

THE QUESTION OF LANGUAGE, DIALECT, IDIOLECT, AND STYLE IN QUEENSLAND ENGLISH

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0.0 Descriptive statements concerning the patterns of variation of spoken English in Queensland are stated and discussed in terms of the linguistic theory of M.A.K. Halliday. Descriptive and analytical procedures are outlined, and pertinent literature briefly discussed.

1.0 The aim of this paper is to state and discuss, in relation to the theoretical background and methods employed, some of the general conclusions which are emerging from the analysis now in progress of the English language data collected between 1960 and 1965 under the Queensland Speech Survey. The detailed descriptive basis of these conclusions will be shown in later publications.

2.0 The terms language, dialect, idiolect, and style are used by linguists to describe the nature and interrelationship of phenomena of linguistic variation. It is generally agreed that a dialect is the form of a language used by a geographical or social sub-section of speakers of a language; an idiolect is the form of language used by each individual speaker; while language is held to be a more general term including a wider range of variations than a dialect. The term *style* describes linguistic differences determined by the purpose for which language is used in a communicative situation. The stylistic scale intersects that of idiolect, dialect, and language.

2.1.1 Linguists find these terms easier to define in words than to apply to the description of forms of speech which are demonstrably related in phonology, grammar, and lexis, but are not mutually intelligible. Where does *dialect* end and *language* begin? Again, if difference of language situation produces stylistic differences sufficient to impair intelligibility for speakers of the same language, is it more correct to call these differences of dialect, or even of language rather than of style? Where does *idiolect* end and *dialect* begin? What is the relation between idiolectal and stylistic variation?

2.1.2 Further problems arise with bilingual or multilingual speakers. How are the modifications of the forms of a language which result from the influence of another language possessed by the same speaker to be designated? How far are these subject to stylistic variation?

The answer to all these questions is best sought by describing the kinds of variation which occur in a wide range of data, and relating them to the accompanying conditions. Queensland offers excellent opportunities for the collection of such data.

2.2.0 S.A. Wurm and D.C. Laycock (1960), faced with the problem of distinguishing between languages and dialects in New Guinea, proposed a working solution.¹

2.2.1 Starting from the premise that a language has "the social function of carrying information from speaker to hearer", they found Swadesh's criterion for distinguishing between language and dialect unsatisfactory. Swadesh had suggested that forms of speech sharing 81% or more basic vocabulary cognates should be regarded as dialects of the same language, whereas forms of speech sharing less than 81% should be regarded as distinct languages.

2.2.2 Wurm and Laycock found, from wide observations of New Guinea languages, that this percentage figure corresponded "to the reality of the borderline between mutual intelligibility and unintelligibility only in rare instances". Mutual intelligibility seemed "only little impaired, or not impaired at all, in cases in which the percentage of basic vocabulary cognates shared by two forms of speech was up to 10% less than 81%.

2.2.3 To distinguish between language and dialect, Wurm and Laycock established a criterion of mutual intelligibility - "the degree and the extent of the practicability of exchange of information between speakers of differing forms of speech in New Guinea, as arrived at largely by the *ask the informant* method, and to some extent by the *test the informant* method", of Voegelin and Harris.

A scale was devised to assist in describing the relationship between cognate forms of speech in this way. The boundary of language could be drawn at approximately 50% of information transfer. A 40%-60% transfer constitutes the *sub-language* range intermediate between language and dialect. The boundary of dialect is presumably set at 75%, between the *limited* (60%-75%) and *fair* (75%-90%) ranges of intelligibility.

2.2.4 This criterion is extremely useful, not (as the authors themselves indicate) because all linguists will agree on these figures, but because it provides a practical basis for descriptive procedure and has also a sound theoretical basis. The linguist works from the communicative function of language in context to a study of the formal means of communication. By making descriptive statements based on observation of ranges of variation, he recognizes an essential principle - that of linguistic variation. The following discussion will show how the foregoing procedures agree with modern linguistic theory; and will also furnish the underlying framework for the statement and discussion of the methods and results which follow.

