



Review: Language Variation in Time and Space Revisited: Appalachian and Ozark English
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assault on Stalingrad, Russia (1942–1943).” For Russians, *Stalingrad* is primarily the rout of the fascist Wehrmacht, the crucial battle that changed the entire course of World War II. Again, *horns* is defined as “a symbol of lust”; for Russians, *horns* is symbolic of adultery. Urdang and Ruffner list “HARE attribute of sexual desire incarnate”—in Russian culture, this meaning is associated rather with other animals (e.g., male dogs and stallions), whereas the hare is a symbol of cowardice. Finally, according to the dictionary, *Babylon* is a symbol of magnificence; for Russians it stands for the disorderly magnitude of people, *babel*.

Thus information contained in the volume can be used with much benefit for the reader for both practical and theoretical purposes. The editors have produced a lexicological achievement, well conceived and excellently executed.

LANGUAGE VARIATION IN TIME AND SPACE REVISITED:
APPALACHIAN AND OZARK ENGLISH

Variation and Change in Geographically Isolated Communities: Appalachian English and Ozark English. By Donna Christian, Walt Wolfram, and Nanjo Dube. Publication of the American Dialect Society, No. 74. Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1988. Pp. v + 181 pages.

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This volume is the most recent in a series of highly serviceable dialect studies begun by Wolfram, who was later joined by Christian and other associates. As the others typically do, it presents a concise discussion of the historical and social contexts of the dialects under investigation and then presents an analysis of selected grammatical features, often chosen because of their general importance in variation studies and/or because of their relevance to grammatical features highlighted in studies of other varieties.

The selection of these two varieties of American English was highly motivated since the varieties together have distinctive grammatical features setting them off from other American varieties. Moreover, the sociocultural features of the regions in which they are spoken are quite similar. Notably, both areas are isolated, rural, basically white communities within a mountain range. Even though both areas nowadays have more access to the outside through improved transportation, significant evidence of their historical isolation remains. It is also important to note that many of the people in the Ozarks are descendants of immigrants from Appalachia, and

they thus share the heavily Scotch-Irish and Highland Scot ancestry of the Appalachian population. Apparently, many migrants from Appalachia to the south and west settled in the Ozarks because it is the only extended mountainous region between their home and the Rocky Mountains (2).

The historical relationship between the two areas makes them prime candidates for the study of the evolution of linguistic diversity, how what was originally one dialect remains the same and changes after its speakers are divided into two groups, each of which continues set off from its surroundings. As the authors observe, several questions are of particular interest in studying the two related communities: (1) What grammatical features are preserved? (2) How do the rates of linguistic change in the two areas compare? and (3) Is there selective preservation of certain grammatical features?

This study and others like it obviously play an important role in making comparisons of American dialects possible, in particular specifying the details of what the authors refer to as a “continuum of dialect divergence” (3). This term, though illuminating, should not, however, lull us into forgetting about dialect clusters of American English which have complexes of grammatical phenomena that do not tie into other dialects. The term might be interpreted as suggesting that all grammatical phenomena found in American dialects are historically or quantitatively related when, in fact, some dialects—notably Black Vernacular English dialects (Spears 1982 and in press)—impugn such a view.

The book is divided into seven chapters with three appendices with a list of subjects, interview excerpts, and an inventory of grammatical features of both varieties. The introduction provides a brief discussion of the history and sociocultural settings of both regions, a discussion of methodology, and an overview of the uses of implicational models in variation studies, followed by a discussion of frequency relationships. The second chapter discusses more fully the historical and social contexts of the two varieties. The third is concerned with completive *done*, the fourth with *a-* prefixing, the fifth with irregular verbs, and the sixth with subject-verb concord. The last chapter presents the overall conclusions of the study, with an emphasis on the relevance of certain findings for variation theory.

In the following discussion I will focus on certain grammatical properties of the dialects, on methodology, and on findings of special import for variation theory.

The analyses presented in this volume are based on data from tape-recorded interviews with 102 subjects. This sample was culled from a larger one including tapings made in Appalachia in the fall of 1974, used for earlier published studies, and tapings done in the fall of 1982 and the spring

of 1983 in Appalachia and the Ozarks. The later Appalachian recordings were made in order to have sufficient speakers in the older age groups.

