




2023

“Local, but intelligent”: Language Ideologies in the Informant Biographies of the Linguistic Atlas Project

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Digital Object Identifier: <https://doi.org/13023/etd.2023.381>

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“LOCAL, BUT INTELLIGENT”: LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES IN THE
INFORMANT BIOGRAPHIES OF THE LINGUISTIC ATLAS PROJECT

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

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2023

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

“LOCAL, BUT INTELLIGENT”: LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES IN THE INFORMANT BIOGRAPHIES OF THE LINGUISTIC ATLAS PROJECT

This thesis argues for the relevance of the Linguistic Atlas Project (LAP) for studies of language ideologies, indexicality, and enregisterment. The LAP represents the largest dialect survey of North American English to date, offering an abundance of historical linguistic data for research in dialectology, linguistic geography, and variation over space and time. Additionally, the LAP also contains additional sources of sociolinguistic data, including informant biographies — documents written by fieldworkers at the conclusion of the LAP interview that summarize an informant’s demographic profile, as well as their personality, speech, and caliber as an interviewee. Rife with subjective judgments from the fieldworker, informant biographies present the opportunity for the study of language ideologies in the LAP. This thesis performs a qualitative discourse analysis of 583 informant biographies collected as part of the Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States (LAMSAS). Focusing on analysis of pragmatic features, this study reveals the ways that language ideologies, indexicality, and enregisterment are encoded into informant biographies and the LAP more broadly. This analysis suggests that linguistic data in the LAP can be understood as products of an indexical, ideological, and enregistered negotiation of language and identity, co-constructed between informants and fieldworkers.

KEYWORDS: language ideologies, linguistic anthropology, pragmatic discourse analysis, enregisterment, dialectology, sociolinguistics research methods

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07/25/2023

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to my thesis advisor, Dr. Allison Burkette, for so generously sharing your ideas, insights, time, and resources with me.

Thank you to my thesis committee members, Dr. Dennis Preston and Dr. Rusty Barrett, for your invaluable advice and inspiration.

Thank you to Dr. Mark Lauersdorf and Dr. Kevin McGowan for your guidance on this project and beyond.

Thank you to Dr. Lamont Antieau for your vital help navigating the LAP archives.

Thank you to the entire University of Kentucky Department of Linguistics — faculty, staff, and my fellow graduate students — who have inspired me with your work and helped me with my own.

Thank you to my friends and family, especially my parents, Angelo and Susan, for your constant encouragement and support.

Finally, thank you the informants, fieldworkers, and all who have contributed to the Linguistic Atlas Project, without whom this research project would not be possible.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In the basement of Miller Hall, stacks of acid-free storage boxes line the perimeter of a small office. Inside one of those boxes are three volumes of type-written documents held together in antique snap-binders, each labeled “Lives.” The lives collected inside these binders belong to the informants of the Linguistic Atlas Project of the United States and Canada (now the Linguistic Atlas Project, or the LAP). Their biographies offer the reader a glimpse back in time — to the middle of the 20th century, when linguists set out to document and map the dialects that dotted the North American continent, interviewing thousands of individuals from different communities in the process.

Allison Burkette, the current director of the LAP, has talked about the shivers she felt when listening to the nearly 100-year-old interview recordings housed in the LAP collection (Burkette n.d.). I had a similar feeling when reading about the lives of LAP interviewees in these informant biographies. Many biographies were more than just dry demographic summaries — they were almost like short stories. Reading through them, I often had some kind of physical response: a smile, a gasp, a guffaw, occasionally a shake of the head in disbelief. These biographies sketched a portrait of what really happened when a LAP fieldworker sat down with an informant for a lengthy interview about their speech and ways of life. After reading the biographies, I not only felt like I knew the informant better, but the fieldworker, too — their handwriting, their turns of phrase, and even their opinions and attitudes towards their informants. More broadly, I felt that these biographies should exist outside of those snap-binders in an acid-free storage box — that they should be told as part of the broader story of the LAP.

1.2 Overview of Topic

Today, the LAP represents “the largest and most comprehensive survey of American English ever undertaken” (Burkette n.d.: 1). Officially founded in 1929, the LAP has documented the speech of thousands of informants over the last century, from individuals born in mid-19th century all the way to those born in the 21st century. The LAP spans not just a long and pivotal period in American history, but also a huge swath of geography, with regional sub-projects representing speakers from most of the United States and beyond.

A linguistic atlas by name, the original aim of the project was the documentation of American English dialects over space and time (Hanley 1930). The process of collecting this information often started with a trained LAP fieldworker entering a small, rural community and looking for local individuals that could best represent the region’s dialect (Kurath 1939). Fieldworkers then spoke with these individuals at length, usually over the course of many hours and multiple sittings, with the goal of collecting linguistic data about local patterns of speech (Atwood 1986). LAP fieldworkers entered these interviews equipped with a worksheet of ‘targets’ — known sources of lexical, morpho-syntactic, and/or phonological variation — and often emerged with hundreds of field pages, each filled with the informant’s response data dutifully transcribed in phonetic detail (Burkette n.d.). This process was then repeated across many communities and regional sub-projects. The resulting LAP collection today offers an abundance of historical language data on North American Englishes, especially for researchers interested in dialectology, linguistic geography, and regional variation over space and time.

Since its inception, though, the LAP has also expressed an interest in the social dimensions of linguistic variation — or, as project organizers originally put it, “the dialects of the social classes” (Hanley 1930: 67). As a result, the LAP differs from its dialectological predecessors in at least a few key ways. For one, the LAP expanded their focus beyond just folk vernacular to also examine the speech of individuals representing several different social types (Kurath 1972). For another, in addition to collecting linguistic data, the LAP also documented biographic, demographic, and social data of its informants (e.g., age, gender, occupation, education, and family history), as well as more qualitative descriptions of the informant’s personality, peculiarities of their speech, and notable stories from the interview. In fact, upon publishing the preliminary data from the LAP’s first survey, original project director Hans Kurath (1939: 47) instructed that this biographical and social information “must be duly considered in dealing with the facts presented by the Atlas.” Consequently, LAP research projects over the last century have been able to explore the patterned distribution of linguistic variables across social types as well as geographic regions (Allen 1977).

Despite its influence on foundational sociolinguistic research projects, including on the early work of William Labov (Labov 1963; 1966; Labov, Ash & Boberg 2006), the LAP and the broader field of dialectology have been the subjects of an ongoing debate. For example, in the wake of the variationist sociolinguistic boom of the mid-20th century, Chambers & Trudgill (1980: 22) noted that “younger scholars are not attracted into ‘traditional’ dialect geography as they were two generations ago.” More recently, Purnell (2013: 277) has suggested that a dialect survey like the LAP might be seen as “a quickly obsolescent storage facility filled with lexical oddities situated in a fixed place

and time.” According to this view, dialectology projects like the LAP are a kind of butterfly collection for linguists — at best, they’re quaintly antiquarian; at worst, they’re outmoded or trivial.

In recent years, though, new theoretical paradigms emerging from linguistic anthropology and what Eckert (2012) calls third-wave sociolinguistics have continued to raise new questions for the LAP and dialectology as well as variationist sociolinguistics. Rather than studying the geographic or social distribution of linguistic variables, this vein of research examines the social *meanings* of those variables, positioning language and dialect as part of a broader socio-semiotic and stylistic practice (Eckert 2008). Studies of indexicality (Silverstein 2003) and enregisterment (Agha 2005) have further explored how linguistic repertoires come to be semiotically linked not just with certain geographic regions or social personae, but more broadly with “particular ways of being and acting” (Johnstone & Kiesling 2008: 7). According to this new tradition, the relationship between language and place is more a negotiation of identity, indexicality, and ideology than a simple matter of geography (Reed 2020). To put it another way, dialects are ultimately socio-cultural constructs (Johnstone, Andrus & Danielson 2006). This prospect seems to challenge an assumption that lies at the very heart of dialectology — so how can a century-old dialect survey like the LAP fit into this changing theoretical landscape?

Rather than seeing these developments as a conflict for dialectology projects like the LAP, researchers can instead approach them as an opportunity. In fact, Johnstone, Andrus & Danielson (2006: 78) have specifically argued for “the relevance of the ideas of enregisterment and indexicality to the historical dialectology of American English.” Similarly, Hall-Lew & Stephens (2012: 276) suggest that studies of enregisterment have

the potential for “uniting dialect geography with theories of indexicality, ideology, and social meaning.” In order to investigate these matters within the LAP, researchers will not only need to ask new questions, but also explore new methods of investigation.

One way forward is to re-examine LAP data that have perhaps been traditionally overlooked in dialectology research projects. While linguistic data (i.e., an informant’s responses) represent the bulk of the LAP collection and the primary resource for dialectological studies, a recurring criticism of traditional dialectology is its focus on bits of language rather than on speakers of language (Mesthrie 2009: 59). Echoing Bourdieu’s (1991: 44) critique of structural linguistics, these projects appear to study language while “ignoring its *social laws of construction* and masking its social genesis” (emphasis in original). However, the LAP collection does include additional data sources — including informant biographies — that can provide vital information to understanding the informant’s linguistic data *in situ*. While these data sources have perhaps been underutilized in LAP research projects to date, they nonetheless present the opportunity for new kind of investigations that shed light on the interactional, indexical, and ideological contexts in which the linguistic data of the LAP were produced.

For this project, I focus my analysis on language ideologies encoded within the informant biographies of the Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States (LAMSAS), a regional sub-project of the LAP. These informant biographies, written by the fieldworker after the interview, are filled with entertaining anecdotes, humorous descriptions, and ideological judgements. Sometimes, these ideologies are overt; other times, they lurk just under the surface, encoded in pragmatic features. Moreover, Gal & Irvine (2000) suggest that researchers should investigate not only the existence of

language ideologies, but also their consequences. Accordingly, analysis of language ideologies within the informant biographies not only reveals the attitudes and beliefs of 20th-century dialectologists, but also the ways these beliefs are inscribed into the data that makes up the LAP. From this reflexive perspective, the LAP interview is not an objective dialectological excavation of bits of language; rather, it is a “site of ideological work” (Gal & Irvine 2019: 167), negotiated dialogically between fieldworker and informant. The resulting data housed within the LAP can be thus approached not just linguistic variables, but simultaneously as “acts of identity” (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985). Ultimately, this argument has wider implications for researcher working with LAP data.

1.3 Overview of Investigation

This project has been guided by two primary research questions, one more analytic and one more methodological:

- (1) How are language ideologies encoded into the informant biographies of the LAP and to what effect?
- (2) How can informant biographies be incorporated into LAP research projects and to what effect?

In order to investigate these questions, I conduct a qualitative discourse analysis of informant biographies housed within the LAP sub-project LAMSAS. Chapter 2 offers background information about the history of the LAP, including an explanation of how its data were collected and the kinds of scholarship LAP research projects have historically produced. Chapter 3 summarizes key theoretical and methodological developments in dialectology, sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, and related disciplines in the time since the LAP was founded, then reviews recent projects that have explored new

conceptual approaches toward LAP data. Chapter 4 seeks to motivate a new approach to analyzing LAP data and points to the informant biography as a prime resource for these investigations. Chapter 5 then outlines the dataset and methodology for the present study, which primarily utilizes pragmatic discourse analyses to examine indexicality, ideology, enregisterment encoded within the LAMSAS informant biographies. Chapter 6 conducts a preliminary analysis of more overt language ideologies in the informant biographies, and Chapter 7 performs a pragmatic discourse analysis focusing on more implicit language ideologies. Chapter 8 presents a brief case study that seeks to apply the approach that I develop in Chapter 4 focusing on a single variable. Chapter 9 discusses the conclusions and limitations of the present study, as well as its potential implications and future directions. My hope is that this project encourages others to see the LAP as a relevant and robust resource for new kinds of sociolinguistic inquiry.

CHAPTER 2. BACKGROUND

2.1 History of Dialectology

The LAP was largely modeled on previous foundational European dialectology projects — especially Georg Wenker’s survey in Germany, Jules Gilliéron and Edmond Edmont’s survey in France, and Karl Jaberg and Jakob Jud’s survey in Italy and Switzerland. Beginning in 1876, Wenker mailed some 50,000 written questionnaires to regional schoolmasters across Germany, asking respondents to translate sentence prompts from standard German into their local dialect (Petyt 1980). Wenker received a staggering number of responses (nearly 45,000 completed questionnaires from 40,000 communities), but the quantity proved to be both a blessing and a curse, giving him an overwhelming amount of data that ultimately limited how much analysis he could perform in his *Sprachatlas* volumes (Mesthrie 2009). Moreover, while Wenker’s methods focused on collecting phonological and lexical data, the responses paradoxically showed an underwhelming amount of lexical variation — likely the result of his focus on collecting written responses rather than speech data and his sampling of schoolmasters, both of which may privilege the elicitation of more standard forms (Chambers & Trudgill 1980).

Gilliéron and Edmont’s project on French dialects, beginning in 1896, similarly utilized a questionnaire to elicit regional variants of folk speech, but instead collected responses from informants directly via on-the-spot interview (Petyt 1980). Edmont, a grocer, was hired as the project’s sole fieldworker and, after being trained in phonetic notation, travelled via bicycle to more than 600 different French communities and conducted more than 700 dialect interviews in the process (Chambers & Trudgill 1980). Despite having only one fieldworker (partially a control for variation in transcription

practices), Gilliéron and Edmont collected and shared their findings with a relatively quick turnaround, conducting fieldwork between 1897-1901 and publishing their results in the multi-volume *Atlas linguistique de la France* shortly thereafter between 1902-1910 (McDavid 1971). Gilliéron and Edmont's project considerably fine-tuned Wenker's fieldwork methods; nonetheless, their survey had its own limitations. For one, the sample was representationally skewed in that more than 90% of informants were men and more than 70% had little to no formal education (Chambers & Trudgill 1980). Moreover, while Edmont collected data from informants in-person (in contrast to Wenker's written survey), the project nonetheless assumed a questionnaire format, prompting informants to directly translate words and phrases from standard French into dialectal regionalisms — a method less likely to elicit naturalistic or “genuine” responses (Petyt 1980).

Two of Gilliéron's students, Jaberg and Jud, further refined this fieldwork-informed approach in their work on Italian dialects beginning in 1928. Inspired by Gilliéron and Edmont's work, as well as by the *Wörter und Sachen* (words and things) movement, their method positioned linguistic data as cultural artifacts (Johnson 1996). As a result, they approached the interview as an almost ethnographic enterprise, focusing on interviewing informants more about culture and ways of life than on language itself (Burkette 2015). Reframing the interview toward more indirect elicitation tactics, Jaberg and Jud underscored the value of examining variation in a more naturalistic linguistic environment (Chambers & Trudgill 1980). Moreover, Jaberg and Jud sampled informants from not just rural communities, but also urban centers, disentangling the notion that ‘dialect’ and rural ‘folk speech’ were necessarily synonymous (Pederson et al. 1974).

2.2 The Early History of the LAP

The success of recent European dialect surveys prompted a team of linguists affiliated with the American Dialect Society (ADS) to consider an equivalent study of the dialects of English in the United States and Canada (Hanley 1930). A large-scale dialect survey had been earlier proposed by American dialectologists and language researchers, but it wasn't until 1928 that the project gained serious momentum (Kurath 1939; Atwood 1986). McDavid (1978) attributes the immediate interest of the ADS in an American dialect atlas to Hans Kurath. In his 1928 article "The Origin of Dialectal Differences in Spoken American English," Kurath (325) expressed the need for a broad-scale survey of American English, writing, "a thorough survey of actual usage in the various sections of the country is as necessary to the historical study of our pronunciation as for the question of a standard of pronunciation. Until we shall possess such a survey, all historical investigation must proceed largely by 'safe guesses.'" According to Kurath, not only would such a survey capture a baseline of current usage patterns, but it would also give researchers the chance to study linguistic change over time, including the socio-geographic origins of regional dialects.

Following the Conference on the Proposed Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada,¹ and in collaboration with the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and the Modern Language Association (MLA), the ADS officially founded the Linguistic Atlas of United States and Canada in 1929, creating a steering committee and appointing Kurath as chairman and project director (Hanley 1930).² Due to the size of the

¹ The discussions at the conference, which included linguists like Leonard Bloomfield and Hans Kurath in attendance, are fascinatingly summarized in Sturtevant (1929).

² The ADS publication *Dialect Notes* outlined the initial proposal for the LAP and continued to publish regular updates on the status of the project through its early development.

geographic area needing to be surveyed and high projected cost of the project, the team decided to begin with a study of the New England as “the first step in the preparation of the larger atlas” (Hanley 1930: 66). This region was chosen for several reasons. For one, given its settlement history, New England was valued as possessing a number of older dialect forms; moreover, the settlement patterns of this region were better known than other areas of the country, which would help furnish studies in dialect geography and migration (Kurath 1930; 1934b).

The preparation, training, and preliminary fieldwork for the Linguistic Atlas of New England (LANE) began in earnest in 1930. To fine-tune the proposed methodology for LANE and the greater American survey, Kurath met with Italian dialectologists Jaberg and Jud, as well as one of their primary fieldworkers, Paul Scheuermeier, to consult on methods of informant selection, data collection, and preliminary analysis (Chambers & Trudgill 1980). Jud and Scheuermeier also travelled to the U.S. in the summer of 1931 to help train LAP fieldworkers on data collection methods (Kurath 1930).

2.3 Components of the LAP

With inspiration from these previous dialect studies supplemented by consultation from the steering committee and the ADS, Kurath and his team devised the protocols that would become the key components of the LAP methodology: the informants, worksheet, and interview.

2.3.1 Informants

From the outset of the project, the LAP steering committee highlighted the urgent need to document specific known dialects of American English before they disappeared.

Outlining the purpose and value of the newly minted project, they write:

The task of recording our spoken language is one of immediate urgency, for our speech is being rapidly standardized through the influence of the public schools, of constantly increasing travel (especially by motor car), of the radio, and of the talking motion picture. Before long many dialects will become extinct or will at least lose much of their individuality. The speech of the mountaineers of the Appalachians and the Ozarks, and the rural dialects of New England and the South are rapidly disappearing. The sooner we record them the better. (Hanley 1930: 68)

Noting the potential loss of certain dialects due to factors such as education, mobilization, and the media, the need for a survey of spoken American English was described as “immediate.” With the goal of preserving these older dialects, Kurath weighted the selection of communities for the survey to favor older settlements and rural areas over newer, more urban ones (McDavid 1971). In consultation with the LAP historian Marcus L. Hansen, Kurath ultimately selected 213 communities to be surveyed as part of LANE, chosen based on settlement history, places of cultural importance, and overall geographic distribution for maximal regional coverage (Atwood 1986). See Figure 2.1 below for a map of communities sampled for LANE (Kurath 1939).

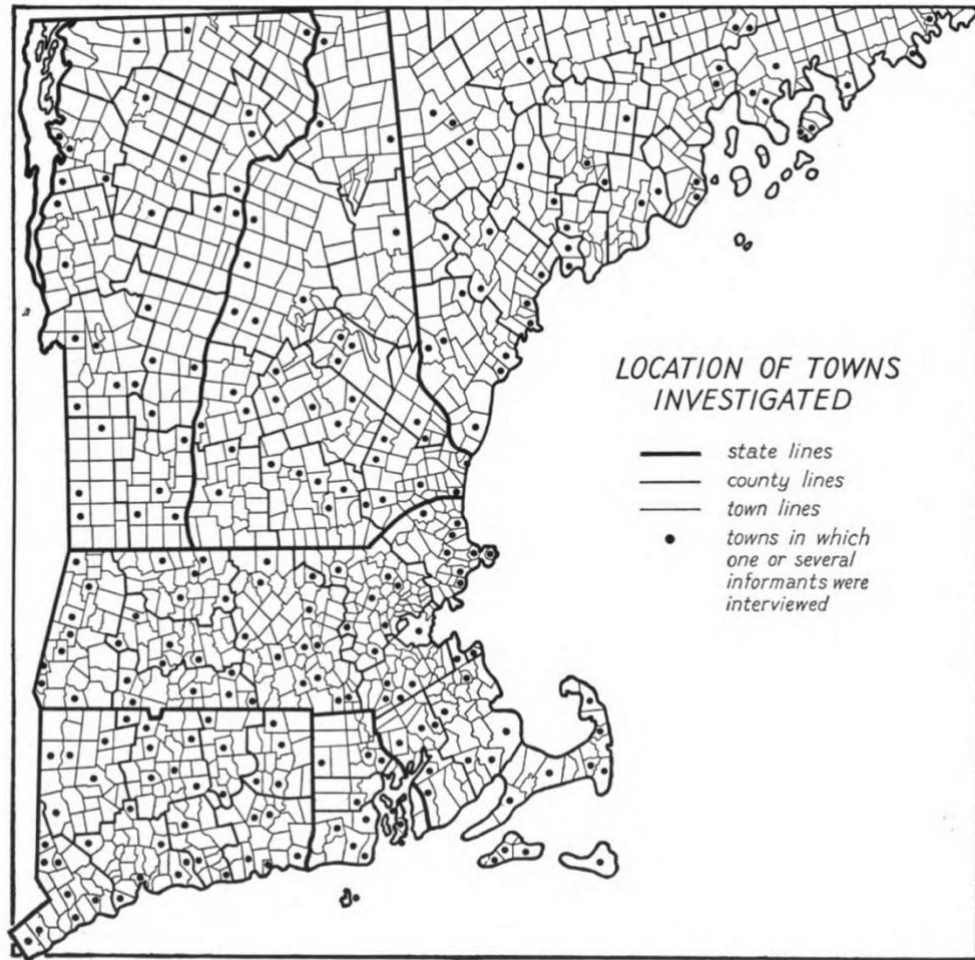


Figure 2.1: Map of Surveyed Communities in LANE (Kurath 1939)

After the 213 sites were selected for investigation, fieldworkers were charged with visiting these communities to find informants to survey (Kurath 1939). Ideal informants were specified as those who came from locally rooted families and were born and raised in the same area; for instance, “one who was born in the community, of parents who were also born there — one who has never lived anywhere else, and has no affectations” (Kurath 1933: 367). Kurath’s directions for informant selection more specifically instructed fieldworkers to focus on finding “an elderly descendent of an old local family....a simple but intelligent farmer or famer’s wife in rural districts, a workingman,

tradesman or shopkeeper in larger villages and in cities” (Kurath 1939: 41). In practice, this selection process generally favored individuals who fit what Chambers & Trudgill (1980) call the “NORM”: non-mobile, older, rural men. These individuals (who were also almost exclusively white) were prioritized because they were thought to possess the most accurate and well-preserved representation of older linguistic forms — what Petyt (1980: 68) refers to as “genuine dialect” — fulfilling LANE’s primary goal of capturing regional variation before it disappeared.

Despite the privileging of certain informants, Kurath and the steering committee nonetheless recognized that a range of social types lived in the pre-selected communities, and furthermore that there was variation among the dialects of different social classes (Hanley 1930). Although the older, more rustic informants (i.e., NORMs) were prioritized, fieldworkers were secondarily instructed to find informants who were similarly locally rooted but had more education, reading ability, and social contacts, as well as informants who could be distinguished as “cultivated” or significantly “cultured” (Kurath 1939: 41). In the *Handbook of the Linguistic Geography of New England*, Kurath (1939:44) thus grouped and categorized LANE informants according to three social types:

Type I: Little formal education, little reading, and restricted social contacts.

Type II: Better formal education (usually high school) and/or wider reading and social contacts.

Type III: Superior education (usually college), cultured background, wide reading and/or extensive social contacts.

In addition to social type, fieldworkers also categorized their informants by “generation” based on their impression of age, as well as whether the informant was “old-fashioned” or “more modern” (Kurath 1939:44):

Type A: Aged, and/or regarded by the field worker as old-fashioned.

Type B: Middle-aged or younger, and/or regarded by the field worker as more modern.

The informant selection process thus amounted to a kind of quota sampling, looking to find representatives of pre-selected groups, weighted in favor of the Type IA informants but not necessarily excluding the others (Penhallurick 2018). Whereas previous European projects had primarily constrained their sample to these NORM-style informants (believed to be the sole sources of folk vernacular), LANE’s inclusion of informants from a range of social classes represented a novel approach to understanding and documenting social variation in dialectology (Atwood 1986). In a report compiled after meeting with Jaberg and Jud, Kurath (1930: 74) himself notes that the “decision to include in our investigation the speech of all social types finds approval.” Documenting the speech of individuals representing different social types would thus allow LANE researchers to better examine how factors like age, education, reading, social contacts, and “cultivation” interact with speech and dialect.

2.3.2 The Worksheet

While previous European dialect surveys primarily utilized a questionnaire format, the LAP drew inspiration from Jaberg and Jud’s approach and developed a worksheet to facilitate a more indirect elicitation method. Rather than a script or list of stock phrases to be translated into dialect, this worksheet compiled a list of linguistic

targets — sources of known lexical, morph-syntactic, and phonetic variation — that served as a kind of check-list elicitation guide for fieldworkers (Burkette n.d.). Per Atwood (1986: 72), “the items on the list represented everyday concepts, and sought to elicit usages that would ordinarily be transmitted orally within the family rather than in schools,” reflecting Jaberg and Jud’s influence from the words and things movement.

The contents of the LAP worksheet experienced numerous changes over the years before stabilizing (Davis, McDavid & McDavid 1969) — see Figure 2.2 below for an example of an annotated worksheet page. Kurath prepared the initial draft of the worksheet between 1929 and 1930, culling targets from published word and dialect feature lists, as well as from his own research and the written suggestions of ADS members (Burkette n.d.).³ The team continued to field test and revise the worksheet with feedback from the steering committee before debuting an “improved” edition which was used to train LANE fieldworkers in the summer of 1931 (Kurath 1939: 148). As a result, several iterations of the worksheet were used throughout the collection of interviews for LANE.⁴ An abridged or short worksheet, about half the size of the full worksheet at 421 words and phrases, was later developed in 1937 and became the foundation for several other sub-projects’ worksheets, allowing project editors to add relevant items or omit irrelevant ones based on the communities under investigation (Davis, McDavid & McDavid 1969). As Gilliéron apparently said, “one can devise a perfect questionnaire only after all the fieldwork is done” (Davis, McDavid & McDavid 1969: ix).

³ According to Kurath (1939: 148), the LAP committee originally sought to generate data to “facilitate comparison with British dialects,” and thus preliminary worksheet drafts included elements from A.J. Ellis’s *Comparative Specimen, Dialect Test, and Classified Word List*.

⁴ The final version of the worksheet, comprised of 814 words and phrases, is printed in the *LANE Handbook* (Kurath 1939) and was also collected by Davis, McDavid & McDavid (1969).