2.3.0 Modern linguists are no longer content merely with accurate observation of linguistic data. Thus Chomsky (1964) insists that linguistic description, to be successful, must be associated with linguistic theory, and must have observational, descriptive, and explanatory adequacy.²

2.3.1 Halliday ("Categories of the Theory of Grammar", 1961) has likewise insisted that "different types of description are bodies of method which derive from, and are answerable to", the theory.³ In this and following articles he has outlined descriptive procedures within an associated theoretical framework which have the threefold adequacy required by Chomsky, and are also comprehensive. The theory provides for contextual as well as formal description, and also for the problem of linguistic variation.

2.3.2 Linguistic events are described in terms of three primary levels of substance (the material of the language, phonic or graphic); form (with two related levels, grammar and lexis); and context.

Form is the organization of the substance into meaningful events. Context is the relation of form to *extratextual features* - non-linguistic features of the situations in which language operates, and linguistic features other than those of the item under attention. Context is thus really an *interlevel*. A linguistic item has both *formal meaning* (its operation in the network of formal relations), and *contextual meaning* (its relation to extratextual features, but through its place in linguistic form). Contextual meaning is logically dependent on formal meaning, and the statement of formal meaning therefore precedes the statement of contextual meaning.

2.3.3 Halliday recognizes four fundamental inter-related categories for the theory of grammar to account for all grammatical patterns that emerge by generalization from language data; unit, structure, class, and system. Halliday calls one of the scales by which the relation between these categories may be described a *cline* - a "continuum carrying potentially infinite gradation", as distinguished from a number of discrete related terms.

2.3.4 So Halliday begins "The Tones of English" (1963) by saying: "Descriptive statements in linguistics are best regarded as having *more/less* validity, *yes/no* being merely a special case of *more/less*" (p.2.). Halliday presents English intonation contrasts in relation to grammar as systems of discrete terms. However he finishes by saying that this discreteness is sometimes arrived at by an "arbitrary cutting of the continuum" (p.28.); and emphasizes the need to extend the theory of grammar to include systems which are not made up of discrete terms, but rather form a *cline*.

2.3.5 Halliday recognizes the essential inter-relationship of all aspects of linguistic description by taking account of the relationship between intonation and grammar. This study is carried further in "Intonation in English Grammar" (1963). Halliday states there that the grammar of spoken English cannot be fully described without reference to contrasts expounded by intonation; "many important distinctions are made in this way, including some on which others not themselves intonational can be shown to depend" (p.169.).

Elsewhere he discusses lexis in terms of theoretical categories of collocation and set, and stresses that *formal* statements in lexis require the study of collocations in very large samples of text.⁴ Lexical items are those least likely to recur very frequently in a given sample.

From this it may be deduced that lexis provides evidence for the study of linguistic variation less readily than will phonology and grammar: phonological items are of most frequent occurrence in a given text, followed by grammatical items. Conclusions founded on lexical evidence only may therefore be misleading, unless phonological and grammatical evidence is also considered.

2.3.7 This applies to the description of literary styles as well as to the description of dialects. Winter (1964) even suggests that "styles can be considered as special types of social dialects". Grammatical phenomena are a useful basis for stylistic description because they are of sufficient generality to assure recurrence in selected data.⁵

2.4.0 A.G. Mitchell (1961) outlines preliminary conclusions emerging from the first comprehensive descriptive study of spoken English made in Australia.⁶ These conclusions elucidate certain phenomena of speech variation.

2.4.1 Mitchell insists that the description of Australian English must begin with the study of samples of the language in actual functional use, not with an arbitrary conception of what it ought to be. Australian English exhibits "a complicated variety of speech habits". To describe the general characteristics of Australian English, idiolectal variations such as the difference in quality between men's and women's voices must be ignored, and regular variations in the phonological system, covering large groups in the speech community, must be sought. Patterns of sameness, as well as of difference, must be observed.

