

*Strathy Undergraduate Working Papers*  
*on*  
*Canadian English*

*Volume 3, 2002*

*Strathy Language Unit*  
*Queen's University*  
*Kingston, Ontario*

*Edited by E. Gold and J. McAlpine*



**Queen's**  
UNIVERSITY



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### Preface to Volume 3

Is a DEPANNEUR in Hawkesbury different from a DEPANNEUR in Almonte? Can the rapid evolution of technology be traced in the speech of Kingstonians of different ages? How long does it take for British immigrants to adopt Canadian vocabulary, and when do they stick to their linguistic roots? Is Canadian English becoming more American? How is the spelling of a new word established? Does anyone really understand the acronyms in the *Queen's Journal*? These are some of the research questions that undergraduate students at Queen's University set out to answer in the fall of 2001. These students were enrolled in LING 202, **Canadian English**, taught by Dr. Elaine Gold; for a good number of these students the course represented an introduction, not only to Canadian English dialect studies, but also to the field of linguistics. We are pleased to present this collection of their final course projects as Volume 3, *Strathy Undergraduate Working Papers on Canadian English*.

Our thanks, once again, to Linda Garrison, Administrator of the Strathy Language Unit, for designing this book.

E. Gold  
J. McAlpine



**Copies of this publication are available at a cost of \$9.00 if shipped, or \$5.00, if picked up at the office. Volumes 1 and 2 are also available at the same price.**

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## YOUSE GUYS EVER HEARD OF LANARK?

Allison Pike and Erica Corbett

### *1. Introduction*

The Ottawa Valley region is one of the richest areas in Ontario for linguistic variation. This linguistic distinctiveness stems mainly from the relative isolation of the concentrated settlements established in this area at the beginning of the nineteenth century. According to Chambers (Chambers 1975: 57), the dialects of the Valley are not homogeneous. They are influenced by many varieties of English. Both Scottish and Irish settlers made the Ottawa Valley their home, each group influencing the development of the Ottawa Valley dialects. For the purposes of this research paper we will focus on what is commonly referred to as the Ottawa Valley "Twang". Although the "Twang" has been linked to both Scottish and Irish influences, we will investigate a geographically delimited variety, which we will call the "Lanark Twang". This variety is, we hypothesize, heavily influenced by the Scottish background of the majority of residents. In addition, we hypothesize that this dialect is not diminishing in usage among younger speakers who have been born and raised in Lanark Highlands, Lanark County.

Our interest in the Ottawa Valley and the possibility of a "Lanark Twang" arose from a conversation that took place with a Lanark County native. She described the existence of a speech pattern that she feels is unique to the county. She further suggested that it is pervasive, that is, clearly in evidence in all age groups, especially at local social functions. Although she herself did not show signs of having this different dialect, she insisted that a notable percentage of the population of the county did. She was very helpful in facilitating our research by giving us directions and providing us with information about the dialect and where it would be most appropriate to interview the people of Lanark Village.

### *2. The Historical Background*

The early years of the nineteenth century marked a time of great change for Upper Canada. Immediately after the War of 1812, the government was making every effort to bring more settlers to the new territory from Britain in the hopes of offsetting the predominantly American-born Loyalist population. The township of Lanark Highlands was primarily settled by Scottish immigrants. Lanark Village, which was named after the town of Lanark in Scotland, started as a government depot set up to serve as the

centre of a military settlement. In the spring of 1821, approximately 1,500 settlers, the majority of whom were unemployed Scottish weavers or discharged soldiers, and their families, were established in this area. With the support of the government and under the jurisdiction of the quartermaster-general's department, they received land, tools, farm implements and seed. In July and August 1821, another group of over 1,800 Scottish emigrants arrived. These pioneers laid the foundation for successful settlement in this region.

Today, Lanark County has not only become an important region for the logging industry, but has also earned the title of Maple Sugar Capital of Canada. Farming too remains an essential local enterprise. As is the case in other rural areas in Canada, many residents are departing for urban centres. Generally, however, in Lanark County, residents leave only temporarily to attend a post-secondary educational institution, travel, or gain work experience, and then, later return to Lanark County, either to raise a family or to retire. Those who return tend to fall back into the speech patterns of their youth with great ease, although they also tend to notice the "Lanark Twang" in others more than before. We noted that the people of Lanark County appear to take great pride in their twang. As well, their great interest in local history is reflected in the historical placards located outside Lanark Village Town Hall.

### *3. Research Methods*

#### *3.1 Type of Survey*

For this research, we used a traditional approach, meaning we looked for language variation by interviewing participants in the field. We chose to conduct fieldworker interviews rather than design a survey because a survey might have limited the information we could collect. Our respondents generally fit a NORM<sup>1</sup> profile, in that they were born and raised in Lanark County and their speech seemed to be relatively uninfluenced by outside usage. However, due to the nature of our study, we did not wish to limit our research to older male respondents; we were interested in determining whether or not age (irrespective of sex) plays a role in the presence of the "Lanark Twang". We took a random 1% sample of the population of Lanark Village (covering both sexes and a range of ages) in an attempt to determine the accuracy of our hypothesis. Our sample was truly random in that we had no set parameters for choosing subjects and simply interviewed any willing people who we encountered.

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<sup>1</sup> NORM is an acronym (nonmobile, older, rural, male) describing the type of subject that traditional dialectologists preferred.

### *3.2 Assessment*

For the purposes of our research, the samples taken from Lanark Village will represent Lanark County. We approached eight unrelated residents in various public locations for short, taped interviews. To begin with, we told them we were doing linguistic research on geographical areas surrounding Kingston. We then presented them with our letter of information and consent (see Appendix B), which outlined the voluntary nature of their participation in the study. We had formulated a series of verbal exercises with the following aims:

- a) to assess their pronunciation in formal and informal speech;
- b) to assess their knowledge of Scottish vs. Irish lexical items (mentioned in previous studies of Valley dialects).

These exercises took the form of a reading passage, designed to elicit informal speech; a multiple choice quiz, designed to reveal Scottish vs. Irish influence in the local lexicon; a word list, designed to elicit formal or careful speech; and, finally, a free speech portion, allowing us to observe any other variants (see Appendix A).

## *4. Results*

### *4.1 Informal Speech*

The purpose of the informal speech section was to elicit the unguarded speech that normally occurs in casual interactions with friends and family. The technique we chose was to have participants read a simple story. We felt confident that the reading passage had produced the desired effect when one of our informants followed up his reading with an anecdote about the family cat. We had inserted several words into the reading text with phonological features that we predicted would show variance from Standard Canadian English. These words were: downstairs, tiger, flowers, garden, Martha, town, car, and around. As predicted, we found that the diphthongs in this word list were fronted. We also found that /a/ before /r/ preceding a consonant or word finally was also fronted. In other words, the /a/ in words like *garden* and *car* was pronounced with the [æ] sound in *cat*.

**Table 1: Vowel Features in Lanark County Residents' Informal Speech**

Informant	# 1	# 2	# 3	# 4	# 5	# 6	# 7	# 8
<i>g</i> arden	fronted	fronted	fronted	fronted	fronted	fronted	fronted	not fronted
<i>fl</i> owers	sometimes fronted	fronted	fronted	fronted	fronted	not fronted	not fronted	fronted
<i>ca</i> r	fronted	fronted	fronted	fronted	fronted	fronted	fronted	not fronted
<i>t</i> iger	fronted	fronted	fronted	fronted	fronted	fronted	fronted	fronted

As **Table 1**, above, shows, there was some variation in the pronunciation of the words. The most variation occurred in the pronunciation of *flowers*, and Informant 8 showed a lack of fronting before /r/ that was a striking discrepancy, since this was the most pronounced phonological variant in the other's informants' speech. It is possible that she was too self-conscious to speak completely casually while reading the passage. Despite the inconsistency, there is no question that the majority of speakers had two phonological features consistent with a Scottish influenced dialect.

#### 4.2 Lexicon

This section of our research was designed to contrast Scottish and Irish vocabulary in an attempt to support our hypothesis. We presented four words with three definition choices each as well as a fourth "I don't know" option. We read each informant the words and definitions and tape recorded their responses. We expected most informants to be more familiar with the Scottish words, *ben* and *rones*, than the Irish ones, *byre* and *coil*.

Contrary to our supposition, the word *ben* (livingroom) was completely foreign to all the informants and only a quarter of them knew *rones* (eavestroughs). However, five out of eight respondents defined *byre* (cow stable) correctly. Finally, all the participants over 60 knew generally what a *coil* (haycock) was. Our possible definitions for *coil* were problematic: the respondents knew that a coil had something to do with hay but did not recognize the "correct" defining term "haycock". Therefore, they chose the very similar definition "haystack".

Our lexical results would seem to disprove our hypothesis of Scottish influence; however, we believe that, even though the Irish words were recognized more often, that is because of their context not their origin. *Byre* and *coil* are both farming terms. And, as described above, farming was and continues to be a significant part of everyday life in Lanark County. This is evident in the fact that, when asked how one would call a cow in from the field, 80% of the respondents had a ready answer: "Cooboss, Cooboss."

#### 4.3 Formal Speech

Since prior to the interviews we had no interactions with the respondents and we were outsiders in a small town, we had no difficulty hearing formal speech. Informal speech rather than formal was the main focus of our research. Nonetheless, for the sake of thoroughness in our investigation of the "Lanark Twang," we felt that it was important to investigate formal speech too, which we did by recording the pronunciation of isolated words. We used a word list containing selected test words, random words, and minimal pairs. Again, the test words contained all the phonological variants we were looking for.

As in the Informal Speech section of the interview, we found that the fronting of /a/ occurred relatively consistently. Most speakers went through the list too quickly to distinguish clearly the extent of their twang, and a few of the older speakers had difficulty reading out the words. Although Informant 4 was prompted by us--in Standard Canadian English--when he had difficulty reading the phrase "number nine binder twine," he repeated it back using a phonological feature of the twang. That is, he realized the /ay/ diphthong with a mid-front onset before the nasals /m/ and /n/ (Pringle and Padolsky 1983: 335).

There were some other points of interest. The over 60 group differentiated between the minimal pairs *Mary*, *merry*, and *marry* by pronouncing the third word [mari]. During the course of our interviews, we added the words *eighty* and *arm* to our list because we had heard speakers using a different pronunciation, and we wanted to assess whether or not there was a trend among Lanark speakers. We found the "Lanark Twang" was strongly realized in the word *arm*, whereas we never heard any peculiarity with the word *eighty* in formal speech. The pronunciation of the word *Lanark* seemed to contradict our general findings: /a/ --> [æ]/ \_rC or \_r#. Our theory is that since the second syllable of *Lanark* is unstressed, the /a/ is not fronted and the fronting is shifted to the first vowel, causing a person with the "Lanark Twang" to pronounce the first vowel as [æ].

#### 4.4 Free Speech

As this portion of our research gave participants the opportunity to relax and express themselves, it proved to be the most interesting for us as interviewers. We set no time limit or subject restrictions although we did give the respondents a few topic ideas to facilitate discussion. First, since it was Remembrance Day, we asked them to discuss this. The older participants had a tendency to reminisce, while the younger speakers described their grandparents' experiences or the commemorative service held in Lanark and the Royal Canadian Legion parade. In addition, we suggested they talk about what it was like growing up in Lanark, how long they had lived in the county, how important farming was in their life, or any Christmas traditions they had within their families. We felt that these familiar topics might put them at ease, and this seemed to be the case.

Sometimes the respondents got quite caught up in these anecdotes. For example, one informant, when asked about his childhood in Lanark County, described in detail a popular pastime among adolescent boys: log rolling. To check our familiarity with this activity, he asked us if we had heard of the short film by the National Film Board of Canada *The Log Driver's Waltz*. We promptly burst into song, at which point he proceeded to tell us how to go about log rolling and what happens when you fall off.

Initially, the informants were self-conscious and needed a little prodding to begin talking. However, once they got started, any number of tangents would emerge. One gentleman spent the better part of an hour telling us about his eldest daughter Deb, who had been the first in the family to go to university and now lives in West Palm Beach, where she is married to an American doctor, whom she met in the Dominican Republic, while he was touring the world in his sailboat. Deb speaks five languages and spent a few years working in the Middle East with a government agency. The end result of these conversations was that we felt very accepted by and comfortable with the residents of Lanark. We got invited to turkey dinner at the Lanark Landing after the hockey game. While driving back to Kingston, we found ourselves discussing the participants as though we had known them for years. As well as being thoroughly entertaining, the free speech portions of the interviews provided us with some interesting morphological and syntactical variants.

First, as our title suggests, there was a tendency to add a plural marker to the second person plural pronoun—hence, the “youse guys” in cases where the speaker was talking to more than one person. Moreover, in phrases such as “My mind's gone blank,” there was an omission of /d/ forming the phrase “My mine's gone blank.” Finally, a plural marker –s was dropped when speakers gave directions: they said “three set o' lights” instead of “three sets of lights.” These variants may not be unique to Lanark County, but they contribute to an outsider's overall perception of the twang.



## 5. Conclusion

We found our research worthwhile. Not only was it interesting to discover a region so different in such close proximity to Kingston, but it also proved to be linguistically relevant. We expanded on previous field studies done in the Ottawa Valley and came to our own conclusions. Since we observed such Scottish influenced traits as the occurrence of [æ] before /r/ and fronting of the diphthongs, our hypothesis of Scottish influence was supported. Moreover, these linguistic traits are present in all age groups, which means that the "Lanark Twang" is not diminishing. Further studies are necessary to investigate in depth the complexities of the "Lanark Twang". In our research, we chose to forgo the use of an item-by-item survey due to insufficient concrete information. Now that we have established some components of the "Lanark Twang", it would be interesting to see if future researchers could go further.

### Appendix A: Structured Portion of Interviews

#### *Reading Passage (Informal Speech)*

It was early Sunday morning. I went downstairs to make breakfast. Coming into the kitchen, I nearly tripped on my son's stuffed tiger. I looked out the window and saw the flowers I had planted in the garden were about the bloom. I finished breakfast quickly since I had to meet my friend Martha in *town*. She doesn't have a *car* so I was going to drive her around to do some errands.

(Underlining omitted from test version.)

#### *Lexical Quiz (Scottish an Irish Vocabulary)*

A <i>ben</i> is	A <i>rone</i> is	A <i>coil</i> is	A <i>byre</i> is
a) a living room	a) an oven	a) a haystack	a) a hill
b) a road	b) an eavestrough	b) a haycock	b) a pond
c) a kitchen	c) a cow's nose	c) a bit of string	c) cow stables
d) I don't know	d) I don't know	d) I don't know	d) I don't know

How do you call cows?

*Word List (Formal Speech)*

pile	blouse	anyhow
excellent	horse	barn
chair	Lanark	up
pint	table	far
shout	cows	large
eleven	because	pretty
Mary	merry	Marry

number nine binder twine  
arm  
eighty

## **Appendix B: Letter of Information and Consent**

Dear Participant,

We are doing research on the "Lanark Twang" and desire only to interview you for a few minutes. During our interview please be aware of the following things:

1. You may discontinue your participation at any time.
2. Your participation is entirely voluntary.
3. Your identity will be kept completely confidential and anonymous.
4. You will be able to withdraw your data from the study at any time if you so desire.
5. You may ask for feedback upon completion of the study.

At the end of your participation, we will disclose the full nature of our research and you may ask us any questions you have. Thank you for your time.

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## **I DIDN'T KNOW COD FISH HAD TONGUES! A STUDY OF NEWFOUNDLAND FOOD VOCABULARY**

**Alison Carr and Emily Russell**

"Our lives were linked to the sea and to its products, and in due course our language came to mirror our lives" (Story 1965). Traditionally, Newfoundland is known for its colourful vocabulary, which has helped distinguish it culturally from mainland Canada. One of the defining features of Newfoundland culture is its unique food products and preparation, which in turn influence the vocabulary of native speakers. Our study developed through examining the differences in food vocabulary between native Newfoundlanders and speakers of central Ontario English. In our study, we looked at foods common to both Newfoundland and central Ontario as well as foods that are exclusive to Newfoundland in order to discover the degree of usage variance.