The 1974 recordings were done in Monroe and Mercer counties of West Virginia, the goal being to record speakers who were (1) felt to be representative of central/southern Appalachia, (2) from a relatively homogeneous area linguistically, and (3) rural, agrarian whites of limited formal education. In all cases except one, the fieldworkers who conducted the interviews were locals; and the one exception, Nanjo Dube, conducted interviews in her home state of Arkansas, though she is not from the area in which she recorded.

The subjects for the Ozark data were from the northwest corner of Arkansas in Johnson County and surrounding areas.

The subjects were divided into cells so as to permit testing for differences related to sex and age. Socioeconomic class and ethnicity were held constant: all were rural, working class, and white. The interviewees were somewhat arbitrarily divided into five age groups characterized as follows: 10–15, those in the immediately postacquisition stage; 16–30, those establishing their roles within the community; 31–50, those having already settled into their community roles with respect to language usage; 51–70; and 70 and over. The two over-50 groups were considered the “older generation,” which might have speech features reflecting an earlier period.

One methodological problem results from the placing of subjects from both the earlier and later tape-recordings into age groups according to their age at the time of the recordings. Since there was a nine-year period between the recordings, in one and the same age group one sometimes finds subjects who in reality belong in different age groups but are together because of their age at the time or recording. Of course, this is not necessarily a significant problem since the time between recordings may not be all that important. Also, if any suspicious results had emerged, it would have been possible to go back and separate out subjects recorded at different times. My chief concern is that the authors do not address these possible problems.

It is curious that some of the cells for the study have as few as three and four members: Ozark males and females 51–70 and 70+. In a sense, though, the authors consider them as one group, the “older generation.” Nevertheless, they treat them as two different groups in some analyses.

Wolfram himself, while acknowledging the difficulty in deciding how many subjects should be in a cell used in empirical linguistic research, has stated, “It appears . . . that if we have fewer than five informants in each cell . . . we run the risk of getting quite skewed results” (Wolfram and Fasold 1974, 40). However, in all fairness to the authors, much hinges on exactly

what is done with the data and particularly how specific results are assessed in terms of their sociolinguistic significance. There *APPEAR* to be no problems resulting from small size; but, again, one wishes they had commented on this issue.

One of the more interesting facts reported for *done* is that, based on apparent-time data, it appears to be dying out among Ozark English (OE) speakers, where it is found only among the 50+ age groups; among all ages in Appalachia, there are no significant differences. It is interesting that the situation in the Ozarks parallels that found by Labov for Vernacular Black English in Northern cities (1972, 50–53). In addition to these age differences, there is also a marked tendency for males in both communities to use *done* more than females.

Although the assignment of meaning to *done* is not without problems, the authors conclude their meaning analysis with the suggestion that, semantically, *done* marks completive aspect. At certain points in chapter 3, tense/aspect terms and terms for language-specific (viz., English) verb forms (the latter often, if not always, capitalized), and general, cross-linguistic tense/aspect terms seem to be somewhat confused and used interchangeably, as is the case in far too many sociolinguistic works. The terms in question here are PERFECT (i.e., the ENGLISH PERFECT), PERFECTIVE, and COMPLETIVE. It eventually becomes clear that by COMPLETIVE the authors mean ‘past tense combined with perfective and punctual (i.e., nonhabitual) aspect’. *Done* has often been discussed with respect to the auxiliary *have* of the ENGLISH PERFECT (not PERFECTIVE, which is only one property of the ENGLISH PERFECT). Thus, it would be natural for the authors to discuss ‘present relevance’ (or, more accurately, ‘posterior-reference time relevance’, keeping in mind FUTURE and PAST PERFECTS), which is often taken to be an essential property of the ENGLISH PERFECT (and, by some scholars, of PERFECTNESS itself). However, they do not discuss ‘present [or any other kind of tense] relevance’ except indirectly through their discussion of *done* with respect to *have*.

The pragmatic meaning (i.e., that occurring with only some tokens) posited for *done* is ‘intensity’ or ‘emphasis’. In the concluding chapter, it is mentioned that, additionally, *done* is suspected of serving as a vernacular marker, a form used at higher frequencies in certain types of vernacular discourse and social situations strongly associated with local culture.

Done is labeled syntactically as a QUASI-MODAL since it does not fully share the syntactic properties of modals (e.g., subject-modal inversion in questions), yet it certainly has more in common with modals than with adverbs, the most promising of the other categories to which *done* might be assigned.