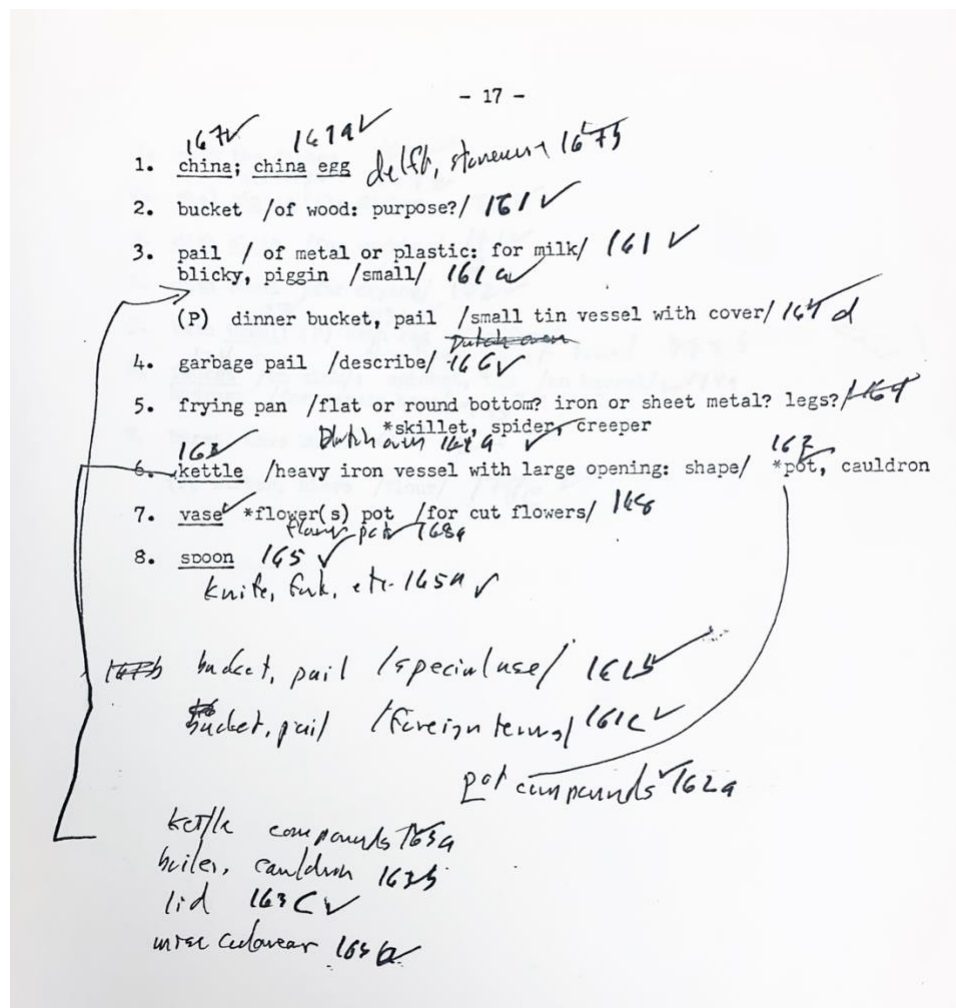


Figure 2.2: Example annotated worksheet page from Kurath's personal notebook (LANE)

Importantly, the worksheet was not designed to be comprehensive or exhaustive of American English regional dialect features, but rather was intended to serve two primary purposes. First, it would provide a basis of comparison for potential variables across informants — an aim reflected in the preliminary items of the worksheet (e.g., core vocabulary terms like numbers and days of the week), which established a phonological baseline for the informant. Second, the worksheet thematically organized the interview as a series of talking points, loosely sub-divided by semantic field (e.g., the home, farming, food), helping the researcher to guide the course of the conversation according to topics

related to culture and ways of life. This organization also provided the fieldworker with both structure and flexibility, granting them the latitude to adjust the order and content of the worksheet to spend more time exploring the sections that produced relevant and interesting forms while cutting the sections that were less fruitful per each informant (Davis, McDavid & McDavid 1969).

2.3.3 The Interview

The worksheet would prove a vital tool for the interview, but before entering the field, LANE's nine fieldworkers (all of whom either held a doctorate degree or otherwise had an academic background in linguistics) were instructed in interviewing methods, including ear-training and transcription (Atwood 1986). The precise detection and notation of phonetic detail was paramount; as Kurath (1972: 6) notes, "The primary task of the fieldworker is, of course, the accurate observation and recording of the responses he elicits from the informant." However, Kurath (1972: 5-6) simultaneously acknowledges that "Successful fieldwork presupposes not only adequate training in linguistics... but also a understanding of people in all walks of life." In other words, fieldworkers needed to build a certain amount of rapport in the interview to elicit natural forms from the informant. Thus, fieldworkers were instructed to use the worksheet only as a guide to facilitate an interview that "approximates as closely as possible everyday conversation between two people interested in a common topic" (Davis, McDavid & McDavid 1969: xiii).

Kurath (1930: 73) arrived at this style of interviewing following consultation with Jaberg, Jud, and Scheuermeier, persuaded by their method of centering the informant's interest "more on the subject matter than on linguistic usage." Kurath (73) continues:

“Under those circumstances the response is more natural and there is less inclination to introduce features of pronunciation or vocabulary from non-local forms of speech.” As a result, unlike a questionnaire format, the LAP interview style often varied widely both between and within interviews. Sometimes, a fieldworker might ask a fill-in-the-blank question (e.g., “What do you call the room at the top of your house just under the roof? [attic]”); other times, they’d ask a more open-ended “shotgun questions” (e.g., “How did you used to build a fire?”), prompting the informant to speak at length on a given subject or produce multiple potential targets in a run (Burkette 2021; Pederson et al. 1974).

Despite the unscripted nature of the worksheet and interview, over time fieldworkers honed in on successful elicitation prompts and thus developed their own idiosyncratic approach to navigating the interview (Burkette n.d.). For instance, Bernard Bloch might ask, “What do you call the heavy white mist that comes out of the river?” whereas Guy Lowman might ask, “Something thick in the air so that you can’t see ahead. You say the air is very ____” (Pederson et al. 1974: 107). This difference in elicitation style also had an impact on the data that was collected in the process. Atwood (1986: 70) notes that “some fieldworkers more inclined than others to elicit archaisms in vocabulary and grammar,” while Burkette (2014) writes that others⁵ had the tendency to ask more follow-up questions and simply record more responses. On the one hand, these variable questioning styles meant there was less experimental stimulus control between interviews; on the other, they allowed LAP fieldworkers to approximate a more

⁵ In particular, Raven McDavid’s habit of asking numerous follow-up questions meant that his informants produced more data than average. One effect of this habit is what Burkette (2014) calls the “McDavid distribution,” where relic forms are potentially over-represented in the LAMSAS regions where McDavid was the primary fieldworker

naturalistic linguistic environment in the interview than a traditional questionnaire or word list (Allen 1977). Fieldworkers were, however, instructed to meticulously note whether a linguistic form was directly elicited through questioning, observed in conversation, corrected, forced, suggested, or otherwise delivered with hesitation, amusement, or doubt (Kurath 1939; 1972).

The LAP's more conversational interviewing technique combined with an 800+ item worksheet meant that interviews were much longer and more free-form than previous dialect surveys, commonly lasting upwards of 8 hours (Atwood 1986). Kurath (1939) notes that interviews for LANE, usually conducted in the informant's own home, regularly spanned between 6 and 20 hours and were often split over the course of multiple sittings, depending on the personality and disposition of both the informant and the fieldworker. The LAP interview thus represented a substantial commitment of time and energy for both informant and fieldworker.

2.4 LAP Data

With the sample communities selected and the components of their methodology devised, the LANE team and their nine fieldworkers officially began work in 1931, conducting more than 400 interviews over the course of two years (Burkette n.d.). Not every interview went off without a hitch — some were discontinued or abandoned midway through, either by fieldworker or the informant — but by 1933, fieldworkers had collected a total of 416 interviews for LANE (Kurath 1939). These interviews produced a number of sources of data for future analysis, including field pages, informant biographies, and audio recordings.

2.4.1 Field Pages

During an interview, a LAP fieldworker collected their informant's responses within a notebook full of field pages — i.e., blank numbered lists corresponding to the 800+ targets of the worksheet. On the left side of the field page, the fieldworker recorded the informant's response in phonetic detail using the International Phonetic Alphabet (Kurath 1939). The right side of the field page was reserved for any field notes or additional context about the usage, as well as alternate variables or pronunciations, drawings to specify the thing-in-mind, or even sketches of the informant's home layout (Burkette 2001) — see Figure 2.3 below for an example field page.

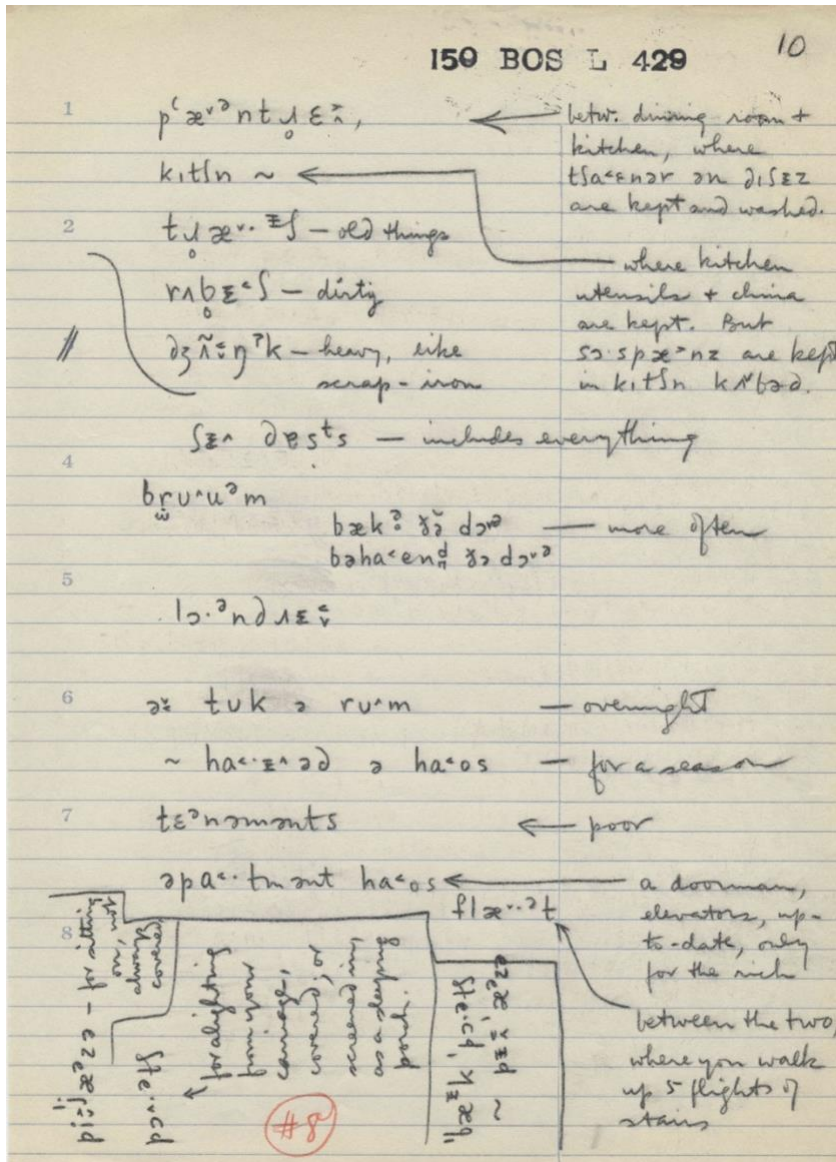


Figure 2.3: Example field page (LANE, MA429, page 10)

By the end of the interview, each field page contained dozens of phonetic, syntactic, and lexical data points, often alongside notes and observations from the fieldworker.

Furthermore, each interview produced dozens of such field pages that would be collected

into a single field record for each informant. As a result, field pages are the primary data byproduct of the interview and comprise the bulk of the LAP collection.⁶

2.4.2 Informant Biographies

Following the often lengthy LAP interview, the fieldworker prepared a short summary of the informant and the community sampled (Kurath 1939). Kurath (1939: 49) notes that fieldworkers were instructed to gather information on the following:

1. *The names of the village, town, county and state, as well as the full name of the informant, entered in both conventional spelling and in phonetic notation.*
2. *Education: formal schooling and extent of reading (newspapers, periodicals, fiction, scientific and technical literature).*
3. *Social contacts: working companions, business contacts, intimate friends; membership in church, club and other organizations; travel.*
4. *Family history: birthplace of father and mother, cultural and social standing, ancestry. If the family history has been published or is accessible in manuscript, give bibliographic information.*
5. *Character sketch: alertness and intelligence, extent and accuracy of information, attitude toward the investigator and his task, naturalness or guardedness in utterance, interest in 'improving' the language.*
6. *General character of the community: number of inhabitants; racial elements with an estimate on their size; industrial, residential or rural; historical or antiquarian society, library, schools.*

After collecting this information by hand, it was collected, edited, typed into an informant biography, which served as an introductory cover sheet for the informant's field record — see Figures 2.4 and 2.5 below for example handwritten and typed informant biographies, respectively.

⁶ Field records from sub-projects are currently available on the LAP website: <https://linguisticatlasproject.org/>

1 Well informed, much interested in the old days; occas. gives interviews on the days of losses & earnings to newspapers. Somewhat reticent, tho' interested; a bit subject to moods. An recording done in his shop.

2 born in Mass, daughter of minister
 Speaks very natural, no attempt to appear to advantage, at the last late wife, ~~a former teacher~~, then connected him. He ^{of the} knows what he ought to say, but ~~but~~ but prefers expressions that "came easy". He often refers to the dictionary, but is little influenced by it. One incident: "Can boles out" - some say bozel, but bozel is correct. He refers to the dict. and finds, without much conviction, that bozel is correct. I'm sure that he'll continue to say, [FBS].

3

4

5 Stray nasalization. Mund "slurping"?
 Intervocalic t is always [t̃] in rapid speech.

6 ʒ, regular
ʒ only occasionally
 post-vocalic ʒ is rare

7 a, a', occas. a', ~~is~~ for ar

8 Good representative of the older, unschooled middle group.

Figure 2.4: Example character sketch (LANE, CT139, Character Sketch, page 2)

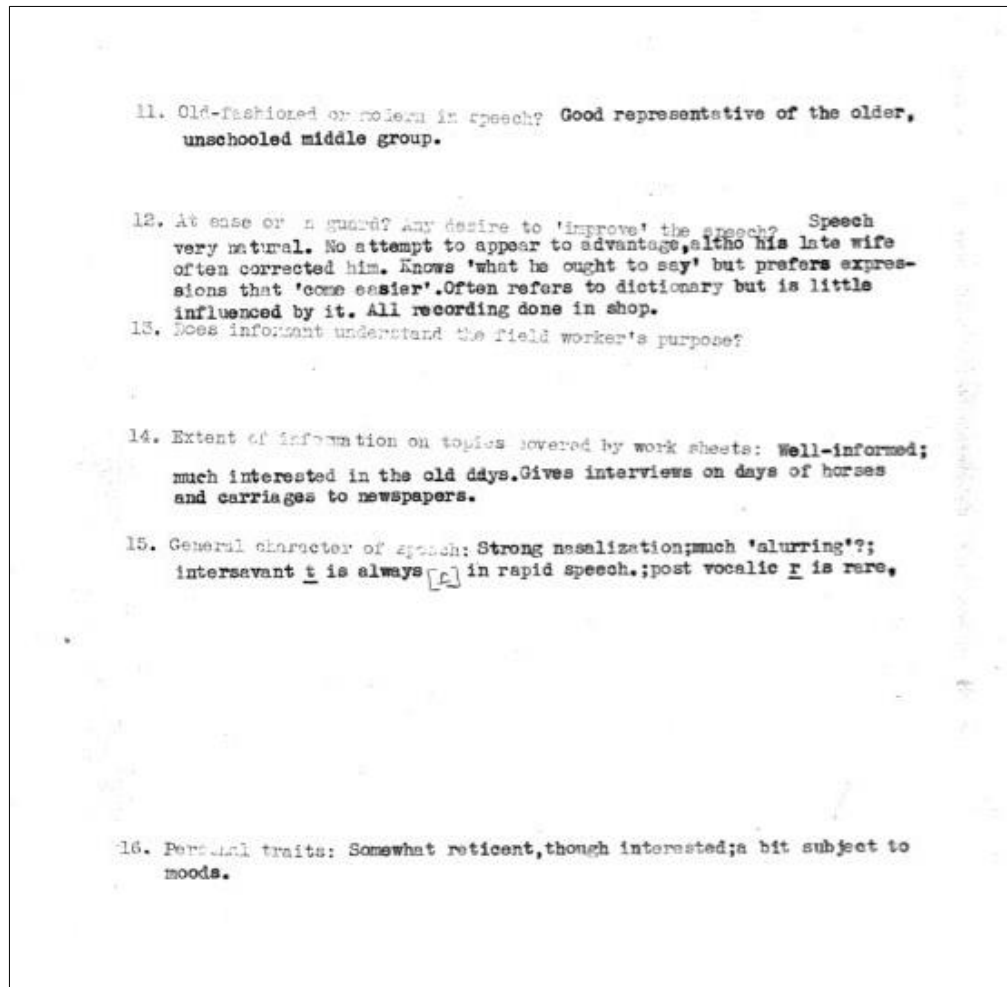


Figure 2.5: Example typed informant biography (LANE, CT139, Biography, page 2)

2.4.3 Recordings

In addition to field records, the LAP collection also includes a set of audio recordings of interviews collected between 1931-1937 sometimes referred to as The Hanley Tapes (Waterman 1974).⁷ The idea to mechanically record informant interviews had been discussed since the beginning of the LAP, but was not implemented until 1933 (Sturtevant 1929). After the original LANE fieldwork interviews were conducted, Kurath

⁷ In addition to The Hanley Tapes, the LAP also houses audio recordings collected on various media collected as part of later regional sub-projects, including the Linguistic Atlas of the North Central States (LANCS) and the Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States (LAGS).

and LAP steering committee member Miles L. Hanley devised a plan to revisit key LANE informants and record their speech with a portable phonographic recording set (Penhallurick 2018). This device recorded audio on aluminum disks and was powered by several car batteries; Hanley reportedly carted the full set-up, which included a microphone and a disc-cutter, in the back of his car around New England from 1933 to 1934 (Kurath 1933; Hall et al. 2002; Purnell 2013).

Midway through the recording project, Hanley (1933: 368) reported on the success of the project, writing that “Permanent electrical recordings of good quality are being made *in the homes* of the speakers” (emphasis original). As Burkette (2021) points out, Hanley’s emphasis underscores just how significant this technology was for the time, especially considering the opportunity it presented for naturalistic data collection. Kurath (1934: 419) later echoes Hanley, writing “These records, made in the homes of the speakers (or in nearby barns, hayfields, country stores, etc.) provide a unique archive of New England speech.” This recording technology also represented a novelty for informants, with several interviewees commenting that they had never spoken into, let alone seen, a microphone before. One informant interviewed in 1934 notes, “Well, I suppose I ought to feel honored that I am permitted to talk into whatever thing the President did” (LANE, NH180, Transcript, page 1).

The recorded interviews collected as part of the Hanley Tapes extended outside of New England and beyond the original LANE informants — the collection notably includes interviews with B.F. Skinner and Edward Sapir, as well as additional auxiliary informants (Hall et al. 2002). The content of the interviews is also notable. Since many informants were in their 70s and 80s at the time of recording in the early 1930s, these

recordings include an informant's memories of the Civil War, a story of hearing abolitionist Henry Ward Beecher preach, and retellings of ghost stories from a retired sea captain from Maine (Waterman 1974; Kurath 1935a). Many recordings also capture the ambient reality of New England life in the 1930s: interviews about farming and local history, stilted conversations between family members, cows lowing and more. The project ultimately produced more than 650 double-faced aluminum records that were later transcribed by fieldworkers, LAP staff, and their students (Atwood 1986).⁸ Today, the surviving recordings have been digitized and are shared between the LAP and the Library of Congress (Hall et al. 2002).

2.5 LAP Research

After completing the fieldwork for LANE, the period from 1933 to 1939 was spent analyzing, drafting, and editing the collected manuscripts for the first LAP publication. Kurath and Hanley continued to publish regular project updates in the ADS publication *Dialect Notes*, dedicating several pages in each issue to discussing the progress of editing LANE, such as the logistics of preparing atlas maps and the status of nascent sub-projects. After five years of editing, the preliminary results of LANE were published in Kurath's 1939 *Handbook of the Linguistic Geography of New England*, which served as an introductory summary and analysis of the full LANE data set. According to its preface, this *Handbook* was intended to serve a dual purpose: "It presents a concise outline of the regional and social dialects of New England, and it provides the apparatus

⁸ Waterman (1974) notes the dubious quality of these transcripts, which are often incorrect and/or incompletely transcribed. Moreover, due to the nature of the early recording technology, the quality of the audio recordings is similarly uneven. The LAP staff and their affiliates are currently working to improve the quality and accuracy of both the digitized audio and the written transcripts — see Fruehwald (2022) for more.

for the critical evaluation and the historical interpretation of the materials contained in the Linguistic Atlas of New England” (Kurath 1939: ix).

The primary findings that emerged from the LANE *Handbook* were related to Kurath’s mapping of the two major dialect areas in New England (East and West), as well as a series of maps of variation throughout the region (Kurath 1939). These maps reveal phonological, morphological and lexical, and semantic variation alongside their geographic distribution — see Figure 2.6 below for an example map via Kurath (1939). Atwood (1986: 73) suggests that the significance of these maps extends beyond dialectology and would be of “great interest to folklorists as well as to linguists.”

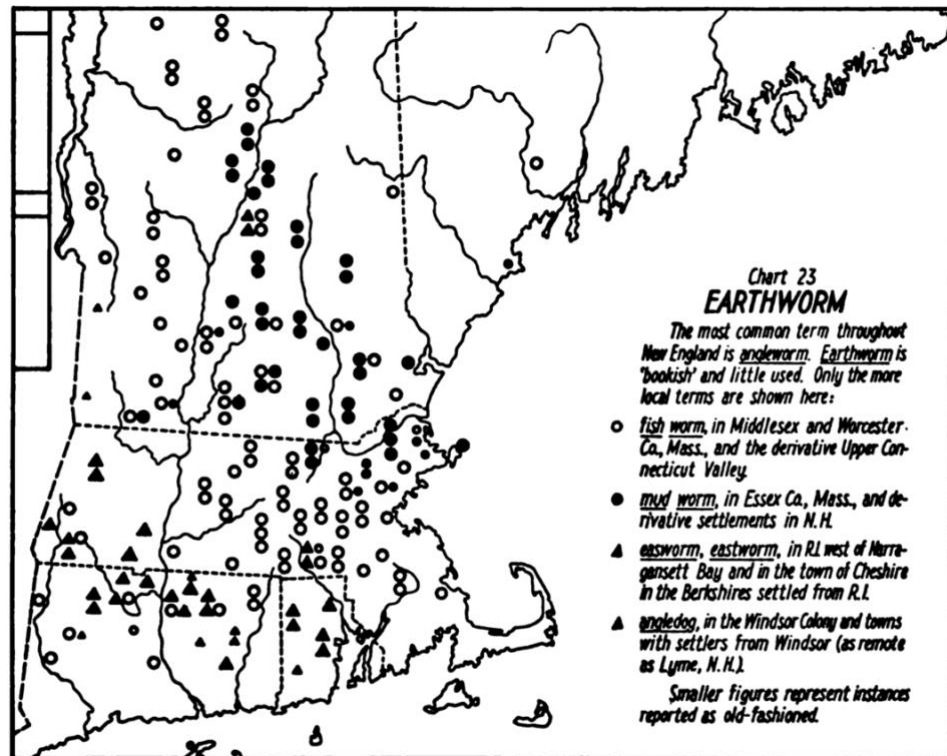


Figure 2.6: Chart 23 from LANE *Handbook* (Kurath 1939)

The LANE *Handbook* further includes not just salient summaries of linguistic data, but also additional historical information on the communities sampled and edited versions of the informant biographies to better contextualize those data. Kurath also used the *Handbook* to provide a detailed overview about the project's methodologies, including information on the fieldworkers and a thorough evaluation of their elicitation and transcription methods. Ultimately, the primary LANE findings (including 700+ total maps) were presented across three *Handbook* volumes published between 1939 and 1943 (Burkette n.d.). What primarily emerged from these volumes was a portrait of the geographic distribution of dialect features in the region — especially dialect areas and zones— as well as preliminary investigations of the social distributions of key variables (McDavid Jr. & O'Cain 1973).

2.6 Later History of the LAP

At the conclusion of LANE fieldwork in 1933, interest in the broader project was high, and several sample records had already been collected in areas as far-reaching as Ohio, Kentucky, and Wisconsin, but the LAP's next primary focus was the study of the Atlantic coastal region (Kurath 1933). The project that would become the Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States (LAMSAS) began in 1933, shortly after the conclusion of LANE's fieldwork, surveying the contiguous geographic area from New York to Georgia (Atwood 1986).⁹

⁹ LAMSAS is actually a merger of two related projects that were originally separate: the Linguistic Atlas of the Middle Atlantic States (New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania) and the Linguistic Atlas of the South Atlantic States (Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and parts of Georgia and Florida) (Allen 1977; Kretschmar et al. 1993).

For the preliminary survey of the South Atlantic states, principal investigator Guy S. Lowman, Jr. used the ‘short’ worksheet from LANE as a basis, and after field testing, he cut and added new items to cater to regional differences, including many items that reflected the “economic, social and cultural conditions in the South” (Davis, McDavid & McDavid 1969: vii). The worksheet was slightly modified again for the Middle Atlantic States. Throughout these early years, Lowman served as the sole single fieldworker for LAMSAS — largely a result of the lack of a centralized, dedicated funding source for the LAP (McDavid 1983). Lowman, who had also worked as full-time fieldworker for LANE, ultimately conducted 826 interviews for LAMSAS from 1933 until his unfortunate death by car accident in 1941 (McDavid 1971).

Lowman’s passing, alongside heightened financial instability related to the Great Depression and World War II, meant that no LAMSAS interviews were conducted for three years starting in 1942 (McDavid et al. 1986). By 1945, Raven I. McDavid, Jr. had assumed sole responsibility for fieldwork on the Southern project and began collecting interviews again through 1949 (Kretzschmar et al. 1993). Work on the project repeatedly stopped and restarted over the next decades, and by 1974, LAMSAS consisted of more than 1,000 informants collected by at least 8 fieldworkers over a span of 40 years. However, due to administrative obstacles and McDavid’s death in 1984, the LAMSAS *Handbook* detailing preliminary results from the survey was not published until 1993 (Kretzschmar et al. 1993). In sum, LAMSAS spanned 60 years from collection to publishing compared to LANE’s 10.

In the meantime, several other LAP sub-projects cropped up, often spearheaded by students of either Kurath or McDavid, including the Linguistic Atlas of the North Central

States (LANCS), the Linguistic Atlas of the Upper Midwest (LAUM), and the Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States (LAGS) among others (Burkette n.d.; Penhallurick 2018).

However, the lack of a dedicated, centralized funding source meant that these later sub-projects operated with relative autonomy, often relying on the work of a single researcher or very small team (Pederson et al. 1974).¹⁰ In total, these sub-projects collectively represent much (though not all) of the geographic U.S., with major regional collections represented in Table 2.1 below.

Today, the LAP is housed at the University of Kentucky, where one of the team's primary goals is to unite all the materials that have been spread across various university holdings, library archives, and personal collections. Given the sheer number of physical items in the collection (including paper field pages, handwritten notes, and aluminum discs), a second major priority for the LAP today is digitizing these materials — not just to preserve the LAP collection, but also to make it accessible to scholars and the public. However, the organizational challenges to achieving these goals cannot be overstated. Not only have field records and original documents been scattered across locations, but some materials have been lost and others have likely been destroyed. Those that remain have often been catalogued with different organizational systems. That said, the LAP is lucky to have small but industrious team aided by University of Kentucky faculty, staff, and students who are dedicated to achieving the vision of a fully digitized and accessible collection. Moreover, the LAP team today seeks not just to maintain the project, but also to carry on its work, and they continue to conduct new interviews today.

¹⁰ McDavid (1978) notes that LAUM in particular drew heavily from the methods of LANE, but operated in near isolation from other LAP projects, maintaining little to no communication with Kurath or other fieldworkers.

Table 2.1: Major Regional Sub-projects of the LAP

Project	Years Collected	States Represented	Informants
Linguistic Atlas of New England (LANE)	1931-1933	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, parts of New York, Rhode Island, Vermont	416
Linguistic Atlas of Middle and South Atlantic States (LAMSAS)	1933-1974	Delaware, parts of Georgia, parts of Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia	1,162
[Gullah]	1933	South Carolina	21
Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States (LAGS)	1968-1983	Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas	914
Linguistic Atlas of the North Central States (LANCS)	1933-1978	Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin	564
Linguistic Atlas of the Upper Midwest (LAUM)	1947-1962	Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota	208
Linguistic Atlas of Western States (LAWS)	1988-present	Colorado, Utah, Wyoming	ongoing
Linguistic Atlas of Pacific Coast (LAPC)	1952-1959	California, Nevada	300
Linguistic Atlas of Pacific Northwest (LAPNW)	1953-1963	Oregon, Washington, Idaho	51
Linguistic Atlas of Hawai'i (LAH)	1950	Hawaii	8

CHAPTER 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Dialectology and Variationist Sociolinguistics

In the years following the fieldwork and publication of early projects like LANE, the emerging field of sociolinguistics and posed new questions for the LAP and dialectology (Penhallurick 2018). Stemming from new approaches to sampling, data collection, and statistical analysis, a broader debate emerged between the disciplines of sociolinguistics and dialectology. In this chapter, I outline several of these discussions, as well as how researchers have responded and adapted in turn. I then address some of the more recent theoretical considerations of indexicality, ideology, and enregisterment that continue to raise new considerations for dialectology, sociolinguistics, and the LAP.