2.4.2 Mitchell distinguishes three varieties of Australian English, which he considers sufficient to account for the pattern of speech variation in his extensive material.

These varieties are not discrete and unrelated, but shade into one another. At one end of the continuum is Cultivated Australian, which differs little phonemically from educated Southern English. At the other end is Broad Australian, and in between is General Australian, the speech of the overwhelming majority of informants recorded.

2.4.3 The Australian English in the recorded material, while showing gradations in a general pattern, was notable for its uniformity by comparison with British and American English, which exhibit sharp regional and social differences. This uniformity is not without social and educational advantages. It is explained by the facts of early Australian social history - the mobility of the population, and the absorption of immigrant elements.

2.4.4 Mitchell forecast that the collection of further detailed evidence of the synchronic patterns of speech variation in Australia might reveal "pockets of distinctive usage", possibly in isolated communities, or where social divisions exist.

2.5.0 Since 1961 detailed work under the Queensland Speech Survey has confirmed Mitchell's forecast that pockets of distinctive usage might be found in Queensland in areas of geographical or social isolation. At the same time it has confirmed the belief that the Australian English spoken by the majority of the population is comparatively uniform.

2.5.1 Communities or areas of distinctive usage have been found in the Cape York Peninsula and Gulf regions; in Aboriginal communities further south; less certainly in areas of original German and Italian settlement distributed throughout the State; and of course among migrants.

2.5.2 A particularly interesting area of language contact has been surveyed by T.E. Dutton in the Torres Strait Islands and on the tip of Cape York Peninsula. Here Australian and Aboriginal English meets two vernaculars, and also a contact vernacular. The latter may have some links with the speech of the remnants of the Kanaka population, which has also been recorded in the Survey.

The contact vernacular is not identical with Melanesian Pidgin. The existence of such an area may be more significant than its isolation suggests: evidence exists of movement among detribalised Aborigines, here and elsewhere in Queensland; and a trend of movement by them towards the cities appears to have begun.

2.5.3 Coincident with the main Survey programme, smaller projects have been undertaken using special sampling techniques. The influence of speech and drama training upon the informal conversational style of a speech community has been investigated. Supplementary evidence bearing on this subject has been collected throughout the State. Studies of migrant English and of the phonemics of Queensland English have also been made.

2.5.4 A subsidiary aim of the Queensland Speech Survey is to test and evaluate current linguistic theories by applying them to a wide range of data, and thereby (if possible) to contribute to theoretical progress. Other theoretical approaches than the one above outlined have been used in the processing of the data.

2.6.1 For the study of the English of bilingual informants, precise linguistic knowledge of the second language spoken by them (its identity, dialectal variety, and structure) is required. The research studies in Aboriginal languages published by A. Capell, S.A. Wurm, T.G.H. Strehlow and others have been helpful here;⁷ and the results of research in Aboriginal vernaculars under the A.I.A.S. programme, and of that recently initiated in Queensland German, are eagerly awaited.

2.6.2 The observations of Weinreich, Mackey, Wilson, Reed, Hall, and many others have furnished valuable guidance concerning the influence upon the English of bilingual informants of another European language.⁸

2.7.0 The studies of Reinecke, De Camp, Quirk, and Whinnom have supplied suggestions of method or comparative data for the study of varieties of English which develop under special social conditions in a language contact situation.⁹

2.7.1 Reinecke asserted in his dissertation (1937) that there are links between Melanesian Pidgin and Aboriginal English, through trade relations between Australia and Melanesia, and through the introduction of Kanakas to work on sugar plantations in Queensland. This subject is now being investigated (see above, 2.5.2).

Reinecke in his article (1938) reports variations in Haitian French in a social language situation resembling that existing in some Aboriginal communities in Queensland.