Perhaps of special interest to scholars who have studied *done* in other vernaculars is its occurrence in these two varieties after *is* and *have*, for ex-

ample, because the one that was in there had done rotted (33) and *We thought he was done gone* (33). Such data make it unlikely that *done* can be considered merely a substitute for the perfect *have*, as the authors appropriately point out.

One hypothesis which might help account for the indeterminate syntactic status of *done* which is not explicitly considered involves atrophy. This hypothesis might explain “messy” facts such as certain limitations on the privilege of occurrence of *done* and its almost redundant co-occurrence with *is* and *have*. These facts would be interpreted as artifacts of its atrophy and competition with the standard English auxiliaries as linguistic change proceeds; what we now witness would be an intermediate stage which will eventually lead to *done*’s disappearance (assuming that the current pattern of change with respect to *done* continues). A number of cases of language change have been noted in which forms in competition co-occur.¹

The *a-* prefixing analyzed for the two dialects is restricted syntactically to (1) progressive participles (in all tenses of the verb), for example *He was a-tellin’ the truth* (52); (2) progressives which have undergone WHIZ Deletion (e.g., *I got two dead and ten a-livin’*, 52); (3) adverbial complements (*One night my sister woke up a-screamin’*, 54); and (4) complements of particular verb subclasses, including those of movement, starting and continuing, and perception (e.g., *A bear came a-runnin’*, 54). Note that *a-* prefixing cannot occur with gerunds (e.g., **He likes a-huntin’*, 55) nor after unreduced prepositions, from which the *a-* prefix is derived and with which it alternates, for example, **He makes money by a-buildin’ houses* (55). The categorical phonological constraint on *a-* prefixing prevents it from occurring on participles with an initial unstressed syllable. (No such examples were found in the data.) A variable phonological constraint prohibits *a-* prefixing on participles beginning with a vowel. Interestingly, *gonna* (cf. *going to*) turned out to be a constraint on *a-* prefixing, a lexical constraint previous studies had not uncovered. The frequency of *a-* prefixing before *gonna* is especially low, and some speakers have none at all. As noted, this is no doubt due to *gonna*’s marginal status as a participle, having become more of a quasi-modal in these dialects, as in general American English.

The two meanings uncovered for the prefix are pragmatic, that is, variably present. The prefix sometimes expresses intensity, and there is also some indication that some speakers may preserve it as a stylistic marker in a fashion similar to the preservation of completive *done*. However, it also seems that some speakers may be using the prefix as an inherently variable form across styles, while some may do both. Unfortunately, these observations must remain speculation, given the difficulty of empirically testing their validity.

There were few differences in *a-* prefixing between the dialects, the one exception being that, among younger Ozark speakers, its occurrence was noticeably reduced. None of them used it at significant levels, suggesting that the decline of *a-* prefixing is proceeding faster in Ozark English than in Appalachian. Of particular significance for variation theory are the findings concerning the lexical constraint *gonna* and selective environment retention. The effects of variability of lexical items such as *gonna* indicate that language change may not be as neat as some variation theorists have implied (e.g., Bailey 1973). The term SELECTIVE ENVIRONMENT RETENTION refers to the fact that, as a form declines in use, it may be retained at significant levels in some environments but not in others, rather than being reduced proportionately in the full range of environments. There is, then, a process of selectively eliminating environments instead of gradually decreasing frequencies in all environments. Not only that, it appears that speakers do not all select the same environments for retention.

The study of irregular verbs uncovered a strong tendency toward generalization, namely to modify verbs with two different forms for preterit and past participle (e.g., *go/went/gone*) and not those with a single form for both preterit and past participle (e.g., *find/found*). This suggests that decreasing markedness is a higher-order principle in the two dialects' reorganization of the verbal system.

Irregular verbs are clearly undergoing change from the perspective of apparent time, but these changes, the authors feel, are not necessarily set ultimately to bring the system into conformity with standard English. What is occurring has more the nature of a leveling process in which those features which most differentiate these dialects from other vernaculars are dropping out, being replaced by features which bring these dialects more into line with other American vernaculars.