3.1.1 Critiques of Sampling Methods

Following the boom of variationist sociolinguistics, spurred in large part by the work of Labov (1966), the LAP's methods of selective sampling were called into question (Chambers & Trudgill 1998). Some scholars criticized the LAP for not using a random sample of informants (Pickford 1956); others suggested that the LAP's sampling methodology meant that the project could not capture a truly representative sample of American English speech (Underwood 1974). However, dialectologists countered that the LAP's sampling method was non-random by design and that the LAP was never intended to be representative of all American speech (McDavid & O'Cain 1973; Penhallurick 2018). Per the original outline for the project, the LAP had two primary goals regarding their sample. First, on the geographic level, they prioritized rural communities and regions with significant historical or cultural value or with otherwise potentially moribund dialects (Kurath 1930). Second, on the informant level, they prescribed finding

residents to serve as reliable representatives of certain types of speakers for each of those communities, and thus employed a combination of judgement and quota sampling (Kurath 1930; 1939). McDavid Jr. & O’Cain (1973) summarize the LAP’s pursuit this way:

In short, it was not the aim of the Linguistic Atlas to break ground in the theory of social stratification but to record the usage of unequivocal social types in relatively stable communities in order to reconstruct as nearly as possible the regional patterns of American speech of a slightly earlier time and to provide a context for the study of intermediate types of communities and social level.

In other words, the LAP was intended to be a preliminary survey on which future scholars could build and expand (Hanley 1930). Throughout his career, Kurath (1972: 2) continued to assert the value of the LAP’s sampling methods, acknowledging that this method is both time-effective and productive, so long as the researcher recognizes the limitation that these samples are “only approximately representative of their communities or of a social or age group living there” and not of all American speech. Trudgill (1983: 33-42) similarly writes that the LAP’s method of informant selection was “obviously exactly the right thing to do” given their objectives and that using a random sample in this case would have been “entirely inappropriate.”

Still, the Atlas’s sampling methods are not beyond reproach. For instance, researchers have since pointed out that the LAP sample nonetheless tends to privilege men at the expense of women (Coates 2013) and white informants at the expense of nearly everyone else (Burkette n.d.), ultimately giving a limited and specific picture of certain American English dialects. Early on, Kurath (1930: 51) suggested that dialectology would benefit from recognizing that ideal informants need not be the exclusive sample, noting that these individuals “cannot be relied upon on all occasions to

produce the vernacular.” Furthermore, in the *LANE Handbook*, Kurath (1939: 49) specifically calls for social and racial representation in the sample, writing, “The careful selection of informants from the various generations and from diverse social and racial elements is of supreme importance.”¹¹ However, given the project’s limited resources and their primary aim of obtaining older dialectal forms, certain types of informants (i.e., NORMs) were nonetheless prioritized over others.

3.1.2 Critiques of Fieldwork Methods

In addition to their sampling techniques, the LAP’s fieldwork methods also received several critiques. For one, in contrast to Labov’s (1972) rapid and anonymous survey method, the sheer length of the worksheet and the resulting interview has been repeatedly cited as a criticism of the LAP’s cumbersome and unwieldy methods (Penhallurick 2018).¹² For another, the worksheet’s focus on collecting phonological and lexical targets potentially gives less attention to morpho-syntactic variables and is generally unable to capture salient discourse variables like suprasegmentals (Davis,

¹¹ Despite Kurath’s calls for racial diversity, the LAP’s sample is overwhelmingly white. Outside of the notable collection of 21 African American speakers of Gullah from the coast of Georgia and South Carolina collected in 1933 by Lorenzo Dow Turner, non-white speakers are largely underrepresented from early projects like *LANE* and *LAMSAS*. When African American speakers are included in these projects, they are separated from the larger informant pool and (uncomfortably) marked with an “N” before their informant number for “Negro.” Informants of other races are nearly or entirely unrepresented. Later LAP projects did little better to represent non-white informants until the 1970s, when Lee Pederson attempted to sample a representative population of African American speakers proportional to the target area for *LAGS* (Burkette, Preston, & Fruehwald, unpublished ms.). Ultimately, the LAP’s treatment of race deserves further critical attention and careful consideration — certainly more than a footnote.

¹² In their criticisms, several scholars have cited the true story about an Atlas informant who died in between interview sittings, prompting his wife to take over in his stead (Penhallurick 2018). However, as Dr. Allison Burkette and I have discussed on several occasions, there’s another way to interpret this story. In this case, a recently bereaved spouse thought this project was worthy and important enough that she finished the Atlas interview for her late husband in the days immediately after his death. To me, the only thing this story reveals is the gravitas with which many Atlas informants regarded their participation in the project.

McDavid & McDavid 1969). For some, the focus on lexis (especially relic or archaic forms) over grammar represented a blind spot in the LAP's purview (Underwood 1974).

The LAP's interviewing methods also garnered critical concern. The decision to hire multiple fieldworkers was a break in methodology from previous European surveys who often relied on a single fieldworker, at least partially for procedural consistency (Bottiglioni 1986). While LAP fieldworkers were often experienced phoneticians and were trained in the phonetic detection and transcription, they still developed unique notation practices in the field, making cross-informant comparison more complicated (McDavid et al. 1986). Differences between fieldworkers' interviewing styles also arose — some focused more on collecting archaisms and older forms, while others (notably McDavid in his work for LAMSAS) had the tendency to ask more follow-up questions and thus simply record more variables (Atwood 1986; Burkette 2014).¹³

In order to mitigate differences between fieldworkers, later surveys like the Orton & Dieth's (1962) *Survey of English Dialects* (SED) and Cassidy, Hall & Von Schneidemesser's (1985) sociolinguistically informed *Dictionary of American Regional English* (DARE) adhered to a more strict interview baseline with standardized elicitation prompts. However, Kurath (1963) notes that this practice runs the risk of skewing the data towards careful speech, eliciting more standard forms rather than local or dialectal ones. Chambers and Trudgill (1980:28) agree, noting that an overly prescriptive elicitation style has the tendency to produce an air of formality between informant and fieldworker where “questions have the flavor of an interchange between a schoolmaster

¹³ McDavid's habit of asking numerous follow-up questions occasionally results in what LAP researchers refer to as the “McDavid distribution” — a data analysis phenomenon where relic forms are potentially over-represented in the LAMSAS regions where McDavid was the primary fieldworker (Burkette 2014)

and pupil, and not a particularly happy interchange at that when the response is trivial or obvious.” As dissected by McDavid (1971: 10), this rigidity is problematic for the fieldworker, too: “it prevents the skillful fieldworker from exploring openings in the conversation; it hinders the gathering of synonyms; it discourages the recording of unguarded responses from free conversation.”

McDavid (1971) concludes that fieldworker variation is inevitable for a project of the Atlas’s scale and should be an editorial concern, not a fieldwork one. In other words, it is the project editor’s responsibility to properly explain differences in fieldworkers’ elicitation styles, not to control for them and limit the collection of response data within the interview itself. Kurath (1939) exemplified this practice in the *LANE Handbook* by including a transparent breakdown of each fieldworker’s strengths and weaknesses, but McDavid (1978) suggests that some later projects like LAUM fell short in this respect, further complicating cross-project comparison.

3.1.3 Rapprochement

In response to what appeared to be a broader debate between dialectologists and sociolinguists, several potential solutions were proposed, with most suggesting some kind of rapprochement (Penhallurick 2018).¹⁴ McDavid Jr. & O’Cain (1973: 137) write that the two fields should be considered as “complementary rather than mutually contradictory approaches to the phenomena of language variation.” Trudgill (1983: 32) agrees that it is “regrettable that sociolinguists often ignore [the dialectologist’s] data”

¹⁴ At least two solutions suggest coining a new name. Chambers & Trudgill (1980) propose “geolinguistics,” while elsewhere Chambers (1993) offers the more cumbersome “sociolinguistic dialectology.”

and suggests that there are many ways where the two disciplines can work together. LAP researchers like Kretzschmar (1995) concur, calling dialectology and sociolinguistics two sides of the same coin, just with different currency. In second edition of their book *Dialectology*, Chambers & Trudgill (1998: 188) state the need for collaboration plainly: “Dialectology without sociolinguistics at its core is a relic.”

Dialectologists and LAP researchers have responded accordingly and taken the hybrid approach advocated by Chambers and Trudgill, both in collection and analysis. In particular, two large-scale dialect surveys of American English with a decidedly sociolinguistic influence have emerged. *DARE* (Cassidy, Hall & Von Schneidmeyer 1985) and *The Atlas of North American English* or *ANAE* (Labov, Ash & Boberg 2006) each approached their dialectological aims with updated collection, sampling, and analysis protocols informed by sociolinguistic methods. Later LAP sub-projects have similarly worked to address previous methodological criticisms. For one, the LAGS moved toward a quota-sampling model to mitigate the historical over-representation of NORMs in LAP data and more accurately reflect the population of their area of focus (Pederson et al. 1974). LAGS fieldworkers were also able to tape record their interviews, opening the possibility to not only capture more kinds of linguistic variation, but also enabling analysis of more textual and discourse elements in the LAP interview (Pederson 1993).

Additionally, LAP studies have also employed sociolinguistically informed analyses to answer traditionally dialectological questions. Several projects have utilized statistical regression analysis of LAP data to re-examine dialect areas and boundaries (Davis & Houck 1992; Davis & Houck 1995; Johnson 1994). Johnson (1996) also

extended this method to conduct a real-time study that also examined multiple sociolinguistic variables resulting in a detailed and nuanced analysis. Following the publication of the *LAMSAS Handbook*, Kretzschmar & Schneider (1996) authored an entire book outlining quantitative and computational approaches to LAMSAS data. In a review for *Language*, the book is described as “bridging the gap” between dialectology and Labovian sociolinguistics; however, the review is less enthusiastic about the overall usefulness of the results of such a bridge: “One wonders, for example, about the value of being able to detect statistically significant differences in the distribution of assorted terms for ‘cow pen’ (particularly when the data represent the speech situation from over 50 years ago)” (Gordon 1999: 173).

Today, dialectologists and sociolinguists not only share a common goal in the study of linguistic variation and change, but often share methods of sampling, data collection, and analysis — so much so that, in recent years, it has become “particularly difficult to come up with definitions which clearly and firmly separate dialectology from the Labovian or variationist strand of sociolinguistics” (Penhallurick 2018: 244).

3.2 New Developments in Sociolinguistics

More recently, theoretical developments from linguistic anthropology and what Eckert (2012) calls third-wave sociolinguistics have raised new questions for dialectologists and variationists alike. Specifically, projects exploring indexicality (Silverstein 2003), language ideologies (Gal & Irvine 2000), and enregisterment (Agha 2005) have complicated linguists’ understanding of how language, place, and identity

come to be related. Moreover, this research has taken a critical look at the methodologies that researchers use to investigate sociolinguistic phenomena.

3.2.1 Third-wave Sociolinguistics

According to Eckert's (2012; 2016) model, variationist sociolinguistic research can be organized according to three successive waves. First-wave variationist projects (historically rooted in dialectology and exemplified by the early work of Labov) are characterized by the quantitative patterning of linguistic variables according to broad macro-social categories such as gender, class, and race (Eckert 2016). Theoretically, first-wave studies “interpreted the social significance of variation on the basis of a general understanding of the categories that served to select and classify speakers rather than through direct knowledge of the speakers themselves and their communities” (Eckert 2012: 90).

Second-wave studies shifted their focus from broad-scale patterns and generalizations to more emic understandings of how the social affects language. Primarily drawing on ethnographic methodologies, this research revealed how social categories are neither monolithic nor deterministic with regard to variation; rather, meaning and variation are often reinterpreted locally and thus should be studied at the level of the individual or community of practice (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992).

In the third wave, according to Eckert (2008: 472), “The social is not just a set of constraints on variation — it is not simply a set of categories that determine what variants a speaker will use — it is a meaning-making enterprise.” Rather than focusing on the patterned distribution of linguistic variables across broad macro-social categories, third-

wave research foregrounds the social meanings of those linguistic variables in use (Eckert 2016). Other scholars pursuing related work in linguistic anthropology have similarly explored the stylistic and ideological nature of variation, motivated by an understanding of language as a social practice (Bucholtz & Hall 2005; Irvine 2002). As Johnstone (2016: 632) aptly summarizes, “We now ask questions about why people use features of one variety or another, rather than assuming that people inevitably speak the way they first learned to speak, and the answers we arrive at have to do with identity and agency rather than only with geography and demography.”

3.2.2 Indexicality

A central theoretical framework underpinning this vein of research is indexicality, largely informed by the work of Michael Silverstein. In his early work on the topic, Silverstein (1976: 53) argues that indexicality is not just a property of certain linguistic forms (i.e., “shifters”) — instead, it is the property of all discourse that links “speech to the wider system of social life” (Silverstein 1976: 53). Further work in the field has explored these social linkages more closely, such as how indexicality indirectly connects linguistic variation to gender (Ochs 1992). Indexicality thus offers a new model for how variation comes to be perceived as socially significant.

Silverstein's (2003) concept of the indexical order explains the semiotic mechanism by which indexical-signs-cum-linguistic-variables acquire meaning via lamination. At the n^{th} order, variation is just “different ways of saying ‘the same’ thing” (Silverstein 2003: 212). Once that variation rises to metapragmatic awareness (Verschueren 2000), it becomes available for valorization at the $n+1^{\text{st}}$ order. Thus, “for any indexical phenomenon at order n , an indexical phenomenon at order $n+1$ is always

immanent: (Silverstein 2003: 212). Furthermore, this pattern can continue again at the $(n+1) + 1^{\text{st}}$ order, revealing compounded layers of interpretation that fold back and inform one another. In this way, indexicality is a dialectic, constituting and constituted by both the (micro) interactional frame and the (macro) socio-culturally informed frame in which the interaction is situated.

Building on Silverstein's work, Eckert (2008: 454) suggests that "variables do not have static meanings, but rather general meanings that become more specific in the context of styles." In other words, variables don't exist in a vacuum, but rather are situated within larger systems of meaning. Her concept of the indexical field — a "constellation of meanings that are ideologically linked" — captures the dynamic and contextual ways that linguistic variables map to an array of potential meanings that are locally negotiated (464).

3.2.3 Language Ideologies

Both Silverstein and Eckert argue that ideology is central to indexicality. For Silverstein (2003), ideology is what powers valorization at different indexical orders, often through some kind of justification of difference or "misrecognition" (Bourdieu 1991). Eckert (2008: 454) similarly writes that "variation constitutes an indexical system that embeds ideology in language and that is in turn part and parcel of the construction of ideology." As a result, Silverstein (2003: 227) suggests that a successful indexical analysis must examine both the pragmatic (i.e., indexical) as well as the metapragmatic (i.e., "ideologically informed") contexts.

The study of language ideologies (also sometimes called linguistic ideologies) has emerged as a key focus of anthropological linguistics (Schieffelin, Woolard & Kroskrity 1998). As Gal & Irvine (2019) note, there is no central consensus on the definition of a language ideology (or, for that matter, on the definition of ideology more generally).¹⁵ Silverstein's (1979) early work defined linguistic ideologies as beliefs that serve to rationalize behaviors and language practices, as well as to inform language's overall structure. More recent research has focused on how linguistic ideologies are part of a broader ideological system and thus deeply intertwined with other social and cultural structures (Gal 1998). Language ideologies are crucial for sociolinguistic investigation because these systems are the foundation for the interpretation of meaning in a system of variation.

Preston (2010) has positioned language regard as the sub-field of sociolinguistics that investigates language ideologies as well as broader attitudes and beliefs about language. This field also encompasses studies of folk linguistics (Niedzielski & Preston 1999) and perceptual dialectology (Preston 1989), which focus on exploring what non-linguists believe about language, dialects, and variation as a means of understanding how ideologies necessarily inform both linguistic production and perception. Moreover, research in this field seeks to examine both the conscious and subconscious elements of these systems of belief.

¹⁵ Bakhtin's (1986: 101) definition of ideology is useful here: "‘Ideology’ should not be confused with the politically oriented English word. Ideology as it is used here is essentially any system of ideas. But ideology is semiotic in the sense that it involves the concrete exchange of signs in society and history. Every word/discourse betrays the ideology of its speaker; every speaker is thus an ideologue and every utterance an ideologeme."

Studies language regard (inclusive of ideologies, attitudes, and beliefs) are not only interested in the ideological influences behind variation, but also their downstream effects. For instance, Gal & Irvine (2000: 36) focus specifically on variation as a system of “linguistic differentiation” and examine ideological structures as well as their consequences. Moreover, their research has shown that language ideologies are not exclusively a folk phenomenon, but that these mechanisms are also at work within the work of linguists and ethnographers. They argue that linguists should pay critical attention to language ideologies underlying their research practices, as well as the semiotic processes (i.e., iconization, fractal recursivity, and erasure) that construct and reify linguistic difference (Gal & Irvine 2000).

3.2.4 Enregisterment

Research on enregisterment has further explored the connections of variation and ideology. Enregisterment refers to the sociolinguistic process where repertoires of linguistic forms “become semiotically associated with particular ways of being and acting” (Johnstone & Kiesling 2008: 7). Agha (2005) defines a register as a recognizable constellation of linguistic variables imbued with higher-order indexical meanings so that they are recognizable as evoking some socially typifiable voice. Moreover, he argues that “encounters with registers are not merely encounters with voices (or characterological figures and personae) but encounters in which individuals establish forms of footing and alignment with voices indexed by speech and thus with social types of persons, real or imagined, whose voices they take them to be” (38).

Descriptive research on enregisterment has examined specific varieties (i.e., registers) to analyze how variation and identity become indexically linked. In particular,

Barbara Johnstone has produced especially enlightening work around the enregisterment of dialect (Johnstone, Andrus & Danielson 2006; Johnstone & Kiesling 2008; Johnstone 2009). Johnstone, Andrus & Danielson (2006) not only examine how key linguistic features come to be associated with the dialect known as Pittsburghese, but also how socio-cultural and ideological forces continue to inform the indexical associations of these variables across multiple indexical orders. For example, a first-order correlation (e.g., the use of monophthongal /aw/) can be taken up at the second order when it becomes available to perform some kind of social work (e.g., to express solidarity with other people from Pittsburgh). At the third order, the second-order usage becomes available for valorization and thus the same variable expresses some new indexical potential (e.g., to imitate someone from Pittsburgh). Furthermore, because of the dialectic nature of indexical orders, second- and third-order usages can impact the first-order “facts on the ground” (84). Johnstone, Andrus & Danielson conclude that “‘languages’ and ‘dialects’ are cultural constructs, produced by a group of people using, or orienting to and/or talking about, a particular set of linguistic features, in a process that also constructs the group itself” (79). Ultimately, this approach takes a new tack in sociolinguistics: “Rather than assuming, as is done in a great deal of work in dialectology and variation studies, that dialects and varieties can be mapped onto places, we have treated dialect and place as cultural constructs” which are the consequences of “dialect-enregistration processes” (Johnstone, Andrus & Danielson 2006: 99).

Studies of enregisterment continue to explore new ground in variation and meaning. In their study of “Country Talk,” Hall-Lew & Stephens (2012) show how enregisterment can also link speech forms along processes of distinction (i.e.,

differentiation, per Gal & Irvine [2000]). In other words, country talk may not necessarily be mapped to a specific geographic area, but more generally to ways of life (Hall-Lew & Stephens 2012). Other projects have explored the application of enregisterment beyond geography, such as gender and the political economy (Inoue 2016), or the broader stylistic construction of identity (Mendoza-Denton 2011). In short, studies of enregisterment have the ability to reframe our understanding of how different kinds of dialects come to be understood as meaningful.

3.2.5 Reflexive Research Methods

Many of these theoretical paradigms have had further implications for the research practices of sociolinguistics. In the wake of the reflexive turn in the social sciences, researchers begun explicitly considering their own role in the production of their research, including closer examination of traditional methodologies like transcription (Ochs 1979) and ethnographic practices (Clifford & Marcus 1986). Bucholtz (2000: 1440) writes that one development emerging from this turn was an “awareness that ethnographies, the textual products of their disciplinary practice, are not transparent and unproblematic records of scientific research but are instead creative and politicized documents in which the researcher as author is fully implicated.” Scholars adopting a reflexive perspective have turned their focus toward commonly accepted sociolinguistic methodologies, including the interview.

In her critical examination of the sociolinguistic interview, Schilling (2013) has noted the many extra-linguistic factors at work in this setting that warrant reflexive analysis. For example, the interpersonal dynamic between an interviewer (often a university-affiliated researcher) and an interviewee (usually a vernacular-speaking

informant) can result in an asymmetry of social power, influencing the registers and styles used in the interview (Schilling 2013). Elsewhere, Schilling has shown the limitations of analyses that neglect the role of speaker agency in the production of variation. For instance, informants (particularly those who are aware that their dialect is the subject of academic interest) may use a potentially exaggerated performance register during an interview to “give the linguists exactly what they want to hear — and then some” (Schilling-Estes 1998: 74).

Anthropologists such as Briggs (1986) and Paredes (1993) have similarly argued for the need to attend to such interpersonal, intercultural, and stylistic factors at play during ethnographic interviews. Paredes (1993) offers examples of researchers who do not have a thorough understanding of the dialectal and communicative practices used by the community of study, and as a result, their research appears to have misinterpreted the content or the context of an interview — for example, not catching on when an informant is cracking a joke, making a reference, being sarcastic, or intentionally messing with the observing fieldworker. Paredes reviews ethnographic studies which include “passages that resemble jokes, legends, or other folkloric performances in content, style, or structure but are presented in print as examples of factual communication” (81). In these cases, he argues that these ethnographers exemplify “the cavalier use of linguistic data to illustrate ethnocentric preconceptions” (Paredes 1993: 79).

These authors have also critically reflected on other research practices such as sampling and data analysis. Although achieving a representative population sample is certainly a worthy goal, Paredes (1993: 75) notes that “the best sampling techniques will not take us very far if they lead us to think of all individuals in a category as

interchangeable units rather than as people with emotions and goals of their own.”

Moreover, the statistical approach of variationist sociolinguistics is not necessarily a methodological panacea. While there is certainly value in studies that count and quantify linguistic data, Paredes (1993: 83) argues that “the type of data that can be worked into graphs or fed into computers usually ignores the nuances of human interaction.”

3.2.6 New Research Practices

How can new work in sociolinguistics address these problems with data collection and analysis? For one, researchers can consider and acknowledge the limitations of the interview method. Just as Schilling (2013) notes the inherent “unnaturalness” of the sociolinguistic interview, Briggs (1986) argues that the ethnographic interview is not an everyday linguistic environment; rather, the interview constitutes its own unique communicative context, constructed dialogically between participant and researcher and dictated by different norms than everyday talk. As a result, researchers must pay critical attention to both their collection and analysis methods of interview data considering these contexts. Moreover, since the researcher is an active participant in the interview, they must attend to their own partiality — i.e., their own ideologies — both in the data collection and analytic phases.

For another, Schilling (Schilling-Estes 1999: 149) has suggested that interview analyses should foreground their informants as active, agentive participants in their construction of identity:

Speakers are not automatons whose use of variable features is nothing but a dull reflection of their demographic characteristics. Rather, they are active strategizers who use language to shape and re-shape themselves and the world around them. However, we can only get a full sense of speaker agency if we complement our large-scale quantitative studies with case studies that examine speech as it actually unfolds.

The need for such case studies is echoed by Briggs (1986), who proposes that researchers examine data such as interview transcripts both close up (e.g., the linguistic forms) and from a broader ethnographic perspective (e.g., how the responses were elicited, the dynamic between the interviewer and interviewee, the socio-cultural norms for communication, etc.). Centering the informant as an agentive entity, and further reflexively considering the fieldworkers position as participant-observer, broadens our analytic capabilities. However, they also bring new questions about how to apply these methods toward historical research collections like the LAP.

Several projects on enregisterment have applied similar approaches and shown the value of these methods in action. For their study, Hall-Lew & Stephens (2012) conducted sociolinguistic interviews that also incorporated tasks from folk linguistics and perceptual dialectology such as elicitation of language attitudes, facilitating dialect impressions, and conducting a draw-a-map task. This method “shifts attention away from feature-based descriptions and isogloss mapping to the indexical relationships between social practice and speech production” (Hall-Lew & Stephens 2012: 257). Similarly, in demonstrating the idiosyncratic and situated nature of indexicality, Johnstone & Kiesling (2008) draw on both case studies of key informants and historical research to examine the micro- and macro-processes of enregisterment. They argue that this method, which they call a phenomenological approach, “pays particular attention to the multiplicity and

indeterminacy of indexical relations and to the way in which such relations arise in lived experience” (29). Drawing on research of indexicality, language ideologies, and enregisterment, these studies point to new theoretical directions and methods for dialectology.

3.3 New Approaches to the LAP

Recent projects have approached the LAP from a perspective informed by indexicality, ideology, enregisterment and reflexive research practices. In particular, Burkette (2011; 2015; 2016) has shown the valuable interdisciplinary connections of dialectology with archeology and material culture. Burkette (2021) argues for a method that approaches LAP data as a kind of assemblage, which in physical archaeology represents a group of objects or artifacts found together and treated as a whole. As illustrated in her sketch (see Figure 3.1 below), this approach enables researchers to interpret linguistic data (i.e., an informant’s response to a targeted cue) alongside a broader array of data from the LAP collection: field notes, audio recordings, informant biographies, drawings, and more (Burkette 2021: 107, Figure 8.3). According to this interpretation, these data are necessarily connected, meaning a broader analysis can help reveal more potential connections.

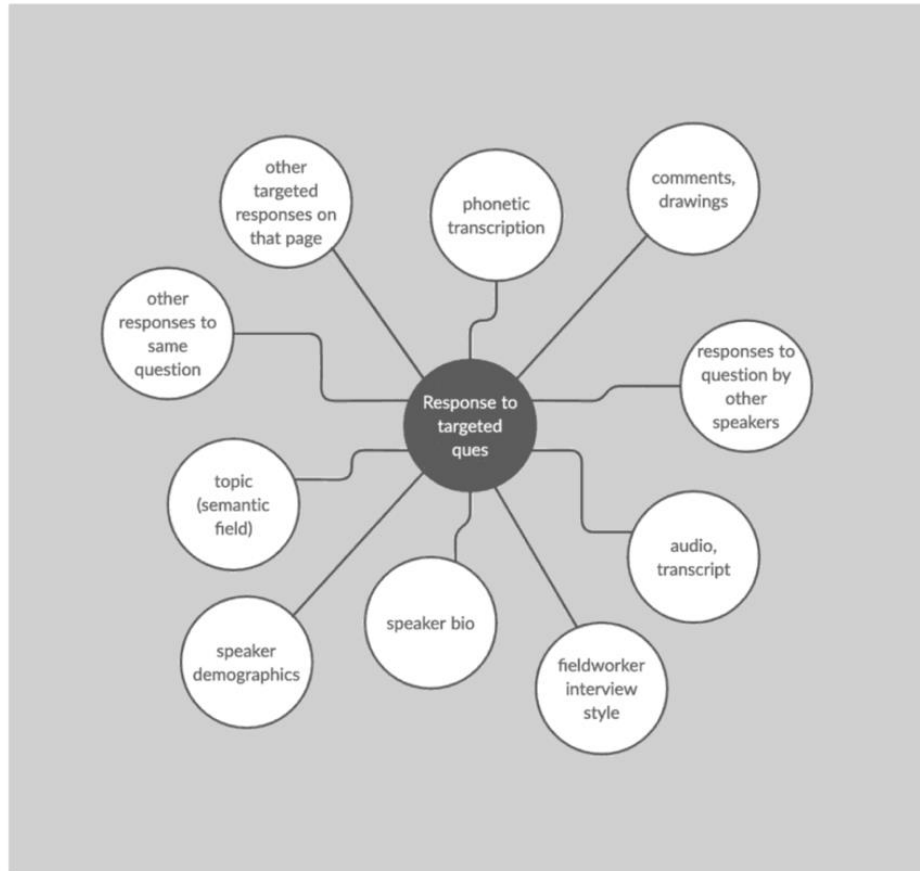


Figure 3.1: Sketch of an LAP assemblage (Burkette 2021)

This type of assemblage approach is particularly relevant to the LAP given the survey’s early influence from the words-and-things movement, which emphasized the connectedness of language with culture and ways of life (Johnson 1996). This approach also addresses the criticism that traditional dialectology methods are overly atomistic, focusing on bits of language rather than speakers (Mesthrie 2009). Moreover, Burkette’s assemblage approach toward the LAP has contemporary theoretical parallels in the interpretation of linguistic data as part of an intertextual series (Hill 2005; Schilling-Estes 2004); additionally, researchers such as Kroskrity (2021) and Pennycook (2021) have similarly drawn on assemblages to analyze linguistic and other semiotic phenomena.