2.7.2 De Camp (1961) discovered evidence, in the English of Jamaica, of a linguistic continuum which can be phonologically, grammatically, and lexically described. This is not only a continuum of speakers, from uneducated to educated. Each speaker is able to adjust his speech between the extreme ends of this range, according to the person he is addressing. A similar phenomenon is found in Aboriginal English (see below, 5.2.3).

2.7.3 K. Whinnom (1956) uses the term *contact vernacular* to mean a form of speech which is the product of the contact of a European and an Aboriginal tongue, and deals with three such languages existing in the Philippines. If Aboriginal English could be shown to possess marked observable characteristics of Aboriginal vernacular languages as well as of English, it could be termed a contact vernacular.

3.0 Descriptive procedures adopted in the Queensland Speech Survey are consistent with the theoretical framework of the project, and take account of similar previous research.

3.1 The linguistic material collected is such as will permit the study of all aspects of informal spoken Queensland English - phonology, grammar, and lexis - in its social context. Informal unscripted group conversation proved especially suitable for this purpose. A method of eliciting it had been devised and used successfully on Norfolk Island in 1957.¹⁰ A similar method has since (independently) been extensively employed by Quirk and Halliday in descriptive studies under the Survey of English Usage.¹¹

Both methods differ little in principle from that employed by Zwirner in obtaining language survey recordings for the Lautbibliothek der deutschen Mundarten. The main difference appears to be that interview-type material is used.¹² Weinreich (1953) had regarded "the free flowing speech of bilinguals in the natural setting of language contact" as especially suitable for the study of grammatical structure.¹³

3.2 A very large sampling has been taken as the simplest recognized way of increasing the accuracy of the random sample.¹⁴ The theoretical principle of linguistic variation also seemed to demand a large sample, since it suggested that linguistic data would have to be handled statistically as continuous rather than as discrete variables.

3.3 Recognition of the theoretical principle of linguistic variation required procedures capable of eliciting all idiolectal, dialectal and stylistic varieties of Queensland English:

- (a) Varied speech material was collected: interviews of informants by research worker; conversation of informants among themselves, both duologue and in groups of three or four; questionnaire type interviews (for lexical items); and free observation by the research worker.
- (b) Informants of all age groups and both sexes were chosen.
- (c) Relevant background material was simultaneously collected.

3.4 Data was collected almost entirely through field work by well-trained workers, although some supplementary indirect methods were also used. The importance of field work by highly trained linguists to ensure observational accuracy was early stressed by Orton (1952).¹⁵ Kurath (1939) had shown the difficulties of co-ordinating the work of a large team of field workers of varying capabilities.¹⁶

3.5 All speech material was tape-recorded, but to guard against the well-known shortcomings of this procedure,¹⁷ all material was monitored in the field for intelligibility difficulties, and a return visit was later made if necessary.

4.1 Ancillary instrumental devices for the study of acoustic data have lately been developed for use in this project. These have provided valuable help in analysis, but their limitations are recognized: what the hearer perceives is not necessarily the full and complex data shown on the acoustic record. Instrumental discrimination must not replace auditory analysis.¹⁸ Computer techniques have also been used for data sorting and the construction of morpheme concordances, and will be further used where suitable. Computers have their limitations in linguistic research.¹⁹

5.0 The following general main conclusions are emerging from the analysis of the English language data collected:

5.1.1 Certain informants who live in areas or communities where languages other than English are, or have been, regularly spoken, speak distinctive varieties of English. These informants are of two kinds:

- (a) Those in communities where the second language is an Aboriginal vernacular.
- (b) Those in communities where the second language is European.

5.1.2 It would be misleading to term the variations, in the speech of any of these informants, regional. The communities in which they live belong, not only to geographically isolated areas of North Queensland, but also to some close to Brisbane. The isolation in which they live is chiefly social, and even this is not absolute. The members of German and Italian speaking communities move freely in the community at large. Residents of most Aboriginal settlements and missions are free to leave for work periods and return.