Newfoundland food vocabulary struck us--the two authors of this paper--as an interesting topic for different reasons: Alison Carr, being a "Newfie," was interested in knowing more about her native dialect, while Emily Russell, a Toronto native, was drawn to the striking differences in vocabulary between the two provinces. Food, being a major part of any culture, seemed like a fun and interesting place to start. In investigating this topic we collected data from various print resources such as dictionaries, cook books, textbooks and articles as well as from surveys and personal interviews. From the print resources, we gained knowledge of particular words that we took to be in common usage among Newfoundlanders. We developed a survey including these words that we hoped would demonstrate usage variance. As we administered the surveys and spoke to people in interviews, we learned that, while Newfoundlanders may be familiar with some of these terms, they are not necessarily used in the vernacular.

The survey was administered to friends and family in person, via e-mail and by telephone. There were eight respondents from Newfoundland and twelve from Ontario. We divided the sample into two sexes and four age categories: under 18 years, 19-34 years, 35-59 years and 60 years and over. While we had respondents from each category, eventually we realized that this information was irrelevant to our results. The major variable was location: Ontario vs. Newfoundland. The survey was divided into three sections, dealing with identification, recognition and perception. The identification section, (see Appendix A, Section B) consisted of twelve questions pertaining to foods

that are common to both Ontario and Newfoundland, but that have different names. We hypothesized that Newfoundlanders would give the Newfoundland variant (which we found in our research of texts), while Ontario speakers would give the Ontario variant. Below is a table outlining the answers Newfoundlanders produced in response to these questions.

**TABLE 1: Newfoundland Speakers' Usage of "Ontario" and "Newfoundland" Variants**

Questions	Ontario Variant	%	Newfoundland Variant	%
Another word for raisin	No other word/dried grape	100	Doughfig	0
Oven baked soft bread	Homemade bread	56	Loaf	0
Sodium bicarbonate	Baking soda	100	Bread soda	0
Bumbleberry	Mixed berries, pie filling	100	Marsh berry, small cranberry	0
Cake served at a wedding	Wedding cake	64	Bride's cake/fruit cake	46
Bread served with dinner	Rolls	70	Buns	30
Mid-day meal	Lunch	63	Dinner	37
Evening meal	Dinner	0	Supper	100
Doughy lumps in soup	Dumplings	50	Doughboys	50
Biscuit served with tea	Scone, tea biscuit	22	Raisin buns	88
Outdoor open fire meal	Cook-out, campfire	22	Boil-up	88

As the above table demonstrates, there is strong usage of variants such as *supper*, *raisin buns* and *boil up* among native Newfoundlanders, while variants such as *fruitcake*, *doughboys*, *buns* and *dinner* showed partial usage at approximately 30% to 50%. Our most surprising finding was with the remaining words *doughfig*, *loaf*, *bread soda* and *marsh berry* which had 0% usage among respondents. These findings could indicate that some of these words, although common in texts, have diminished or disappeared from Newfoundland vernacular. In preparing this section of the survey, which was not

multiple choice, we were interested in finding out whether Newfoundlanders would give the supposed Newfoundland response unprompted. Because the respondents had to fill in their own responses, we obtained a more accurate representation of actual usage. We did not give respondents options for fear that they would choose terms that they recognized but would not necessarily use in natural speech.

The recognition section of the survey (see Appendix A, Section C) asked respondents whether they were familiar with unique Newfoundland food terms and, if they were, asked them to provide a brief explanation of the term. We anticipated that Newfoundlanders would be familiar with most of the terms, while Ontario speakers might be familiar with some of the terms but would be unable to describe them. This hypothesis proved generally correct. However, neither Newfoundlanders nor Ontarians were familiar with the following words: *callibogus*, "a drink made by mixing spruce beer, rum or other liquor and molasses" and *bangbellies*, "a pudding, cake, or pancake, originally prepared by fishermen and men in the woods, made with flour, fat pork, etc., and boiled, baked or fried, now usually served as dessert," (definitions from Story, Kirwin and Widdowson 1982). The only Newfoundland food term that Ontario speakers were familiar with was *screech*, which most were able to describe as a "strong alcoholic drink." In personal interviews, some Newfoundland speakers provided us with interesting anecdotal definitions. For instance, one speaker gave the following explanation for *screech*:

Newfoundland fisherman used to trade cod to Jamaica. In exchange, Newfoundlanders received a dark rum made from water and fermented molasses in the dregs of a barrel. One night, an American was visiting Newfoundland. His Newfoundland host offered him a drink (this dark rum), and the Newfoundlander drank his own straight. The American, wanting to be like his host, did the same. He howled!! So the neighbours came a' runnin' ... they didn't know what had happened! Had there been a fire? What was the screech? "'Tis the rum," replied the bewildered Newfoundlander. And the name stuck. Literally. They started sticking labels on the bottles, bearing the name *Newfoundland Screech*. (Russell 2001)

Another interviewee told the story of *bakeapple* berries:

"Bakeapple" comes from French settlers who arrived in a bay in Newfoundland. They did not know the name of the bay, so they referred to it as "Baie Qu'appel" (Bay What's-it-called). It was here they found this orange, tart, hard berry that

greatly resembled a raspberry, and named it after the bay: "Baie Qu'appel berry"--*bakeapple berry!* (Walsh 2001)

Because of the varied backgrounds of settlers, there were foreign words in use in Newfoundland that were changed to "make sense" in English and to fit its sound patterns, like *bakeapple*, which has nothing to do with apples or baking.

The recognition format employed in Section C (Appendix A) presented only Newfoundland vocabulary, whereas the previous section had described items in terms common to both provinces. These two different approaches allowed us to see that although there was little distinction in the terms in use for shared food items, there still exists a distinct Newfoundland food vocabulary. The recognition technique also allowed us to see just how prevalent the special Newfoundland terms have become in other provinces. Our overall inference from Sections B and C (Appendix A) is that while some words have been dropped from the Newfoundland vernacular and are being displaced by broader, more standard Canadian terms, Newfoundland still retains a certain vocabulary for foods unique to the province. For a full list of recognition words with definitions, refer to Appendix B.

The third section of our survey, labeled perception (See Appendix A, Section D), listed nine types of food and asked the respondents to report on the common perception of these food terms in their community. We asked about the community in order to avoid personal preferences, which might not be representative of common perception. We decided to look at perception of a food's appeal because we noticed in our research that there seemed to be large cultural differences in the appeal of many of these foods. There were five response categories: 0=Never heard of it; 1=Unappetizing/unappealing; 2=Neutral; 3=Somewhat appetizing/appealing; 4=Very appetizing/appealing. Our hypothesis for this section of the survey was that there would be significant variation in community perception with most foods in our list being more appealing to Newfoundlanders than to Ontario speakers. Our hypothesis proved correct for some of the items, such as *fruitcake*, *moose*, *pickled beets*, *turnip* and *cabbage*. However, we also discovered that Newfoundland and Ontario speakers agreed that *fish*, *pickled cauliflower*, *pickled cucumber* and *potatoes* were "very appetizing/appealing" and that *rabbit* and *seal* were "unappetizing/unappealing." Additionally, the categories of *salt beef*, *salt fish* and *cod tongues* showed significant variation: while the Ontario speakers had never heard of these terms, the Newfoundlanders could not get enough, rating them as "very appetizing/appealing." **Table 2** below represents the results of this part of the survey. We totaled all of the

responses for each location (Newfoundland and Ontario) and calculated the average response for each. The average Newfoundland response is marked with an N and the average Ontario response is marked by an O.

**TABLE 2: Perception of foods by Newfoundland and Ontario speakers**

<b>Food</b>		<b>Appeal</b>	<b>Level</b>		
	4 (high)	3	2	1	0 (low)
Fruitcake		[N]		[O]	
Bologna		[N]	[O]		
Fish	[O/N]				
<b>Hunted Meat</b>					
Moose	[N]			[O]	
Caribou			[N]	[O]	
Rabbit				[O/N]	
Seal				[O/N]	
<b>Pickled Vegetables</b>					
Beets	[N]		[O]		
Cauliflower	[O]	[N]			
Cucumber	[O/N]				
<b>Root Vegetables</b>					
Turnip	[N]			[O]	
Cabbage	[N]		[O]		
Parsnip			[O/N]		
Potatoes	[O/N]				
Salt(ed) Fish	[N]				[O]
Salt(ed) Beef	[N]				[O]
Cod tongues	[N]				[O]

In conclusion, although there is a specific and distinctly Newfoundland food vocabulary, many of the words that have been attributed to Newfoundlanders are not now necessarily used in common, natural speech among native speakers. Food words that are found in many academic papers on the subject of Newfoundland English and that are generally thought of as common and highly used in the province, such as *callibogus*



and *bangbelly*, were not, in fact, even recognized by the speakers surveyed in this study. This leads us to conclude that there is a rich heritage of colourful language in Newfoundland that is now retained only through historical texts, dictionaries and folklore. Many of the words that have come to represent Newfoundland have diminished from everyday use. Newfoundland maintains much of its food vocabulary relating to products that are exclusive to its shores, such as Purity Products and traditional dishes. The advent of mass media and the political union of Newfoundland and Canada may have influenced the Newfoundland lexicon, causing shared items to assimilate to the standard Canadian lexicon. Newfoundlanders maintain a knowledge of their unique food vocabulary but also have become accustomed to the food terms favoured in Ontario. While many food words have diminished from use, many others remain in the vernacular because of their strong tie to tradition and identity. For many Newfoundlanders, eating traditional foods, and thus using traditional names to describe them, is a part of a proud cultural identity. This cultural culinary identity is preserved in folklore and music. Buddy Wasisname and the Other Fellers, a Newfoundland band and comedy troupe, proclaim the virtues of good ol' fashioned home cooking in their song, "Salt Beef Junkie", which suggests a Newfoundland identity based on heartiness, practicality, family values and good food. We conclude our study with an excerpt from "Salt Beef Junkie":

Jane Fonda likes to eat sesame seeds and Twiggy likes low-fat tofu  
But they don't live in Newfoundland where the winter blows right through you  
Now if they lived in Wesleyville where the north wind blows right vicious  
They'd enjoy their salt beef dinners just like me and the missus

*Chorus*

Put on the beef, peas puddin' and the greens  
Carrots and turnips; can't you smell the steam  
Some new potatoes with a puddin' good and lumpy  
No I just can't wait  
'Cause I'm a salt beef junkie.

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## Appendix A: The Survey

### A. Personal Information

1. Where you born? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where did you grow up? (age 5-18) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where do you live? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where did your parents grow up? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Are you Male or Female? F M
6. How old are you? Under 18 19-34 35-59 60+

### B. Identification

For the following descriptions of various foods, please provide the word that you would use. Feel free to include more than one response per question if necessary. If you do not have an answer, please indicate so, by writing 'no answer' in the space provided.

1. What is another word for 'raisin'?
2. What do you call oven-baked soft bread?
3. What is the common name for sodium bicarbonate, used in making bread and other baked goods to help with rising?
4. What does the word 'bumbleberry' mean?
5. What do you call the cake served at a wedding?
6. What do you call the loaf-like pieces of bread served with dinner/supper?
7. What do you call the morning meal? midday meal? evening meal?

8. What do you call the doughy lumps made from flour and water that are usually served with or in pea soup?
9. What role does tea play in your daily diet?
  - a) How often do you drink it? (Circle your response)  
Never   Once a day   2 times a day   3 times a day   3 or more times a day
  - b) What time(s) of day do you drink tea?
10. What do you call a small, dense, biscuit made with flour, water, milk and eggs, with raisins, that is often served with tea?
11. What is a name for a sweet, sticky snack/dessert rolled into a spiral pattern, made with flour, water, milk, butter, sugar and cinnamon and sometimes jam or marmalade?
12. What would you call an outdoor gathering where a meal is cooked over an open fire?

*C. Have you ever heard of ...?*

For the following food terms, please indicate whether you are familiar with them. If your answer is yes, please provide a short explanation of the term and any other information that comes to mind.

- |                          |        |
|--------------------------|--------|
| 1. Screech               | YES/NO |
| 2. Fish and brewis       | YES/NO |
| 3. Jigg's dinner         | YES/NO |
| 4. Bakeapples            | YES/NO |
| 5. Toutons               | YES/NO |
| 6. Bangbellies           | YES/NO |
| 7. Callibogus            | YES/NO |
| 8. Partridge berries     | YES/NO |
| 9. (Figgy) duff          | YES/NO |
| 10. Hard bread/tack      | YES/NO |
| 11. Jam jams             | YES/NO |
| 12. Peppemiint/hot knobs | YES/NO |
| 13. Scrunchions          | YES/NO |
| 14. Lassy bread          | YES/NO |
| 15. Clingy (syrup)       | YES/NO |

*D. Perception*

For the following foods, what is the common perception in your community of their appeal? Check the box that applies.

LEGEND: [4] = Very appetizing/appealing [3] = Somewhat appetizing/appealing  
[2] = Neutral [1] = Unappetizing/unappealing [0] = Never heard of it

	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
1. Fruitcake	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Bologna	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Fish	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4. Hunted Meat</b>					
Moose	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caribou	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rabbit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5. Pickled Vegetables</b>					
Beats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cauliflower	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cucumber	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>6. Root Vegetables</b>					
Turnip	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cabbage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parsnip	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Potatoes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>7. Salt(ed) Fish</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>8. Salt(ed) Beef</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>9. Cod tongues</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you would like the results of this study, please indicate below.

Yes, please send me the results of this interesting and worthwhile survey! [ ]

No, I would not like to see the results... and stop bothering me! [ ]

### **Appendix B: Definitions for Newfoundland Food Terms**

**Fish and Brewis:** Fish and Brewis (pronounced "brews") is one of the oldest traditional dishes of Newfoundland.... The fish in "Fish and Brewis" is salt cod and the brewis is made from hardtack/hardbread, which is available everywhere in Newfoundland and in specialized grocery stores across Canada. The dish is always sprinkled with scrunchions, (crisp fried bits of salt pork). "Fisherman's Brewis" is sometimes the same as "Fish and Brewis", but often the fish and bread are chopped while hot and mixed together, or fresh cod is used instead of salted cod. (*Traditional Recipes of Atlantic Canada: Newfoundland #5*)

**Jigg's Dinner:** A traditional meal of salt beef, potatoes, turnip, carrots, cabbage and sometimes peas pudding boiled together in a pot, usually eaten on Sundays (*Traditional Recipes of Atlantic Canada: Newfoundland #5*)

**Toutons:** A piece of bread dough fried in fat often served with molasses or maple syrup (*Dictionary of Newfoundland English*)

**Partridge Berries:** A low creeping plant producing small, tart, red berries; the berry of this plant harvested on the barrens in the autumn (*Dictionary of Newfoundland English*)

**Figgy Duff:** A boiled pudding containing raisins (*Dictionary of Newfoundland English*)

**Hard Bread/Tack:** Thick oval shaped coarse biscuit baked without salt and kiln dried (*Dictionary of Newfoundland English*)

**Jam Jams:** A cookie made by the Purity Company that consists of two soft wafers with jam in the middle (*Russell 2001*)

**Peppermint/Hot Knobs:** Green and white or pink and white peppermint flavoured candies made by the Purity Company (*Russell 2001*)

**Scrunchions:** Fat back pork cut into cubes, often fried and served as a garnish (*Dictionary of Newfoundland English*)

**Lassy Bread:** Bread made with molasses as a principle ingredient or fresh homemade bread, spread with molasses (*Walsh 2001*)

**Clingy:** Sweet fruit flavoured drink; flavoured syrup diluted in water, often served to mummers (*Dictionary of Newfoundland English*)

## A TASTE OF ONTARIO ENGLISH SPRINKLED WITH A DASH OF FRENCH

Dobrija Milicevic and Nina Rytwinski

*It is de rigueur to wear black to funerals. It would be a faux pas to wear hot pink.*  
--Conway and Vincent

### 1. Introduction

The towns of Hawkesbury and Almonte are both located in Ontario, approximately one hour from Ottawa, and are similar in size and population. Hawkesbury, a chiefly French community, is located along the banks of the Ottawa River about 5 minutes from the Quebec border, and is home to approximately 10,000 inhabitants. Almonte is an English-speaking town that is situated on the Mississippi River, approximately 45 minutes from the Quebec border, and has a population of approximately 7,000 residents.

We set out to observe whether the French language influences the English vocabularies of the residents in these regions. To do this, we created a survey that was distributed in both towns, and we researched the regions themselves because, although Hawkesbury and Almonte are situated close to each other, many factors, such as the settlement patterns of the towns, contribute to the spoken language.

We hypothesized that in Hawkesbury, French vocabulary would influence the English spoken by the English-speaking residents. In Almonte, we predicted that there would be less of a French influence on the spoken English due to the significant lack of French-speaking residents.

