Gary King (Minor), B.A.; Kay Liddicoat (Minor), B.A.; Chris Pabreza (Minor), B.S.; Karin Sandberg (Minor), B.A.; Betsy Trenter (Minor), B.A.; Anne Ware (Minor), B.A.; Jean Waybrant (Major), B.S.; John Zellers (Major), B.A., summa cum laude.

August Commencement--Undergraduates:

Debbie Braunschweig (Minor), B.A.; Howard Goldsmith (Minor), B.S., magna cum laude; Ron Haskell (Major), B.A., commissioned as 2nd Lt., U.S. Army; JoAnn Kinner (Minor), B.A., magna cum laude; Kathy Misiak (Minor), B.S.; Ron Ochala (Minor), B.A.; Wayne Vanderwier (Minor), B.S., magna cum laude. Honors College graduate; Sally Vaughn (Major), B.A., magna cum laude.

August Commencement--Graduates and Friends

Carolyn Dlouhy (wife of Robert) received an M.S. in Librarianship, with honors; Suzanne Durk (former student) received the Prix du Gouvernement de France, par le Conseiller Culturel, and took her B.A. summa cum laude; Susan Holaday (former Minor) received an M.A. in the Teaching of Reading; Betty Muthiani (wife of Joseph N.) received an M.A. in Teaching in the Community College; Karen Rhodes (former student) received an M.A. in Area Studies and Teaching in the Community College; Donald E. Thompson (on whose committee Dr. Hendriksen served) received an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership--"An In-Service Program Designed to Change Elementary Teacher Attitudes Toward Black Dialect"; Patrick Welch (former Minor) received an M.A. in the Teaching of Reading.

FACULTY REDUCTION--THE HARD WAY

The faculty reduction really hit home last March 27 when the three full-time members of the Linguistics Department--Drs. Dwarikesh, Hendriksen, and Palmatier--were almost run down by a Volkswagen while returning from lunch at the Student Center. A member of another Department, who witnessed the near-accident, remarked that she could picture the headlines in tomorrow's newspaper: "Linguistics Department Run Over by Small Foreign Car." To make matters worse, the Chairman was almost certain that he saw an administrator at the wheel of the bug; but the curtains were drawn, so he couldn't be sure. Ever since that incident, as a precautionary measure, the instructors have been going to the Student Center by different routes--and taking separate elevators in the Tower. You never know when faculty reduction might strike again!

NEW GRADUATE PROGRAM

The Department of Linguistics has renewed its participation in the Master of Arts degree in Teaching in the Community College. This means that a graduate student can major in Linguistics in the MA-TCC program, provided that he has an undergraduate degree in some other field. No fellowships or assistantships are available yet, but five students are already in the program, three are part way in, three more are expected in January, and two others are expected next Fall. According to the reference book, University Resources in the United States and Canada for the Study of Linguistics (1972), Western Michigan University is the only college in North America to offer such a program. Interested students should contact the Chairman, Department of Linguistics, 410 Sprau Tower, phone 38-30064.

A MATCHING TEST

Linda Czuhajewski (Ling. minor) has sent us the following mismatches from a vocabulary test that she gave to the high school English class she is student-teaching. Your job is to replace the students' choice, linguist, with a more appropriate name for a person who practices the particular occupation.

_____ "Playing the role of linguist at the fair, John had all the girls excited about their futures." [John must be a major/minor advisor.]

_____ "A linguist is often depicted in a cartoon sitting in a backyard gazing through his field glasses into the treetops." [He's looking for nested embeddings.]

_____ "The true linguist will often display his collection in bank lobbies, an appropriate place." [It's just their vaulting ambition.]

_____ "The linguists, fishing tackle in their cars, are starting out for a day of pure enjoyment." [Don't forget the angle brackets!]

_____ "Mrs. Pryor is a typical linguist, going to see every art exhibit, and talking about the paintings, even though she does not understand them." [She's admiring the test frames.]

_____ "People who have good imagination and little regard for the truth often make the best linguists." [What's wrong with that?]

MAJORS AND MINORS

The Department welcomes the following new majors and minors who have chosen a Linguistics program since the last issue of The Informant (March 1973):

New Majors

Jouni Alatervo
Michael Fransted
Keiko Kamata
Masaaki Okuno
John Paxson
James Penrose III
Neeli Wimalasini

New Minors

Sarolta Ficsor
Phyllis Hoffecker
Jolene Jackson
Beverly Mikalonis
Leo Mundt
Diane Rickert
Diane Swanson
Margaret Teutsch

THE WAGES OF SYNTAX

Section 3.031. Tenses

"The present tense includes the past and future tenses; and the future, the present."

Section 3.032. Number; Gender

"The singular shall include the plural and the plural shall include the singular; the masculine shall include the feminine and neuter, as requisite."