Recent work has also examined indexicality within the LAP data. Burkette & Antieau's (2022) study of *a*-prefixing (e.g., “*a-singing*” or “*a-going*”) in the LAP has shown that this variable is not strictly a Southern dialect feature as some have suggested, but rather is found throughout the LAP subprojects, even as far north as Maine. They propose that *a*-prefixing might be thus used by LAP informants to indexically express a rural identity or an affinity for rural life, evoking Hall-Lew & Stephens's (2012) “country talk.” More broadly, their study suggests that historical LAP data can indeed be used for broader investigation of phenomena like indexicality. New research is also taking a greater interest in the conversational and discursive elements of the LAP data. Using audio recordings and transcripts from the LAP’s collection, Cramer & Burkette (in press) analyze key variables of Appalachian Englishes situated within their conversational context. Their method of analysis, examining a variable embedded in a broader discourse, echoes Eckert's (2008: 470) claim that variable “does not exist in a vacuum but is part of a vast system.”

Some LAP projects have also begun re-examining underutilized data sources in the collection such as written survey data. While several notable dialectology projects have utilized written surveys,¹⁶ this data collection approach largely fell out of favor among dialectologists around the mid-20th century in favor of the informal interview, which was seen as an improvement on earlier methods (Allen 1977). However, Burkette & Antieau (2023) have recently taken a closer look at the written surveys collected as part of the LAP, showing that data obtained from questionnaire surveys largely mirror

¹⁶ In addition to Wenker’s foundational study along with several LAP sub-projects, written questionnaires were also used in Angus McIntosh’s (1952) Linguistic Atlas of Scotland (LAS, later united as the Linguistic Survey of Scotland [LSS]).

data collected in more traditional LAP interviews. Burkette & Antieau’s findings suggest that written survey data need not be disregarded, but rather can be analyzed alongside other data sources to supplement LAP research projects and make new kinds of connections — a further argument for an assemblage-style approach.

The LAP is also actively (and reflexively) considering their new data collection practices. For one, new LAP methods will attempt to address longstanding concerns with traditional sampling methods. For one, in addition to the under-representation of non-white speakers, LAP surveys have also focused almost exclusively on monolingual English speakers. Accordingly, one of the LAP’s aims for new interviews is to extend the informant pool to include English-Spanish bilinguals (Burkette, Preston & Fruehwald 2023). Additionally, as part of their new “hybrid” protocol, the LAP will incorporate a draw-a-map task from perceptual dialectology (Preston 1989). Administered at the end of the interview, this task supplies informants with a blank map and asks them to label different speech zones (Burkette 2021). As a result, researchers will thus not only be equipped with an informant’s linguistic data, but also reflections that speak to their attitudes, beliefs, and ideologies about language in the surrounding area (Burkette, Preston & Fruehwald 2023).

These new projects show how the LAP can be a worthwhile and relevant resource for new sociolinguistic questions. In the next chapter, I seek to further develop this point by outlining the motivation for a new approach to the LAP that draws on these theoretical and methodological models.

CHAPTER 4. MOTIVATION

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the motivation for a reflexive and situated approach toward working with LAP data. Central to this approach is the understanding that LAP data were negotiated dialogically in the context of an interview setting, and further situated as part of a broader indexical and ideological system. As a result, research should attend to the ways that LAP data is necessarily ideological, indexical, and even enregistered by studying these phenomena within the dataset. I argue that the LAP represents a particularly relevant dataset for this approach thanks to the project's abiding interest in and attentiveness to the sociological aspects of linguistic variation, and how that interest was borne out in the project's fieldwork methods. I then focus on one of the LAP's data sources — the informant biography — as a prime resource for this new approach.

4.2 A New Approach to the LAP

As detailed in Chapter 3, theoretical and methodological developments in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology posed new questions for dialectology projects like the LAP; however, researchers have also suggested several ways forward. Framing dialects as the products (and producers) of enregisterment — the process that ideologically links ways of speaking with ways of being — presents one such opportunity. Hall-Lew & Stephens (2012: 276) summarize that just as “Perceptual dialectology has long argued that studies of dialect geography must be informed by speakers' perceptions and attitudes,” models of enregisterment have the potential for

“uniting dialect geography with theories of indexicality, ideology, and social meaning.” Johnstone, Andrus & Danielson (2006: 78) similarly argue for “the relevance of the ideas of enregisterment and indexicality to the historical dialectology of American English.” To facilitate these kinds of studies, they further recommend that sociolinguists “need to pay attention not just to people’s talk but to the metapragmatic activities in which they create and circulate ideas about how they talk” (99). This approach dovetails with reflexive approaches toward the sociolinguistic and ethnographic interview, with scholars like Paredes (1993: 107) arguing that “more recognition must be given to the process that takes place when a fieldworker interviews an informant,” and with scholars like Burkette (2021) investigating LAP data as a part of broader assemblages that can be studied together.

Accordingly, we can critically examine the LAP interview itself to better understand the resulting data housed in the LAP collection. Review of the LAP’s fieldwork motivations and methods reveals an early and ongoing interest in the sociolinguistic elements of dialect and variation. This interest led to their collection of additional data sources, such as the informant biography, that provide a better understanding of the dialogic nature of the LAP interview, as well as the potential language ideologies at work during this exchange. Using these informant biographies, we can position the LAP interview itself as a locus of metapragmatic activity, language ideologies, and processes of enregisterment. This understanding motivates a reflexive approach toward working with LAP data, examining the informant biography as part of a broader assemblage in order to situate linguistic data within their sociolinguistic contexts.

4.3 The LAP and Social Dialectology

An interest in sociocultural aspects of linguistic variation has been part of the LAP since the very beginning. In the original proposal for the LAP published ca. 1930 in the ADS publication *Dialect Notes*, the steering committee wrote that the future survey “must furnish material for studies in the social stratification of our spoken language, as well as in its geographical variations” (Hanley 1930: 69). The committee further explains the importance of this social element of variation when outlining the proposed scope of the LAP:

The speech of all groups of society must be represented on the maps of the Atlas. The younger generation often differs from the older, the uneducated from the educated; women, being exposed to different social influences, often differ from men. In most communities there are racial differences, especially in the cities. The material gathered in each community must furnish a cross-section of the diversified linguistic usage. There would be little purpose in confining the investigation to one class of society, for the speech of the cultured constantly draws from the lower levels of speech, and vice versa. We cannot hope to understand the history of any one of these “class dialects” and similar variations without knowing the speech of all the social groups in the community. The data presented in the Linguistic Atlas must furnish material for studies in the social stratification of our spoken language, as well as in its geographical variations. (Hanley 1930: 69)

While the focus on the “social stratification” of language points to a categorical understanding of variation along the lines of macro-social categories (i.e., what Eckert [2012] might categorize as part of the first-wave of variationism), we can nonetheless see an early awareness of (and interest in) sociolinguistic complexity embedded in the LAP’s preliminary goals.

This interest can at least partially be attributed to the LAP’s influence from Jaberg, Jud, and Scheuermeier’s survey of Italian dialects (Jaberg & Jud 1928). As

summarized in Chapter 2, their survey expanded the traditional dialectology sample beyond exclusively “folk” informants; moreover, their association with the words-and-things movement meant that they approached the interview as an almost ethnographic investigation of customs, culture and ways of life rather than an explicit survey about language (Burkette n.d.; Johnson 1996). In the early planning stages of the LAP, Kurath (1930: 73) acknowledged this project’s methodological influence on the LAP:

Dr. Scheuermeier's demonstration of his method of interviewing subjects was extremely enlightening. It convinced me of the importance of centering the questions around a more or less coherent content so that the subject's interest is centered more on the subject matter than on linguistic usage.

Per Kurath’s note, Jaberg, Jud, and Scheuermeier’s approach had immediate bearings on the LAP’s fieldwork methods, such as the development of the worksheet and the interview. They were also consulted regarding the LAP’s interest in sociolinguistic variation, with Kurath (1930: 73) reporting, “Our decision to include in our investigation the speech of all social groups finds approval.” As a result, according to McDavid (1971: 19), the LAP became “the first regional survey to recognize a social dimension” to dialectal variation.

Much of the LAP’s interest and attention to these social dimensions of language variation has been attributed to Kurath himself. Allen (1986: 247), for one, praises Kurath for setting “a precedent that increasingly has brought to light significant social variation in American English.” In addition to an interest in the social stratification of language, Kurath also seemed attuned to finer-grained aspects of sociolinguistic variation early in the collection of data for the LAP. Evidence can be seen in the methodology chapter of the LANE *Handbook*, which includes a thorough assessment of the project’s methods for

informant selection and data collection (Kurath 1939). In this section, Kurath (1939: 45) also outlines the potential for variability between data due to a number of factors within the interview:

The factors conditioning the character of the material are (1) the field worker's training, his personality and his approach; (2) the informant's personality, his fund of information and his attitude during the interview; (3) the character of the work sheets, such as the arrangement of the items, the verbal context and the definitions provided for the guidance of the field worker; (4) the linguistic character of the items: phonetic, lexical, or syntactic; (5) the 'thing-meant': concrete or abstract, familiar or unfamiliar, etc.

Of particular note in this summary are items (1) and (2), which point squarely to the interpersonal and interactional nature of the LAP interview, where data are not robotically collected via question-and-answer but discussed in conversation and thus dependent on the personalities and attitudes of informants and fieldworkers alike. Item (3) points to the interaction of the fieldworker with the prepared materials, suggesting that how the fieldworker navigated and presented the worksheet was as important as the content of the worksheet itself. Items (4) and (5) seem to be more specifically related to the content of the worksheet, but still may implicate the fieldworker in their successful elicitation.

Later in the *Handbook*, Kurath (1939: 45) acknowledges that not all responses were elicited in the ideal conversational conditions, and “When a response was not secured in this manner, i.e., the normal manner, or when the informant expressed or assumed a peculiar attitude towards the thing or the expression, the particular circumstances were noted.” These types of elicitation notations, alongside their abbreviations, are listed below:

c., conversation form, obtained without direct inquiry

r., repeated at the request of the field worker

s., suggested by the field worker and acknowledged as natural by the informant, whether actually used by the informant at present, used by him formerly, or heard from others

f., forced response, secured by pressing for an answer

cr., corrected spontaneously by the informant

:, hesitation on the part of the informant, for whatever reason

!, amusement on the part of the informant, either at the word or pronunciation, or at the subject matter;

?, prefixed to a form, uncertainty or doubt as to its genuineness on the part of the informant or the field worker.

⊥, expression heard from other in the community or, in the past, from a bygone generation

The linguistic data represented in the LAP were thus not entirely elicited by the indirect, conversational format extolled by the project aims, but also included repetitions, suggestions, forced responses, corrections, and bygone expressions. Moreover, other elicited forms may have provoked hesitation, amusement, or doubt. Fieldworkers were instructed to note these cases in the field pages to provide crucial interactional context to understand the variable as it was used; however, these contextual details are less easily incorporated into the distribution maps that were at the heart of the LAP's mission.

Kurath's (1939) methods chapter of the *Handbook* also notably includes a frank assessment of the LANE's fieldworkers, evaluating their collection methods with "ruthless honesty" (McDavid 1983: 49). These evaluation criteria included the fieldworkers' ability to elicit different forms, their fidelity to "minuteness" in phonetic transcription, their observation of lexical variants, the "fullness of notes taken down from

free conversation of the informant,” and more (Kurath 1939: 52-3). Kurath notes that some fieldworkers excel at eliciting conversational responses while others falter; in one case, he admonishes a fieldworker who “pressed forward energetically and rarely permitted the informants to expatiate or to drift into story telling and anecdote” (46). Rather than any arbitration of the fieldworker’s worthiness as an investigator, this review can be understood as an attempt to openly acknowledge and account for the limitations of the LAP collection methods. In these evaluations of fieldwork methods, we start to see more detail about the interpersonal nature of the LAP interview and its inherent variability.

In addition to his honest review of the fieldworker’s effect on the collection of LAP data, Kurath (1939: 46-7) also recognized the potential for variability based on the project’s informants:

The informant’s responses are colored by his personality, his attitude toward the interviewer, his attitude toward language, and the extent of his knowledge as determined by his occupation, his social contacts, his reading and his intellectual curiosity. He may be responsive or reticent, trusting or wary, talkative or taciturn, elusive or drifting or to the point, imaginative or matter-of-fact, friendly and open or suspicious and retiring, emotional or cold, immersed in the present or fond of ‘olden days.’ He may be natural, unaffected and unconcerned about ‘correctness,’ or else on guard, affected, conscious of ‘improvements’ and eager to speak ‘correctly.’ He may be naïve and set in his speech or vary his style with the circumstances. Some pay no attention to the speech of others, some again are observant and can report reliably the usage of relatives, neighbors and strangers. In native intelligence and in the fund of information at their disposal they are no less diverse — some highly intelligent and well-informed, others slow-witted, with limited interests. In the lives of the informants (Chapter VI), such traits are pointed out and must be duly considered in dealing with the facts presented by the Atlas.

Kurath’s words seem almost prescient in light of the disciplinary history of sociolinguistics. To summarize, Kurath says that the interview can be affected by the

informant's attitude toward the interviewer, evoking notions of interpersonal and epistemic stance (Kiesling 2009); the informant's attitude toward language, evoking folk linguistics (Niedzielski & Preston 1999); the informant's knowledge of speech variation based on occupation, social life, and reading level, evoking not just variationist sociolinguistic investigations but also notions of metapragmatic awareness (Verschueren 2000) and voicing contrasts (Agha 2005); the informant's eagerness to speak correctly, evoking prescriptivism and standard language ideologies (Barrett, Cramer & McGowan 2023); and the informant's ability to "vary his style with the circumstances," evoking style and style-shifting, both in the Labovian sense (Labov 1972b) and more contemporary sense (Schilling-Estes 2002; 2008). Kurath's early attentiveness to a wide range of topics in sociolinguistics is remarkable, as is his note that these facts "must be duly considered in dealing with the facts presented by the Atlas." This kind of complexity is perhaps what (Trudgill 1983: 42) had in mind when he described LANE as "sociolinguistically sophisticated."

This tradition of attentiveness to the sociolinguistic factors conditioning the interview continued throughout the LAP's development. Pederson et al.'s (1974) *A Manual for Dialect Research in the Southern States* documents how these sociolinguistic interests were carried out in the fieldwork for later sub-projects such as LAGS. For one, the affordability and accessibility of portable tape recorders meant that the interviews conducted for LAGS were able to be recorded. Pederson et al. (1974) suggest that such recordings would better enable researchers to analyze the conversational discourse elements of the interview in addition to the linguistic targets.

The *Manual* also includes a chapter from McDavid (1974), which summarizes general advice and procedures for dialectology fieldwork from his experience with LAMSAS. Underscoring the need to build rapport with the informant, he specifically suggests investigators might frame the LAP interview as part of an oral history project rather than a matter of language study. Another suggestion is to altogether “eschew the word *dialect*, which is often misunderstood” in order to avoid drawing the informant’s attention to their own speech (McDavid 1974: 44).¹⁷ He concludes that “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” (McDavid 1974: 50). This interactional attentiveness is echoed in a later chapter of the *Manual* titled “Folklore and the LAGS Fieldworker,” in which Foster (1974) notes the close interrelatedness of folklore studies with dialectology, particularly in the methodology that prioritizes interpersonal rapport and conversation based on local culture and customs.

These methods reinforce the standard that Kurath set early on, and moreover they resonate with the suggested approaches from scholars like Paredes (1993) and Briggs (1986) toward the ethnographic interview. For one, these authors similarly suggest the researcher should consider the informant as a performer of folklore. Paredes (84) writes, “the folklorist tends to view the informant not only as a more-or-less representative member of a group but as a potential artist, and an individual person as well, with interests and goals of his own.” Second, Briggs (14) suggests that oral history interviews

¹⁷ Here, I think of the interview from Preston (1994: 286), where a graduate student asks an informant “Could you tell me a little bit about your dialect?” The informant responds by disputing the presupposition that he has a dialect.

produce not just a dialogue between researcher and informant, but also “a *dialogue* between past and present.” In this light, many of the LAP interviews with their focus on ways of life may produce such a dialogue between past and present. These findings suggest that the data produced within the LAP interview is conducive to interdisciplinary analysis, drawing on methods from disciplines like ethnography and folklore.

4.4 About the Informant Biography

The LAP’s attentiveness is not only captured in their instructions for fieldwork methods, but also in resulting data sources like the informant biographies. As summarized in Chapter 2, the informant biography is a summary written by the fieldworker at the conclusion of the LAP interview to serve as a cover sheet for an informant’s field record. In their plan for the LAP, the steering committee explained the motivation for these informant biographies this way: “The fieldworkers will secure a brief history of each subject whose speech is to be represented on the maps, so that scholars who use the Atlas will have a knowledge of the speech basis of each individual” (Hanley 1930: 69). Later in the *LANE Handbook*, Kurath (1939: 159) reiterates that “The proper interpretation of the Linguistic Atlas records requires at least some knowledge...of the life and personality of the informants interviewed.” In other words, the informant biography was intended to provide the relevant personal information that would give appropriate context to the linguistic data produced in the interview.

The information collected in the biography usually included the informant’s age, gender, occupation, birthplace and other places of residence, ancestry and family history, education, and extent of social contacts (i.e., often their religious affiliations or other

social memberships). Additionally, the informant biography also asked fieldworkers to write a character sketch, or a summary of the informant's "personality and character, as described by the fieldworker: temperament, habits, interests, and the like" (Kurath 1939: 161). While much of the informant biography was factual demographic information, the character sketch was a more subjective evaluation from the fieldworker's perspective often including impressionistic descriptions, notable speech characteristics, or even stories about the interview itself. Per Kurath (1939: 49), the character sketch was also meant to include a reflection on the informant's "alertness and intelligence, extent and accuracy of information, attitude toward the investigator and his task, naturalness or guardedness in utterance, interest in 'improving' the language" and anything else that may have conditioned the language used in the interview.

Kurath and the LAP team developed a templated worksheet for collecting the data for the informant biography, illustrated in part by Figure 4.1 below. This worksheet prompted the fieldworker to reflect specifically on the informant's behavior in the context of the interview: Were they more "old-fashioned or modern in speech?" Were they "at ease or on guard" during the interview? Was there "any desire to 'improve' the speech?" Did the informant "understand the field worker's purpose?" Fieldworkers were additionally asked to describe the informant's "general character of speech," as well as any "personal traits" worth documenting.

11. Old-fashioned or modern in speech? Old fashioned. Admires old style of elocution and eloquence.

12. At ease or on guard? Any desire to 'improve' the speech? At ease but could not be interviewed in the usual manner as every question lead to a discourse on his part. Jas cultivated his own speech and uses colloquialisms in "quotes".

13. Does informant understand the field worker's purpose?

14. Extent of information on topics covered by work sheets: Record fragmentary as most of materials offered here were jotted down from his conversation.

15. General character of speech: Possible Massachusetts influence. Shappy, ~~sharp~~ staccato utterance; perhaps also the sharp articulation of final consonants (which may be the result of school training and of careful cultivation); marked realization.

16. Personal traits: Pronounced opinions on all phases of life, which he is ready to express in choice language.

Figure 4.1: Excerpt Informant Biography Worksheet (LANE, CT142, Biography, page 2)

Some of the worksheet's questions ("At ease or on guard? Any desire to 'improve' the speech?") again evoke contemporary sociolinguistic notions of style and stance (Kiesling 2009). Other questions ("Does the informant understand the field worker's purpose?") seem to be an assessment of the informant's level of awareness about dialect variation and its potential mediating effect on their speech behavior in the interview (Agha 2005). In this case, a lack of understanding about the fieldworker's

purpose (i.e., the study of dialectal differences in American English) might point to a lack of metapragmatic awareness, but an understanding of the LAP's goals might suggest some awareness about the nature of linguistic variation. These questions again indicate an attentiveness on the part of the LAP organizers and fieldworkers to the highly interactional and socially mediated nature of the interview itself, and how it was potentially subject to influences that researchers now refer to as stance, style, and metapragmatic awareness.

The collection of these informant biographies was a multi-step process. In the case of LANE, the fieldworker composed the initial draft of the biography in longhand. Afterwards, these notes were edited, typed into a new document, and catalogued as part of the informant's field record. The biographies were then edited once more and condensed for publishing in the *Handbook*. As Kurath (1939: x) notes, this editing process ended up omitting many of the fieldworker's original notes, and "In many cases several pages of interesting and pertinent notes had to be reduced to a dozen short lines." As a result, the informant biographies published in the *Handbooks* are often significantly different from their earlier iterations, as illustrated by Figures 4.2 and 4.3 below from the LAMSAS collection.¹⁸

¹⁸ Over the history of LAMSAS, there have been several systems for cataloguing informants, resulting in multiple different informant numbering systems (i.e., Figure 2 shows the original informant biography number of VA247). Reconciling these different systems is one of the organizational challenges of working with LAP data today.

247 VA NEL EL K 687

Housewife, 77

Born here

PGF, PGM (of Irish descent) b. here or from down the James

MGF (of Scotch descent), MGM (of English descent), b. here

Attended pay school one session

Methodist

Sweet, simple, sturdy old lady -- very local, but intelligent and quick to grasp things in her mountain way

Rather slow tempo with a drawl, causing prolongation of all vowels. FW has not encountered this vowel prolongation east of here in Va. It reminds one of Pa. or N.C.

Figure 4.2: Example Informant Biography (LAMSAS, VA62A)

VA 62A: F, housewife, 77. B. here. — F. b. here, PGF, PGM b. here or from down the James (PGM Irish descent); M., MGF b. here (Scotch descent), MGM of English descent. — Ed.: Elma (pay school) one session. — Methodist. — Rather slow tempo with drawl, causing prolongation of all vowels; FW had not encountered phenomenon east of here; reminded him of PA or NC. Fronted /a/ as in Louisa Co.; /au/ like Greene and Augusta Cos.

Figure 4.3: Published Informant Biography (Kretzschmar 1993)

Across the two versions of the same informant biography represented in Figures 4.2 and 4.3, much of the original information has been preserved, including the informant's gender, occupation, age, birthplace, family history, education, religious affiliation, and the fieldworker's impressionistic description of key speech features. However, the character sketch ("Sweet, simple, sturdy old lady – very local, but intelligent and quick to grasp things in her mountain way") has been removed entirely from the published version.

Given the seemingly non-linguistic and subjective nature of this character sketch, it is perhaps easy to see why editors would remove this information from the published biography. However, the character sketch is often more than just an entertaining description — often, it can provide a detailed illustration of the informant as a real person from the fieldworker's perspective. Given their additional (often subjective) content, these earlier unpublished versions of the informant biographies offer relevant information for the understanding of LAP interview and the data that came from it. Sometimes, that information is useful towards a fuller understanding the informant; other times, it sheds new light on the fieldworker.

4.5 Conclusion

In their study of indexicality and enregisterment, Johnstone & Kiesling (2008: 24) argue that, as language researchers, "we need to pay more attention to our own interpretive practices than we sometimes have. This calls for increased reflexivity, that is, increased attention to the ideological schematizations that shape how we hear the variants

we study.” I argue that a similar reflexive approach is needed to situate the data of the LAP in its discursive contexts — both micro-interactional and macro-socio-cultural.

As mentioned above, there are a few reasons why the LAP is relevant for such an approach. For one, since the project’s beginnings, the LAP has been attuned to sociolinguistic nuances of the interview. Review of early LAP literature reveals a longstanding awareness that the LAP interview is a dialogic enterprise; not only is it determined by the personality and disposition of the informant, but also the fieldworker and a host of interactional and ideological factors. Data collection practices, such as noting the how a linguistic form was elicited, attempt to account for the interactional nature of the data, but they don’t necessarily provide a picture of the interview itself. Other LAP data sources, such as the original informant biographies, do offer more information about the interview itself.

These informant biographies a prime resource for reflexive research practices for a few reasons. For one, these original documents often contain data not included in the published *Handbooks* which can help reveal the unique communicative context in which the data were gathered. Additionally, character sketches of these biographies include subjective judgements and metadiscursive commentary that offer insight to the perceptions and attitudes held not just by the informants, but also the fieldworkers. Investigation of these ideologies — and, more specifically, these language ideologies — is crucial for the reflexive analysis of LAP data.

While the LAP team were rigorously trained and evaluated (Pederson et al. 1974), Kurath (1939) himself recognized early on that fieldworkers are implicated as participant-observers in the context of the LAP interview and have some bearing on the

data that gets produced. Moreover, in the words of Gal & Irvine (2000), “there is no ‘view from nowhere,’ no gaze that is not positioned.” Their study suggests that there is much to be gleaned from an examination of language ideologies in linguistics research projects:

Examining the activities of linguists a century or more ago reveals, via the wisdom of hindsight or at least via historical distance, the ideological dimensions of their work in drawing and interpreting linguistic boundaries. This historical inquiry also has a contemporary relevance, to the extent that early representations of sociolinguistic phenomena influenced later representations and even contributed to shaping the sociolinguistic scene itself. (Gal & Irvine 2000: 36)

In this light, the study of language ideologies within the informant biographies not only helps reveal the attitudes that LAP fieldworkers held at the time — it also has bearings on the conclusions they drew, the data they helped produce, and how language researchers approach LAP data today. To explore these questions, researchers can, first, perform a close analysis of the informant biographies and, second, examine the biographies alongside other LAP data as part of a broader assemblage approach (Burkette 2021). This strategy allows researchers to explore new questions, apply new methods, and uncover new connections within the expansive dataset that is the LAP.

CHAPTER 5. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I outline the specific dataset, processing techniques, and analysis methods that I use for a qualitative study of informant biographies housed within the LAP collection.

5.2 Data Overview

The data for the present study comes from the Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States (LAMSAS), a sub-project of the LAP that represents 1,162 informants from more than 10 states — see Figure 5.1 below for a map of the areas surveyed by LAMSAS. The interviews for LAMSAS were conducted from 1933-1974 by a total of eight fieldworkers plus additional student interviewers. More information about the collection methods and the informants represented in this project is available in the *LAMSAS Handbook* (Kretzschmar et al. 1993).