### 2. History

To investigate whether the settlement patterns of these two towns had a significant influence on the vocabulary of the English-speaking residents, we researched the historical origins of Hawkesbury and Almonte.

The first pioneers of Hawkesbury were mostly anglophone Loyalists, an interesting fact considering that it is a predominantly French-speaking community today. However, 1849 saw the first influx of French-Canadian pioneers, lumberjacks, raftsmen, farmers, transporters and sawmill workers, who were encouraged to establish themselves in the Outaouais region so that they could live close together and assure their cultural and religious cohesion. Hawkesbury developed due to its wood industry and was

established as a town in 1858. In fact, in 1871, the first census of Canada showed that 46% of Canadian sawed wood was produced in the Hawkesbury sawmill (The Town of Hawkesbury Website).

Almonte was originally founded by a few Loyalists who used the waterfalls along the Mississippi River to establish several textile mills. This brought Almonte its reputation as "The Manchester of North America". This reputation, along with generous land grants from the British government, encouraged many impoverished Irish and Scottish citizens to immigrate to Almonte, and in 1870, Almonte received town status. During its relatively short history, Almonte has had many different names, including Shipman's Mills, Ramsey, Shepherd's Falls, Victoriaville and Waterford. Today, although none of the mills remain, Almonte is still a bustling town of mainly British ancestry (Marsh 1980).

### 3. Survey

We conducted a dialect survey to discover the usage of words of French origin in the English of the anglophone residents of Hawkesbury and Almonte. We examined common linguistic features, using geography as our independent variable and keeping those variables such as age, gender, and income consistent between the two regions. The survey consisted of two main parts: the first contained personal information about the respondents (including age, gender, and income) while the second was a list of 20 words of French origin that are frequently used in the English language. From a wide range of originally French words that have been adopted into the English language, we chose to focus on the following: *mélange*, *crèche*, *autoroute*, *metro*, *hôtel de ville*, *faux pas*, *pièce de résistance*, *questionnaire*, *entente*, *rendezvous*, *professor*, *chalet*, *cul-de-sac*, *affair*, *cinema*, *haute couture*, *promenade*, *depanneur*, *tortière*, and *joie de vivre*.

If the respondents recognized the words, they were to

(a) define them;

and

(b) use them in sentences that illustrated their meanings.

Whether they were familiar with the words or not, they were to

(c) rate each one on the following scale of 1 to 5:

1 = I have **never** heard the word.

2 = I **have heard** the word, but only from my knowledge of French. I would **never use** it in an English sentence.

3 = I probably **would not use** the word in English, but would understand if others used it.



4 = I would **occasionally use** the word in English, but I have a synonym for the word that I would use more often.

5 = I would **always use** this word in English.

Below is the example that was provided in the survey for *pont*.

(a) a bridge

(b) To get to Quebec you can cross *pont* Champlain.

(c) 1.  2.  3.  4.  5.  1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

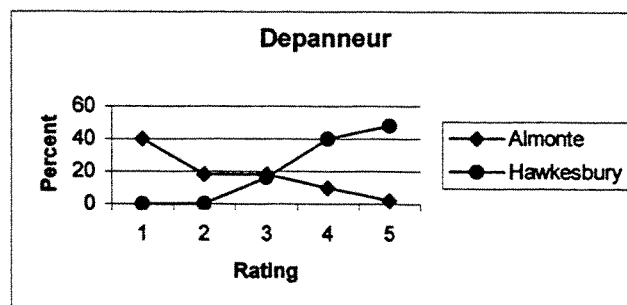
In total, 100 respondents were surveyed (50 English-speaking residents from each town). The requirements for those surveyed were as follows:

- 1) They had to be at least 20 years of age
- 2) They had to have been born in the Hawkesbury or Almonte region or moved there within the first five years of their life.
- 3) English had to be their first language.

#### 4. Results

Of the 20 words in our survey, we chose to analyze 12 for the interesting trends we observed in them. The anglicized words of French origin that best supported our hypothesis were *depanneur*, *autoroute*, *metro*, and *chalet*. Each of these words produced an S-curve similar to the one shown in **Figure 1**.

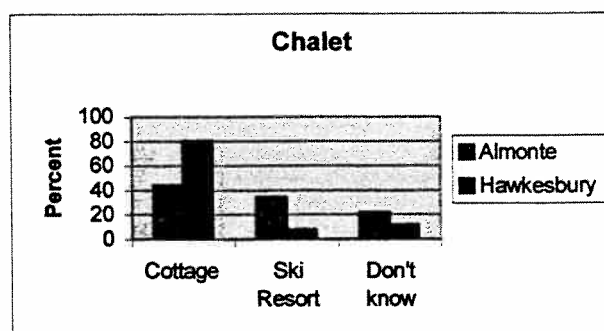
**Figure 1: Use of *Depanneur***



As you can see from **Figure 1**, Hawkesbury residents are very comfortable with *depanneur* as an English word and use it quite often when speaking about a local convenience or corner store, whereas 40% of people from Almonte had never heard of it. These findings may stem from the fact that above every corner store in Hawkesbury, as in the province of Quebec, there hangs a sign that says *DEPANNEUR* before the name of the store. Another interesting discovery was that, in Almonte, nearly 10% of the respondents defined *depanneur* as "a repairman" but no one from Hawkesbury gave this definition. According to Larousse (1997), this French definition is correct but we could not find it in any Canadian English dictionary. The reason that Almonte respondents indicated this French definition may be due to the fact that they are using the limited knowledge of Parisian French that they acquired from French teachers at school.

*Metro* and *autoroute* displayed similar results to *depanneur*, being used much less frequently in Almonte than in Hawkesbury. Interestingly, the English definition of *autoroute* is "an expressway in Quebec, France, and other French-speaking regions" (Barber 2000). Therefore, as Hawkesbury is a mainly French-speaking area, this would explain why it is more common in this region. It would also explain why several residents from Almonte said that they would always use it to describe a highway but only when they are in Quebec. An equal number of Hawkesbury and Almonte residents claimed to use *chalet*. However **Figure 2** shows that the word is used in different contexts.

**Figure 2: Meanings of *Chalet***



*Chalet* is generally defined as "the main building at a ski resort", but in Quebec it is used to signify "a holiday cottage" (Barber 2000). Not surprisingly, the residents of Almonte were much more likely to choose the first definition whereas those from Hawkesbury chose the second, illustrating the French influence in Hawkesbury.

The results for the word *professor* demonstrated yet another linguistic difference between the towns. We included this word because it is a homophone of the French *professeur*, which is often used in reference to a high school teacher. We felt that this might create varied results in respect to definition. As predicted, many of the residents of Hawkesbury defined the English word *professor* as a "high school teacher", reflecting the French definition of *professeur*, while the responses of the residents of Almonte mirrored the English definition, "a university teacher (of the highest rank)" (Barber 2000). However, several respondents from both places defined *professor* simply as "a teacher". So, to help us examine the French influence on the definition of this word, it would have been useful to ask the respondents to specify the type of teacher.

Another very interesting finding was that, in Almonte, the definitions of certain French words such as *mélange* and *rendezvous* were converted from French nouns into English verbs, while words like *hôtel de ville* and *entente* were either translated literally or confused with other French words.

The dictionary definitions of *mélange* and *rendezvous* are respectively "a mixture", and "an agreed meeting place" or "a meeting by arrangement" (Barber 2000). However, English speakers in Almonte defined *mélange* as the verb "to mix" (the French verb is actually *mélanger*), and *rendezvous* as "to meet", which interestingly does not exist in French. According to both English and French dictionaries, *rendezvous* is classified as a noun, in English it has developed a second use as a verb, and this use is primary for anglophones of Almonte.

*Hôtel de ville* is defined as "city hall" (Barber 2000), a definition Hawkesbury English speakers were familiar with, while many of those in Almonte translated it word for word as "the city's hotel". Interestingly, an equal number of residents in both towns claimed to use *hôtel de ville* in everyday English. This leads us to imagine the confusion in a potential conversation between a native English speaker from Hawkesbury and his friend from Almonte, who spent the night at the *hôtel de ville* with his family.

The results for *entente*, "an agreement to cooperate between opposing parties" (Barber 2000), were equally entertaining. Many of those respondents from Almonte who claimed to be familiar with the term confused it with another French word. For example, residents of Almonte defined *entente* variously as "entrance" (which is *entrée* in French), "to wait" (*attendre*), "intention" (which is spelled identically in French), and "to listen" (a confusion with *entendre*, "to hear"). In fact, only 10% of residents in both towns used *entente* according to its proper definition.

We also noticed that expressions of French origin such as *faux pas*, "a tactless mistake or social blunder" (Barber 2000), and *pièce de résistance*, "the most important or remarkable item" (Barber 2000), have become so anglicized that they may no longer be

regarded as primarily French. English speakers from Almonte were slightly *more* familiar with them than those from Hawkesbury. Residents of Hawkesbury recognized them as words of French origin, but the majority of Hawkesbury English speakers were not familiar with their meanings because they are not commonly used in the area. These terms may be associated with people of a different milieu who wish to sound cultured, and therefore utilize certain words of foreign origin that have been adopted into Canadian English.

### 5. Conclusion

Our linguistic research demonstrates that there is, indeed, a greater French influence on spoken Canadian English in Hawkesbury than in Almonte. Evidently, because Almonte is not surrounded by the French language, there is less French influence on the spoken English there. Our data displays that, generally, the English speakers of Hawkesbury are more comfortable using words of French origin on a regular basis when speaking English, and they tend to use words that are common in the province of Quebec. On the other hand, English speakers in Almonte tend not to be familiar with words of French origin. And those they are familiar with they convert from nouns to verbs, translate literally, or confuse with other French words. Nevertheless, there are some French words that are used equally in both Hawkesbury and Almonte. It would be interesting to extend this dialect survey to other regions of Ontario to examine the French influence on the English language on a larger scale.

In conclusion, when native speakers of English and French came to Hawkesbury and Almonte, Ontario, they brought with them the linguistic ingredients of their respective languages to create a new recipe. As these ingredients were mixed, they magically created a delicious flavour of Canadian English, sprinkled with a dash of French.

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## Appendix A: Our Survey

### Linguistics Survey

Does the French language affect Canadian English spoken in different regions of Ontario? The following survey has been designed by two students from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario to examine this question.

To participate in the survey you must meet the following criteria:

- You must be at least **20** years of age.
- You must have been born in **Almonte** or **Hawkesbury** or moved to the area before five years of age and remained there for the rest of your life (except to attend school or serve in the military).
- **English** must be your first language.

If you meet all of these requirements, we would greatly appreciate it if you would donate approximately 15 minutes of your time to complete the following survey. We feel that the survey is interesting and enjoyable to complete. However, filling out this survey is completely voluntary and you may discontinue your participation at any time. If you are interested in the results of this study or have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact either Nina Rytwinski or Dobrija Milicevic. If you choose to partake in this survey please sign this form and begin the survey.

I have read the above information and agree to participate in the following study.

---

Signature

Date

*Thank You and Have Fun!*

### Survey: French in Ontario

#### *Part 1: Background Information*

Please answer the following questions as accurately as possible. All of the questions are optional. However, any information that you provide would greatly help us to analyze our data. The information that you release will be used for research purposes only and your name will never be divulged.

1) What is your age?

- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70+

2) What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

3) What is your family's annual income? (optional)

- Less than \$20 000
- \$20 000 - \$40 000
- \$40 000- \$60 000
- \$60 000- \$80 000
- Greater than \$80 000

4) Please list all of the languages that you speak (with the language you use most often first)

- |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ | 3. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 5. _____ | 6. _____ |

5) Would you consider yourself bilingual in French and English?

- Yes
- No, but I have a fairly strong knowledge of French
- No, but I speak some French.
- No, I speak very little or no French

6) What are your parents' first languages?

Father: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

### *Part 2: French Influences on English*

This section consists of a list of 20 words. Please answer the following three questions about each word:

- a) Define the word in your own words. If you are unfamiliar with the word, please leave parts (a) and (b) blank.
- b) Use the word in an **English** sentence that illustrates its meaning.

c) Rate the word from 1 to 5 based on the following scale:

- 1) I have **never heard** the word.
- 2) I **have heard** the word, but only from my knowledge of French. I would never use it in an English sentence.
- 3) I **probably would not use** the word, but would understand if others used it.
- 4) I **would use** the word **occasionally** but I have a synonym for the word that I would use more often.
- 5) I would **always use** this word.

*Example: Pont*

- a) A Bridge
- b) To get to Quebec you can cross *pont* Champlain.
- c) 1.\_\_ 2.\_\_ 3.\_\_ 4.\_\_ 5.\_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

1. *Mélange*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) 1.\_\_ 2.\_\_ 3.\_\_ 4.\_\_ 5.\_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

2. *Crèche*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) 1.\_\_ 2.\_\_ 3.\_\_ 4.\_\_ 5.\_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

3. *Depanneur*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) 1.\_\_ 2.\_\_ 3.\_\_ 4.\_\_ 5.\_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

4. *Autoroute*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) 1.\_\_ 2.\_\_ 3.\_\_ 4.\_\_ 5.\_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

5. *Metro*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c) 1.\_\_\_\_ 2.\_\_\_\_ 3.\_\_\_\_ 4.\_\_\_\_ 5.\_\_\_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

6. *Tortière*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c) 1.\_\_\_\_ 2.\_\_\_\_ 3.\_\_\_\_ 4.\_\_\_\_ 5.\_\_\_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

7. *Hôtel de ville*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c) 1.\_\_\_\_ 2.\_\_\_\_ 3.\_\_\_\_ 4.\_\_\_\_ 5.\_\_\_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

8. *Faux pas*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c) 1.\_\_\_\_ 2.\_\_\_\_ 3.\_\_\_\_ 4.\_\_\_\_ 5.\_\_\_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

9. *Pièce de résistance*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c) 1.\_\_\_\_ 2.\_\_\_\_ 3.\_\_\_\_ 4.\_\_\_\_ 5.\_\_\_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

10. *Questionnaire*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c) 1.\_\_\_\_ 2.\_\_\_\_ 3.\_\_\_\_ 4.\_\_\_\_ 5.\_\_\_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE



11. *Entente*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
b) \_\_\_\_\_  
c) 1. \_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

12. *Rendezvous*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
b) \_\_\_\_\_  
c) 1. \_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

13. *Professor*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
b) \_\_\_\_\_  
c) 1. \_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

14. *Chalet*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
b) \_\_\_\_\_  
c) 1. \_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

15. *Cul-de-sac*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
b) \_\_\_\_\_  
c) 1. \_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

16. *Affair*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
b) \_\_\_\_\_  
c) 1. \_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

17. *Cinema*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c) 1. \_\_ 2. \_\_ 3. \_\_ 4. \_\_ 5. \_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

18. *Haute Couture*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c) 1. \_\_ 2. \_\_ 3. \_\_ 4. \_\_ 5. \_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

19. *Promenade*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c) 1. \_\_ 2. \_\_ 3. \_\_ 4. \_\_ 5. \_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

20. *Joie de vivre*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c) 1. \_\_ 2. \_\_ 3. \_\_ 4. \_\_ 5. \_\_ 1-NEVER HEARD 3-RARELY USE 5-ALWAYS USE

**THANK YOU!**

**QABT: QUEEN'S ACRONYMS AND BUBBLE-TALK**  
**A SURVEY AND ANALYSIS OF ACRONYMS PRINTED IN THE *QUEEN'S***  
***JOURNAL***

**Joanna Cudmore and Pat Tanzola**

*1. Goal*

Do Queen's students speak a dialect all their own? The goal of this paper is to look at acronyms that are commonly printed in the main student newspaper at Queen's, *The Journal*, in order to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most common acronyms printed in *The Journal*?
2. Are the most commonly found acronyms in *Journal* articles actually familiar to most Queen's students? That is, are Queen's students actually in touch with terms used in their own student newspaper?
3. Are acronyms printed in *The Journal* representative of an argot at Queen's? In other words, are certain Queen's-related acronyms recognizable only to Queen's students? Are they relatively unknown to the outside Kingston community?