5.1.3 The competence of the informants in the second language, or of other members of the community whom they hear speaking it, varies. Some are fully or partially bilingual; others have a recognition knowledge only; others yet have lost the second language completely. Some communities are multilingual. The variety of German or Italian spoken may be dialectal.

5.2.1 The pattern of speech variation in Aboriginal communities is complex. Their English shows the influence of the Aboriginal vernaculars in phonology and lexis, and perhaps in grammar (too little is known as yet of the grammar of the relevant Aboriginal vernaculars). It also shows the influence in phonology, grammar, and lexis of the most informal varieties of Broad Australian, of General Australian (through formal teaching in the schools), and occasionally (in rare lexical occurrences) of British dialectal English.

5.2.2 The Aboriginal English of the material varies little from community to community, except in certain environmental words. However, the same speakers within the same community show an extraordinary stylistic range. Intelligibility tests in which non-Aboriginal Australian hearers listened to the tape-recordings showed an intelligibility range, using the Wurm-Laycock scale, from below 40% through the sub-language and dialect ranges into the range of *fair* intelligibility (75%-90%).

5.2.3 This variation correlated with features of the speech situation: the person or persons addressed, the place or topic of conversation, and the form of the discourse. The informant's conversation with the research worker was more intelligible than his conversation with his fellows; conversation recorded in school, or about school, was more intelligible than that recorded under a tree or about fishing and hunting. Conversation between informants in pairs was more intelligible than that in larger groups. The least intelligible of all was informal conversation on leisure pursuits among male groups of four or five outside school.

5.2.4 The formal manifestations of this variation, obviously conditioned by the situation, were chiefly in phonology and grammar, much less in lexis. The percentage of Australian English vocabulary cognates in the least intelligible stretch of the Cherbourg material (which falls in the 40%-60%, *sub-language* range) was very high: 97%. In making this calculation, forms occurring in the whole range of Australian English are accepted as a basis for comparison; morphophonemic variants are admitted; and *vocabulary cognate* is defined as a form recognizably similar to one in Australian English. The interrelated higher-level phonological patterns of the utterances - stress, intonation, length (where relevant), tempo of articulation, and pause - were notably different, as were segmental phonemes.²⁰ Segmental phonemes were conditioned by the higher-level patterns differently, by comparison with Australian English. Grammatical differences, especially in pronominal systems, impaired intelligibility.

5.2.5 Australian and non-Australian English phonological features and grammatical forms occurred in free variation in the material. These *interference phenomena* did not appear to make the informants less understandable to one another, but may have helped to make them less so to the non-Aboriginal informant hearer. Some of these forms (e.g. ['ʌfə] = we) were obviously neither Aboriginal vernacular nor Australian, and have developed within Aboriginal English. The non-English features were more apparent in the informal group conversation than in the interview material.

5.2.6 Evidence of idiolectal variation was difficult to discover. In the Cherbourg material the speech of one informant differed from that of his three fellows in minor phonological and grammatical features. However, most of the speakers appear to adapt their speech intuitively to a central norm in communicating with one another.

5.3 Limited evidence of the influence of Aboriginal English upon the speech of non-Aboriginal Australians has been found in isolated areas where Aboriginals form a high proportion of the population.

This influence is in phonology and the grammatical structure of utterances rather than in lexis. However it is perhaps significant that, of the Aboriginal words which W.S. Ransom has shown to be current in Australian English, a high proportion are found in North Queensland.²¹

5.4 Idiolectal variation is a notable feature of the data brought by T.E. Dutton from the Torres Strait Islands and Cape York area. Here several vernaculars are in contact, and each local variety of these is not mutually intelligible to every other. These conditions do not favour the development of a communicative norm. Possibly for that reason idiolectal variation is clearly observable. The detailed analysis of this data promises interesting results.