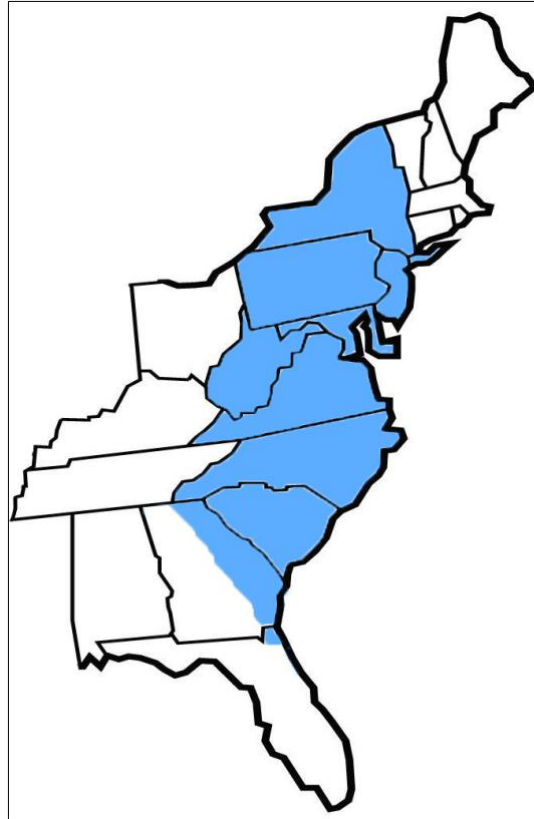


Figure 5.1: Approximate area surveyed for LAMSAS (Kretzschmar et al. 1993)

For this project, I used a total of 583 informant biographies from the original LAMSAS collection, representing just over half the number of the project's total informants. These 583 informant biographies started as a collection of 601 physical documents housed in the LAP archive at University of Kentucky. I selected these 601 documents based on their immediate availability; additional informant biographies from LAMSAS were not accessible at the time of publishing. After digitizing, processing, and transcribing these 601 documents (detailed in Section 5.3 below), I ended up with 583 unique informant biographies as my dataset.¹⁹

¹⁹ The entire dataset of transcribed informant biographies is available for download on my GitHub: https://github.com/napassarelli/LAMSAS_bios_corpus. These files are also in the process of being made publicly available via the Linguistic Atlas Project website: <https://linguisticatlasproject.org/>

Because the biographies for this study were used based on their immediate availability, they do not constitute a perfectly representative sample of LAMSAS informants. For instance, my dataset includes 158 biographies of informants from North Carolina, but no biographies from informants of Pennsylvania. A state-by-state breakdown of LAMSAS informants (adapted from Kretzschmar et al. 1993: 21) compared to the number of biographies in my dataset is listed below in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: LAMSAS Informants and Biographies in Dataset by State

States	Informants of LAMSAS²⁰	Biographies in My Dataset
Delaware	14	13
District of Columbia	2	2
Georgia	110	10
Florida	9	0
Maryland	62	61
North Carolina	157	158
New Jersey	47	13
New York	182	105
Ontario	0	8
Pennsylvania	158	0
South Carolina	156	21
Virginia	154	155
West Virginia	111	35
Total	1,162	581

²⁰ The numbers in this column differ slightly from Figure 2.7 in Kretzschmar et al. (1993: 21) because their counts “exclude 41 African-American informants, and one New York while male informant not classified by locality type.” For the purposes of reporting all official LAMSAS informants surveyed in each state, I have added these informants to these counts.

The comparison in Table 5.1 can be deceiving — for instance, Virginia and North Carolina appear to have more biographies than informants. This is because my dataset includes biographies from auxiliary informants (i.e., informants who were partly but never fully interviewed, often the spouses, children, or neighbors of primary LAMSAS informants) and partial informants (i.e., informants whose interviews were abandoned, left incomplete).²¹ The *Handbook* records these individuals in Chapter 10: Community Sketches and Informant Biographies (Kretzschmar et al. 1993: 165–421), but does not include them in their official informant counts. My dataset also notably includes 8 biographies of informants from Ontario, Canada.²² These biographies were originally catalogued alongside the New York informants and appear to be conducted at the same time by the same fieldworkers and with the same methods; however, today they are collected as part of the Linguistic Atlas of Canada (LACAN) rather than LAMSAS.

I have elected to keep these auxiliary, partial, and Canadian informant biographies in my dataset because the information they offer is valuable for my analysis, regardless of whether the informant completed a full interview or whether they were included in the LAMSAS *Handbook*. Additionally, this study is not an attempt to list and catalogue the language ideologies within the informant biographies of LAMSAS, but rather to show *how* language ideologies are present in these biographies and their consequences for our interpretation of the resulting data. I conclude that my diverse sample — which includes biographies for Canadian, auxiliary, and partial informants — is appropriate for this kind of investigation.

²¹ These partial and auxiliary informants are marked with an asterisk (*) alongside their informant number in the text of the biography and in the file name.

²² These Canadian biographies are marked as “LACAN” in their file names rather than “LAMSAS.”

As is conventional in LAP studies, I have kept the identities of informants anonymous and redacted any use of their names in the biographies. For this project, I have also opted not to identify the fieldworkers who authored these biographies. I made this decision because of the sensitivity of the content within the biographies. Many of the fieldworkers' remarks about their informants in these biographies are less than flattering. Moreover, many relatives of both informants and fieldworkers live on today and reflect positively on their family's participation in this project. The goal of this project is not to 'expose' what fieldworkers really thought about specific informants, nor is it to adjudicate who the LAP fieldworkers were as individuals or make claims about what specific beliefs they held. Rather, my goal is to show more broadly how the LAP interview is an ideological, interpersonal, and dialogic negotiation between fieldworker and informant. I believe that I can accomplish this investigation unproblematically (and non-controversially) without naming these parties explicitly.

5.3 Data Processing

My first step in preparing my dataset for analysis was to digitize and transcribe the 601 physical documents — a process that posed several practical challenges. First, these documents were historical, type-written, and not wholly consistent in style. Some documents were originals while others were faded carbon copies. Some contained no information in the character sketch while others included biographies on the same page. Some biographies had multiple versions with slight variations between them.²³

²³ For example, many New York informants had both a "form" version and a condensed or "short" version of the same biography. As a result, these informants have either "Form" or "Short" recorded in their file name.

Second, the quality of the scanned informant biography documents was not optimal for digital processing. The text was often skewed, noisy, or inconsistent in contrast. Some documents included hand-written edits, annotations, and editorial asides—for example, see Figure 5.2 below, which includes the bracketed annotation “[interesting tale which I have greatly condensed]” presumably written by an editor.²⁴ All of these factors posed challenges for automated transcription processing via optical character recognition (OCR). As a result, these documents required further image manipulation.

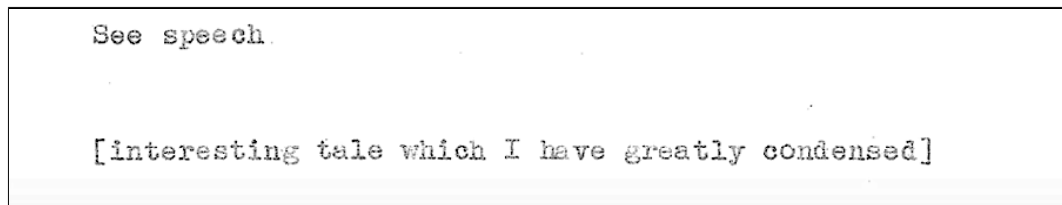


Figure 5.2: Excerpt of Informant Biography with Editorial Annotation (LANE, VA40A)

After scanning the 601 documents at 300 DPI, I researched and tested several different image pre-processing protocols to optimize the files for OCR (Mageshwaran 2021; Tesseract Documentation n.d.; Willus 2023).²⁵ The protocol that generated the best results was using Adobe Photoshop (2022) to manually edit an image file using several of the software’s automatic contrast, noise reduction, and image sharpening filters (e.g., Unsharp Mask and Dust & Scratches). However, due to time constraints on this project, editing hundreds of image files manually in Photoshop was not realistic. Instead, I used

²⁴ Editorial commentary suggests that these biographies were edited or condensed from at least one earlier version. Other LAP projects like LANE similarly had multiple versions of the informant biography, including hand-written originals, which were recently recovered and are currently in the process of being cataloged. I am presently working with the LAP staff to locate any earlier versions of the LAMSAS informant biographies that may exist for further comparison and analysis.

²⁵ I’m especially grateful to Dr. Mark Lauersdorf for his guidance with this process.

ImageMagick (2023) in my command-line interface to batch process and generate high-resolution TIFF files from the PDF scans.

I utilized two image processing techniques: one ‘standard’ procedure for higher-quality documents, and one ‘enhanced’ procedure for lower-quality documents.²⁶ The standard procedure included 1) setting the image density to 300 dots per inch; 2) setting the image color to grayscale; 3) compressing the image using the LZW compression type; 4) setting the image background to white; and 5) setting the color depth to 8 to complement the grayscale setting. The enhanced procedure used the same processes plus additional manipulation using 6) open morphology (diamond shape) to hone the shape of the characters and reduce anomalies; 7) normalization to increase black-and-white image contrast; and 8) blur to remove surface noise. While testing these protocols, I used Tesseract OCR Engine (2021) in my command-line interface to generate a character-recognized text file based on a sample image file. I evaluated the different image pre-processing methods by measuring the character error rate (CER) of the OCR output based on the sample file.²⁷

After settling on my image processing protocols, I used Tesseract to batch generate the informant biographies as plain text files. Once generated, I manually cross-referenced the output of each file with the original biography scan to correct processing errors. My correction protocol also included incorporating all manual edits that were present in the biographies, such as omitting content that had been crossed out and

²⁶ The code for these image processing methods is available on my GitHub: https://github.com/napassarelli/LAMSAS_bios_corpus

²⁷ I invite feedback and suggestions to hone my methods here. For example, one direction for future LAP projects would be to explore machine learning technologies for image pre-processing tasks.

integrating any hand-written annotations to reflect the final version of the original document. In cases where there were errors remaining in the document (i.e., an obvious typo or misspelling), I made a judgment call of whether to correct the text files on a case-by-case basis.²⁸ In other cases, some elements of the documents were indecipherable or unreadable and were not transcribed. These cases, as well as any of my own editorial remarks, are noted inside curly braces { }.

5.4 Corpus Creation

Based on the final output of the above processing and correction measures, I created two corpora using AntConc (Anthony 2022). First, I created a corpus of the informant biography plain text files, consisting of 583 texts and 45,529 tokens. My single selection criterion was that only one biography could be used per informant (i.e., no duplicates). I then created a second corpus that excerpted just the character sketch and general speech description from each informant biography, consisting of 579 texts and 18,417 tokens. My two selection criteria for this corpus were: 1) the informant biography must have a character sketch, and 2) only one biography could be used per informant. Note that this corpus was smaller than the informant biography corpus as there were four informant biographies that did not have a character sketch associated with them: NY33A, NY45C, VA55A*, and VA67B.

I created two corpora to assist the different goals of this project.²⁹ The aim of the first corpus was to get a broad overview of language used in the whole of the informant

²⁸ The files with edits that reflect my personal corrections (rather than existing editorial corrections) are noted in a spreadsheet that is available on my GitHub: https://github.com/napassarelli/LAMSAS_bios_corpus

²⁹ Both corpora are available on my GitHub.

biography texts, especially key words and collocations. The aim of the second corpus to focus specifically on the language used in the character sketches and to exclude repetitive word types that commonly reoccur in the demographic portion of the biography (e.g., “education”). In my analysis, I specify whether I use the “informant biography corpus” or the “character sketch corpus.” I utilized these corpora and AntConc primarily as an organizational and data search tool to aid my qualitative investigation, but also to ground my observations in data. Figures 5.3 and 5.4 below respectively show my preliminary keyword and N-Gram (size: 3) searches in the character sketch corpus using AntConc.

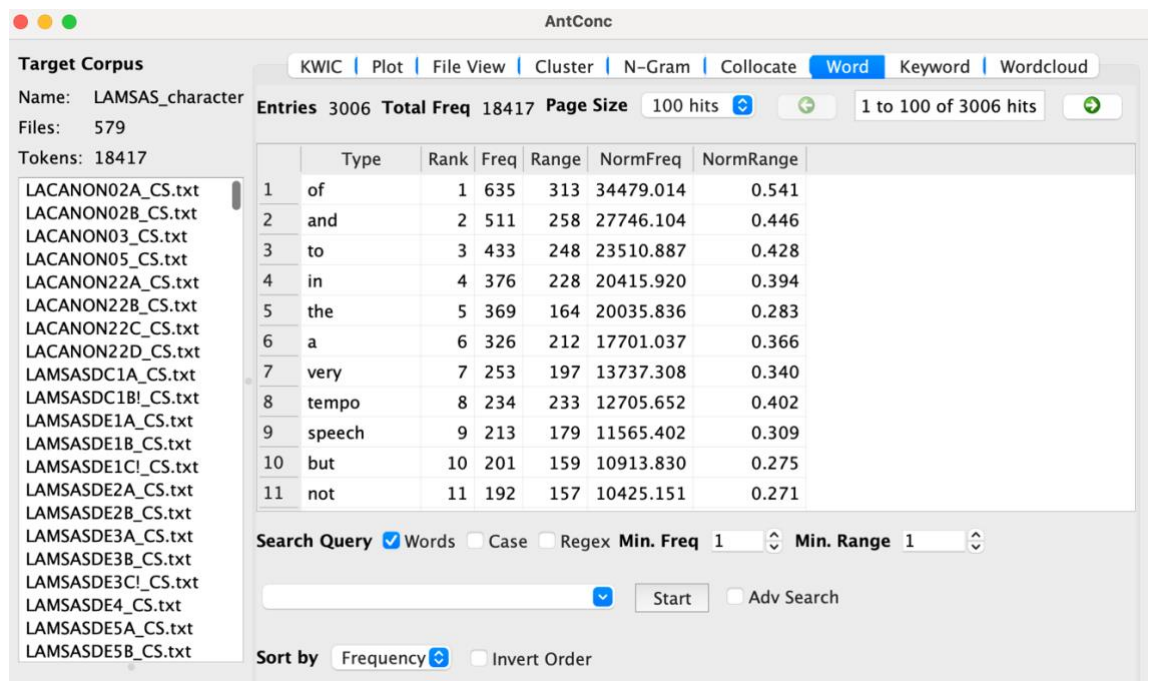


Figure 5.3: Keywords search of ‘Character Sketch Corpus’ in AntConc

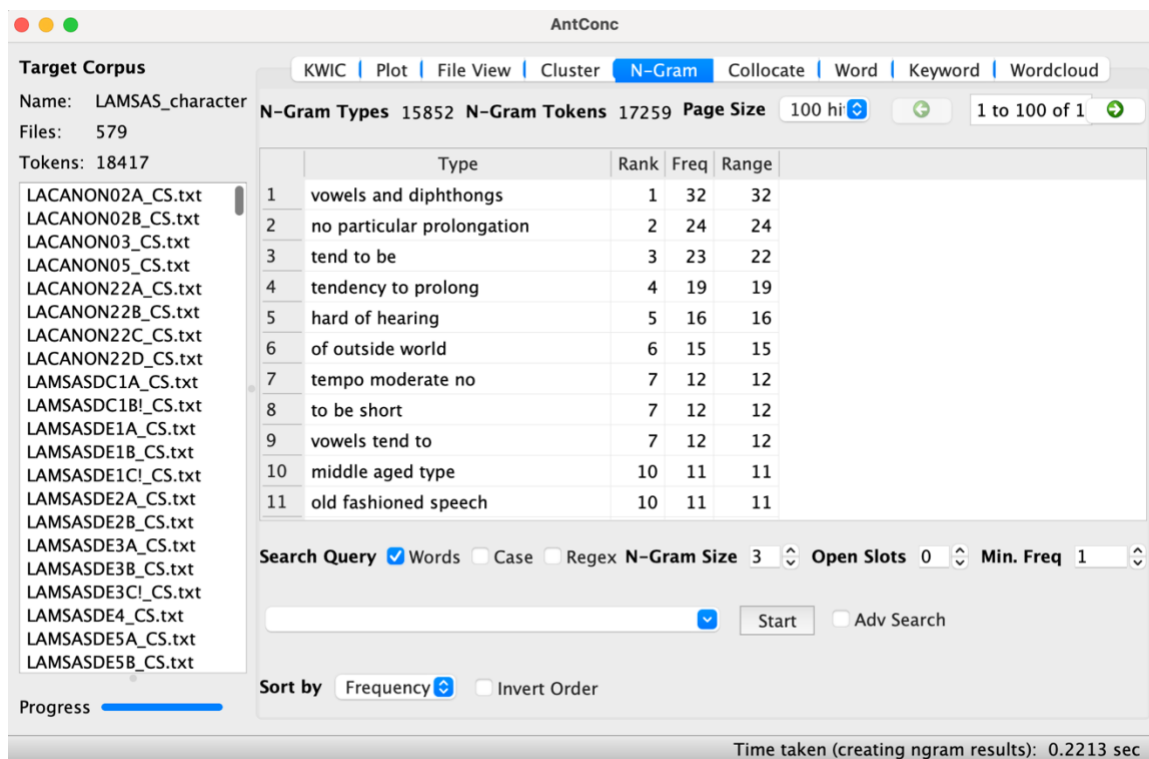


Figure 5.4: N-Gram (size: 3) search of ‘Character Sketch Corpus’ in AntConc

5.5 Analysis Methods

This project is broadly a qualitative investigation language ideologies in the dataset of LAMSAS informant biographies. Kroskrity (2016: 103) summarizes that studies of language ideologies can use a wide range of research methods, often drawing on a combination of “participant observation, formal and informal interviewing, life history, person-centered ethnography, conversational analysis, historical linguistics, and textual analysis.” Another common approach in practice is to elicit metadiscursive discussion from informants, either through interview (Hall-Lew & Stephens 2012; Johnstone & Kiesling 2008) or through activities like a draw-a-map task (Cramer 2018; Preston 1989), in order to gauge their language attitudes.

At first glance, these methods do not seem immediately applicable to the analysis of LAP's historical dataset. First, while the LAP fieldwork may have been sociolinguistically sophisticated (especially for its time — see Chapter 4), this project was not an ethnographic study. Accordingly, I do not suggest that researchers treat the data as ethnographic in nature. Rather, I suggest that researchers *think* like an ethnographer and consider how LAP data might be understood from an emic perspective. Analysis of LAP data sources like informant biographies can aid in this approach, providing information useful to understanding that interactional context of the interview. In other words, this approach seeks to reflexively consider the environment in which the data were produced (Paredes 1993).

Second, language regard was not an explicit topic of conversation in the LAP interview protocol and thus metadiscursive commentary is not immediately available in the data.³⁰ Moreover, as indicated in Chapter 4, it was even suggested that fieldworkers avoid framing the LAP interview as an investigation of dialect so as to not draw the informant's attention to their language use. Still, we can understand the LAP interview as a site of metapragmatic attention to language. Analysis of informant biographies occasionally captures explicit metadiscursive commentary from the informants. Moreover, the informant biographies themselves can be understood as a metadiscursive text, containing reflections on the informant's language. As a result, these texts can be utilized to investigate the ideologies of their authors (i.e., fieldworkers).

³⁰ Contemporary LAP data collection methods are changing this and have begun incorporating perceptual dialectology methods like the draw-a-map task into the interview protocol (see Chapter 3).

I used several discourse analytic techniques throughout this study of language ideologies. First, I loosely adapt Preston's (1994) "content-oriented discourse analysis" in order to conduct a preliminary analysis of language ideologies in the biographies. Preston uses this method to examine the folk beliefs embedded within the *content* of conversations about language, rather than the typical discourse analytic focus on their *structures*. This method is useful for approaching the informant biographies, though with some notable differences in practice. For one, Preston's study used this method to examine informant ideologies embedded within interview discourse, whereas this study looks at the fieldworker-authored informant biography. That means my content-oriented discourse analysis is not an exploration of folk beliefs, but rather a study of the language ideologies of career linguists and dialectologists of the LAP. Still, as Preston (2013: 180) remarks, linguists are not immune to language attitudes, and "what attitudinal responses linguists might have to languages and varieties after they are trained as linguists is an empirical question, one little investigated." This adapted method enables the analysis of the ideological content of these informant biographies.

Second, as Verschueren (2012) has shown, studies of language ideologies can also draw on a wide range of pragmatic and discourse analytic strategies. More recently, Preston (2018; 2019) has shown how a pragmatic discourse analysis can unearth salient implicit judgements through investigation of implicature and presupposition. Accordingly, I investigate pragmatic elements of the informant biographies in order to access the contextual information embedded in the data. I adapt Preston's (2019) framework to examine the "behind the scenes" judgements of fieldworkers, though again with some important distinctions. For one, my study focused on the fieldworker-produced

informant biographies, meaning I am focusing on the implicit ideologies of the fieldworkers, not the informants. For another, my primary focus is not necessarily on presupposition, but rather on the use of conventional implicature (Grice 1975) and text-metricity (Agha 2005) — concepts described in detail in Chapter 7.

Importantly, this study is not a catalogue of discrete ideologies found in the informant biographies. As Schieffelin, Woolard & Kroskrity (1998), Verschueren (2012), and many others have suggested, such ideologies do not exist as stable and fixed systems of thought. Instead, this project is a study of how ideologies are inscribed into the informant biographies, and what consequences they have for our interpretation of the accompanying data in the LAP. As a result, the case study in Chapter 8 combines an ideological analysis of informant biographies with additional data and methods to explore a potential new approach toward LAP research.

CHAPTER 6. EXPLICIT IDEOLOGIES

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I perform a preliminary analysis of the informant biographies as a resource to understanding the interactional and ideological nature of the data in the LAP. The primary aim of this analysis is to show how the informant biographies can themselves be a locus of metapragmatic activity, and therefore can be a vital resource in an investigation of language ideologies. First, I show how narratives in the informant biographies provide useful context to understanding the interactional context of the LAP interview. Second, I perform an adapted content-oriented discourse analysis (Preston 1994) of the character sketches in order to unpack the fieldworker's language ideologies present in the content of these biographies. Third, looking specifically at metadiscursive commentary that links ways of speaking with ideological schemas and social personae, I point to the enregistering potential of these biographies.

6.2 Stories in the Informant Biographies

As previously noted, the LAP informant biographies were designed as a kind of cover sheet to provide context for an informant's response data in their field record. In practice, the informant biography (and more often the character sketch) gave fieldworkers *carte blanche* to reflect on any aspects about the informant or the interview they wished. As a result, the informant biographies often include interesting slice-of-life stories about the informant, either more generally or within the context the interview itself. For example, one North Carolina interviewee, a "housewidow," is described this way: "Sweet maternal soul; dutifully offers scuppernong grapes to visitors. Worked during interview

after carefully explaining she didn't have to. Cooperative natural" (NC15B). While not expressly linguistic in its description, this kind of sketch can be communicative about the interactional and socio-cultural context of interview.

One particularly interesting point of examination are the informant biographies for partial and auxiliary field records (usually indicated with an asterisk in their informant number and file name). The LAMSAS collection includes several of these records that were left unfinished or were otherwise abandoned at some point during the interview. A glimpse at these biographies shows the many different mitigating factors that Kurath (1939: 46) said can affect the interview, including the informant's "personality, his attitude toward the interviewer, his attitude toward language" and more. Many of these stories surrounding the abandoned interviews are fascinating, if not downright entertaining, like the North Carolina woman who "refused to continue by pretending to not be at home" (NC13B*). Other notable cases include the Virginian man whose "unpleasant wife forced him to discontinue" (VA3C)³¹, the North Carolina housewife whose "husband ordered FW out of house at bottom of p. 30" (NC23B*)³², or the North Carolina man who, halfway through the interview, said "I'm done, and when I say I'm done, I mean I'm done" (NC38A).

Other biographies indicate that the record was started by one informant and finished by another, such as the Virginia man who, halfway through the interview, "became feeble and FW allowed his wife to finish answering" (VA31A). Other times, a swap of informants happened under less-than-ideal conditions, as in the case of a North

³¹ This sketch concludes with the bracketed aside "(Should I give more details?)," presumably included by an LAP editor, again suggesting the presence of earlier, less edited versions of the LAMSAS biographies.

³² FW in these biographies stands for "fieldworker."

Carolina woman who “Became disgusted and stopped on p. 95. A friend, sitting on porch, continued” (NC59). Another notable case of this type concerned a Virginia woman whose interview was interrupted by a third party:

An elderly tenant of hers objected violently to FW’s visits, thinking he was a rival suitor. She refused to see FW again but referred him to a neighbor who, for the glory of the University of Virginia and the fair name of Brunswick County agreed to finish the record. FW did not think it advisable to go back and inquire further about her history. (VA51C)

In these stories, the practical challenges of the interview come into focus. Beyond just the abandoned informants, some biographies specifically reveal the challenges of gaining an informant’s trust, such as the North Carolina farmer who was “suspicious of FW at first, but discovering FW was from Chapel Hill convinced informant it was worth while project” (NC74A). Others discuss the difficulties of navigating the interpersonal dynamic of the interview, such as the Maryland farmer who “had been interviewed by some economists studying farm life only a week before and almost refused in disgust to continue” since he “didn’t see much use in such nonsense” (MD7B), or the North Carolina housewife who “felt she had not done well and burst into tears on last 5 pages” (NC29B)³³. Occasionally, stories in the character sketches reveal the outright dangerous nature of fieldwork:

[Informant’s] Son is an ignorant lout. May have let air out of FW’s tire because he suspected FW was a gov’t. person going to condemn their farm for Park purposes. Then he broke jack trying to help; but finally, when his suspicions were allayed, he found some wire and bound it together. (MD27A)

³³ Fortunately, this story seems to have a somewhat happy ending, with the fieldworker concluding: “On husband’s advice, FW waited a few mins. and the storm cleared.”

Again, even though it is not expressly about language, this type of story shares relevant information to understanding the nature of the LAP interview — i.e., the hazards of fieldwork whereby a fieldworker might be subject to suspicion or even potential threat. (This sketch, describing the informant’s son as an “ignorant lout,” is also full of explicit ideological judgements, which I address in Section 6.3 below.) As outlined in the project proposal, the informant biographies were collected and published with the intent giving greater context to the “speech basis” of the individual who was interviewed (Hanley 1930). As a result, the inclusion of these stories in the informant biographies suggests that fieldworkers may have thought them germane to understanding the linguistic content of their field record. Further research on the informant biographies could perhaps use narrative analysis or interactional sociolinguistic analysis techniques to examine these stories included within the informant biographies. For the remainder of this project, though, I will focus on the character sketches that more explicitly concern language and dialect. One biography tells a thrilling story prompted by such a belief about language (i.e., a language ideology):

A rugged Christian farm-woman of the lower classes. She has a remarkably clear mind and answered well -- but, as to insight, there are many things outside her experience. FW aroused listening grandson’s ire on the question about bull. Only after outside intervention could the son and grandson be called off and the FW allowed to return and finish the questionnaire. His conclusion was that the word bull was not used in the presence of ladies. The grandmother feared he might be a witch or something of the sort as three people died after his coming to the neighborhood. The grandson also came into the room during the last interview, holding a bright sickle, which may have been a threat, as he had not one word to say to FW. [Interesting tale which I have greatly condensed].³⁴ (VA40A)

³⁴ Again, the concluding aside “[Interesting tale which I have greatly condensed]” suggests the existence of an earlier, un-condensed version of this story — one that I would especially like to read.

In this example, the fieldworker reports that informant's grandson expressed a belief about what kinds of words are appropriate to be used "in the presence of ladies." In this context, "bull" was full of ideological and indexical potential with implications for its usage — not just with regard to politeness, but also gender and a host of other social factors. In the context of the LAP interview, the fieldworker's use of the word "bull" was necessarily bound up in a local indexical and ideological system and had material consequences (i.e., a perceived threat). The stories in the character sketches are therefore not only communicative about the interactional context of the LAP interview — they are also a useful starting place to understanding the language attitudes, beliefs, and ideologies at work.

Many of these stories, such as the one in VA40A above, point to language ideologies held by informants. For example, a number of biographies describe informants as "self-conscious" about their speech (suggesting stigmatization) or include stories about the informant style-shifting in the presence of different individuals (suggesting a second-order indexicality) While fascinating, for the scope of this paper, I focus my analysis on the informant biographies and the ideologies of the authors (i.e., the fieldworkers), not the subjects of their investigation (i.e., the informants). However, a focus on informant ideologies captured within the informant biographies would be an extremely interesting subject for future investigation.