*2. Purpose*

Queen's students have a reputation for "living in a bubble." They are often accused of being snobs who are only concerned with life and reality within their own miniature campus universe. Part of the reason for the "bubble" accusations may be the profusion of Queen's slang and, for lack of better term, jargon, which can be heard throughout the hallways of the University and on the streets surrounding campus. How often have you heard students using words and phrases such as *Frec, Frosh Fifteen, Gael, Oil Thigh, the JDUC*--linguistic items you might never hear outside of a circle of Queen's students, all trapped in their bubble? Surely, you have heard something like this: "I'll meet you at the *JDUC* and we'll get wasted at the *QP*, or maybe *Alfie's*, ok?" A staple phrase in student life to be sure. Many more acronyms, including *P&CC, UBS, FYNIR, GW* can be added to the list of Queen's expressions. The motivating spirit behind this project, then, is to ascertain whether Queen's students do in fact speak "their own language" and whether even they truly understand it.

**Table 1: Key to Examples of Queen's Language**

FRECs	Student leaders of engineering orientation (Frosh Regulation Enforcement Committee)
Frosh Fifteen	the amount first-year students can expect their weight to go up and/or their marks to go down
Gaels	student leader of arts and science orientation or member of a Queen's varsity team (the Golden Gaels)
Oil Thigh	Queen's school song. <i>Oil Thigh</i> means "college" in Gaelic
JDUC	(pronounced jay-duck) John Deutsch University Centre
QP	Queen's Pub
Alfie's	a larger, louder Queen's pub
P&CC	student-run Publishing & Copy Centre
UBS	student-run Used Book Store
FYNIRS	(rhymes with miners) First-Year Not-In-Residence Students
GW	<i>Golden Words</i> , engineering students' newspaper

### *3. Step One: Documenting the Jargon*

One obvious source for usage of Queen's jargon is the main student newspaper at Queen's, *The Journal*. Published twice a week for most of the school year, *The Journal* contains articles on news, sports, entertainment, science, as well as opinion pieces, editorials, and even humour. Publishing a variety of articles that represent the widest cross-section of student interests on campus, *The Journal* offers a fairly reliable cross-section of student language within its pages.

We found it not feasible to track the use of every single example of Queen's jargon in the newspaper. Rather, we decided to focus on one particular type of jargon-- acronyms. (An acronym is an abbreviation which contains the first letter of each word in a commonly occurring phrase. For example, *USA* is the acronym that stands for United States of America). Our first task was to find acronyms in *The Journal*. We headed to the Journal House, which contains in its offices, entire bound volumes from each of the past 32 years of *The Journal's* 129-year publication history.

### 3.1 Collection Method

We examined only the past four volumes of *The Journal*, the school years 1998-1999, 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 (in progress). We felt it would be appropriate to mirror the four-year cycle of a student. Four years is the average length of a student's stay at university; we assumed that each four-year generation would use jargon more or less unique to itself. That is, if we went back too far in time, we assumed we would be examining jargon that might no longer be in widespread use.

We studied all the articles in four entire issues from each volume in the four-year span, for a total of 16 issues of *The Journal*. Each issue took approximately 0.5 hours to scan (for a total research time of about 8 hours), and so we had to limit ourselves to this number (16 issues). Obviously, if we had examined more issues, our results would be more significant, but we only had so much time to get the project done!

For three of the volumes (1998-1999, 1999-2000, 2000-2001) we picked two issues each from the Fall and Winter terms. For 2001-2002, all four issues examined were taken from the Fall term (this research was conducted in mid-November).

For each *Journal* issue, we went through every written article, and combed it for any acronym that might be construed as student-related. Student-related acronyms we then divided into two categories: Queen's Specific (e.g., *AMS* = Alma Mater Society, the Queen's student government), or Non-Queen's Specific (e.g., *ISIC* = International Student Identity Card, *KGH* = Kingston General Hospital). We then tallied the number of articles that contained specific acronyms in either of the above two categories. Note that we did not tally the number of times a given acronym was used; rather, we counted the number of *articles* in which a given acronym was used. Thus, if a news story about the *AMS* happened to repeat the term *AMS* 15 times, that still only counted as a single occurrence for the tally.

We did not consider paid advertisements or classified ads, only articles. Since *The Journal* is a publication of the *AMS*, and hence carries a disproportionate percentage of *AMS*-related advertising, we thought that including advertisements in the tally would skew our results. We hoped that the proprietary relationship between the *AMS* and *The Journal* would not unduly affect the content of the articles in the newspaper.

After counting the number of times *Journal* articles in our sample contained student-related acronyms, we printed a frequency tally (see Appendix A). Included beside the tally is an indication (y/n) of whether the given acronym is Queen's Specific or not.

### 3.2 Summary of the Acronym Tally

From the 16 *Journal* issues we examined, we found:

67 different relevant acronyms:  
42 were deemed Queen's Specific  
25 were deemed Non-Queen's Specific

Of the 67 acronyms:  
27 had more than one occurrence  
20 had 3 or more occurrences  
15 had 4 or more occurrences  
5 had 10 or more occurrences

**Table 2: The 10 most frequently occurring acronyms in *The Journal***

Acronym	Frequency	Queen's Specific? (y/n)
1. AMS	87	y
2. QUA	44	y
3. CIAU	24	n
4. JDUC	18	y
5. SGPS	14	y
6. ASUS	9	y
7. TA	8	n
8. O-QIFC	6	n
9. UBS	6	y
10. CFRC	5	y

See Appendix A for meanings.

### 3.3 Comments on the Acronym Tally

*AMS* is by far the most commonly mentioned acronym in *The Journal*. Despite our hopes that there would be no *AMS*-bias in the articles (as opposed to the advertising), it appears that *Journal* writers do indeed like to write about the *AMS*. Whether most

Queen's students (i.e., non-*Journal* writers) share this familiarity with the *AMS* will be determined in Step Two of this project--the survey.

A large percentage of sports articles mention the *OUA*, the *CIAU*, and the *O-QIFC*. These acronyms were found in sports-related articles and almost nowhere else in the paper. Therefore, the high rank of these acronyms cannot be taken as a sign of widespread use. Data on other commonly-occurring acronyms can probably be taken at face value, however.

On a personal level, we were pleased with the results of the acronym search. The acronyms we found were by and large ones we, the authors, were familiar with (*UBS*, *QP*, *SWEP*, *KGH*, *SOAR*, etc.) and ones that we ourselves use quite commonly as students. Thus, to purport that the main Queen's student newspaper does indeed contain a representative cross-section of Queen's jargon seems to be justified. The next part of the project will bear this out.

#### 4. *Step Two: Surveying the Students*

Next we conducted a survey among Queen's students and non-student Kingston residents to answer the questions:

1. Do Queen's students indeed recognize the acronyms printed in their own newspaper, *The Journal*?
2. When they do recognize a given acronym, can students correctly explain exactly what the acronym means or stands for?
3. Do non-students have the same levels of acronym recognition for these terms? And can non-students give the correct meaning for these terms?

##### 4.1 *Survey Procedures*

We devised a quick (approximately five-minute) quiz of 30 acronyms, which would test respondent recognition and knowledge of Queen's acronyms. The survey was in hard-copy form, and was handed to the respondent in person; they were given a pen to fill it out. Respondents had to indicate whether they recognized a term, and, if they did, write the correct meaning on the sheet. We sought out 15 students and 15 non-student full-time residents of Kingston to complete the survey. Survey candidates fit in the student category as long as they said they were currently attending Queen's. We

accepted a respondent as a non-student if they said they were not currently attending Queen's (though they may previously have been a Queen's student).

#### 4.2 Notes on the Survey

Because we assumed that there would be some turnover in the jargon used at Queen's with every four-year generation of students, we thought counting former Queen's students as non-Queen's students would be appropriate. In fact, only one non-student surveyed was previously a Queen's student and she had not gone to Queen's for over 10 years.

Of the 15 student respondents, 9 were in fourth year. This might bias the results in favour of students, giving them a higher score overall, than if the respondents had been pulled equally from each year (25 per cent from first year, 25 per cent from second year, and so on). We are assuming upper-year students have relatively more familiarity with Queen's jargon than students newer to Queen's.

The non-student respondents were selected from the downtown Kingston area, mostly from shops along Princess Street, where idle employees could be found who were willing to participate in our little project. Non-students were of all ages--one as young as 17, another as old as 60, and the rest spread evenly in between.

Of the 30 acronyms chosen, 20 consisted of those most frequently occurring in our tally chart (see Appendix A). This included any acronym occurring three or more times throughout our search of the 16 *Journal* issues. Ten additional acronyms were selected from the rest of the chart. These included acronyms that we felt were common Queen's University jargon terms, (e.g., FYNIR, SOAR, DSC) even though they did not achieve a high score in the frequency tally. In other words, we recognized the limitations of *The Journal* in representing Queen's jargon.

Of the 30 acronyms in the survey, 19 were deemed Queen's Specific; 11 were Non-Queen's Specific. Thus, the ratio in the survey, approximately 2:1, reflects the split found in the overall tally chart (see Appendix A), where 42 of the acronyms were Queen's Specific, as opposed to 25 that were not.

Respondent sex was not considered. Respondent age was recorded but not considered in the final analysis.

See the full results of the survey in Appendix B.



## 5. *Our Hypotheses*

Our main hypothesis was premised on the "Queen's Bubble" view of student life at Queen's mentioned above. That is, we expected to find jargon which only Queen's students understood, and which non-students rarely ever understood. More specifically, we expected that

1. all respondents would recognize more acronyms than they could define. Common sense dictates that it is easier to say you recognize something than to explain it. (How many Queen's students actually know what *CIAU* stands for?)
2. not all acronyms would be recognized by most Queen's students. That is, just because a given term has been printed in the student newspaper does not mean students are necessarily familiar with that term.
3. overall, Queen's students would both recognize and correctly supply the meanings of the acronyms better than non-students. In other words, students would score higher, out of 30, in both facets of the test.
4. non-students would be better at recognizing and identifying Non-Queen's Specific acronyms than students.

## 6. *Results*

Full results are contained in Appendix B. Not surprisingly (but happily), all of our hypotheses turned out to be true, at least to some extent.

1. Recognition rates were indeed higher than the rates for supplying correct meanings. On average, all respondents (student and non-student) recognized 41% of the acronyms, while supplying the correct meaning for 28%.
2. One acronym, SGPS (Society of Graduate and Professional Students), was not even recognized (much less defined) by anyone in either group of respondents. This is notable, especially since SGPS placed fifth highest in the research tally (14 occurrences). Other acronyms that were not recognized very well include QFA (20 per cent student recognition), QUA (13 per cent), OUA (20 per cent), and ESOS (3 per cent). Not one respondent, student or non-student, supplied a correct meaning for any of these.
3. Students fared better overall on both facets of the test as expected. Acronyms

which produced the widest gap were, for recognition, *UBS* (students scored 87% higher than non-students), *GW* (80% difference), and *SOAR*, *QP* and *ITS* (73% difference each). With respect to supplying the correct meaning, the biggest differences were for *GW* and *QP* (80%), *UBS* (73%), and for *JDUC* and *ASUS* (60%). See **Table 3** below for summary figures.

**Table 3: Breakdown for each respondent group**

	% Recognition	% Correct Meaning
Students	55	38
Non-Students	28	18

- There were 5 acronyms which non-students recognized at a higher rate than students: *QUFA*, *CIAU*, *CFRC*, *CFS*, and *KCVI*. Of these, four were Non Queen's Specific (only *QUFA* is Queen's Specific). And there were 6 acronyms which non-students defined more successfully than students did: *QUFA*, *OPIRG*, *CIAU*, *RMC*, *CFS*, and *KCVI*. Of these, only *QUFA* (Queen's University Faculty Association) is Queen's Specific. Note that although *QUFA* is Queen's Specific, it is understandable that students might have little familiarity with it. Students in general are concerned about their fellow student groups, not professorial organizations.

Only one acronym, *KGH* (Kingston General Hospital)--a Non-Queen's Specific term--was recognized and had its meaning supplied correctly by every single respondent, student or not. *RMC* was close, being recognized by 100% of respondents and correctly defined by 87% (80% of students, 93% of non-students).

### 7. Conclusion

Our initial surmise that Queen's students live in a linguistic bubble has been given some credence by the results of this project: many of the Queen's terms in the survey could only be identified successfully by Queen's students. While *The Journal* may not be an absolutely comprehensive source for Queen's jargon, we did find the prevalence of a term in the student newspaper predicted, with a few notable exceptions, its level of familiarity among students.

The results of the survey did not however, show two solitudes. It is not as though students are completely separated from non-students in Kingston. Perhaps the town's

small size and the relative prominence the University holds in the community ensure that certain jargon seeps out of Queen's and infects the outside populace. Places like the *JDUC* and Grant Hall--the home of community groups and the host of the Kingston symphony, respectively--are familiar to every Kingston resident, Queen's student or not.

### Appendix A: Tally of Acronyms in *The Journal*

**Bolded** acronyms (including all on this page) were used in the Survey.

Acronym	Meaning	Frequency Tally	Queen's Specific?
<b>AMS</b>	<b>Alma Mater Society</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>y</b>
<b>OUA</b>	<b>Ontario University Athletics</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>CIAU</b>	<b>Canadian Interuniversity Athletics Union</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>JDUC</b>	<b>John Deutsch University Centre</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>y</b>
<b>SGPS</b>	<b>Society of Graduate and Professional Students</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>y</b>
<b>ASUS</b>	<b>Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Society</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>y</b>
<b>TA</b>	<b>Teaching Assistant</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>O-QIFC</b>	<b>Ontario-Quebec Interuniversity Football Conference</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>UBS</b>	<b>Used Book Store</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Y</b>
<b>CFRC</b>	<b>Canada's Famous Rugby Champions Radio Station</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>QP</b>	<b>Queen's Pub</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>y</b>
<b>CFS</b>	<b>Canadian Federation of Students</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>OPIRG</b>	<b>Ontario Public Interest Research Group</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>P&amp;CC</b>	<b>Publishing and Copy Centre</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>y</b>
<b>QEA</b>	<b>Queen's Entertainment Agency</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>y</b>
<b>GW</b>	<b>Golden Words</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>y</b>
<b>ITS</b>	<b>Information and Technology Services</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>y</b>
<b>MAC</b>	<b>Municipal Affairs Commission</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>y</b>

<b>QUFA</b>	<b>Queen's University Faculty Association</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>y</b>
<b>RMC</b>	<b>Royal Military College</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>n</b>
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas	2	n
<b>KCVI</b>	<b>Kingston Collegiate Vocational Institute</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>n</b>
PARTEQ	Partners in Technology at Queen's	2	y
PEC	Physical Education Centre	2	y
SCN	Student Care Networks	2	n
SOARB	Senate Orientation Activities Review Board	2	y
<b>SWEP</b>	<b>Student Work Experience Program</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>y</b>
AAC	Academic Affairs Commission	1	y
ACSA	(Queen's) African and Caribbean Students Association	1	y
AOSC	Association of Student Councils	1	n
BA	Bachelor of Arts	1	n
CAD	Coalition against Deregulation	1	y
CASA	Canadian Association of Student Alliances	1	n
CESA	Concurrent Education Students Association	1	y
CFS-S	Canadian Federation of Students: Services	1	n
CIS	Canadian Interuniversity Sports	1	n
COR	Campus Observation Room	1	y
CUSEN	Canadian Unified Student Environmental Network	1	n
<b>DSC</b>	<b>Departmental Student Council</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>y</b>
<b>ESOS</b>	<b>Educating Students on Substances</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>y</b>
<b>FYNIR</b>	<b>First-Year Not-in-Residence</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>y</b>
HCDS	Health, Counselling and Disability Services	1	y
IAESTE	International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience	1	n

ICACBR	(Queen's) International Centre for Advancement of Community-Based Relations	1	y
<b>ISIC</b>	<b>International Student Identity Card</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>n</b>
JRHC	Jean Royce Hall Council	1	y
<b>KGH</b>	<b>Kingston General Hospital</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>y</b>
LSAT	Law School Admission Test	1	n
MBA	Masters of Business Administration	1	n
OUFLA	Ontario University Field Lacrosse Association	1	n
QBET	Queen's Conference on Business Environment Today	1	y
<b>QFA</b>	<b>Queen's First Aid</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>y</b>
QISA	Queen's Indian Student Association	1	y
QMT	Queen's Musical Theatre	1	y
QPID	Queen's Project on International Development	1	y
QSCSG	Queen's Student and Community Services Group	1	y
<b>QUA</b>	<b>Queen's University Archives</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>y</b>
SCAP	Senate Committee on Academic Procedure	1	n
<b>SOAR</b>	<b>Student Orientation and Registration</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>y</b>
SSP	Subject of Specialization	1	y
STRIVE	Students Taking Responsible Initiatives for a Viable Environment	1	y
SWAP	Students Work Abroad Program	1	n
TALK	Telephone Aid Line Kingston	1	n
TEAM	Technology, Engineering and Management	1	y
TYB	Tricolour Yearbook	1	y
USC	University Students' Council	1	n
WISE	Women in Science and Engineering	1	y