5.5.1 The English of second generation bilingual informants in areas of original German settlement has a very high intelligibility rating (95%-100%). The few differences from Australian English in phonology and grammar are of two kinds: those in which the influence of German phonological and grammatical structure are demonstrable: and those which correspond to no known English or German pattern, and which seem to have developed through hesitation between the two. The German of the informants varies dialectally. Results of the research which has begun in this may further explain German influence apparent in their English.

5.5.2 The informants' English shows a pattern of stylistic variation, manifested in greater or lesser resemblances to Australian English. The speech of one informant which showed German phonological influence when he was conversing in a group with others exhibiting similar characteristics was entirely indistinguishable from Australian English when he conversed in a group with Australians of non-German origin. The range of such stylistic variation is not however great, as German characteristics at the most are not very marked.

5.6.1 The detailed analysis of the large corpus of material collected throughout Queensland is not yet completed.

Impressionistic examination however suggests that, apart from the distinctive forms of Queensland English already discussed, not linguistic differences likely seriously to affect intelligibility exist.

5.6.2 Variations are however observable. Whether these can be appropriated to any particular area or social group can be finally determined only when the linguistic data has been sorted against the background material. This is a complicated task. The mobility of the Australian population means that speakers in one area often come from many different parts of Australia. Seasonal workers from Sydney were found in Cape York peninsula. Their speech habits differed from those of some of the local inhabitants, but they had not lived there long.

5.6.3 The speech of some of the female informants differs notably from that of the male informants in the same groups. Stress and intonation contrasts within utterances are much less clearly marked with these women than with the men, and meaningful contrasts appear to be carried rather by length. Acoustic evidence here confirms auditory observation. Further investigation is needed to determine whether those distinctive phonological patterns are idiolectal characteristics of certain women informants, or whether they are of wider occurrence.

5.7.1 A descriptive study of the influence of speech and drama training upon ordinary conversational speech showed a range of variation between different informants in the degree of influence. At one extreme were those whose ordinary speech was not affected at all by speech training, although they acquired another style of speech suitable for use on the stage. At the other extreme were those whose ordinary speech was influenced, both in segmental phonemes and in stress and intonation patterns, by their training. The other informants were distributed between the extremes of this range.

5.7.2 Individual circumstances of age and of degree of interest in drama work, appeared to be the most important determining factors in the degree of influence.

5.7.3 Informants whose ordinary speech was least influenced by training appeared to have no difficulty in adapting themselves to their second acquired speech style when participating in a training group.

6.0 The linguistic significance of the foregoing conclusions remains to be discussed.

6.1.1 Human language is not a fixed communicative system, but presents a choice of alternative forms and structural patterns for the expression of the same meanings. In the use of language two opposite trends are observable - the one towards variation, the other towards uniformity. Individual physiological and psychological differences tend to produce variation in the choice of communicative means; and these may be termed idiolectal. The distinctive phonological characteristics of some women's speech noted above may well prove to be examples of such variation.

6.1.2 The need of individuals to live in society tends to restrict their linguistic choice, since variety may cause misunderstanding and thus impair communication or be otherwise socially inconvenient. So idiolectal differences tend to disappear under the pressure of social needs. This is especially observable in the adaptations of individual speech habits to the norm of the group which are illustrated in the examples of the German bilingual informant and the drama students mentioned above. Idiolectal characteristics are strongly in evidence in communities like those of Torres Strait Islands, where such a variety of speech habits exists that a group norm can scarcely develop.

6.1.3 The need for social adaptation may however be manifested in the opposite tendency of making a different choice to conform to a different situation. This stylistic variation is illustrated in the varying characteristics described above of the speech of Aboriginal informants in different situations. Here, however, there is an unusually wide range of variation. What are the reasons for this?