6.3 Fieldworker Ideology

As several of the examples in this chapter have already shown, often these informant biographies contain characterological descriptions of the informant's

personality, intelligence, and even appearance that seem to be overtly ideological. Some are flattering (e.g., “Sweet maternal soul,” [NC15B]); others, less so (“Son is an ignorant lout” [MD27A]). These judgements are more than peeks behind the curtain of fieldwork; they are also part of a larger ideological system and thus relevant for analysis. As Gal (1998: 323-4) notes, “ideologies that seem to be about, say, religion, political theory, human subjectivity, or science invite reinterpretation as implicit entailments of language ideologies or as the precipitates of widespread linguistic practices.” As a result, analysis of the ideological judgements included within the informant biographies has consequences for how researchers understand and approach the resulting linguistic record. In other words, if these ideologies are the ground on which language is interpreted, then they must be considered (potentially as broader assemblage, per Burkette 2021) alongside the facts of the linguistic record. As detailed above, this project focuses on those descriptions and ideologies that are more specifically linguistic.

6.3.1 Ideologies in Informant Biographies

In addition to the character sketch, fieldworkers were also instructed to remark on the “general character” of the informant’s speech. Commonly, these descriptions included evaluations of the informant’s tempo, articulation, vowel quality, and stress. Other times, these reflections include notable dialect forms or idiosyncrasies of the informant’s speech. However, not all speech descriptions were phonetic in nature.³⁵ Instead, many are more subjective (and creative):

³⁵ As McGowan (2011) has shown, phonetic perceptions are necessarily ideological. Future projects could more closely examine these speech descriptions for ideological judgements embedded within.

- General character of speech is normal (VA16A)
- General character of speech: well-bred (VA52B)
- General character of speech: unctuous (VA56A)
- General character of speech: timid, weak, but determined (VA57B)
- General character of speech: OF, rough (VA60*)³⁶
- General character of speech: whimpering (VA60)

These descriptions are not just extralinguistic — they are often semiotically rich. In some cases, they point to character traits (“timid, weak, but determined”), social factors like cultivation (“well bred”), or even evaluations (“normal”). In other cases like “unctuous” and “rough,” they seem to draw on sensory aspects like qualia (Harkness 2014).

Moreover, these descriptions are wholly subjective and ideological.

Other times, characterizations of an informant’s speech were worked into the broader character sketch, often rife with ideology:

- Her speech is genuinely old-fashioned and uneducated, and the most unself-conscious that FW has heard. (VA48A)
- Speech very plain, matter-of-fact, homely, coarse, vigorous (VA63B)
- A casual, drawling tempo, with rather relaxed tones of the speech organs. Slight pleasant nasalization. (MD13F!)
- Her speech has a coy little drawl to it, as if she were dropping her handkerchief. (VA30C!)

Again, rather than strict phonetic characterizations, the speech of informants here is described in various descriptions (“uneducated,” “coy,” “pleasant,” “matter-of-fact,” etc.) and expressing the fieldworkers’ subjective point-of-view. Linking speech with broader indexical and ideological positionings, these descriptions point to a potential enregisterment, where ways of speaking come to stand in for broader ways of being.

³⁶ OF stands for “old fashioned”

Other times, the fieldworker seems to be more expressly invoking a third-order indexicality, drawing on more widely known indexical relationships. One striking case comes from the biography of a 74-year-old North Carolina farmer who is also apparently a “notorious ‘blockader’ (i.e., moonshiner),” illustrated in Figure 6.1 below.

487 NC TRAN DR W 856
Farmer. [A notorious "blockader," i.e. moonshiner], 74
Born 1/2 m. away
PGF of Irish descent
MGF b. Gloucester twp, in county (of Scotch descent); MGM b. county
No education to speak of
Methodist
Introduced to informant by a school teacher who had won confidence
of everyone in community.
Slightly sub-normal mentally, though quick in reaction time. Responds
with fond affectionateness of a child to those of whom he
approves but is capable of shooting others.
Tempo moderate. No prolongation to speak of. Articulation rather
bad. Several speech defects in individual words. Some people
probably get their ideas of mtns. from a few peculiar types
like this one.

Figure 6.1: NC72A Informant Biography (LAMSAS)

This character sketch of this biography is particularly relevant for ideological analysis:

Slightly sub-normal mentally, though quick in reaction time. Responds with fond affectionateness of a child to those of whom he approves but is capable of shooting others. Tempo moderate. No prolongation to speak of. Articulation rather bad. Several speech defects in individual words. Some people probably get their ideas of mtns. from a few peculiar types like this one. (NC72A)

In NC72A, the fieldworker includes a characterization (“slightly sub-normal mentally, though quick in reaction time”) that doubles as a description of the informant’s general character and their caliber as an interviewee. The next sentence is purely characterological, showing the extreme polarity of this informant’s behavior which spans from showing the “fond affectionateness of a child” to some while “shooting others.” The fieldworker then includes a series of linguistic evaluations, including notes about “tempo” and “prolongation,” followed by noting his “rather bad” articulation and “speech defects.” The concluding line ties it all together: “Some people probably get their ideas of mtns. from a few peculiar types like this one.” This remark occurs at the end of a string of both character and speech descriptions, suggesting that the stereotype might be intertwined with both social and linguistic factors — not to mention the many demographic features appearing elsewhere in the biography. Some LAMSAS informant biographies explicitly associate social personae and ideological assessments with linguistic habits, pointing to the makings of enregisterment within the texts and the LAP interview itself.

6.3.2 Ideologies in Informant Type System

In addition to addressing explicit fieldworker ideologies within the LAMSAS informant biographies, the system that was used to categorize informants by social type deserves further attention. As detailed in Chapter 2, this type classification was a “subjective measure” that Kurath and fieldworkers used to select and organize their informants according to certain social criteria (Kretzschmar et al. 1993: 25). To reiterate, in the *LANE Handbook*, Kurath (1939:44) outlines the three types this way:

Type I: Little formal education, little reading, and restricted social contacts.

Type II: Better formal education (usually high school) and/or wider reading and social contacts.

Type III: Superior education (usually college), cultured background, wide reading and/or extensive social contacts.

These descriptions of informant types are based on education, literacy, and quantity of social contacts (with Type III also including the criterion of “cultured background”); they do not include any note about informant speech style or register. Adapting Kurath’s original system, the LAMSAS *Handbook* (Kretzschmar et al. 1993) used slightly different language in their type descriptions, notably including the type of “speaker” alongside the usual criteria:

Type I: Folk speakers, local usage subject to a minimum of education and other outside influence.

Type II: Common speakers, local usage subject to a moderate amount of education (generally high school), private reading, and other external contacts.

Type III: Cultivated speakers, representing wide reading and elevated local cultural traditions, generally but not always with higher education.

Three things are worth noting about these descriptions. First, the Type I and II descriptions seem to create a tension where an informant’s “local usage” is subject to external factors “other outside influence” such as school or reading. According to this description, a perfectly local (i.e., Type I) informant would be one whose speech has been unspoiled by any cultivation, affectation, or influence such as education, literacy, or social contacts.³⁷ As Kretzschmar & Schneider (1996: 30) note, “Kurath and his field

³⁷ “Local” acquires the flavor of isolation and untouched by society, notably calling to mind the Elizabethan stereotypes about Appalachian English speakers outlined by Cramer (2014; 2018).

workers assumed that a bond was forged between land, person, and speech that was attenuated, though not lost, under the influence of education, and their selection practices preferred bonds that were hardened by long residence and unalloyed with outside experiences.” In other words, factors like education, social contacts, and geographic mobility are perceived as mitigating factors concerning local dialect speech. This understanding is also visible in the language of the informant biographies, where the speech of some informants is described as “preserved” (NC35A) while others are described as “corrupted” (NC70B).

Second, while “cultivated” appears in description of Type III informants, the LAMSAS *Handbook* note that cultivated and Type III were not actually synonymous; in fact, there were 14 Type III informants who were not designated as cultivated, and two Type II informants who were designated cultivated (Kretzschmar et al. 1993). Kretzschmar et al. (1993: 26) offer the following explanation of cultivation: “Field workers’ judgements of cultivation were supposed to identify those whose speech reflection superior education and elevated social standing in their communities.” How this definition differs from the description of Type III informants (“Cultivated speakers, representing wide reading and elevated local cultural traditions, generally but not always with higher education”) is not clear, reinforcing the subjective and impressionistic nature of this classificatory system.

Third, the addition of speaker type in these type descriptions explicitly links an informant’s socio-cultural characteristics (education, literacy, occupation, social contacts, etc.) with certain categorical linguistic types (folk, common, and cultivated). This bundling of social and linguistic qualities points to what Silverstein (2003) would call

n+1st order indexicality, where a presupposing indexical relationship can acquire some entailing potential — for instance, that folk speakers entail being poorly educated, while cultivated speakers entail having more education with “elevated” cultural traditions.

We can also see Gal & Irvine's (2000) three semiotic processes at work here. First, an indexical relationship, such as between “folk speakers” and “minimum education,” is flattened via iconization, where the relationship becomes necessary (i.e., entailed) rather than suggested (i.e., presupposed). Second, the process of fractal recursivity suggests an opposition that is salient in one context (e.g., LANE) is applicable in another (e.g., LAMSAS); thus, a series of oppositions is grafted rather than locally determined. Third, the process of erasure in this organizational system eliminates anomalies or added complexity, such as potential “cultured” individuals who nonetheless have elements of folk speech, or “folk speakers” who might be considered “cultivated.” In this way, the simple organization of LAP informants by type may have an enregistering potential, thus producing downstream effects for how fieldworkers described their informants in the character sketches.

6.4 Conclusion

The informant biographies are a prime resource to reveal more information about both the content and the context of the LAP interview. For one, these biographies often extend beyond simple demographic facts to include stories which can provide crucial context to the interactional aspects of the interview. In these stories, LAP interview itself comes into focus as a locus of metapragmatic activity (i.e., an interview about dialect). Moreover, the informant biography itself is an explicitly metadiscursive text (i.e., talk

about talk), reflecting on that interview. As a result, content-oriented discourse analysis can examine this text to identify the language attitudes and ideologies of the fieldworkers at work, and how those ideologies end up linking ways of speaking with ways of being. Understanding the ideologies of LAP fieldworkers ultimately helps us better understand the data they recorded, and how the data may interact with sociolinguistic phenomena like enregisterment. However, as Schieffelin, Woolard & Kroskrity (1998: 9) argue, a “focus on overt ideological contestation should not lead us to lose sight of ideology as doxa, naturalized dominant ideologies that rarely rise to discursive consciousness.” Accordingly, the focus of the next chapter is on the more implicit ideologies within the informant biographies, and how these can be uncovered via pragmatic analyses.

CHAPTER 7. IMPLICIT IDEOLOGIES

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 6, I introduced how the fieldworkers explicitly expressed ideologies (both linguistic and otherwise) in the LAMSAS informant biographies. Sometimes, though, ideologies in the biographies are less overt. In fact, Irvine (2002: 25) has suggested that “some of the most important and interesting aspects of ideology lie behind the scenes... in the terms and presuppositions of metapragmatic discourse, not just in its assertions.” Positioning the informant biographies as a kind metapragmatic discourse (i.e., metadiscursive commentary, or talk about talk), we can examine their pragmatic features to study fieldworkers’ implicit language ideologies embedded in the LAP.

In this chapter, I conduct an adapted pragmatic discourse analysis (Preston 2018; 2019) of LAMSAS informant biographies. After introducing a few preliminary examples, I conduct my analysis using two primary analytic frames. First, I focus on the use of conventional implicature (Grice 1975; Potts 2015) in the character sketch descriptions as carriers of implicit ideological judgements. Second, I examine voicing and text-metricity (Agha 2005; Bakhtin 1981a; Silverstein 2021) to examine how ideology is conveyed within the emergent structures and conventions of the informant biographies as a collection of texts. Using these frames, I show how linguistic forms, ideological schemas, and social personae come to be semiotically linked in the informant biographies, pointing to the processes of enregisterment. I conclude with a brief case study comparing a variable found both in the informant biographies and in field data, suggesting a new analytic method for the LAP.

7.2 Pragmatic Analysis

While many fieldworker ideologies are explicit in the text of the biographies, others are less clear and lean more into pragmatic realm. For instance, the indexicality embedded in the informant type system (discussed in Chapter 6) can be described in terms of presuppositions and entailments. A similar kind of entailing indexicality is also encoded into the character sketches of some informant biographies, as in the following:

Very dear old soul, unable to walk, and overjoyed to have someone come in to talk to him. Although slightly hard of hearing, his mind and memory are quick and active. Not coming from the lowest strata himself, he does not use all the old forms but is thoroughly conversant with them. He is most amiable about supplying all the information he can. (MD4B)

The presupposition in this character sketch suggests that individuals from the “lowest strata” are the same ones that “use all the old [speech] forms. Here, the fieldworker necessarily links a certain linguistic repertoire with a certain social class. This informant, who is not himself from the lowest social class, thereby does not use these forms (though he is apparently conversant with them). As a result, enregisterment appears to be reflected not just in the type system, but also ideologically embedded in fieldworker’s descriptions of their informants, and pragmatic analyses can help tease out these examples.³⁸

³⁸ Not only is the type categorization of informants potentially enregistering, but perhaps so is the actual informant sampling method employed by the Atlas, which prioritized what Chambers & Trudgill (1980) call “NORMs” (non-mobile, older, rural men), ones from local families who were often believed to be the best representatives of vernacular speech. The fieldworker’s search for speakers of “genuine dialect” (Petyt 1980) according to certain social types is rife with enregistering potential before the interview is even conducted.

The type-classification system is not the only way that fieldworkers categorized and labelled LAP informants. In several character sketches, fieldworkers seem to draw on pre-existing stereotypes when describing their informants, especially when employing definite descriptions (sometimes alongside adjectives like “typical” or “true”):

- Good hard-headed Yankee (NY533)
- A plain, middle-class, successful farmer of the typical German Valley type. (VA228)
- Mountain woman of the Pa.-W.Va. type (VA252)

Building on the work of Stalnaker (1973; 1999), von Stechow (2004) has argued that definite descriptions invariably carry existence presuppositions, regardless of intuitions regarding the truth-value. According to this understanding, these fieldworker descriptions may presuppose the existence of certain “types” of individuals: Yankees, a German Valley type, mountain women of the Pa.-W.Va type, to name a few. The presupposing ideological content of these definite descriptions warrants further discussion but will have to be explored elsewhere. For now, I focus on cases where ideology is more obvious:

- In a community largely of German descent, a plain matter-of-fact man who saw no sense to the questions, but answered them all quickly (and well) because he’s promised to. (MD61)
- A great blustering bellowing man who makes up for his German rusticity by hearty buffoonery. (VA105)
- Informant is intelligent and honest, but occasionally just a bit “thick,” perhaps because he is oppressed too mightily with being a Virginian. (VA185)

Again, these cases are rife with ideology and warrant further exploration in future analyses. I briefly include them here to give a cursory illustration of the ways that presupposition and entailment carry ideology some informant biographies, thus motivating a pragmatic approach to my dataset. My first primary focus will be on the instances of conventional implicature in the LAMSAS biographies.

7.3 Conventional Implicature

7.3.1 Overview

In *The Causal Theory of Perception*, Grice (1961: 127) lays out several cases where “something might be said to be implied as distinct from being stated.” One of his examples is “‘She was poor but she was honest’, where what is implied is (very roughly) that there is some contrast between poverty and honesty, or between her poverty and her honest” (127). This type of example, he notes, seems to work differently from other cases of implication via presupposition and warrants further study.

Later, in *Logic and Conversation*, Grice (1975) further develops a framework for understanding the difference between what is said and what is implicated in discourse. While conversational implicature is the centerpiece of his model, Grice (1975: 44) briefly calls for further examination of what he terms “conventional implicature,” which occurs when “the conventional meaning of the words used will determine what is implicated” outside of “what is said.” Here, he offers the example “He is an Englishman; he is, therefore, brave” (44-45). In this case, the conventional meaning of the words implies (rather than directly says) that bravery is a consequence of being an Englishman. As a result, Grice concludes that some implicatures are conventional; however, he focuses the rest of his investigation on nonconventional (i.e., conversational) implicatures.

Potts (2015) notes that, since being coined by Grice, conventional implicature has been an ongoing source of debate in semantics and pragmatics. For instance, Bach (1999) argues that conventional implicature is not implicature at all; instead, alleged conversational implicature devices (ACIDs) actually contribute directly to what is said. Moreover, providing an overview of these ACIDs, Potts (2015) notes that there seems to

be an apparent overlap between items ACIDs and what are called presuppositional triggers, suggesting that more research should focus on teasing out these phenomena in detail. These debates aside, what Grice (1975) called conventional implicatures nonetheless appear to express additional propositional content to a given sentence. Moreover, as Potts (2015: 186) concludes, the study of conventional implicature can “offer insights into semantic composition and pragmatic enrichment that neither presupposition nor conversational implicature can.”

In his manual of pragmatic investigation methods in language ideologies, Verschueren (2012) suggests that researchers approach their data looking for anything that carries implicit meaning — especially implicatures, presuppositions, and entailments. In fact, he notes that while analysis of conventional implicatures “may often be tedious and sometimes sound trivial, their contribution to the overall pattern of discursive meaning generation is crucial” (175). Thus, unpacking conventional implicatures in the LAMSAS informant biographies presents the opportunity to examine the implicit ideological content of the fieldworker’s discourse more closely.

For this study, I use Potts's (2015: 186) definition of conventional implicature based on Grice’s principles in order to identify both the at-issue content and the implicature at work:

Meaning p is a conventional implicature of phrase S if, and only if:

a. p is a conventional (encoded) property of a lexical item or construction in S;

b. p is entailed by S; and,

c. p’s truth or falsity has no effect on the at-issue content of S.

Pott’s method of analysis thus breaks down examples into 1) at-issue content and 2) its implicature. I mirror this method in my analyses below.

7.3.2 Conventional Implicature in Informant Biographies

To begin, I started my investigation of conventional implicature in the LAMSAS informant biography corpus by performing a search for every occurrence of the word “but” — noted by Potts (2015: 187) as the “alleged conventional implicature device with the longest pedigree.” A keyword in context (KWIC) search in AntConc produced 228 hits, as seen in Figure 7.1 below.

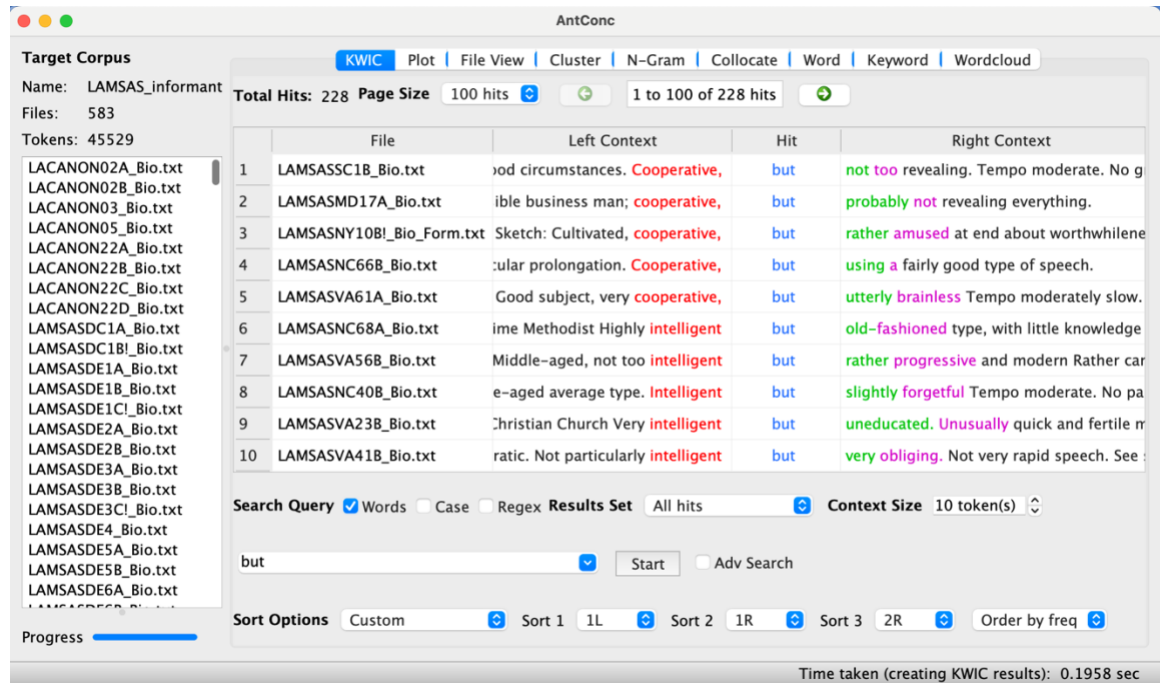


Figure 7.1: KWIC Search of "but" within ‘Informant Biography Corpus’ in AntConc

Not every use of “but” in this search was used as part of a conventional implicature;³⁹ however, several were, such as the below:

- (1) Moral but poor family (NC349)

The predication “Moral but poor family” in (1) contains a conventional implicature stemming from the use of the connective “but,” which contributes an additional layer of meaning to what Potts (2015) calls the “at-issue” content of this sentence.⁴⁰ This example can be broken down accordingly:

- (1a) At-issue: (A) Family is moral and (B) family is poor
- (1b) Conventional implicature: (A) normally precludes (B); thus, being moral normally precludes being poor

The at-issue proposition (1a) is that the family is simultaneously moral and poor using the connective “but.” However, the implicature (1b) implicitly proposes a contrast between the qualities of being moral and being poor. In other words, this implicature expresses an ideological position attributable to the author’s (i.e., the fieldworker’s) perspective. As a result, examination of the use of conventional implicature in the informant biographies is one way to uncover implicit ideologies held by the LAMSAS fieldworkers.

The ideologies expressed via conventional implicatures often appear to be related to the characterological qualities of informants, as in the case of (1). However, other implicatures include judgments that are more likely informed by and intertwined with

³⁹ My methods of identifying conventional implicature are likely what Bach (1999) would criticize as being based purely on intuition. However, in the absence of a more rigorous criteria for identifying conventional implicature, I nonetheless hope to show that conventional implicatures in the LAMSAS informant biographies add propositional (and ideological) content beyond what is said.

⁴⁰ This example is strikingly similar to Grice's (1961) example “She is poor but she is honest.”

informants' linguistic habits. These language ideologies, expressed via conventional implicature, will be the primary focus of this analysis.

7.3.3 Conventional Implicature and Language Ideologies

To focus my search on conventional implicatures that carry language ideologies, I first returned to the informant type descriptions (detailed in Chapter 6) that were used to organize the social make-up of the LAMSAS sample. Specifically, in my informant biography corpus, I searched for the terms: local, folk, common, cultured, old-fashioned, and modern. I focused on these search terms because, in the informant type descriptions, social and linguistic descriptions are bound together (e.g., “Cultivated speakers, representing wide reading and elevated local cultural traditions, generally but not always with higher education.”). As I argue in Chapter 6, through processes of enregisterment, these terms appear to have the potential to be simultaneously characterological and linguistic in nature; thus, their appearance in the informant biographies is relevant for the investigation of language ideologies.

Within these descriptions, I located conventional implicatures using “but,” as well as other connectives (e.g., “nevertheless,” “therefore”), subordinating conjunctions (e.g., “though,” “despite,”), and additional ACIDS detailed in Potts (2015: 188). An illustrative example of conventional implicature with the term “local” is visible in the character sketch of a 77-year-old housewife from Virginia, detailed in (2) below:

- (2) Sweet, simple, sturdy old lady -- very **local**, but intelligent and quick to grasp things in her mountain way (VA62A)

Like in (1), the connective “but” in (2) signals a conventional implicature:

- (2a) At-issue: Informant is local and informant is intelligent
- (2b) Conventional implicature: Being local normally precludes being intelligent

In this description, the conventional implicature in (2b) conveys an ideology that being “local” and “intelligent” are apparently at odds. In fact, in (2), there is also a secondary implicature in the phrase “quick to grasp things in her mountain way”:

- (2c) At-issue: Informant is quick to grasp things and does so in a mountain way
- (2d) Conventional implicature: A mountain way normally precludes being quick to grasp things

The conventional implicature in (2d) appears to reinforce (2b) and expresses a common ideology: that the qualities of being local and being from the mountains are normally at odds with the qualities of being intelligent and being quick to grasp things. Whether the fieldworker uses “local” to refer to their general character or the quality of their speech is not immediately recoverable from this example; however, given the entanglement of characterological and linguistic ideologies, this implicature would seem relevant to both.

7.3.4 Corpus Investigation

In the character sketch corpus, 32 texts used the word “local.” Alongside example (2) above, four additional biographies used conventional implicature:

- (3) Cultured, but strong **local** root (NY53B!)
- (4) Of good **local** background, but rather simple minded (VA51C)
- (5) Quiet, unassuming, rather quick and intelligent, though quite **local** (NC2A)
- (6) Intelligent and cooperative; very friendly, but rustic and **local** (NC3B)

In items (3) and (4), “local” is used as an adjective describing the informant’s root and background (respectively); thus, these descriptions are potentially (but not certainly) linguistic. In items (5), and (6), “local” is used as a more generic description of the informant, such as “very local, “quite local,” or “rustic and local.”⁴¹ Thus, through conventional implicature, the fieldworker authors of these biographies imply a contrast between being “local” (or having “local” speech) and being intelligent (2), cultured (3) rather quick and intelligent (5), and very friendly (6).⁴²

I performed a similar search for the term “old-fashioned,”⁴³ which produced 78 hits in the character sketch corpus, and five uses of conventional implicature:

- (7) Highly intelligent but **old-fashioned** type, with little knowledge of outside world. Extremely hospitable, friendly; no embarrassment but utmost cooperation in exhibiting her **old-fashioned** words and pronunciation (NC68A)
- (8) Probably above average, but very **old-fashioned** in many ways (NC57A)
- (9) **Old fashioned** but normal speech (VA6A)
- (10) Speech normal but somewhat **old fashioned** (VA5B)
- (11) **Old fashioned** but perhaps better educated than the average old man (VA52A)

Through conventional implicature, being “old fashioned’ (or having “old fashioned” speech) is contrasted with being highly intelligent (7), probably above average (8), normal (9, 10), and better educated than the average old man (11). Example (7) contains the additional implicature that the informant had “no embarrassment” but instead “utmost

⁴¹ The use of modifiers like “very” (10) or “quite” (12) alongside “local” deserves further analysis.

⁴² This implicature is interesting and somewhat surprising in light of the common perception that Southern English speakers sound “pleasant” and are, indeed, “friendly” (Cramer & Preston 2018; Preston 1999).

⁴³ In addition to “old-fashioned,” I also searched for the unhyphenated “old fashioned” and the abbreviated “OF.”

cooperation” in using old-fashioned speech, suggesting that the embarrassment of using old-fashioned speech normally precludes cooperation and exhibition.

The implicatures here reflect a series of ideological judgements from the fieldworkers who authored these biographies — that being local (either in speech or in character) normally precludes intelligence, friendliness, and/or quickness. Similarly, the quality of being old-fashioned (either in speech or character) normally precludes being intelligent, normal, or educated. These descriptions extend beyond these particular informants and their speech and are broader ideological judgements from the fieldworker about the normal qualities of certain types of people.