## Appendix B: Survey Results

### Table 1: Acronym Recognition by Students(S) and Non-Students(NS)

Acronym (Queen's Specific)	#S	%S	#NS	%NS	AVG%	% Difference (S Minus NS)
UBS	13	87%	0	0%	43%	87%
GW	14	93%	2	13%	53%	80%
SOAR	12	80%	1	7%	43%	73%
QP	15	100%	4	27%	63%	73%
ITS	13	87%	2	13%	50%	73%
ASUS	14	93%	4	27%	60%	67%
DSC	10	67%	4	7%	37%	60%
FYNIR	8	53%	0	0%	27%	53%
JDUC	15	100%	7	47%	73%	53%
P&CC	10	67%	2	13%	40%	53%
SWEP	7	47%	0	0%	23%	47%
AMS	14	93%	7	47%	70%	47%
QEA	7	47%	2	13%	30%	33%
ESOS	1	7%	0	0%	3%	7%
MAC	6	40%	5	33%	37%	7%
QFA	3	20%	3	20%	20%	0%
QUA	2	13%	2	13%	13%	0%
SGPS	0	0%	0	0%	0%	0%
OUA	3	20%	3	20%	20%	0%
QUFA	0	0%	5	33%	17%	-33%
<b>(Non-Queen's Specific)</b>						
ISIC	8	53%	0	0%	27%	53%
TA	15	100%	10	67%	83%	33%
0-QIFC	2	13%	0	0%	7%	13%
KGH	15	100%	15	100%	100%	0%
OPRIG	3	20%	3	20%	20%	0%
RMC	15	100%	15	100%	100%	0%
CIAU	4	27%	5	33%	30%	-7%
CFRC	8	53%	10	67%	60%	-13%
CFS	0	0%	3	20%	10%	-20%
KCVI	9	60%	13	87%	73%	-27%

**Table 2: Acronyms Correctly Defined by Students(S) and Non-Students(NS)**  
**Total S=15      Total NS=15**

Acronym (Queen's Specific)	#S	%S	#NS	%NS	AVG%	% Difference (S Minus NS)
UBS	11	73%	0	0%	37%	73%
GW	14	93%	2	13%	53%	80%
SOAR	6	40%	0	0%	20%	40%
QP	15	100%	3	20%	60%	80%
ITS	6	40%	2	13%	27%	27%
ASUS	11	73%	2	13%	43%	60%
DSC	6	40%	1	7%	23%	33%
FYNIR	7	47%	0	0%	23%	47%
JDUC	14	93%	5	33%	63%	60%
P&CC	3	20%	0	0%	10%	20%
SWEP	4	27%	0	0%	13%	27%
AMS	12	80%	6	40%	60%	40%
QEA	5	33%	2	13%	23%	20%
ESOS	0	0%	0	0%	0%	0%
MAC	1	7%	0	0%	3%	7%
QFA	0	0%	0	0%	0%	0%
QUA	0	0%	0	0%	0%	0%
SGPS	0	0%	0	0%	0%	0%
OUA	0	0%	0	0%	0%	0%
QUFA	0	0%	3	20%	10%	-20%
<b>(Non-Queen's Specific)</b>						
ISIC	5	33%	0	0%	17%	33%
TA	15	100%	8	53%	77%	47%
0-QIFC	1	7%	0	0%	3%	7%
KGH	15	100%	15	100%	100%	0%
OPRIG	0	0%	1	7%	3%	-7%
RMC	12	80%	14	93%	87%	-13%
CIAU	0	0%	1	7%	3%	-7%
CFRC	1	7%	0	0%	3%	7%
CFS	0	0%	2	13%	7%	-13%
KCVI	7	47%	12	80%	63%	-33%

**Table 3: Average Number of Acronyms Recognized (Total 30)**

	#	%
Students	16.4	55
Non-Students	8.3	28
Difference (S-NS)	8.1	27

**Table 4: Average Number of Acronyms Correctly Defined**

	#	%
Students	11.4	38
Non-Students	5.3	18
Difference (S-NS)	6.1	20



## AGE DEPENDENCE OF TECHNOLOGICAL LEXICON IN CANADIAN ENGLISH

Ian Campbell and Justin LeBlanc

### *Introduction*

Throughout the history of spoken language, words have been used to represent certain objects, and, of course, the same is true today. With the unprecedented technological progress that has been made in the recent history of humankind, a wealth of new objects has been created--as well as corresponding names. The pace of invention has been especially rapid in the last fifty or so years, since the introduction of tools like the computer, and is showing no signs of abating.

Our study investigated technology-related words in standard Canadian English (CE). We chose a small set of technological devices in order to determine empirically which words were being used by the general population to describe these objects. We were looking for agreement or variation among subjects and at how the age of the subject affected the results.

### *Hypothesis*

We expected to discover a greater awareness of the technological lexicon among our younger participants. Conversely, we anticipated that certain lexical items would not be part of the vocabularies of older individuals. Also, we believed that, for some objects, a lexical evolution would be taking place in which an older word for the object would be gradually being replaced by a newer one.

### *Methodology*

We designed a questionnaire that incorporated picture-based, multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions emphasizing recent technologies and, in particular, objects we suspected would have more than one name. (The survey, including the pictures used to cue participants, is reproduced in Appendix A.) The questionnaire was administered to a stratified random sample--we canvassed the shops of Princess Street in Kingston and asked every person available until we ensured that we had achieved our quota for each age group.

Participation in the study was voluntary and participants were asked to sign a form indicating that they understood they could stop at any time and choose to withdraw

their data. The survey itself asked participants to identify their gender, age group, and childhood hometown, and then to answer ten questions. Part A of the questionnaire asked them to put a name to a pictured object. Part B described objects and asked participants either to write down the word they would use to name this object or to choose from a list of words the one they thought best suited the description. Any bystanders were asked not to help participants and participants were encouraged to answer honestly, which included admitting ignorance if uncertain. At the end of the questionnaire, a space was provided for the participants to supply an e-mail address if they wished to receive the results of the survey.

### *Results and Discussion*

Fifty-eight individuals were asked to participate and, of these, 37 completed surveys (64% acceptance). The data from 34 surveys were appropriate for this study. The data from three surveys were discarded because the participants did not meet our requirements for speaking standard Canadian English. In the personal data section of the survey, each participant indicated where he or she spent most of his or her youth. The rationale for this question was to determine whether the participant likely spoke standard Canadian English. In accordance with the apparent time hypothesis of J. K. Chambers (Chambers 1988a: 13), if the participant was raised in a community where standard Canadian English was prevalent, then that person would likely speak standard Canadian English for the rest of his or her life. All three rejected surveys were from participants who did not grow up in regions where standard Canadian English is in use (one was from Michigan, another from Ireland, and one answered half the survey in French).

The five age categories used in the personal data section of the survey were compressed into four for analytical purposes by simply fusing the categories 26 – 40 years and 41 - 60 years. Thus, data from participants in the following four age categories were compared in this study: the 12 - 17 year olds or teenagers (6 participants); the 18 - 25 year olds, the young adults (11 participants); the 26 - 60 year olds, the adults (13 participants); and the over-60 year olds, the seniors (4 participants).

The results for the picture of a satellite dish (**Table 1**) show, in the teenager category, an overwhelming preference for the word *satellite* to describe the object, which is interesting because that word traditionally names an orbiting body, and not the object that receives transmissions from one. The proclivity for a single word answer is not surprising. We had expected such brevity from an age group that we assumed was comprised of generally less formal speakers. In the young adult age category, we see less inclination for single word answers, although the majority still do chose either

*satellite* or *dish*. There is also far more variation in word choice. Those two trends continue into the adult age category, where the majority of participants gave the multiple word answer *satellite dish* or *satellite TV dish*. In the oldest category, half of the people polled chose the multiple word answer *satellite dish*, while a quarter of participants didn't know what the object was, demonstrating a smaller technological lexicon.

**Table 1: Percentage use of lexical variants for Object 1 by age group**

Lexical Variants	Teenagers	Young adults	Adults	Seniors
satellite	100	42	18	0
dish	0	16	18	25
satellite dish	0	42	55	50
antenna	0	0	9	0
unaware	0	0	0	25

In the second question, regarding the television remote control (**Table 2**), the teenager category preferred the term *remote*. The young adults were somewhat split, but favoured the two-word variant *remote control*. The adults were in even less agreement but also favoured *remote control*. The seniors were the most united group, with three-quarters of them settling on *remote*, and the remaining quarter on *control*. We had expected more variation on this question, both of us being accustomed to words such as *flicker* and *clicker* in our own homes, but these options did not show up. And no one questioned did not know what the object was, perhaps because of its ubiquity--practically every household in North America has had a television set since the 1950s, and remote control apparatuses have existed in one form or another for almost as long.

**Table 2: Percentage use of lexical variants for Object 2 by age group**

Lexical Variants	Teenagers	Young adults	Adults	Seniors
remote	51	33	36	75
control	17	0	0	25
remote control	17	58	45	0
converter	17	9	19	0

**Note:** Due to a computer rounding error, not all columns in this and following tables total 100.

Question three (**Table 3**) showed the largest amount of variation in Part A of our questionnaire, likely because commercial video cameras designed for the average

consumer have only recently been introduced and are evolving at quite a fast rate. The evolution from shoulder-mounted VHS-style units to smaller digital cameras that are hand-held (and very recently have become small enough to put in one's pocket) has spawned different (and easily confusable) words for these various devices. For this reason we saw wide, unfocussed variation in even the youngest, most technologically savvy age group. All the groups preferred the term *video camera*, but only among the young adults and seniors was this the majority choice. The total agreement of the seniors on this term may stem from the fact that theirs is the only age group in which no members had their formative years overlap with the introduction and metamorphosis of the personal video camera. Thus, seniors were more likely to have stuck with what was probably the first phrase to describe such an object.

**Table 3: Percentage use of lexical variants for Object 3 by age group**

Lexical Variants	Teenagers	Young adults	Adults	Seniors
video camera	33	55	39	100
camera	17	9	23	0
camcorder	17	27	23	0
other	33	9	15	0

In the fourth question (**Table 4**), participants were asked to put a name to a picture of an everyday audio cassette tape that one might play in a stereo. The teenager category again favoured one-word answers, *tape* and *cassette*, and between those one-word choices preferred the monosyllabic *tape*. This once more emphasized the youngest group's inclination towards informality. The young adult and adult categories were again divided in their answers and still supported relatively strongly the multiple-word variants *cassette tape* and *audio cassette*, which speaks of a preference for more formal terms. The adults also had a significant portion (15 %) answer incorrectly, naming the object a *video cassette*. The seniors again showed solidarity, with all of them choosing *tape*, an answer which goes against the general trend of older participants using polysyllabic and multiple-word terms.

**Table 4: Percentage use of lexical variants for Object 4 by age group**

Lexical Variants	Teenagers	Young adults	Adults	Seniors
tape	66	36	46	100
cassette	34	18	16	0
cassette tape	0	36	23	0
audio tape	0	18	0	0
wrong object	0	0	15	0

Question five (**Table 5**) asked the subject to give the word for a standard computer disk. The teenager category preferred in a majority the single-word, single-syllable answer *disk*. The young adults also strongly supported that term, but it was not the top choice. The young adults preferred multi-syllable or multi-word terms: *floppy disk* (50 % gave this term), *hard disk*, and *diskette*. Uncharacteristically, the adult age category was fairly united on a one-syllable word, *disk*, but the remainder did give *floppy disk* as their answer. The seniors were more divided on this question, and the majority were unaware of a name for the object.

**Table 5: Percentage use of lexical variants for Object 5 by age group**

Lexical Variants	Teenagers	Young adults	Adults	Seniors
disk	83	34	67	25
diskette	17	8	0	0
floppy disk	0	50	33	25
hard disk	0	8	0	0
unaware	0	0	0	50

The first question in Part B of the survey (**Table 6**) asked participants to name the main part of the computer, which stores all the information and data. The four main lexical variants elicited were *hard drive*, *mainframe*, *motherboard* and *CPU* (Central Processing Unit). Other acceptable terms, such as the *memory*, *storage* or *brain* of the computer were suggested, but these variants are not common enough to be considered standard usage in Canadian English.

**Table 6: Percentage use of lexical variants by age group**

***What do you call the main part of the computer that stores all its information and data?***

Lexical Variants	Teenagers	Young adults	Adults	Seniors
hard drive	17	27	38	50
CPU	17	18	15	0
mainframe	0	0	23	0
motherboard	0	18	0	0
other	33	9	8	25
unaware	33	27	15	25

**Note:** In this table and those that follow, the category “unaware” represents an answer of “I don’t know” or a completely incorrect answer.

Many of the answers given by the teenagers showed that they understood the concept but could not think of the technical word on demand. Older, more intellectual participants had adequately developed vocabularies with which to retrieve a more precise term. Since younger people tend to use computers more, the fact that the variants *CPU* and *motherboard*—the most technical variants—came from the young adult category and not from the seniors was expected.

Question two in Part B of the survey (see **Table 7**) was the most confusing to participants, as evidenced by the high frequency of individuals from every age category who were unaware of a suitable word. *Download* was the only common word elicited that correctly answered the question. Two interesting, but imprecise alternatives collected were *transfer* and *copy*. Despite the difficulty the participants had in interpreting the question, the results suggest that standard CE doesn't have much variation for the concept best described by the word *download*. In future studies of the technological lexicon, the wording of this question should be clarified or it should not be included at all.

**Table 7: Percentage use of lexical variants by age group**

***What word do you use to describe a transfer of data from the electronic community to your own computer?***

<b>Lexical Variants</b>	<b>Teenagers</b>	<b>Young adults</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Seniors</b>
download	100	42	18	0
other	0	16	18	25
unaware	0	42	55	50

The most recent technological invention included in this survey was the computer accessory that enables one to create a compact disk. Results are shown in **Table 8**.

**Table 8: Percentage use of lexical variants by age group**

*What do you call the computer accessory that enables you to create your own compact disk (CD)?*

<b>Lexical Variants</b>	<b>Teenagers</b>	<b>Young adults</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Seniors</b>
(CD) burner	83	82	46	25
CD writer	0	9	8	0
unaware	17	9	46	75

For participants aware of this modern technology, *CD burner* or simply *burner* were the dominant lexical variants. Another acceptable variant was *CD writer*, but it was favoured by very few of the participants. Due to the up-to-date nature of this question, the trend that the younger participants were more aware of a word for the object than the older participants was not surprising.

The fourth question in Part B of the survey (**Table 9**) was the only multiple-choice question. We thought that we had anticipated all the possible lexical variants, but one participant who suggested *the net*, an abbreviated form of *the Internet*, proved us wrong. Perhaps other participants would have chosen this variant if it had been one of the options in the survey. The omission of this suitable variant probably increased the frequency with which the other variants were chosen, lessening the validity of the results for this question. In much the same way, by omitting the option *couch*, a popular alternative for the word *chesterfield*, Scargill and Warkentyne introduced error into their Canadian English survey of 1972 (Chambers 1998a: 9). Nevertheless, *the Internet* was the most common variant for every age category, and the dominance of this term probably wouldn't have been affected by the addition of *the net*. *The web* was another notable variant in every age category, except for the seniors. The variant *online* was also chosen by a few.

**Table 9: Percentage use of lexical variants by age group**

***Are you more likely to refer to the popular electronic community as the Internet? the web? online? or by another word?***

Lexical Variants	Teenagers	Young adults	Adults	Seniors
the Internet	67	50	53	75
the web	33	42	23	0
online	0	8	8	25
unaware	0	0	8	0
other: the net	0	0	8	0

The last question of the survey, regarding a way of sending written messages, did not specify the computer as the medium. Nevertheless, the most common answer for every age category (**Table 10**) was *email*. A few participants from the young adult category suggested words for instant messaging such as *chat-lining* and the popular program *ICQ* (I seek you). The other variants collected from adult participants included older messaging technologies such as traditional *mail* and *fax*. A few young adults also thought of the mail. Although the dominant word used was consistent across the generations, the less common variants collected from each age group showed the development of communicative technologies: from mail to fax to email (the most popular choice nowadays) to the increasingly popular instant messaging systems.