Nevertheless, there is a weak correlation between standardness of forms used and age in Ozark English, with younger speakers tending to use a higher percentage of standard forms. "This is clearly not evidence of a perfect correspondence between the age factor and nonstandard usage" (105), and no doubt a number of other factors for which there were no controls (for example, education) influenced the results.

The major insight into irregular verb usage came through implicational analysis. Irregular forms for the preterit and past participle fell into six categories: (1) different strong forms (e.g., *drug* for *dragged*); (2) regularization (e.g., *knowed* for *knew*); (3) participle for preterit (e.g., *seen* for *saw*); (4) preterit for participle (e.g., *have went* for *have gone*); (5) bare root forms (e.g., *give* for *gave*); and (6) ambiguous cases, basically those involving verbs which have the same root and past participle forms (e.g., *come* and *run*). An

example of the last case would be the use of *come* for *came*. It was possible to construct almost identical implicational arrays for both dialects. The categories as listed above represent the implicational relationships for Ozark English. Thus, if an Ozark speaker uses a regularized form such as *knowned*, it is highly probable that he or she uses a bare root form also.

With regard to subject-verb agreement, or concord, Appalachian and Ozark have very similar patterns. These patterns set these two dialects off from other nonstandard varieties. So, for example, the two dialects tend to follow standard usage with respect to third singular verbal *-s* (with *do* an exception to this pattern—*don't* commonly occurs with third-person singular subjects, as is the case in other nonmainstream varieties); this is like Northern White Nonstandard varieties, but different from Puerto Rican, Vernacular Black, and American Indian (Pueblo) Englishes. Unlike Northern White Nonstandard varieties, however, Appalachian and Ozark both show nonstandard usage typically with concord between plural subjects and verbs other than *have* and *be* (whose behavior requires distinguishing them from other verbs with respect to concord).

Both dialects also consistently show high frequency of singular verbs with all expletive *there* structures, those which standard English would require to have a singular verb (e.g., *There was a man at the door*) as well as those requiring a plural verb (e.g., *There were men at the door*).

Both varieties show varying degrees of nonstandardness with plural subjects and no nonstandardness with grammatically singular subjects (with the exception of *don't*).

With regard to one set of implicational relationships, both varieties behave the same. Specifically, speakers following a nonstandard pattern with present tense verbs other than *have* and *be* (e.g., *flowers grows*) can be expected to show even more nonstandard agreement with the present tense of *have* and *be*, even more with past tense *be*, and even more with expletive *there*. Both Ozark and Appalachian also follow the same pattern in terms of the effect of grammatical environments (e.g., pronoun or noun subject or expletive *there*) on concord and in terms of age group. The patterning of concord according to age group in both regions makes it difficult to conclude that any type of change is in progress.

The book overall stands as an admirable model of clarity and organization. It serves as an excellent example of how language varieties can be illuminated through quantitative variation studies, not by adducing hordes of facts to escort aggregations of unattached details, but by marshaling details into ordered, revealing relationships which can give us a satisfyingly broad view of several critical areas of specific grammars. A book such as this would be quite useful in an introductory course on language variation, as it

shows what can result from the sustained application of variation methodology and theory—and it would be even more useful if it had an index.

NOTE

1. Something similar appears to be occurring in Vernacular Black English, where the two disapproval forms *gone* and *come* appear to be competing. They occur individually and together, as *done* occurs with *had* in the examples above. *Gone* and *come* also are not interchangeable. In BVE, however, the picture is complicated by age factors: apparently, younger speakers tend to use *gone* rather than *come*.

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OUCH!

The Language of Sado-masochism: A Glossary and Linguistic Analysis. By Thomas E. Murray and Thomas R. Murrell. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989. Pp. xi + 197.

Reviewed by GEORGE JOCHNOWITZ, *College of Staten Island, CUNY*

There is an old story about the masochist who went to visit the sadist. "Beat me, beat me," he said.

"No!" replied the sadist.

The sadist and the masochist in this joke are not speaking the language of sado-masochism. Their needs are not complementary; they are not part of a single community. In general, a dialect fills at least three needs for a subculture: it supplies words for concepts that do not exist in the surrounding culture; it provides a degree of privacy by being partially incomprehensible to outsiders; it reflects and expresses group solidarity. Even if such a dialect served no purpose at all, it would exist anyway. Any identifiable subdivision of humanity that has existed for a generation or more has developed its own vocabulary and often its own grammar and phonology as well.