6.1.4 The total inventory from which a speaker makes his choice of communicative means - dialect or language - is acquired by him from the social group in which he is brought up. These Aboriginal informants appear to have acquired imperfectly two inventories belonging to different languages. Their extreme range of stylistic variation is explainable by circumstances of language contact. With them the stylistic range intersects the dialect-language range. Aboriginal English is a linguistic continuum: one extreme approaches the Aboriginal vernaculars and the other incompletely overlaps Broad and General Australian. This offers a wider choice of communicative means for different stylistic situations than are normally available in more homogeneous forms of speech. The speakers range towards the Aboriginal end in speech situations relating to their own community, life, and environment, and towards the Australian end in those relating to life in the community at large. Aboriginal English resembles in these characteristics the Jamaican English described by De Camp and the Haitian Creole described by Reinecke (see 2.7.1-2.7.2 above).

6.2 The stylistic variation in the English speech of German bilingual informants also intersects the language range, being manifested in the presence of more or fewer German characteristics. The range of variation is however much less than in Aboriginal English. This is explainable by two facts. German is now little used in daily communication by the informants, even those of the older generation; and members of German communities mingle freely with the general population. Aboriginal vernaculars are still used by some at least of the older members of the communities in which the informants live; and Aboriginals mingle less freely with other Australians.

6.3 Complete linguistic uniformity is never attainable: language of its very nature is a flexible communicative medium. However, excessive linguistic variation, especially when it affects intelligibility, has educational, social, and economic disadvantages. If Aboriginal English is imperfectly intelligible to non-Aboriginal Australians, it may reasonably be deduced that some varieties of Australian English are imperfectly intelligible to Aboriginals.

This may retard their educational progress, especially in subjects like mathematics which employ abstract language, as the more formal kind of Australian English is the medium of instruction in schools.

6.4 The detailed linguistic descriptions of Aboriginal English made as a result of the Survey in Queensland provide information which could assist teaching procedures designed to improve the English of Aboriginals. However, the most effective solution of the linguistic problems of the Aboriginals lies in the officially favoured procedure of their assimilation into the Australian community. If they are removed from social isolation and the environment with which their less intelligible style of speech is associated, this will automatically fall into disuse, and they will express themselves, as they are already able to do, in a style approximating more closely to Australian English. Education will, of course, continue to assist their progress; but social isolation is the principal cause of the linguistic differences which they exhibit.

6.5.0 The present study confirms the view of modern linguists that observational, descriptive, and explanatory adequacy can be ensured if scientific investigation is associated with a flexible but comprehensive theory. The value of Halliday's theory has been proved through all stages of the project - in data collection, analysis, and explanation of the facts ascertained.

6.5.1 Without the guidance of a theory which recognizes the fact of linguistic variation, observational and descriptive adequacy would not have been ensured. Sampling could well have been inadequate. Though prior information suggested the existence of variety in Aboriginal English, the range and nature of variation was entirely unsuspected. The theory suggested the need for field work procedures likely to elicit the whole range of dialectal and stylistic variation. Monostylistic sampling, which is sometimes favoured in linguistic research because it simplifies analysis, would have created a false impression of uniformity, and concealed both the fact of linguistic variation and the educational and social problems associated with it.

Similarly, the theory, in emphasizing the interrelationship of phonology, lexis, and grammar, and the relationship of form to social situation, called for linguistic material and background information suitable for the study of these aspects of language.

6.5.2 The theory likewise called for the adoption of analysis techniques, such as those of Wurm and Laycock, which describe linguistic variation in terms of the contextual relationship of linguistic form to social function and setting.

6.5.3 The theory also proved its explanatory adequacy. It explained why comparison of dialects based only on the relative number of lexical cognates, without reference to phonology and grammar, is likely to produce misleading results. It suggested moreover how the existence of the continua or *clines* of formal variation discovered in the data could be explained in terms of their contextual relationship to features of the social situation.

7.0 The study of spoken English undertaken in Queensland needs the support of research in Aboriginal vernaculars and in Australian German, and Italian, dialectology. Language contact phenomena will be better understood as more detailed information in these fields becomes available under the new research programmes. Periodical linguistic conferences will continue to assist interchange of information and co-ordination of effort in linguistic research.

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