**Table 10: Percentage use of lexical variants by age group**

***What would you call the method by which you send a written message to someone at another location?***

Medium Mentioned	Teenagers	Young adults	Adults	Seniors
email	100	70	72	75
mail	0	15	14	0
other	0	15	7	0
unaware	0	0	7	25



## *Conclusion*

In general, we may glean from this questionnaire that the younger age group preferred more truncated variants of words, for example, *satellite* and *tape*, and that they were aware of a more extensive technological lexicon. Also, a consistent variation in the names suggested by people ranging in age from 25 to 60 was observed. We account for this by pointing out that such individuals were in their formative, most linguistically impressionable years when some or all of the test objects were coming into existence, and a standard name for these objects had not yet been settled on. In the adult age range, as well as among the seniors, we also observed an inclination towards polysyllabic terms, which implies an inclination towards more formal speech, something we expected from the older participants. Finally, we confirmed our suspicion that seniors would be the least knowledgeable about current (or at least relatively recent) technology. In all instances where no name at all was given for an object, it was someone over 60 years old who failed to give it.

For many of the technological words tested in this study, a dominant term often emerged that was independent of the age of the participants. However, that general term was often surrounded by many other variants that were used in different proportions by different age groups. This pattern of variation was observed, for example, around the dominant technological words *hard drive* and *CD burner*. Sir James Murray, first editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, encapsulated this familiar pattern of variant distribution when he said, "The circle of the English language has a well-defined centre but no discernible circumference."

Our original hypothesis that we would observe, through the different age groups, the evolution of one word into another for the same item was not borne out. Perhaps the younger participants often used more informal, truncated variants due to their youth or due to their generally greater comfort level with new technology. Either way, their informal usage is still standard CE because standard usage does not depend on what dictionaries prescribe (Fee and McAlpine 1997: ix, xii).

## **Bibliography**

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## Appendix A: Canadian English Survey

Thank you for taking the time to fill out our survey. We are interested in your language use for this linguistic study. There are no "right" answers to any of the questions. Please write "I don't know" if you are unaware of a word for the picture or question. Your honesty is appreciated.

Your results will be completely anonymous, but we do request some personal information for analytic purposes.

**Gender:**  male  
 female




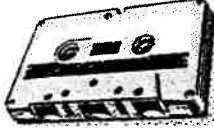

**Age Category:**  12 - 17 years  
 18 - 25 years  
 26 - 40 years  
 41 - 60 years  
 >60 years

Which city did you spend most of your youth growing up in?

\_\_\_\_\_ (city)

\_\_\_\_\_ (province)

### Part A: What do *you* call the following objects?

		
1.	2.	3.
		
4.	5.	

**Part B:** Answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

1. What do you call the main part of a computer that stores all of its information and data?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What word do you use to describe a transfer of data from the electronic community to your own computer?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you call the computer accessory that enables you to create your own compact disc (CD)?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Are you more likely to refer to the popular electronic community as

- a) the internet
- b) the web
- c) online
- d) I don't know
- e) other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. What would you call the method by which you send a written message to someone at another location?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Completely Voluntary:** If you are interested in the final results of this study, please leave your e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

## HOW TO SHARK A SKETCHY STUNNED TREAD: A STUDY OF LOCALIZED CANADIAN SLANG

Christina Cheung and Sarah Clarke

### 1. Introduction

One of the remarkable features of Canadian English is its considerable homogeneity over its vast area of use; citizens of Toronto and of Victoria speak essentially the same dialect in terms of lexicon, accent, and grammar. However, although standard Canadian English is widely used across the country in formal speech situations, a more casual register is often adopted during informal exchanges, such as conversation among friends. The lexicons of these registers diverge from standard Canadian English: words also used in standard Canadian English are used in different contexts and with different meanings. These words are slang and they are used in dialect pockets of varying size; some arise within enclosed communities like schools, some are used within a city, and some are used nation-wide. Our endeavour is to discover some words of standard Canadian English that are also used as slang in various areas of Canada and to determine how widely they are used.

### 2. Words Used in the Survey

Several residents of various parts of Canada volunteered words used as slang in their respective areas. We chose the twelve words listed below in **Table A** which have dictionary definitions and slang meanings.

**Table A: Words Used in Survey**

Word	Acquired From	Slang Meaning	Dictionary Meaning
Stunned	St. John's, NF	adj: Stupid, illogical, or ridiculous	adj: Dazed or rendered senseless, by or as if by a blow
Sweet	Tewksbury, ON	exc: An exclamation of enthusiasm or excitement	adj: a) Pleasing to the senses; agreeable b) Pleasing to the mind or feelings; gratifying
Poke	Ottawa, ON	1. v. To engage in casual sexual relations 2. n. A participant in such an act	v: a) to push or jab at, as with a finger or an arm; prod b) (slang) to strike, punch
Giddy-up	Lanark, ON	exc: An exclamation of agreement or enthusiasm	exc: Used to command a horse to go ahead or go at a faster pace
Sketchy	Kingston, ON	adj: Untrustworthy, questionable, or uncertain	adj: a) Lacking in substance or completeness b) slight: superficial
Random	Kingston, ON	adj: Unexpected, abnormal, or odd	adj: having no specific pattern, purpose, or objective
Hook up	Toronto, On	v: To form a casual romantic relationship	v: a) to assemble or wire (a mechanism) b) to connect a mechanism to a source of power c) (slang) to join, associate with
Tread	Kinderlay, SK	n: A foolish, unthinking person	1. v: To walk on, over, or along 2. n: The part of a wheel or tire that makes contact with the road or rails
Legend	Red Deer, AB	exc: An exclamation of approval or enthusiasm	n: An unverified story handed down from earlier times, especially one popularly believed to be historical

Word	Acquired From	Slang Meaning	Dictionary Meaning
Choice	Calgary, AB	exc: An exclamation of approval or enthusiasm	1. n: a) The act of choosing; selection b) An alternative 2. adj: Of very fine quality
Hey?	Calgary, AB	int: Used to ask a question or to seek repetition or confirmation of a statement	exc: Used to attract attention or to express surprise, appreciation, wonder, or pleasure
Shark	Victoria, BC	v: To relentlessly pursue romantically	1. n: a) Carnivorous fish of the subclass Elasmobranchii b) Person regarded as ruthless, greedy, or dishonest c) (slang) A person unusually skilled in a particular activity 2. v: (archaic) To obtain by deceitful means

**Note:** All dictionary meanings from the *IPT Nelson Canadian Dictionary of the English Language*, 1997

We anticipate three different relationships between the dictionary and slang meanings of our words. The first and most likely relationship is expansion; the dictionary meaning is stretched to include non-standard contexts. The adjectives *sweet* and *choice* are both used as slang exclamations of approval or enthusiasm, which is an extension of their standard usages, which indicate agreeability, quality, and pleasantness. The same is true of the words *giddy-up*, *hey*, *poke*, *hook up*, and *legend*; their slang meanings are derived directly from their standard meanings.

Another relationship expected between standard and slang usages of words is misinterpretation, exemplified in the words *sketchy* and *random*. These words seem to have been misused to the point of such misuse being accepted in many situations. The words are used in a number of varying contexts, the slang meanings overlapping and going beyond their standard meanings; *sketchy* goes from meaning uncertain or superficial to meaning untrustworthy or questionable, and *random* progresses from meaning purposeless or accidental to meaning odd, unusual, or uncharacteristic. The slang usages are actually misinterpretations of the standard usages.

We also discovered words whose slang meanings seem to have no obvious relationship with their standard meanings. The word *stunned* is a typical Newfoundland expression, the romantic meaning of *shark* was created in an international college in Victoria, and *tread* has its origins in a small town in Saskatchewan. These expressions were most likely coined by an individual or group and spread within their enclosed community. This is the only group of words whose slang meanings do not relate in any obvious way to their standard meanings, and we expect that they will be only understood by people who have lived in the area of origin of these words.

### 3. Procedure

We created a survey that was distributed over e-mail as well as in person to a variety of people aged 18-30. Our goal was to reach people in as many different regions of Canada as possible so that we could see how far a slang meaning could travel. We also

made an attempt to obtain a few responses from the United States, in order to determine if the slang meanings of the words carried across the border. We thought cross-border recognition would be a good indicator that the slang had American roots and was therefore not actually an example of slang of Canadian origin.

The survey included twenty-four sentences, using each of the twelve chosen words in two sentences. The first sentence featured the word in a context illustrating its regular dictionary meaning while the second used the word in its slang context. Participants were requested to indicate whether they understood the word used in each of the two contexts, as well as whether or not they would use the word themselves in that context.

Respondents were also asked to give their age and gender, as well a list of all of the places in which they had lived for more than four months.

#### 4. Results and Analysis

We received a total of 45 responses to our survey. The majority of our respondents have lived in several cities; we labelled respondents' locations differently for different survey words. For example, a respondent who has lived in both Ottawa and Kingston, having been exposed to both lexicons, would be grouped under "Ottawa" as opposed to "Non-Ottawa" for the Ottawa-area word *sweet*, and "Kingston" as opposed to "Non-Kingston" for the Kingston-area word *random*. **Table B** is a summary of the locations in which our respondents have lived.

**Table B: Cities of Residence of Respondents**

LOCATION	# OF RESPONDENTS
Toronto, ON	24
Kingston, ON	12
Ottawa, ON	3
London, ON	3
St. John's, NF	3
Victoria, BC	2
Vancouver, BC	1
Edmonton, AB	3
Calgary, AB	4
Whitehorse, YK	1
Regina, SK	2
Winnipeg, MB	1
United States	16
Other Countries	6

As expected, the vast majority of the respondents understood and would use each word in its standard context, and therefore the results for the first sentence of each pair are not presented. The results for the second sentences, illustrating the slang use of each word, are discussed below (see **Tables 1-12** for full results).

The responses for *sweet* in both the understanding (100%) and the usage (over 85%) categories are the highest of the entire survey. A resident of Ottawa, Ontario, provided the word but its use is obviously not restricted to Ottawa, to Ontario, or even to Canada. All of the respondents who have lived exclusively in the United States stated that they understood the usage, and the majority also indicated that they use it themselves. This suggests that the origin of the slang usage lies in the United States, and the usage has been transmitted to Canada through the media or other means.

Comprehension of the slang meaning of *random* is higher in Kingston (92%) than elsewhere (70%), suggesting that this slang usage has simply become popular in Kingston. Oddly our Kingston respondents did not report use of this item at any higher rate than non-Kingstonians (42%).

*Sketchy* also seems to be a slang word that has caught on in Kingston, but is understood and used outside of it as well. *Sketchy* is even more popular in Kingston than *random*: 100% of Kingston respondents reported understanding the slang meaning and 58% would use it, compared to 79% and 45% for non-Kingston respondents.

The use of *tread* is highly localized to Saskatchewan. Only 19% of non-Saskatchewan respondents understand the slang term. No one (even from Saskatchewan) reported using the term.

*Stunned* has a traditional Newfoundland usage, and all of the respondents from Newfoundland stated that they understood it and would use it. Among respondents from outside of Newfoundland, 40% stated that they understood the word, but there was only one respondent from outside of Newfoundland who would use the word in its slang context.

*Shark* is another local expression: it is used by all of the respondents from Victoria and understood by all the respondents from British Columbia. However, it is understood by a fairly low percentage of respondents (38%) outside of British Columbia, and used by none at all.

*Hook up* is much like *sweet* in its high responses for both understanding and usage, from Toronto (100% understanding and 79% use) as well as outside of Toronto (90% understanding and 71% use). It is another expression that likely has origins in the United States, as the majority of American respondents reported using it.

## Tables 1-12: Percentages and Raw Scores of Survey Results

**Table 1: Sweet (actual numbers in brackets)**

	Understood	Would Use
Ottawa, ON	100 (3)	100 (3)
Non- Ottawa	95 (40)	86 (36)

**Table 7: Hook Up (actual numbers in brackets)**

	Understood	Would Use
Toronto, ON	100 (24)	79 (19)
Non- Toronto	90 (19)	71 (15)

**Table 2: Random (actual numbers in brackets)**

	Understood	Would Use
Kingston, ON	92 (11)	42 (5)
Non- Kingston	70 (23)	42 (14)

**Table 8: Poke (actual numbers in brackets)**

	Understood	Would Use
Ottawa, ON	100 (3)	33 (1)
Non- Ottawa	29 (12)	2 (1)

**Table 3: Sketchy (actual numbers in brackets)**

	Understood	Would Use
Kingston, ON	100 (12)	58 (7)
Non- Kingston	79 (26)	45 (15)

**Table 9: Hey? (actual numbers in brackets)**

	Understood	Would Use
Alberta	100 (7)	71 (5)
Non- Alberta	79 (30)	16 (6)

**Table 4: Tread (actual numbers in brackets)**

	Understood	Would Use
Saskatchewan	50 (1)	0 (0)
Non- Saskatchewan	19 (8)	0 (0)

**Table 10: Giddy-Up (actual numbers in brackets)**

	Understood	Would Use
Ottawa	100 (3)	33 (1)
Non- Ottawa	48 (20)	12 (5)

**Table 5: Stunned (actual numbers in brackets)**

	Understood	Would Use
Newfoundland	100 (3)	100 (3)
Non- Newfoundland	40 (17)	2 (1)

**Table 11: Legend (actual numbers in brackets)**

	Understood	Would Use
Alberta	14 (1)	0 (0)
Non- Alberta	29 (11)	3 (1)

**Table 6: Shark (actual numbers in brackets)**

	Understood	Would Use
British Columbia	100 (3)	67 (2)
Non- British Columbia	38 (16)	0 (0)

**Table 12: Choice (actual numbers in brackets)**

	Understood	Would Use
Alberta	71 (5)	14 (1)
Non- Alberta	42 (16)	8 (3)



*Poke* is a word that is almost exclusively restricted to Ottawa: all of the Ottawa respondents understood the usage (although only one respondent would use it), while a fairly small percentage of respondents outside Of Ottawa (29%) understood it, and only one would use it.

*Hey?* is understood by all respondents who have lived in Alberta (100%), and is used by most of them (71%). It is widely understood outside of Alberta (79%), most likely as a variant of *eh?* Less than 20% of respondents outside of Alberta report using the expression and most of them are residents of Western Canada.

*Giddy-up* seems to be another expression particular to Ottawa (100% comprehension and 35% use). It is, however, more widely understood by respondents outside of Ottawa (48%) and more often used (12%) by them than *poke*, the other Ottawa expression.

*Legend*, like *tread*, is a very localized expression which presented a problem in that we had no respondents from its city of origin (Red Deer). It is understood by a small percentage of respondents from both Alberta (29%) or elsewhere (14%) and is used by only one non-Alberta respondent.

*Choice* is another Albertan expression, more widely understood by Alberta respondents (71%) than used (14%). A few respondents outside of Alberta stated that they would use it themselves (8%) and several more understood it (42%), but the expression is still relatively localized.

## 5. *Problems*

We encountered a number of difficulties during our research. The first of these was attempting to find words for our survey: while we had hoped to acquire words from several regions of Canada, we were only able to obtain expressions from comparatively few areas due to the limits of our personal resources. While we managed to acquire words that were widely distributed geographically, it was a sparse list. Another problem presented itself while the survey was being composed. For each pair of sentences we wrote, it was necessary to clearly delineate and differentiate between the two contexts. However, as a result, the meaning of the slang word became quite easy to deduce, prompting a few respondents to state that they *understood* what a word meant in spite of never having heard it before. Therefore, we must assume that the percentage of people who had actually heard the word used before in the slang context is slightly lower than our figures would indicate.

## 6. Conclusion

We encountered a number of interesting expressions of local, provincial, and national scope while gathering material for our report. Our expectations for the groups of people who would understand and use each word were more or less correct; the comprehension of certain words was almost entirely restricted to the area of origin of those words, while others had a much wider area of use. Thus, we have concluded that Canadian slang can be divided into three categories: words acquired from the United States; words particular to Canada as a whole; and words used only within small communities.

### APPENDIX A: The Survey

We would appreciate your input on the following survey of local slang used in Canada!

#### I. Personal Information:

Gender:

Age:

Cities in which you've lived for more than 4 months:

#### II. Survey:

Please mark a **U** beside all sentences that you understand and where you have heard the bolded word used in a similar context, and/or mark an **X** beside all sentences where you would use the bolded word yourself. You can also leave a sentence unmarked if neither a **U** nor an **X** applies.