Some informant biographies expressed multiple ideologies via conventional implicatures:

- (12) A quiet, reserved, religious, well-bred but rather plain woman; she is very like a good middle-class Northern woman in her belief in education, etc. Most obliging and willing to partake in anything savoring of educational research. Her speech is probably more careful than that of most people, yet thoroughly natural. She was entirely honest in her reports, but has had a better education than most people. (VA49B)

The conventional implicatures present in (12) include:

- (12a) being “well-bred” precludes being “plain”
(12b) “careful” speech precludes “natural” speech
(12c) being “entirely honest in reports” precludes having “a better education than most”

Whereas (12a) perhaps reflects a general characterological ideology, (12b) is more strictly linguistic.⁴⁴ The contrast in (12c) is perhaps both, relating both to the informant's character and the interactional candor of the interview. This implicature is less clear (i.e., less intuitive) than the others in (12), but I suspect relates to the informant typology — that those with more education are more likely to be “cultivated” in speech, or at the very least more preoccupied by the prescriptions of grammar and as a result, less “honest.” As a comparison, consider the “genuinely cultured” LAMSAS informant who was described as having “‘Standard’ language but not school-marmish” (NY63D!) — i.e., speaks standardly, but is not overly concerned with prescriptive correctness.

In summary, the informant biographies are rife with conventional implicatures that carry fieldworkers' ideological judgements. Several of these ideologies appear to directly linguistic in nature; however, even those that are more strictly characterological and can still be seen as laying the foundation for future linguistic ideologies. As Gal & Irvine (2000: 37) crucially note, “ideologies about language locate linguistic phenomena as part of, and evidence for, what they believe to be systematic behavioral, aesthetic, affective, and moral contrasts among the social groups indexed.” In other words, an ideological schema must exist before a linguistic ideology can be mapped onto it; they are the ground on which linguistic ideologies can bloom.

⁴⁴ The contrast of “careful” and “natural” speech in (12b) calls to mind Labov's (1972)'s concept of style.

7.4 Voicing

7.4.1 Overview

Fieldworker ideologies in the LAMSAS informant biographies are often explicit (Chapter 6), or just under the surface, as in the case of conventional implicature (section 7.3). Verschueren (2012: 181) also suggests that pragmatic investigations of language ideology can also look for implicit meaning in the textual features of data — e.g., tropes like irony and humor, aspects of dialogic organization, and other “metapragmatic functions” like quotation and reported speech. This approach resonates with a large body of research, primarily emerging from linguistic anthropology, that examines “poetic” functions and structures (Jakobson 1960) — i.e., text-metricity.

The study of voicing (Bakhtin 1981a) unites analyses of ideology with text-metricity. As Silverstein (2021: 33) explains, this kind of research draws on Bakhtin’s concepts of *heteroglossia* (“the basic centrifugal property of every language community”) and *polyphony* (translated as “many-voice-dness” and defined as “the compositional property of emerging texts”). These studies of emergent voicing structures can reveal how ideologies are textually embedded in discourse. As Hill (1985: 728) summarizes, “A single utterance can combine a variety of voices in an intertextual polyphony or dialogue, in which both ideology and the language system function as constraints on combination.”

Silverstein (2020) has explicitly shown the usefulness of voicing and text-metrical analyses in the examination of historical biographical texts. Accordingly, loosely following Silverstein’s framework, I focus first on examining the emergent conventions of the informant biographies via text metricalization. I then focus on voicing strategies, especially direct and indirect report, as a means of carrying fieldworker ideologies.

Finally, I consider how these elements work interdiscursively to create both denotational and interactional texts. Given the intertextual nature of this analysis, in this section I focus on the entire informant biography text, not just the character sketch.

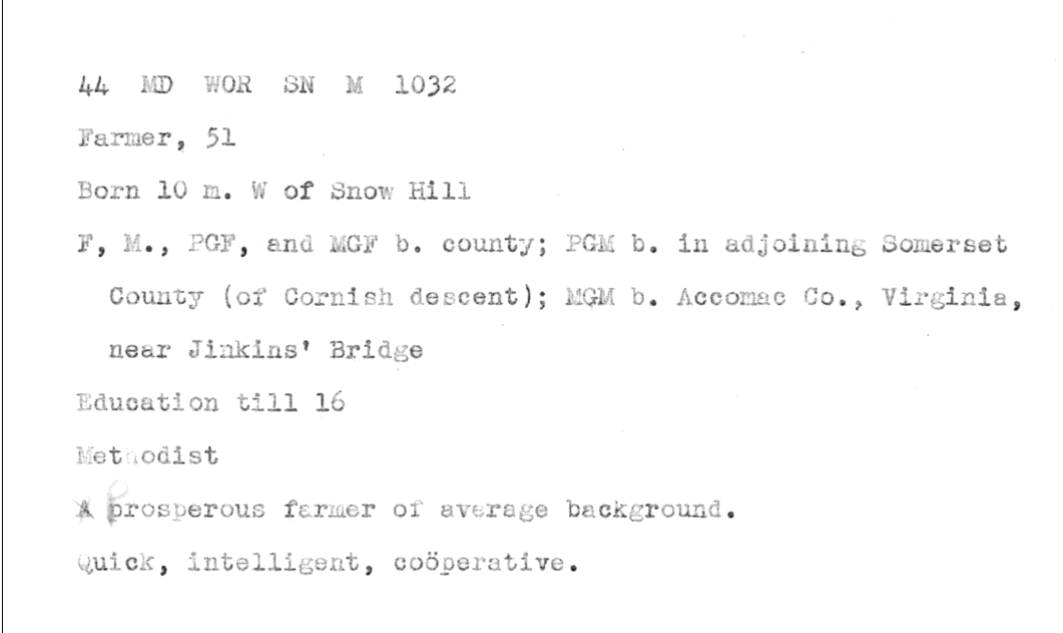
7.4.2 Textual Zones

Referencing Bakhtin, Agha (2005: 39) writes that a voicing contrasts are the starting point for the emergence of voices: “The typifiability of voices (whether as ‘individual’ or ‘social’) presupposes the perceivability of voicing contrasts, or the differentiability of one voice from another.” Thus, we can begin this analysis with the ways that the voicing contrasts emerge from the informant biographies.

First, the informant biographies represent their own text genre with an emergent structure. The organization of the informant biography is such that the top half is generally composed as an objective fact sheet, documenting key aspects of the informant’s demographic profile and family history: name, occupation, key components of the family history, education, and more. These facts are meant to be read as context — or, as Kurath (1930: 44) phrased it, as the “speech basis for the linguistic facts in the informant’s field record.” If there is a narrator here, they are generally omniscient and objective.

The latter section, comprised of the character sketch and general character of speech, is to be understood as directly authored by the fieldworker, who gives subjective commentary of the informant and the qualities of their speech. As indicated in Chapter 6, the content of these character sketches is often explicitly ideological. Thus, emergent from the structure of the informant biographies are two distinct textual zones and voicing

types: one more objective (reported) and the other more subjective (reporting), as illustrated in Figure 7.2 below. These zones and voicing types inform the reading of these texts.⁴⁵



44 MD WOR SN M 1032
Farmer, 51
Born 10 m. W of Snow Hill
F, M., PGF, and MGF b. county; PGM b. in adjoining Somerset
County (of Cornish descent); MGM b. Accomac Co., Virginia,
near Jenkins' Bridge
Education till 16
Methodist
A prosperous farmer of average background.
Quick, intelligent, coöperative.

Figure 7.2: Informant Biography Illustrating Textual Zones (LAMSAS, MD8B)

7.4.3 Direct Report

In the informant biographies, fieldworker occasionally utilizes direct report in the form of a quotation, overtly excerpting the informant's speech from the interview. Sometimes, a direct report is a communicative fragment; other times, it's an excerpted salient linguistic variable. The fieldworker's use of direct report in the context of the informant biography is notable, since the broader aim of the LAP interview is the documentation of an informant's speech form; indeed, the informant's field record is

⁴⁵ As noted earlier in Chapter 5, some informant biographies contain additional annotation or commentary, which introduces an editorial voice as an additional frame. The practice of editing in the LAP (and the role of the editor) would be grounds for a very interesting future work.

essentially a collage of hundreds of direct reports. However, the presence of direct report in the informant biography is notable, since this is a space for the fieldworker to highlight relevant characteristics of the informant for the interpretation of the field record.

Moreover, this reporting style can result in an entextualized voicing contrast. Agha (2005: 42) writes that in the case of direct reports, the reporting and reported voices are distinguished very clearly.” As a result, one effect of direct report is the creation of two distinct voices. But, there is also a broader effect. Silverstein (2021: 23) writes that “metapragmatic discourse is at its citational or quotational maximum when it simply re-presents a new token of the very forms used in some other communicative event; this is a denotation intertextuality.” Thus, in these denotationally explicit direct reports, the fieldworker’s citation of an informant’s linguistic variable doesn’t just repeat but adds an additional layer of meaning via intertextuality. For example, consider the informant biography of a 37-year-old housewife (born 1899) from North Carolina, illustrated in Figure 7.3 below:

306 NC CAM CH P 755

House, 37 (1899)

Born Belcross

PGF, PGGF, PGGGF (ancestros direct from Wales) b. Pasquotank Co.,

adj. co. SW; PGM, PGGF born C. ~~xxxxxxxx~~

M, MGF, MGGF b. C.; MGM b. Shipyard in county; MGGF b. England;

MGGM, MGGGF b. county

Education: Belcross -- 18th

Baptist

Old maid with good memory. Lives in a lovely old home with father;
rather ordinary people, as are most in this section. Intelligent
and coöperative; very friendly, but rustic and local

Speech probably better than most, but it bristles with "this-a-
way's" and "that-a-way's." Moderate tempo. Considerable
nasalization.

Figure 7.3: NC3B Informant Biography (LAMSAS)

Notably, in the character sketch represented in Figure 7.3, the fieldworker includes a direct report via quotation, excerpting a feature of the informant's speech. Looking at this direct report in the context of the entire character sketch is illuminating, as in the annotated example below:

- (13) (A) Old maid with good memory. (B) Lives in a lovely old home with father; rather ordinary people, as are most in this section. (C) Intelligent and cooperative; very friendly, but rustic and local. (D) Speech probably better than most, but it bristles with "this-a-way's" and "that-a-way's."
(NC3B)

The summary of (13) is as follows: (13A) The fieldworker opens with a characterological description of the informant as an “old maid with good memory,” (13B) followed by a description of the family as “rather ordinary people” much like others in their community, (13C) then includes a deeper character description of the informant, and (13D) finally describes of the informant’s speech including a direct report of a notable set of features.

Before analyzing the use of voicing, we can return briefly to conventional implicature, as we have seen this very example before in example (6) of Section 7.3.4 above. In (13C), the informant is described as “Intelligent and cooperative; very friendly, but rustic and local,” where the use of “but” signals a conventional implicature, suggesting that being local and/or rustic normally precludes being friendly. In (13D) the fieldworker directly cites the informant’s phrases “‘this-a-way’s’ and ‘that-a-way’s’” from the interview, simultaneously voicing the informant and highlighting a key dialectal feature of her speech. These quoted items “this-a-way” and “that-a-way” were both targets (known sources of regional variation) for the LAP interview, appearing on page 52 of the short-form worksheet on which the LAMSAS worksheet was based (Davis, McDavid & McDavid 1969). Accordingly, these items can be understood as salient features of speech for fieldworkers. The use of quotation functions as a direct report, delineating the reporting (fieldworker) voice from the reported (informant) voice. The use of a salient variable feature serves to further widen the contrast between these voices, since “this-a-way” and “that-a-way” can be understood as regional variants contrasted with the objective, non-dialectal writing of the fieldworker’s text.

Moreover, in (13D) the fieldworker writes that the informant's speech is "probably better than most, but it bristles" with these rustic and local features. Here, the use of "but" again points to a conventional implicature, where a positive valuation of her speech ("better than most") is contrasted with the reported linguistic variables ("this-a-way's and that-a-way's"). This implicature is unpacked below:

- 13D-A. At issue: The informant's speech is better than most and the informant's speech contains dialect features "this-a-way's" and "that a way's"
- 13D-B. Conventional implicature: Having "better speech" normally precludes using the dialectal features "this-a-ways" and "that-a-ways"

The conventional implicature — that the informant's speech is "better than most" except that she uses these particular variables — conveys that having these linguistic features normally preclude a positive valuation of speech. This interpretation is further supported by the fieldworker's description of how the informant's speech "bristles" with these particular features. As a result, in (d), not only does the fieldworker voice informant through direct report, creating two distinct voices, but also includes an ideological schema with which we can understand these features — and the voices that use them.

Finally, the entirety of the informant biography, as well as the preceding demographic information, adds another layer to this interpretation. The first line of the character sketch (13A) describes of the informant as an "Old maid," a definite description that invokes a recognizable social type.⁴⁶ Later descriptions (13B) and (13C) use "rather ordinary," and "rustic and local." These characterizations are all swept up in the semiotic

⁴⁶ The fact that a 37-year-old woman is described as an "old maid" demands more attention.

machinery of enregisterment, associating a persona (an “old maid” who is “rather ordinary”) with a linguistic ideology (where key dialectal features are implied as a mitigating factor of her speech that is otherwise “better than most”).

Other informant biographies similarly voice the informant through direct reports of their speech:

- (14) A quaint jolly waterman, who is most willing to talk... His wife felt the FW’s coming to talk about old things meant the next war was “a-comin” and this was to be the end of the world (MD033)

In (14), the fieldworker notably remarks that informant’s wife chimed in during the interview, suggesting that fieldworker’s presence in town and talking about “old things” signaled a new war to come.⁴⁷ Especially noteworthy is fieldworker’s use of the quoted phrase “a-comin.” Two variables are encoded in this dialect respelling: [-in] for [-inj], and *a*-prefixing, both of which were targets included on the LAMSAS worksheet and known sources of variation (Atwood 1953; Davis, McDavid & McDavid 1969).

Furthermore, both of these variables have specific social interpretations. Per Burkette & Antieau (2022), *a*-prefixing is frequently described as archaic and commonly associated with specific dialect regions (especially Southern and Appalachian), as well as more indexical qualities like rurality and “old-timer” speech. Research by Campbell-Kibler (2007: 33) has shown that [-in] is similarly associated with Southern speech, as well as “associations with the country, lack of education, and the image of the redneck.”

By including this quotation, the fieldworker is voicing the informant’s wife through direct reported speech, but it is the content of that quotation that is crucial. The

⁴⁷ Interviewed in 1939, she was not wrong.

informant's use of the phrase "a-comin'" clearly communicated something salient for the fieldworker during the interview, and its inclusion in the character sketch is similarly intended to communicate something salient to the reader — perhaps including the indexical associations of the two variables encoded in the dialect respelling. This voicing strategy of direct report suggests some enregistering potential, linking speech with higher-order indexical and ideological associations. Given the dialectal and apparently archaic nature of the variables in this report, it also potentially functions as a sort of chronotope (Bakhtin 1981b), tethering the voice of the informant to a distinct time and place.

Another example of this kind of enregistered and chronotopic quotation is found in the biography of Maryland farmer and waterman in his 70s:

- (15) A peculiar old man, "sot" in his ways, who decided he didn't want to talk any more. The rector came calling and prevented finishing the record one day; he discussed the project so openly that he made the informant self conscious. The rector suggested a better specimen nearby at Nanjemoy. (MD80A)

The inclusion of the quotation — "sot," a regional variant of the past participle for "set" according to the *Dictionary of American English* (Cassidy, Hall & Von Schneidmesser 1985) — as a direct report serves to voice the informant with a salient, communicative variable. Not only does this act distinguish the voice of the informant from that of the fieldworker, but the inclusion of this variable alongside a character description indexically links this linguistic feature with a social persona. Additionally, the fieldworkers' use of "peculiar" and their expressed desire to find "a better specimen" in another informant reveals a clear ideological framework informing these processes.

Moreover, the fieldworker's creative strategy of embedding the variable "sot" inside idiomatic discourse (e.g., "set in his ways") double-voices the variable, amounting to a kind of word-play. As Barrett (2006: 164) and Hill (1998: 682) have discussed with relation to Mock Spanish and covert ideological discourse, this incorporation of dialectal variables serves to "create a jocular or pejorative 'key.'" The humor of this kind of construction requires a recognition of the social contrast between the two voices at play, resulting in a kind of semantic pejoration. Thus, following Agha (2005), this use of an enregistered variable also communicates the fieldworker's footing or alignment toward that variety.

7.4.4 Indirect Report

In addition to direct report, several informant biographies seem to make use of entextualized voicing contrasts, creating what Agha (2005) calls typifiable voices. In these cases, the fieldworker incorporates an informant's dialect feature not simply as reported speech via direct quotation within the character sketch, but in a more indirect reporting style, as in Figure 7.4 below.

127 VA CAR WH C 715

Farmer, Sawmilling, 77

Born 4 miles west (Upper Zion). Has done sawmilling in Caroline County and edge of adjoining Essex and [A and Q] counties. [I believe A and Q should be adjoining King and Queen County]

Father? Mother's family local

Illiterate

Baptist

A very pitifully primitive and po' old critter. Rather quick and bright; slightly hard of hearing and aging considerably. Did not understand reason for interview and grew somewhat weary.

Speech rather quick and nervous. av before voiceless; >ɔ̃v or x̃v before voiced and finally.

Figure 7.4: VA10A Informant Biography (LAMSAS)

In the character sketch of the informant biography shown in Figure 7.4, the fieldworker describes the informant as “A very pitifully primitive and po’ old critter.” The fieldworker’s use of “po’ old critter” does not appear inside quotations, but it is recognizable as representing a distinct social voice thanks to the use of “po’” for “poor” a dialect respelling (Preston 1985). The result is that within a single sentence, there are two distinct voices represented: one standard and one markedly dialectal.⁴⁸ The lack of quotations, however, ambiguates the voicing source and citational reference. Is the fieldworker slipping into his own dialect, citing the informant, or perhaps referencing a social type for which the informant is a representative? In contrast to previous examples, this is a more indirect (and perhaps “free”) type of narrated speech where the voicing

⁴⁸ The semantic content of “po’ old critter” as a dialectal phrase deserves further attention, especially considering the lack of dialect respelling for “old.”

contrast is less transparent (Agha 2005). In effect, this indirect report “indexes a displacement of social perspective of the narrated world into that of the world of narration in which and from which something is nonetheless being narrated about someone in that framed narrated universe” (Silverstein 2020: 18). As a result, in this voicing strategy, the fieldworker is not just citing the informant’s speech, but rather invoking a broader way of speaking (i.e., a social voice, or a register), as well as an ideological alignment in relation to that voice.

Figure 7.5 below shows another strategy of fieldworkers can voice an informant in a more indirect style:

```
          95 WV GRA GR. R 1199  
Farmer, 87  
Born 2 1/2 m. up mountain  
F b. same; PGF, PGM b. Germany  
M b. 4 m. down crick; MGF b. Germany
```

Figure 7.5: Excerpt of WV95 Informant Biography (LAMSAS)

In Figure 7.5, at the beginning of the biography, the fieldworker documents key biographical data for the West Virginian informant: a farmer, age 87, who was born “up mountain” and whose mother was born “down crick.” In this informant biography, crick serves as a dialect respelling representing the pronunciation as [kɾɪk]. “Crick” is well documented as a variable within “Southern Mountain Dialect” and Virginian speech ca. 1930s and 1940s (Carpenter 1933; McJimsey 1940). As a result, the fieldworker’s inclusion of this variable can be understood as salient.

Notably, in this example, the author includes this dialect respelling not in the subjective sketch portion of the biography but in the factual demographic portion. As discussed in Section 7.4.2, the lower “character sketch” textual zone is more clearly positioned as a reporting voice representing the fieldworker’s own judgements, whereas the upper demography textual zone is more objectively reported almost as a fact sheet. Consequently, these textual zones are also “character zones” (Agha 2005) occupied by specific voices. By voicing the informant indirectly in the more fact-based demography zone, the voicing contrast is even less transparent, but the use of “down crick” is nonetheless double-voiced, invoking both the reported and reporting voices simultaneously. “Down crick” is moreover chronotopic, invoking a specific matrix of space and time, and enregistered, representing a distinct social voice alongside an implicit footing toward that voice. These laminated ideological and indexical components are all recognizable on the basis of a linguistic feature (“crick”).⁴⁹

The use of dialect respelling in a more indirect style of voicing is again found elsewhere in the informant biographies, as illustrated by Figures 7.6 and 7.7 below.

⁴⁹ Note: “up mountain” may well be a similar case but is not as immediately clearly enregistered as “crick.”

*171 VA CHE MA M 723

-----, 93

Born here (See record of 171 for ancestry)

Attended as a day student ~~bf~~ befo' de Wah a boarding ----- which happened to be situated in the neighborhood.

She probably belongs to the class of respectable but rather semi-cringing middle-class poor whites. Her education befo' de Wah makes her speech somewhat better, when she is on guard, than that of her son-in-law or her daughter.

Figure 7.6: Excerpt of VA31C Informant Biography (LAMSAS)

143 VA KW AQ T 708

Farmer, formerly carpenter, 64 perhaps

Born Manquin, 4 or 5 miles away, and came here an an infant. When 19-21 years in Hanover, near Gethsemene Church.

F and P GM born County. PGF a Yanke~~e~~ who came here befo' de Wah. Mother's family born County.

Figure 7.7: Excerpt of VA17A Informant Biography (LAMSAS)

In Figures 7.6 and 7.7, the fieldworker uses the same dialect respelling — “befo’ de Wah” — to capture a representation of these Virginian informants’ non-rhotic speech. In Figure 7.6, the fieldworker uses the same construction twice in the same biography. In both examples, the dialectal features occur alongside a social or characterological description. In Figure 7.6, the fieldworker writes: “She probably belongs to the class of respectable but rather semi-cringing middle-class poor whites. Her education befo’ de Wah makes her speech somewhat better, when she is on guard, than that of her son-in-

law or her daughter (VA31C).” In Figure 7.7, the fieldworker writes that the informant’s paternal grandfather was a “Yankee who came here befo’ de Wah.” Both biographies creatively incorporate these dialect respellings in the more objective demographic textual zone. In Figure 7.6, the feature is included in the education section (and again in the character sketch); in Figure 7.7 it is included in the family history section.

Agha (2005: 41) notes that an ironic voice emerges when the narrator unmasks another’s speech as the result of “emergent projections from a metricalized text structure of which the exclamatory phrase is a fragment.” Thus, it is not simply the inclusion of the phrase “befo’ de Wah” itself that creates the ironic voice, but rather the structure that frames this phrase — i.e., double-voicing through various text-metrical strategies, including dialect respelling feature, indirect report, playing with character zones. More broadly, the ironic effect is the product of entextualization of the generic form of the informant biography.

Moreover, ideology and enregisterment seeps through these examples. In Figure 7.6, a definite description presupposes the existence of “the class of respectable but rather semi-cringing middle-class poor whites” — a class to which the fieldworker says the informant “probably” belongs. The fieldworker is not simply documenting the status of the informant, but suggesting the existence of a certain class of people that includes race (white), socioeconomic status (both middle-class and poor), and an ideological evaluation via conventional implicature (respectable but rather semi-cringing). The fieldworker further only speculates the informant’s membership in this class, which seems to further solidify the presupposed existence of this class. Crucially for the understanding of language ideologies at work in this example, the fieldworker continues that it is the

informant's education "befo' de Wah" that "makes her speech better, when she is on guard, than that of her son-in-law or daughter." The informant's dialectal speech is not only excerpted but evaluated in contrast to her less-educated family members.

These examples underscore how the LAMSAS informant biographies are more than simple descriptions or vitae. Often, they can be complex matrices of enregisterment where fieldworkers express their footing in relation to different kinds of voices, drawing on a number of pragmatic and textual strategies to link ideologies with ways of speaking and being. In the next chapter, I conduct a case study that attempts to examine a recurring variable in the informant biography alongside additional LAP data, situating this variable in its broader ideological and interactional contexts.

CHAPTER 8. CASE STUDY

8.1 Introduction

So far, I have shown the ways that ideology and enregisterment are encoded in the informant biographies through pragmatic discourse analysis of conventional implicature and text-metricity. I now move toward a case study that focuses on one recurring variable found in the informant biography corpus: a description of informants as “Babtis.” After qualitative analysis of this variable in the context of the informant biography, I examine the variable alongside additional LAP data sources such as phonetic field-page data in a broader assemblage-based approach. This case study serves as a preliminary proposal in how researchers can use LAP informant biographies alongside response data for a broader situated and reflexive analysis.

8.2 Babtis

When I originally came across the “Babtis” on an informant biography, as in Figure 8.1 below, I assumed it was a typo. Looking at the published version of this informant biography in the *LAMSAS Handbook* (Kretzschmar et al. 1993), shown in Figure 8.2 below, the informant’s religion has been corrected to “Baptist.”

Farmer, 55

Born Avon, 3 m. below Afton, in county, and came here when 25

F b. Wintergreen, 2 m. above here; PGF, PGM b. in county

M b. near Bryants in county; MGF, MGM b. in county

Education at Avon till 16

Babtis

Figure 8.1: Excerpt of VA62B Informant Biography (LAMSAS)

VA 62B: Nellysford, Rockfish Dist. — M, farmer, 55. B. Avon (3 mi. below Afton), came here at age 25. — F. b. Wintergreen, 2 mi. above here, PGF, PGM b. Co.; M. b. Bryants in Co., MGF, MGM b. Co. — Ed.: Avon till 16. — Baptist. — Typical better-class, middle-aged farmer, fairly well-to-do (wife somewhat better family). Rather casual manner, as if nothing mattered. — Lax articulation; nasalization.

Figure 8.2: Excerpt of VA62B Informant Biography (Kretzschmar et al. 1993)

However, while reading more of the LAMSAS informant biographies, I saw Babtis reappear several times, each reported in the field of the biography detailing the informant's social contacts (often a storehouse for religion or other social memberships). In fact, non-standard spellings of Baptist are present in eight different LAMSAS biographies from my dataset, representing informants from Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina:

- Primitive Babtis (VA48A)
- Babtis (VA48B)
- Babtis (VA62B)

- Babtis (VA64A)
- Contacts: Babtis, hunting (NC22A)
- Babtis (NC73B)
- Free Will Babdis (SC3A)
- Babtist (SC41A)

These spellings are similar, though not entirely identical. All of them have a medial [b] in place of a [p]; however, SC3A (“Babdis”) uniquely has a medial [d] in place of a [t], and SC41A (“Babtist”) is the only spelling to include a final [t]. For this analysis, I treat Babtis as a lemma encompassing these three unique dialect respellings found in the LAMSAS informant biographies — Babtis, Babdis, and Babtist — and I focus specifically on the alternation of the medial [p] segment to a voiced [b].

In the dialectology literature, Babtis has been documented as a variable in several historical word lists and regional dictionaries, mostly in the American South and Appalachian regions. For one, Babtis is listed as a variant of Baptist within Southern Mountain Dialect, where “occasionally [p] becomes [b]: Babtis” (Berrey 1940: 50).⁵⁰ Similarly, in “The Phonetics of Great Smoky Mountain Speech,” Hall (1942: 87) notes “the usual forms are [ˈbaebdɪs] and [ˈbaebtɪs].” The *Dictionary of American Regional English* records the form as traditionally Midland and Southern, appearing in states like Missouri, Arkansas, Texas, Tennessee, Kentucky, and North Carolina, with pronunciation spellings including *Babdist*, *Babtiss*, and *Babtist* (Cassidy, Hall & Von Schneidemesser 1985). Additionally, the lexical item “Baptist” itself was also target on the LAMSAS worksheet, appearing as item 89.1 (Davis, McDavid & McDavid 1969). Together, these facts suggest that Babtis would have been a known source of variation for

⁵⁰ Berrey (1940: 47) also notes the word-final stop reduction of “Babtis’.”

fieldworkers working in the Middle and South Atlantic states at the time of the LAMSAS interviews. Babtis also appears outside of linguistic and dialectological research as a dialect respelling in several works, notably including Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Twain 1884). The appearance of Babtis in these various texts suggests that the pronunciation of Baptist with a medial [b] would be a recognizable dialectal feature not just to dialectologists, but also more generally. The appearance of Babtis in popular literature further reifies the socio-indexical linkage between this variable and specific regions, such as the South and Appalachia, as well as the people who live there.