Section 3.033. "Shall" and "May"

"'Shall' and 'may' means shall is mandatory and may is permissive."

[The Editor shall offer a prize to the first person who may identify the local source of the preceding quotes. For the purposes of the contest, however, the first person shall include the second person and the third person; the third, the second; and the second, the first, as requisite. First prize is a copy of the Editor's latest book; second prize is two copies.]

LINGUISTICS AND READING

"Better teacher training likewise results in greater knowledge of literature and linguistics, two vital ingredients in any successful program for teaching children to read. Without a teacher's familiarity with good literature, a child's tastes, interests and attitudes toward reading can be thwarted for his lifetime. And unless the teacher has a command of the fundamentals of word and language structure which comes from a working knowledge of linguistics, the reader's word and language repertoire also may be limited for life. Therefore, diagnostic skill, creative use of materials, linguistic competence, and knowledge of the sources and uses of good literature are areas due for stronger emphasis in the preparation of a reading teacher."

[Quoted from Dr. Myron L. Coulter, "Reading: A Year for a Lifetime," pp. 12-15, WMU University Magazine, Vol. 31, No. 4, Summer 1973. Italics ours. Dr. Coulter is Vice President for Institutional Services at WMU.]

WE BEG TO DIFFER

"College Offers Arabic Tongue"

"Memphis, May 12 [AP]--Darlene May, a young assistant teacher on the Southwestern faculty, teaches a rather unusual language to her 14 students. It's Arabic.

"'The world is so small now that the political and sociological happenings in the Arabic-speaking countries have more meaning for us,' said Miss May, who has studied classical Arabic and colloquial Egyptian Arabic in Cairo with a government grant.

"Portland (Ore.) State College is believed to be the only other college in the nation offering the language at the undergraduate level. Southwestern plans to open a center for Arabic studies soon at the University of Beirut, Lebanon."

[Quoted from the Chicago Tribune, Sunday, May 13, 1973.]

[Aside from wondering what is so unusual about the Arabic language, we beg to differ on the claim that Southwestern and Portland are the only U.S. colleges offering Arabic to undergraduates. The truth is that Western's Linguistics Department has offered Arabic to undergraduates for the past three years, and our teacher, Mr. Samir F. Homsí, reports good enrollments for Fall 1973. Let's set the record straight!]

FACULTY-STUDENT NOTES

Linguistics Department Faculty

Dr. D.P.S. Dwarikesh, newly promoted to Associate Professor, will deliver a paper at the third session of the Michigan Linguistic Society meeting at Western on October 5. The title: "Indispensability of Socio-Cultural Factors in Hindi Pronominal Usage." Dr. Dwarikesh also appeared on television last March with President Miller, Dr. John Sommerfeldt, and Mr. Dean Tyndall to describe the various activities of the Linguistics Department.

Dr. Daniel P. Hendriksen, Associate Professor of Linguistics, will also read a paper at the October 5 meeting of the Michigan Linguistic Society. His title: "Reshaping Inquiry into the Perception of Sounds: A Lab to Life Comparison of Contextual Constraints." Dr. Hendriksen was associate moderator of one of the sections of the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs Convention in Detroit last May.

Mr. Joseph N. Muthiani, newly reappointed as full-time Instructor of Linguistics, submitted a paper for discussion at the Ninth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Chicago in August: "Language Choice in Kenya: The Case of Grassroot Languages, Swahili, and English." The periodical Lugha, in Nairobi, Kenya, has asked permission to publish the paper in its November issue.

Faculty in Other Departments

Dr. Jean Malmstrom and Dr. Constance Weaver of the English Department are the authors of a new college textbook, Transgrammar: English Structure, Style, and Dialects, Scott, Foresman (1973).

Dr. Arthur Falk of the Philosophy Department was awarded a Faculty Research Fellowship in 1973 for a project entitled "The Implications of Generative Semantics for Linguistic Rationalism."

Mr. John Willis of the Anthropology Department will offer Anthro. 370, Language in Culture, in the Winter semester: Tuesday-Thursday, 1:00 to 2:15 p.m., 0112 Moore Hall.

Students and Alumni

Mr. Peter Greenquist (Alumni Major) directed the prize-winning one-act play, "Prisoner of War," by Crary Elwood, at the Conference on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University last April 30.

Miss Janine French (Minor) will present a paper entitled "The Language of Commercials" at the Fall reception for Linguistics students and faculty, 3 o'clock, Wednesday, October 17, Faculty Lounge of the Student Center.

Mr. Robert Dlouhy (Graduate Major) has introduced a symbol for syllable, \$, which makes it much easier to describe such things as stress placement in Swahili: \$→\$/X--{?}#. ("A syllable is stressed when it occurs before another syllable, or is lengthened, before a word boundary.")