1. a) The cookies were a bit too **sweet** for my liking.  
b) "**Sweet!**" he yelled as the basketball went in at the sound of the buzzer.
2. a) The stars formed **random** patterns in the sky.  
b) I just went jogging for the first time in six months. How **random**.
3. a) My knowledge of physics is pretty **sketchy** after all these years.  
b) He's a bit of a **sketchy**-looking guy, with his perpetual leer and greasy hair.
4. a) I need to get my tires re-**treaded** soon.  
b) "You **tread**," I muttered at the poor fool.
5. a) I was completely **stunned** by his reaction.

- b) "You're a bit **stunned** today," he told me as I messed up yet another question during our study session.
6. a) "**Shark!**" I screamed as a fin came into view.  
b) That guy just won't stop asking me out. He's been **sharking** me for years!
7. a) I **hooked up** my computer last night.  
b) "No, of course they're not sleeping together!" I exclaimed . "They just **hooked up** last week!"
8. a) I **poked** him teasingly in the ribs.  
b) I picked up a great **poke** last night.
9. a) **Hey** Christina, how did you do on the test?  
b) It's cold out today, **hey?**
10. a) "**Giddy-up!**" he said, and his horse carried him off.  
b) "**Giddy-up!**" she thought excitedly as he hugged her for the first time.
11. a) Have you ever heard the **legend** of Sleepy Hollow?  
b) "**Legend!**" he exclaimed as he looked at his test score.
12. a) We bought a few **choice** sweaters on the weekend.  
b) "**Choice!**" she exclaimed approvingly.

*III. Comments:*

*Thank you for your input!*

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## CBC ENGLISH AND ONTARIO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

**Violaine Poutier and Karen Dawson**

### *Introduction*

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) was established in 1936 as a national, publicly owned company. Since that time, the CBC has grown to include four radio networks, two television services, and an international short-wave radio service. Since the CBC is Canada's largest cultural institution and is owned by the people of Canada, many believe that it has a number of responsibilities to the Canadian people. One of these is to provide a standard for Canadian English. In 1980, George Rich, one of the CBC's Broadcast Language Counsellors, wrote:

Some of the blame for poor English usage throughout Canada is ours. Listeners accept the language they hear on radio and television as being correct. Therefore, it is our responsibility to use the language with care and respect.  
(Rich 1980)

This feeling is shared by many Canadians who watch and listen to any number of the various programs available on the networks. These programs range from American series such as *The Simpsons* and children's programs like *Mr. Dress-Up*, through sports broadcasts such as *Hockey Night in Canada*, to political satire and news reports. This programming breadth gives the CBC a universal appeal, which makes their careful use of language even more important.

In order to ensure a high standard of language from their broadcasters, the CBC introduced the Office of Broadcast Language. The language counsellors in this office produced guidelines for both radio and television broadcasters. A newsletter entitled *You Don't Say* was circulated to broadcasters in the 1970s and 1980s and it dealt with complaints about usage received from the audience and problems noticed by the language counsellors. This office was dissolved in the 1980s and now each department is responsible for monitoring its own use of language.

This study looked at two issues, one attitudinal and one factual, relating to the CBC and its use of language. The first issue was whether the CBC is viewed as an important authority on Canadian English, and the second, whether the CBC accurately reflects the language used by young Canadians.

To investigate these questions a sample of 35 students was drawn from Ontario universities. All were between 18 and 30 years of age and all were raised in Canada.

Twenty-eight were raised in Ontario, 2 in Quebec, and 5 in Western Canada. Of the 35 subjects, 23 were female and 12 were male. The students were surveyed by means of a written questionnaire containing 19 questions on the subjects of stress patterns, pronunciation, and grammar. The questions (see Appendix A) were about issues taken from *You Don't Say* between 1979 and 1981, and were therefore important to CBC audiences at that time. The survey was also filled out by Russ Germain, the current Broadcast Language Advisor for CBC National Radio News in order to determine the current standard of that department.

### *Results*

The survey began with questions concerning the respondents' habits regarding the CBC and their views on the CBC's role in Canadian English. It was expected that many students would not be regular members of the CBC audience. This was not found to be the case, however, as only two never watched or listened to the CBC, and more than two-thirds watched or listened at least once a week. The type of program most frequently watched or listened to was news broadcasts; thus, many respondents were familiar with National Radio News.

Next, respondents were asked their views of the role of the CBC in terms of English usage. A majority of respondents believed that the language used by the CBC should reflect proper usage and pronunciation. A large minority, however, felt that the CBC played little to no role in determining the way in which Canadian English is used.

The survey then contained questions about three areas of language: stress patterns, other aspects of pronunciation, and grammar. The complete results can be found in Appendix B.

### *Stress Patterns*

Stress patterns were analysed in 10 words including place names, nouns, and adjectives. These words could be divided into three categories according to similarities in pronunciation. The first group contained the words *offence*, *defence*, and *finance*. The CBC pronunciation of these words places the stress on the second syllable. Of the respondents, 68% agreed with the CBC pronunciation of *offence*, with 24% placing the stress on the first syllable, and 9% using either stress pattern depending on the context of the word. The same pattern appeared for *defence*, with 66% putting stress on the second syllable, 26% on the first, and 9% using both. The pattern changed, however, for *finance*, with 68% putting the stress on the first syllable, 29% on the second, and

3% using both forms. We hypothesize that the stress patterns in *offence* and *defence* could be different from those used by the CBC because of the influence of sports. The people who responded that they used both pronunciations suggested that emphasis was placed on the first syllable when referring to sports, but on the second syllable for other situations.

The second group of words consisted of two items: *protester* and *protested*. In each of these cases the CBC suggests placing the stress on the second syllable. It was found that most students place the stress on the first syllable (74% for *protester* and 54% for *protested*). It is possible that since *protester* was listed first and placing stress on the first syllable in *protester* is very common, this could have affected the results for *protested*, the second word.

The third group contained the place names: *Newfoundland*, *Saskatchewan*, *Calgary*, and *Caribbean*. *Newfoundland* has three possible stress patterns, with main stress on each of the syllables. The current CBC guide directs broadcasters to place the stress on the first syllable, which is the stress pattern chosen by 89% of the respondents. The remaining 11% were split equally between placing the stress on the second and third syllable. In Newfoundland the emphasis is placed on the final syllable, though most people outside the province pronounce it differently. *Caribbean* is also pronounced differently according to the person speaking. The pronunciation accepted by the CBC, and those living in the Caribbean, places the emphasis on the third syllable. Among our subjects, this is not the standard pronunciation: 72% placed the emphasis on the second syllable. *Saskatchewan* and *Calgary* were generally pronounced by the respondents in the way suggested by the CBC, that is, with the emphasis on the second syllable in *Saskatchewan* and on the first in *Calgary*. With respect to *comparable*, the final word examined, the CBC suggested emphasis be placed on the first syllable, but most respondents (71%) placed it on the second.

#### *Other Aspects of Pronunciation*

Twelve more words with variant pronunciations were examined. The first set of three words consisted of *enclave*, *envoy*, and *envelope*. The CBC recommends the first syllable in these words be pronounced with the vowel in *den* [ɛn] rather than *don*. University students agreed with the recommendation for both *enclave* (60% using [ɛn-]) and *envelope* (69%), but not for *envoy* (only 43% using [ɛn-]).

A second comparison was made between the present and past tenses of *bury*. It was expected that people would pronounce both words in the same way, but this was not the case. The CBC guideline is to pronounce the initial vowel in both words like that in

*berry*, which is what most people did. However, 29% responded with *bury* pronounced to rhyme with *furry*, and 34% pronounced *buried* with the same vowel.

The remaining words were examined singly. *Semi*, *radiator*, *amateur*, and *again* were pronounced in the manner used by the CBC by a large majority of respondents. Among respondents, 91% pronounced *semi* as [sɛmi], while only 9% pronounced it [sɛmai]. The pronunciation of *semi* is fairly uniform among these respondents. *Radiator* and *again* showed slightly more variation, with the CBC pronunciation being favoured by 86% of respondents in each case. The CBC advises pronouncing *radiator* as [reɪd-] rather than [ræd-], and *again* to rhyme with *Ken* rather than *Cain*. The pronunciation of *amateur* showed more variation still, with 80% responding with the CBC favoured pronunciation [æmətʃɜːr] (*t* pronounced like *ch* in *church*) and 20% with the pronunciation [æmətɜːr]. These four words showed a high correlation between the pronunciations used by the respondents and those used by the CBC, but the remaining three did not.

The responses for *dais* were split almost evenly between the two pronunciations: the CBC pronunciation of [deɪz] (initial vowel as in *day*) and the other pronunciation of [daiəs] (initial vowel as in *dye*). We suspect this split result may partially be due to the more obscure nature of this word. A number of respondents commented that they did not know the word, and three respondents left it blank.

The remaining two words showed a tendency towards the pronunciation not recommended by the CBC. *Lieutenant* was pronounced [luː-] by 64% of respondents and [lɛf-] by only 36%. The CBC continues to use the second pronunciation possibly because it is the British pronunciation and valued by some Canadians as a higher "non-American" standard.

The pronunciation of *data* also showed a preference for the variant not used by the CBC. Among respondents, 57% pronounced the word [dætə] (initial vowel as in *mat*), while 40% used the CBC pronunciation [deɪtə] (initial vowel as in *mate*), and 3% used both versions. This word is being used more frequently now than in 1980 because of the increase in computer and Internet use. Since most of the advertisements for computer products and services have come from the United States, the pronunciation of *data* in Canada could have been influenced by the media pronunciation.

### *Grammar*

Six different grammatical points were examined in the survey: *less* and *fewer*; *affect* and *effect*; *different from*, *different than* and *different to*; *identical with* and *identical to*;

*momentarily; H.M.S.*

Among respondents, 80% were able to use *less* and *fewer* as prescribed by the CBC. The remaining 20% used *less* when referring to both an amount and a number. A similar pattern of response was found for the use of *affect* and *effect*. Between 80% and 90% of respondents were able to identify the sentences in which this pair of words was used correctly (as prescribed by the CBC) incorrectly.

Three prepositions can be used following *different*: *from*, *than*, and *to*. These options were not equally represented in survey responses. *Different from* was chosen by 56% of respondents; 44% used *different than*; and no one used *different to*. *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary* suggests that *different from* is the most widely accepted form, while *different than* is well established in Canadian English though less formal than *different from*. *Different to* is the British variant and has a very limited use in Canada. This analysis is reflected in CBC policy, which suggests the use of *different from* in the national radio news broadcasts.

All but one respondent preferred the use of *identical to*, which is the usage suggested by the CBC, over *identical with*. *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, however, does not list *identical to* as an alternative. This suggests that, in this particular case, the CBC more accurately reflects the usage of the Canadian public.

According to *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, the term *momentarily* has two different meanings: for a moment, and in a moment. The CBC sees the first usage as correct, while most respondents exclusively use the second. The second meaning is a North American usage, so the CBC may still be using the first usage in order to maintain ties with British English.

The use of *the* before *H.M.S.* was considered correct by 83% of the respondents. This is not the form used by the CBC, or other authorities on language, because of what the abbreviation *H.M.S.* means. *H.M.S.* stands for "Her (His) Majesty's Ship," and thus *H.M.S.* requires no article before it. Since the abbreviation is always used, many students did not know what the initials stood for and, therefore, could not know that *the* was unnecessary.

### *Conclusion*

Overall, current CBC usage mirrored the usage of Ontario university students in only about half of the cases examined by this survey. This leads to the conclusion that CBC English does not accurately reflect the usage of young Canadians.

Canadian English continually evolves, and the CBC guidelines reflect some of these



changes. The recommended pronunciations of *Newfoundland* and *amateur* have followed the pattern of change among the Canadian public. However, that of *protester* has moved away from the pronunciation used by most Canadians. Two aspects of grammar have changed in the past 20 years: *different than* has become more widely accepted and *identical to* is now the accepted form rather than *identical with*. In these cases, CBC policy has been flexible in response to changes in Canadian English. However, there are many changes being made in Canadian English that are not yet reflected by the CBC. In some cases, the CBC appears to be retaining a British form when a North American form is being used more commonly by young Canadians, for example, *data* and *lieutenant*.

The CBC has taken on a large task if it intends to accurately represent the speech of Canadians, but based on the views of many audience members it has been pushed into this position of authority. Determining a Canadian language standard is very difficult since, as one respondent wrote, "Canadian English ... tries to placate both the U.K. and the U.S." Furthermore, multiple forms of many words are in use across the country. Despite the magnitude of its challenge, the CBC is seen to have an important role in language use and must therefore continue to adapt to changes in Canadian English.

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*Also with thanks to Russ Germain, CBC Broadcast Language Advisor for National Radio News, for providing information on current CBC standards.*

### **Appendix A: The Survey**

This survey is designed to look at the usage of English among university students in Ontario and compare this usage with what is defined as correct for use by CBC broadcasters. There is never a "right" or "wrong" answer, so please answer the way you would speak to your friends, and use your first reaction to each question as your answer.

Words of interest are written in **bold** type, and each has a sentence to give a context for the word.

Participation in this survey is optional, and may be discontinued at any time. The results will be anonymous, but we do need some preliminary information in order to compare results.

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey, it is greatly appreciated.

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Birthplace: \_\_\_\_\_ Current residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of residence between ages 8 and 18: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's birthplace: \_\_\_\_\_ Mother's Birthplace: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you watch or listen to CBC? \_\_\_\_\_ How often? \_\_\_\_\_

What types of programs? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you see as the CBC's role in terms of the usage of Canadian English?

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Would you like to receive a summary of the results? \_\_\_\_\_

1. Underline the syllable that the emphasis is placed on (for example, example) in the following words:

- a) offence
- b) Calgary
- c) finance
- d) protester
- e) defence
- f) Saskatchewan
- g) Caribbean
- h) protested
- i) Newfoundland
- j) comparable

2. Fill in the blanks with a word meaning the opposite of "more":

- a) I have \_\_\_\_\_ candies than he does.
- b) I have \_\_\_\_\_ chocolate than he does.

3. Does **bury** (Medical workers are beginning to bury flood victims in common graves) rhyme with:
  - a) hurry
  - b) very
  
4. Which of the following sentences would you use:
  - a) The bus will arrive momentarily.
  - b) The bus will only be here momentarily.
  
5. Does the first syllable in **data** (This survey is collecting data on English usage) sound like:
  - a) day
  - b) da
  
6. Fill in the blank: My coat is identical \_\_\_\_\_ yours.
  
7. Does the first syllable in **enclave** (East Timor is a tiny enclave in Indonesia) sound like:
  - a) on
  - b) en
  
8. Which of the following sentences would you use:
  - a) The sailors left on the H.M.S. Pinafore.
  - b) The sailors left on H.M. S. Pinafore.
  
9. Does the *-mi* in **semi** (Veteran rower Derek Porter glided to the semi-finals after easily winning his heat) sound like:
  - a) me
  - b) my
  
10. Does the first part of **radiator** sound like:
  - a) glad
  - b) glade
  
11. Does the first part on **envoy** (He was appointed the United Nation Secretary General's special envoy for AIDS in Africa) sound like:
  - a) on
  - b) en

12. Which would you say:  
a) My book is different from yours.  
b) My book is different to yours.  
c) My book is different than yours.
13. Does the first part of **dais** (There is a huge throne room where he constantly entertains and holds court from his high dais at one end of the room) sound like:  
a) die  
b) day
14. Does the first part of **lieutenant** (Lieutenant General Louis Joseph Montcalm was wounded on the Plains of Abraham) sound like:  
a) heft  
b) hew
15. Does the first part of **buried** (Both Sartre and de Beauvoir are buried in Montparnasse cemetery) rhyme with:  
a) ferry  
b) furry
16. Does the **t** in **amateur** (Canadians want more funding for amateur sports) sound like the first sound of:  
a) turn  
b) chum
17. Does the first part of **envelope** (Many people opened their envelopes to find cheques) sound like:  
a) on  
b) en
18. Does **again** (The two leaders will meet again next month.) rhyme with:  
a) pain  
b) pen
19. Which of these sentences is correct (circle as many as apply):  
a) Consumers are already seeing the effect of the Bank of Canada's latest cuts.  
b) The new contract takes affect immediately.  
c) The imminent U.S. actors' strike will affect the Canadian film industry.  
d) It can effect about 17 million people every year.