8.3 Babtis in the Informant Biographies

Examining the variable in the direct context of the LAMSAS informant biographies, in each instance, Babtis does not appear quoted, nor does it occur in the subjective character sketch textual zone. Accordingly, the voicing contrast between fieldworker and informant is less transparent than a direct report (see Chapter 7). However, the use of a dialect respelling nonetheless signals a contrastive individuation (Agha 2005) between the reporting and reported voices (fieldworker and informant), as well as between two socially distinct voices (standard and dialect). As a result, Babtis in this context is double-voiced, invoking both the informant and the fieldworker as well as the space and contrast between them. Per Hill (1985: 729), this parodic double-voicing is the passive type, where the informant's word can become subsumed by the "ideologically controlling, monologic voice, if the words that are parodied are allowed no independence

or resistance against the author.” Thus, the fieldworkers’ use of Babtis in the informant biographies is full of indexical, ideological, and enregistering potential.⁵¹

Looking more broadly at the informant biographies opens the possibility to consider additional data and ask new questions — for example, do the informants described as Babtis have anything else in common? To begin, I focused on extracting key demographic data from these informant biographies and from the LAMSAS *Handbook*: age, gender, occupation, and social “type.” This information is listed in Table 8.1 below.

Table 8.1: Demographic Information for Informants Described as Babtis

Informant	Age	Gender	Occupation	Type
VA48A	66	Male	Farm work and takes in work	I
VA48B	62	Female	Housewife	II
VA62B	55	Male	Farmer	II
VA64A	83	Female	Housewife	I
NC22A	68	Male	Farmer	I
NC73B	77	Male	Farmer, carpenter, cancer curer	II
SC3A	72	Male	Farmer	I
SC41A	79	Female	Housewife	I

The eight informants span 55-83 years of age, comprise informant types I (“folk speakers”) and II (“common speakers”), and include both women and men. Looking at occupation, an impressionistic commonality of these informants is that all the women in this sample are housewives and all the men do some kind of farming work. Perhaps, then,

⁵¹ It’s also worth noting that Babtis is not just an idiosyncratic feature of one fieldworker’s descriptions — in fact, two different LAMSAS fieldworkers use this same spelling in different informant biographies.

Babtis is broadly indexically associated with the social types represented in this sample: middle-aged and older adults from North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina, primarily farmers and/or housewives, that can be described as “folk” or “common” social types.⁵² In addition, one informant (NC73B) is described in the informant biography, matter-of-factly, as a “cancer curer.” Listed as part of his occupation, this inclusion suggests the fieldworker is ironically double voicing the informant’s own words, noting that he cures cancer in addition to his farming and carpentry work. In this respect, even the reporting of traditional sociolinguistic categories like occupation may be subject to fieldworker ideology.

To further study these fieldworker ideologies at work, the character sketches of the informant biographies can provide additional data and context. Excerpts of these informants’ character sketches are listed below:

A quick, busy, alert, active spinster, with a very clear mind, but entirely ignorant of the outside world. Bearing what was once a good family name, she and her older sister have had to work hard for other people since their father's death. As a child she worked in the fields. FW found her most alert mentally of any uneducated person he had met; she grasped exactly what he meant and did not fumble for responses. Her speech is genuinely old-fashioned and uneducated, and the most unself-conscious that FW has heard. (VA48A)

Complacent middle-aged type (VA48B)

Typical middle-aged farmer of the better class, fairly well-to-do. His wife comes of a better family than he does. Rather indifferent manner; not particularly refined (VA62B)

Remarkable for her youth at age of 83. Never been sick. Moves gracefully and seems to think and act without effort. Quick to respond. No intellectual fire or keen interest in intellectual exactness of delineation. Contented with slipshod thinking and short-cuts. (VA64A)

⁵² Due to the extremely small sample of informants represented and lack of explicit ideological data from the fieldworkers, these are not conclusions but gestures toward an indexical understanding of this variable.

Very ill-informed of outside world. Accustomed to being guide to a few hunters from Winston-Salem each year. Moral but poor family. (NC22A)

Lazy, easy-going, not too intelligent (NC73B)

Natural-born friendly chatterer. Good sport when young, and now mind runs to moral, religious goodness to mankind. Very willing to do his part. Understood importance of project in own uneducated way. (SC3A)

Plain, sensible; serious-minded disposition. Felt she was contributing valuable information and took pains to be thoroughly honest. Intelligent in all she told but incapable of realization when tricked into using old-fashioned forms. (SC41A)

In these sketches, we see a number of different kinds of descriptions and potential ideologies at work. Two informants are described as “ill-informed” or “ignorant” of the outside world (VA48A and NC22A). Two are described as “old fashioned” (VA48A and SC41A). Three include some kind of conventional implicature that seems to blunt a description of possible intelligence: “Understood importance of project in own uneducated way” (SC3A), “most alert mentally of any uneducated person he had met” (VA48A), “Intelligent in all she told but incapable of realization when tricked into using old fashioned forms.” Two explicitly comment that the informant is “not too intelligent” (NC73B) or has “No intellectual fire” (VA64A). Two are “middle-aged” — one of whom is “complacent” (VA48B) and the other is “indifferent” and “not particularly refined” (VA62B). While there is perhaps so single unifying ideology in these sketches, a general common thread of informants described as Babtis appears to be some kind of negative valuation from the fieldworker, especially related to intelligence. Alongside the social characteristics detailed in Table 8.1 and the regional dialect associations in Section 8.2, a more specific picture of the indexical and ideological potential of Babtis starts to emerge from these character sketches.

8.4 Babtis in the Field Record

As indicated earlier, Baptist was a target on the LAMSAS worksheet (89.1). That means that in addition to analyzing Babtis in the context of the informant biographies, we can also look at how fieldworkers recorded the informants' production of this variable in their phonetic field records. For example, does Babtis reflect the informant's actual pronunciation of this word? Figure 8.3 below shows one informant's production of the Baptist target (VA62B).

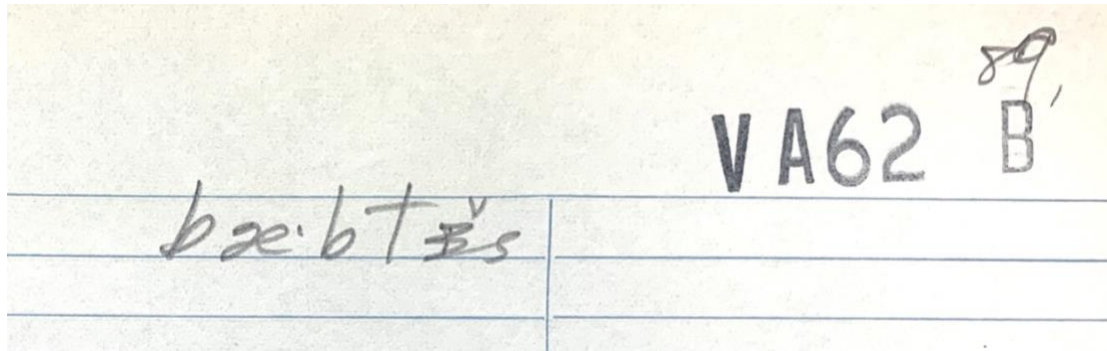


Figure 8.3: Excerpt of VA62B Field Page 89 (LAMSAS)

In this example, the fieldworker has recorded the informant's response phonetically as [bæbts],⁵³ roughly matching the dialect respelling of Babtis in the informant biography. As it turns out, each of the informants with Babtis in their biographies also had a roughly mirrored version of [bæbts] in their field record, as exemplified in Table 8.2 below.⁵⁴

⁵³ The exact phonetic notation in Figure 8.3 is difficult to render in print — especially the second vowel, which appears to be transcribed as both [ɪ] and [ɛ] with an additional diacritic. For the purpose of this study, because I focus less on vowel quality and more on the voicing of the medial consonants [p]→[b] and [t]→[d], I have simplified the fieldworker's phonetic transcription.

⁵⁴ As in Figure 8.3 the exact phonetic notations used by LAP fieldworkers is more complex. In Table 8.2, I use a simplified transcription focusing on the medial consonant alteration. Images of the field pages containing the original transcriptions for these forms are available via the LAP website.

Table 8.2: Comparison of Babtis in Informant Biographies and Field Records

Informant	Informant Biography	Field Record
VA48A	Primitive Babtis	[bæbtɪs]
VA48B	Babtis	[bæbtɪs]
VA62B	Babtis	[bæbtɪs]
VA64A	Babtis	[bæbtɪs]
NC22A	Contacts: Babtis, hunting	[bæbtɪs]
NC73B	Babtis	[bæbtɪs]
SC3A	Free Will Babdis	[bæbdɪs]
SC41A	Babtist	[bæbtɪs]

Almost every phonetic transcription in Table 8.2 is consistent with the dialect respelling in the informant biography, each with a medial [b] instead of [p], and each with the word-final stop [t] reduction. Notably, SC3A was the only instance of a fieldworker’s respelling of Babdis instead of Babtis, and it is also the only phonetic transcription in this set that includes a medial [d] instead of [t]. The one exception in this table is SC41A, where the fieldworker uses Babtist in the informant biography, but the phonetic record does not document a word-final [t] in the informant’s pronunciation. These examples resist simple interpretation; SC3A suggests the fieldworker used phonetically accurate respellings in the informant biography, whereas SC41A suggests the opposite. More broadly, these findings reinforce the idea that Babtis in the informant biography is not a simple phonetic reproduction of the field record or linguistic documentation, but a dialect respelling loaded with ideology. In other words, the use of Babtis in the informant biography represents choice made by the fieldworker to reflect the informant’s dialectal pronunciation of the word, which itself is reflective of a broader socially typifiable voice

(Agha 2005). In other words, *Babtis* represents both a salient dialect feature and a unique social type, meaning someone who is described as *Babtis* is indexically different from someone who is *Baptist*. Moreover, the use of this enregistered voice in the informant biography also carries the fieldworker's footing (i.e., ideology) toward that voice.

8.5 A Broader Look at *Babtis*

We can continue to zoom out and examine a larger sample of LAMSAS informants to compare informant biography data with field record data. For example, plenty of informants are described as Baptist (not *Babtis*) in their informant biographies — did these individuals have a medial [p] recorded in their phonetic field data for the target Baptist? To investigate this question, I first limited the search of my dataset to just the 334 biographies of informants from Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina — the only states where a dialect respelling of Baptist occurred in the biographies. Secondly, not every informant biography had the word Baptist appear (since not every informant was Baptist or had a relation to this religion), so I further limited my search to only those 123 biographies that had “Baptist” or a dialect respelling appear somewhere in its text.

I began by looking at the distribution breakdown in the informant biographies. As reported above, out of these 123 records, 8 informant biographies included a dialect respelling of Baptist (6.5%). The remaining 115 biographies used the traditional spelling of Baptist (93.5%). Without looking at the broader LAMSAS dataset, this breakdown might give the impression that pronunciations like [bæbtɪs] were in the minority in these states. However, looking at the field records of these 123 informants tells a different story. In fact, 94 of the 123 informants (76%) were recorded as having a pronunciation of

Baptist with a medial [b] — e.g., [bæbtɪs], [bæbtɪst], or [bæbdɪs]. On the other hand, 24 of these informants (20%) were recorded as having a medial [p] — e.g., [bæptɪs] or [bæptɪst]. Two informants were recorded with both [b] and [p] variants (2%) and three had no information recorded (2%). These counts are listed in Tables 8.3 and 8.4 below.

Table 8.3: Variation of Baptist in Informant Biographies

Representation in Biography	Count	Percent
Babtis	8	7%
Baptist	115	93%

Table 8.4: Variation of Baptist in Phonetic Field Record

Pronunciation in Field Record	Count	Percent
Medial [b]	94	76%
Medial [p]	24	20%
Both [b] and [p]	2	2%
No data recorded	3	2%

This exploration reveals that while a medial [b] is the dominant pronunciation of Baptist in the field record of these informants, the LAMSAS fieldworkers used the corresponding dialect respelling of Babtis in their biographies relatively rarely. Conversely, the standard spelling of Baptist is common in these informant biographies, while the pronunciation of with a medial [p] is less common in the field records.

As the LAP and dialect geography has long contended, examining the geographic distribution of variation can also reveal compelling connections (Kurath 1972).

Accordingly, Figure 8.4 below maps the distribution of medial [p] vs. [b] pronunciations of Baptist in the field records of LAMSAS informants compared to those informants with a dialect respelling in their informant biographies.

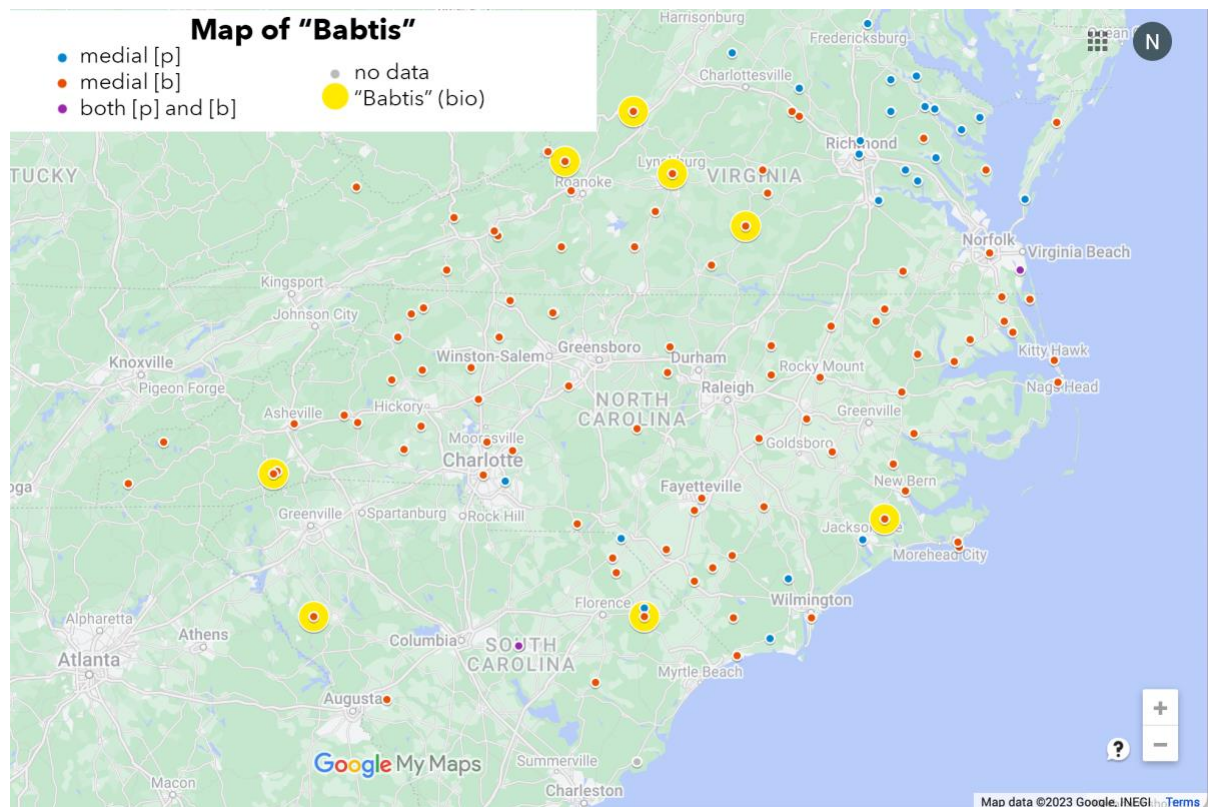


Figure 8.4: Distribution of Baptist pronunciation in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina

The distribution of medial [p] appears clustered in northern Virginia or otherwise either coastal or larger cities: Charlottesville and Richmond, VA, Charlotte and Wilmington, N.C.; the South Carolina informants do not appear to follow any particular patterns. Meanwhile, the medial [b] occurs nearly everywhere, but is certainly more prominent in

the central and western regions of each state. The use of dialect respelling Babtis in the informant biography does not seem to neatly follow any geographic pattern except that four instances seem clustered in central Virginia. Future research could further examine this distribution alongside relevant geographic features for potential connections.

8.6 Conclusion

What can we glean from these different approaches to understanding the occurrence of Babtis in the informant biographies of LAMSAS? First, Babtis represents a dialect respelling of Baptist that appears in both dialectological and popular literature associated with Southern, Appalachian, and Mountain dialects. Second, the occurrence of Babtis in the biography may not correspond neatly with a single social type, but broadly it appears to be accompanied by a character sketch with some negative valuation of the informant's intelligence. Third, the fieldworkers' respellings of Babtis in the informant biography tend to roughly match the informant's pronunciation Baptist in their field record. Fourth, a broader glimpse at the field records suggests that Baptist with a medial [b] was in fact the dominant pronunciation among this selection of North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia informants, despite the respelling only occurring in a handful of biographies. Fifth, the geographic distribution tends to place a medial [p] pronunciation closer to northern, urban, and coastal centers, whereas a medial [b] is often more central and western.

Together, the varied investigations in this case study suggest that there is perhaps no single determination or motivation for why fieldworkers described their informants as Babtis in the informant biographies. The common thread between these findings,

however, seems to be an undergirding of ideology, indexicality, and enregisterment. As Silverstein (2021: 34) aptly summarizes, “we recognize who these characters in the narrated world are, what are their social identities with all the presumptive associated interests and moral positionalities, et cetera, not so much by what they say one to another, as by how they (indexically) say it.” As a result, the choice for the fieldworker to voice the informant through the inclusion of a key dialect feature like Babtis, rendered in dialect respelling, gives the reader a picture of who the informant is vis-à-vis how they talk. In many cases, they occur inside the character sketch as direct reports alongside characterological descriptions or ideological valuations from the fieldworker. In other cases, they occur more ambiguously in the demographic sections of the informant biography, bringing a dialectal flavor to the narrated facts, adopting a parodic voicing style, or perhaps even coining new social types. Ultimately, dialect features like Babtis are representational tokens, ripe with socio-indexical potential — in this case, perhaps imbued with indexical associations of Southern or Appalachian, folk and common social types, or farmers and housewives. In the informant biographies, the fieldworker uses Babtis to reference these indexical associations alongside an ideological footing.

Importantly, the informant biographies are not the only LAP data source that are subject to fieldworker ideologies. While this investigation has treated the transcription of Baptist in the field record as objective fact, phonetic documentation is not impervious to ideology. Rather, as sociophoneticians like McGowan have repeatedly demonstrated, speech perception is necessarily a socio-indexical and ideological enterprise (McGowan 2011; 2015; McGowan & Babel 2020). In fact, research has suggested this alternation between the voiced [b] and voiceless [p] in American English is not as binary as the

phonetic representation in LAMSAS might imply. Lisker (1986: 3) has examined this very alternation from medial [p] to [b] before an unstressed syllable, noting that whether the bilabial stop in this context is perceived as voiced or voiceless is subject to some 16 patterns, which “makes it difficult to rationalize a purely acoustic account” of this alternation.⁵⁵ While an especially fascinating extension of this study would be to explore the LAP’s audio collection for potential appearances of Baptist in interview recordings, Lisker (1986: 4) further notes the “auditory judgement and acoustic record may not always agree.” In other words, examining the acoustic speech signal would not reconstruct the articulatory gesture, nor would it recreate the fieldworker’s speech perception process. This is an important reminder that variation is indeed part of a broader ideological and indexical system with diffuse and wide-spread linguistic implications. As Silverstein (1998: 138) has succinctly summarized, it’s indexicality “all the way down.”

⁵⁵ I’m grateful to Dr. Kevin McGowan who raised this discussion and pointed me toward this paper during my thesis defense.

CHAPTER 9. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

9.1 Discussion

In this project, I have focused on analyzing the ways that fieldworkers encode language ideologies into the informant biographies of the LAP. This study has also attempted to explore a new approach to researching data from the LAP, a storied project in U.S. American dialectology and linguistics. I return to my research questions here:

How are language ideologies encoded into the informant biographies of the LAP and to what effect?

How can informant biographies be incorporated into LAP research projects and to what effect?

Language ideologies in these informant biographies are visible on multiple levels, encoded through both explicit and implicit strategies. Using pragmatic discourse analysis focusing conventional implicature and text-metricity in the informant biographies, I argue that fieldworkers align linguistic features and behaviors with social personae and ideological schemas, pointing to processes of enregisterment. Furthermore, this ideological analysis of informant biographies can be used as a jumping-off point for further research of LAP data. As shown in the case study (Chapter 8), ideological analysis of the informant biographies complicates the investigation of sociolinguistic variation in new and interesting ways.

In revealing the workings of ideology in the informant biographies, I argue that LAP data should be understood as “acts of identity” (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985). In other words, LAP data are not just bits of language, but the products of agentive actions situated within larger ideological and indexical system. This approach hinges on a reflexive perspective that examines the LAP interview itself as a locus of metapragmatic

activity and a “site of ideological work” (Gal & Irvine 2019: 22). Moreover, this interpretation implicates both informants and fieldworkers, suggesting that the LAP data are co-constructed between informant and fieldworker. Accordingly, more research can be done to tease out the ideologies that are inscribed in texts like the informant biographies in order to better understand the LAP data as a whole.

Ultimately, these findings have further implicatures for future projects approaching the LAP. I argue that researchers working with the LAP should seek to account for how these linguistic data were negotiated, both in the interactional and broader ideological and socio-cultural contexts. In terms of methods, that means LAP research projects can look more closely at additional data such as informant biographies for greater insight to these contexts, including the role of language ideologies. This thesis thus not only offers an investigation for ideology in the LAP, but a methodological proposal for a new kind of approach to LAP data — one I hope to continue exploring in future projects.

9.2 Limitations

This study has several methodological limitations. In Chapter 7, I examine conventional implicature and voicing as two separate frames. However, in many cases, the fieldworker employs these discursive forms in same turn of phrase, suggesting that these are likely related pragmatic strategies.⁵⁶ I separate them here to better account for the fact that they emerge from different theoretical traditions — voicing largely stemming from the Bakhtinian influence of linguistic anthropology, and conventional implicature

⁵⁶ I’m grateful to Dr. Dennis Preston for bringing this point up during my thesis defense.

belonging to the world of semantics-pragmatics. Given their rich overlap in this dataset, though, I look forward to conducting more research at the interface of these traditions.

In addition, one of my central arguments in Chapter 5 is that critical attention should be paid to the LAP interview itself, including its unique interactional elements. However, in this study, I do not consider the fieldworker's positionality within this interaction. Future studies could more closely examine the fieldworker's identity and role in this interaction, but because I am not attempting to reconstruct the interview itself from the surviving LAP data (nor am I trying to triangulate the social positioning between informant and fieldworker using, as Silverstein [2003: 197] would say, "billiard-ball" sociolinguistics), I consider the fieldworkers role more broadly in terms of the ideological positionings we can extract from their data.

There are also several practical limitations to my study. One challenge relates more generally to working with the LAP and its massive amount of data, almost entirely physical in medium, much of which has yet to be digitized. Because of my position as a graduate student at University of Kentucky, where the LAP is currently housed, I have had special access to documents such as the LAMSAS informant biographies that are not yet publicly available. Part of this project included digitizing and operationalizing of this data for future use and my hope is to continue making this data accessible so that other researchers might incorporate it into their methods. I have thoroughly reviewed this data for processing and transcription errors but recognize I may not have caught all of them; any remaining errors or anomalies in transcription are my own.

Additionally, within this study, I am not looking at every informant biography available in the LAP, nor am I looking at every biography in the LAMSAS collection. I

limited my analysis to these LAMSAS biographies based on their availability; after consulting with the LAP team, I could not immediately locate additional biography documents. Future studies could focus on locating the remaining LAMSAS biographies for a broader analysis or could compare findings with informant biographies from other LAP projects. Indeed, a more complete corpus might allow me to expand my research or feel more confident in the conclusions I draw. However, given the nature of the LAP as a dataset, aiming for “completeness” is often like chasing the horizon. As a result, this analysis, though limited, is intended to serve as a launching pad for further research, not a comprehensive catalog. As I continue to search the archives for additional informant biographies, I will also look forward to discovering new surprises.

Furthermore, while my corpus methods attempt to consider the whole of this data set, my qualitative analyses focus on the particularly illustrative biographies that have some ideological commentary to be teased out. That means there are many informant biographies that are not included in this paper, and the presentation of ideologies at work in these data is necessarily partial. Accordingly, it should be noted that the biographies selected here are not reflective of the overall breadth or complexity of the project. I also recognize my own positionality has informed the kind of analysis I perform and conclusions I make. I invite researchers to examine my data (available via my Github) and to continue the analysis for themselves.

9.3 Future Directions

There are several avenues for further research stemming from this project. For one, future projects can continue to focus on analysis of the LAP informant biographies, either

looking at a single sub-project like LAMSAS or comparing several sub-projects. These analyses can use quantitative methods or qualitative methods — or a combined approach. For example, an extremely interesting investigation could focus specifically on gender and language ideologies in the informant biographies. Alternatively, researchers can also incorporate analysis of informant biographies into broader studies as part of an assemblage-style investigation, as I hope to have shown in my case study. In these cases, I suggest that researchers might *begin* research for a project by examining the informant biographies, which often offer a summary of key features of that informant’s speech or other interesting ideological commentary from the fieldworker. Additionally, as Johnstone, Andrus & Danielson (2006: 100) note, “Paying attention to individuals also inevitably complicates the picture in interesting ways” — so futures investigations could focus on a close analysis of a single speaker within the LAP, beginning with an analysis of their biography. For example, recall the North Carolina informant who was described in their informant biography as initially suspicious until he learned the fieldworker was from Chapel Hill (NC74A). What might a closer, deeper analysis of this single informant’s field record reveal? Does the nature of the informant’s response change during the course of the interview? These kinds of explorations will continue to complicate our understanding of LAP data.

I argue that interdisciplinary approaches remain the most exciting directions for LAP research, enabling scholars to ask new questions and explore new methods. Moreover, echoing Burkette's (2021) suggested assemblage approach, interdisciplinary research can continue to find new value in under-utilized LAP data sources. In particular, audio recordings of LAP interviews represent an exciting opportunity for studies of

ideology, indexicality, and enregisterment, especially exploring the pragmatic, discourse features of these conversations.

9.4 Conclusion

Eckert (2000) and others have repeatedly shown that sociolinguistic phenomena are understandable as part of a broader “meaning-making enterprise” only when situated locally in context. Similarly, in their study of the enregisterment of Pittsburghese, Johnstone & Kiesling (2008: 29) propose what they call a “phenomenological approach” that “attending to multiplicity and indeterminacy of indexical relations (and how those relations arise historically in lived experience) can lead to a more nuanced account of the distribution of social meanings of variant forms than can studies of perception or production alone” (29). They describe this methodology as “phenomenological” in order to call attention to the fact that people encounter the sociolinguistic world through their own lived experience. Therefore, in order to study sociolinguistic meaning, researchers should examine language users’ own sociolinguistic experiences, as well as the broader historical socio-linguistic landscape in which they are situated.

Accordingly, to fully understand the linguistic data housed within the LAP, we need to attempt to examine the interactional, indexical, and ideological context in which those data were produced. In order to achieve this, I echo my professor Dr. Mark Lauersdorf’s motto and suggest we “use all the data.” Studies of informant biographies are not only fascinating in their own right but can also shed new light on the broader LAP collection. As a result, I advocate for further analysis of informant biographies and other

under-explored LAP data sources. Furthermore, I encourage others to embrace the LAP in investigations of indexicality, ideology, or enregisterment.

In 1970, Davis (42) wrote that “the Atlas records still represent the largest untapped linguistic resource open to students of American English.” I would argue that this claim remains true today, 50 years later, and much of the LAP’s massive collection is still yet unexplored. That means there is much still to be uncovered in the LAP archives. This thesis ultimately argues that historical dialectological data, like that collected as part of the LAP, are not only a relevant but an extremely rich resource for researchers interested in sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropological inquiry. Moreover, the language ideologies housed within LAP data present a more nuanced understanding of the LAP more broadly. With the centennial anniversary of the LAP on the horizon, it is my hope that more researchers will turn to the LAP to explore this robust dataset, asking new questions and applying new methods in the process.

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