**Appendix B: Results**  
**Respondents' Usage: CBC Recommended, Other, Both**

	<b>CBC Rec. Usage</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Other Usage</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Both Used %</b>
Offence	offENCE	68	Offence	24	9
Defence	DeFENCE	66	DEfence	26	9
Finance	fiNANCE	29	FINance	69	3
Protester	proTESTer	26	PROtester	74	0
Protested	proTESTed	46	PROtested	54	0
Newfoundland	NEwfoundland	94	NewfoundLAND or NewFOUNDland	6	0
Caribbean	CaRIBbean	28	CaribBEan	72	0
Saskatchewan	SaskATchewan	94	SaskatCHEwan	6	0
Calgary	CALgary	83	CalGARY	17	0
Comparable	COMparable	29	comPARable	71	0
Enclave	en-	60	on-	40	0
Envoy	en-	43	on-	54	0
Envelope	en-	69	on-	26	6
Bury	rhymes with <i>ferry</i>	71	rhymes with <i>hurry</i>	29	0
Buried	rhymes with <i>ferried</i>	66	rhymes with <i>hurried</i>	34	0
Semi	rhymes with <i>me</i>	91	rhymes with <i>my</i>	9	0
Radiator	raid-	86	rad-	11	3
Dais	day-	53	dye-	47	0
Lieutenant	left-	36	loot-	64	0
Amateur	-ch-	80	-t-	20	0
Again	rhymes with <i>ben</i>	86	rhymes with <i>bane</i>	14	0
Data	da-	40	day-	57	3
Less/Fewer	<i>less</i> amount, <i>fewer</i> number	80	<i>less</i> both amount and number	20	0
Affect	verb	85	Noun	9	0
Effect	noun	91	Verb	21	0
Different	than	44	from	56	0
Identical	to	97	with	3	0
Momentarily	for a moment	0	in a moment	94	6
H.M.S.	no <i>the</i>	17	preceded by <i>the</i>	83	0

## **A STUDY ON THE USE OF CANADIAN ENGLISH: ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS VS. NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS IN CANADA**

**Dawn Caswell and Priscilla Hu**

### *Aim and Hypothesis*

There are few Canadians who would deny that there are many differences that distinguish Canadians from their neighbours to the south. In the area of linguistics it has been noted that, although both Canadians and Americans speak English, there are certain ways of speaking that are considered Canadian and others viewed as American. This study will look at some features of Canadian speech that differentiate it from American speech in order to determine if Native English Speakers (NES) raised in Canada speak a more "Canadian" English than do English as a Second Language (ESL) students studying in Canada. It is hypothesized that NES will speak a more American-influenced variety of English because they have grown up in an environment where Canadian speech is not stressed and the influence of American media has created a subliminal learning environment in which American speech patterns are easily absorbed. The ESL students on the other hand are drilled in the classroom on the "proper" Canadian English and therefore their speech should reflect this emphasis.

### *Survey*

A survey consisting of 4 parts was created in order to test this hypothesis (see Appendix A). The survey examined three areas: Canadian raising of the onset of the diphthongs [aw] and [aj] to [ʌw] and [ʌj] respectively before voiceless consonants; Canadian preference for the pronunciation of /ju/ after coronals, or yod-retention, as opposed to American yod-dropping; and other miscellaneous pronunciation differences between Canadian and American speech commonly noted by researchers. Section 1.1 (Appendix A) of the survey focused on the students' perceptions of the language with regards to yod-retention and Canadian raising. Informants answered questions involving their own perception of the way in which they pronounce the words in question. Section 1.2 consisted of paired words that checked for the students' perception of Canadian raising, though section 1.2, unlike 1.1 tested their aural perception of the words as spoken by the researchers (see Appendix B). The paired words--one word with a normal diphthong and the other, according to Canadian speech, with a raised diphthong--were read aloud. Students then had to say if the vowel sounds in the words were the same or different. Section 2 focused on Canadian raising, yod-retention, and Canadian vs. American pronunciations in the form of a word list consisting of 22 words: 7 words looked at Canadian raising, 4 at yod-retention, and

11 at other noted pronunciation differences. Section 3 once again checked for yod-dropping or retention and Canadian raising, but this time the format was an informal reading passage. Section 4 of the survey involved picture associations to test for Canadian raising. The students were shown pictures and asked to name objects.

### *Participants*

The survey was distributed to the two groups described above. The NES group was drawn from Loyalist College of Belleville Ontario, specifically, from two small classes from the Arts and Science Programme: a first-year Communications class and a second-year Personal Development Class. The NES group totaled 23 students (8 males, 15 females). For the ESL group, Loyola Community Learning Centre of Belleville provided two classes from their English as a Second Language Department: Intermediate level and Advanced level. This group consisted of 14 students (4 males, 10 females).

### *Results*

Full results of the survey are contained in Appendix C. Highlights are discussed below, section by section.

#### *Section 1.1*

For *news*, 71%, and for *avenue*, 89% of the ESL students chose the Canadian variant (yod-retention). Thirteen percent of the NES group chose yod-retention for *news* and 52% chose yod-retention for *avenue*. Seventy-one percent of the ESL students specified that the diphthongs in the paired words *house* vs. *houses*, where one is raised in Canadian speech and the other is not, were different. Fifty-seven percent of the ESL students maintained there was a difference between the vowel sounds in *wife* vs. *wives*. Thirty-nine percent and 52% of the NES students marked the vowel sounds in *house* vs. *houses* and *wife* vs. *wives* respectively as different.

#### *Section 1.2*

The ESL speakers scored 50% or above for recognizing that the words sounded different. *Eyes* vs. *ice* and *mouthed* vs. *mouth* scored the highest at 79% each. *Loud* vs. *lout* was at 71% and *advise* vs. *advice* was the lowest at 50%. The NES group scored relatively low percentages in all but one of the four paired words: *lout*

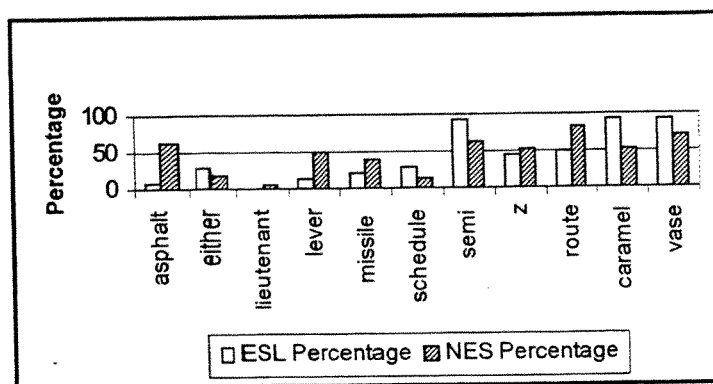
vs. *loud* scored 39%, while *advise* vs. *advice* and *mouthed* vs. *mouth* both scored 48%. Only *eyes* vs. *ice* sounded different to more than half of the NES group (69%).

### Section 2

One hundred percent of the ESL students chose the Canadian variant for *news* and *Tuesday* followed by 93% of them choosing the Canadian pronunciation for *avenue*, *semi*, *ice*, *caramel*, and *vase*. Less than 10% of the ESL students chose the Canadian variants for *asphalt* and *lieutenant* with the latter at 0%. One hundred percent of the NES used the Canadian variant for *bite*, *avenue* and *ice* with 83% using it in the words *wife*, *mouth* and *route*. Out of all the participants only one, from the NES group, chose the Canadian variant for *lieutenant*.

There was a higher percentage of ESL than NES students choosing the Canadian variant for all the words testing yod-dropping with the one exception of the word *avenue*. For the words looking at Canadian raising a similar outcome occurred where a higher percentage of ESL students chose the Canadian variant for 4 out of 7 words. There was a higher percentage of ESL students using the Canadian (see **Figure 1**) pronunciations for the miscellaneous words in 5 out of the 11 words. A comparison of all the words showed that for 13 of the 22 words tested there was a greater percentage of ESL students than NES using the "Canadian" variants.

**Figure 1: Canadian Pronunciation of Miscellaneous Words**



### Section 3

A vast majority of the ESL students, that is 93% chose the Canadian variant for the words *Tuesday*, *house*, *south*, *news* and *avenue*. One hundred percent of the ESL



students chose to retain the yod in *new*. For *enthusiastic*, equal numbers of ESL students chose the Canadian and American pronunciations (36% each) with 28% skipping the word as unknown. The vast majority (90%) of NES chose the Canadian pronunciation for these four words only: *house*, *south*, *life* and *bite*. *Enthusiastic* and *due* were both at 70% for American pronunciation. *News* had a near 50/50 split with 57% of the NES retaining the yod.

With the exception of the word *student*, the ESL students chose the Canadian variant more than the NES for words involving yod-dropping or retention. A higher percentage of NES than ESL students chose the Canadian variant for 3 out of the 4 words looking at Canadian raising; however with the exception of the word *bite* the percentages for both groups were very similar. Overall in section 3, the ESL students showed higher usage of the Canadian pronunciation than the NES: ESL students chose the Canadian version for 8 of the 11 words, NES for 3.

#### *Section 4*

More than 70% of ESL students used the raised diphthongs for *ice* and *house*. *Ice* had a strong Canadian pronunciation with 100% of the NES students pronouncing it with the raised diphthong. There was only a 1% difference between the ESL and NES percentages for the raised *house*.

#### *Discussion and Conclusions*

In section 1, there was a higher percentage of ESL students choosing the Canadian variant for the words testing yod-retention and Canadian raising. The results also indicate that ESL students could discern the difference in the diphthongs more readily than NES whether they were considering the sounds in their own minds or whether they heard the researchers say them. In section 2 again a higher percentage of ESL students than NES chose the Canadian version for each word involving yod-retention. With Canadian raising the pattern was the same, though the gap between the two groups is smaller. Only in the miscellaneous pronunciation category was there a higher percentage of NES choosing the Canadian version. Here, it should be noted that the relatively low percentages of the ESL students for the Canadian variant of certain words, for example *lieutenant*, were due in part to the unfamiliarity of the words. Many ESL students based their pronunciation of *lieutenant* on the spelling of the word rather than any former knowledge of the word. Thus, overall, there were more ESL answers deemed other/unknown than NES. In addition, 43% of ESL students gave the sound

ZZZ instead of the name of the letter when surveyed, but when later informed that the name of the letter had been intended, they unanimously chorused *Zed!*

In section 3, once again there is a higher percentage of ESL students demonstrated Canadian yod-retention in most words. However, the percentages of NES that showed Canadian raising in their speech were greater than the ESL percentages for most of the words involved. Finally, in section 4, more NES seemed to use the raised diphthong [ʌj] than ESL students, while [ʌw] was used by almost equal percentages of NES and ESL students.

The results show that ESL students have a greater preference for Canadian yod-retention than do the NES. The results for Canadian raising and other Canadian pronunciations are less clear cut with words containing the diphthong [ʌw] showing higher percentages for ESL speakers than those with [ʌj]. Overall the data collected reflect the ESL students' tendency to use Canadian English to a greater degree than NES as well as the NES tendency to use American pronunciations over Canadian variants. Our research supports our assumption that Canadian native English speakers (in Ontario) are speaking more like our neighbours to the south, while newcomers to our country are being taught, consciously, to use more "Canadian" English. Information concerning the media influence, especially from the States on Canadian English could be collected and studied. Information gathered in the personal information section of our survey, but not analysed here, could be further researched to ascertain which factors affect the amount of "Canadian" English a newcomer develops.

### Appendix A: The Survey

Informant Number \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill out some **personal information**.

Gender (m/f): \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother Tongue: \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you been speaking English? \_\_\_\_\_

In what country did you first start learning English? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the nationality of your primary ESL teacher? \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you lived in Canada? \_\_\_\_\_

In what other English speaking cities/countries have you lived and for how long? \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 1.1

1. Does **NEWS** rhyme with \_\_*nyooze* or \_\_*nooze*?
2. Do the vowel sounds in **HOUSE** and **HOUSES** sound the same: ! yes or \_\_no?
3. Does the beginning of **COUPON** rhyme with \_\_ cue or \_\_ coo?
4. Do the vowel sounds in **WIFE** and **WIVES** sound the same: \_\_yes or \_\_ no?
5. Does the ending of **AVENUE** rhyme with \_\_ you or \_\_ oo?

### Section 1.2

*Now someone is going to read 4 pairs of words to you. For each pair, say whether the vowel sounds in the two words are the same.*

### Section 2: Word List

*Please read the following word list and reading passage.*

1. news
2. asphalt
3. buy...bite
4. either
5. lieutenant
6. wife...wives
7. lever
8. missile
9. house...houses
10. avenue
11. schedule
12. semi
13. lives...life
14. z
15. mouth...mouthed
16. route
17. due
18. eyes...ice
19. caramel
20. Tuesday
21. lout...loud

- 22. vase
- 23. coupon

### Section 3: Reading Passage

Last Tuesday night, I was walking down the street when I heard my name shouted from behind. When I turned around, I was really surprised to see my old friend Dave. I hadn't seen him since he moved to a new house in the south end of the city. He had a lot of news to tell me--he told me about how his wife is so enthusiastic about her flower arranging business and how his daughter is now a medical school student with a really hectic life. He suggested we catch up on some more things over dinner at the café on 5th Avenue and of course I agreed since I was on my way for a bite to eat before I ran into him. It was a great way to spend an evening and now our families are due for a get-together sometime next month.

Note: Several words shown in the original survey were later dropped as unsuitable for this study. Also due to its nature Section 4 is omitted here.

### Appendix B: For Researcher Use

Informant Number: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section 1

- |                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Pair 1 (eyes ... ice)      | ___ same or ___ different |
| Pair 2 (loud ... lout)     | ___ same or ___ different |
| Pair 3 (advise ... advice) | ___ same or ___ different |
| Pair 4 (mouthed ... mouth) | ___ same or ___ different |

## Section 2

1. news [ju:]/[u:]	2. asphalt [ʃ]/[s]	3. buy...bite [ay]/[ʌy]	4. either [ay]/[i]	5. lieutenant [lɛf]/[lu]
6. wife...wives [ʌy]/[ay]	7. lever [i]/[ɛ]	8. missile [ayl]/[əl]	9. house ...houses [ʌw]/[aw]	10. avenue [ju:]/[u:]
11. schedule [ʃ]/[sk]	12. semi [i]/[ay]	13. lives...life [ay]/[ʌy]	14. z [ɛd]/[i]	15. mouth ...mouthed [ʌw]/[aw]
16. route [u]/[aw]	17. due [ju:]/[u:]	18. eyes...ice [ay]/[ʌy]	19. caramel [kæramel] /[karməl]	20. Tuesday [ju:]/[u:]
21. lout...loud [ʌw]/[aw]	22. vase [z]/[eiz]/[eis]	23. coupon [ju:]/[u:]		

## Section 3

Last *Tuesday* night, I was walking down the street when I heard my name shouted from behind. When I turned around, I was really surprised to see my old friend Dave. I hadn't seen him since he moved to a *new house* in the *south* end of the city. He had a lot of *news* to tell me--he told me about how his wife is so *enthusiastic* about her flower arranging business and how his daughter is now a medical school *student* with a really hectic *life*. He suggested we catch up on some more things over dinner at the café on 5th *Avenue* and of course I agreed since I was on my way for a *bite* to eat before I ran into him. It was a great way to spend an evening and now our families are *due* for a get-together sometime next month.

## Section 4: Picture Cueing

Caramel  
Vase  
Ice  
Eyes  
Coupon  
House  
Houses

## Appendix C: Full Results

### Section 1

<b>NES Section 1.1</b>	<b>Canadian Variant</b>	<b>American Variant</b>
News	13 (3)	87 (20)
Avenue	52 (12)	48 (11)
house vs. houses	39 (9)	61 (14)
wife vs. wives	52 (12)	48 (11)
<b>NES Section 1.2</b>	<b>Canadian Variant</b>	<b>American Variant</b>
eyes vs. ice	61 (14)	39 (9)
loud vs. lout	39 (9)	61 (14)
advise vs. advice	48 (11)	52 (12)
mouthed vs. mouth	48 (11)	52 (12)

<b>ESL Section 1.1</b>	<b>Canadian Variant</b>	<b>American Variant</b>
News	71 (10)	29 (4)
Avenue	86 (12)	14 (2)
house vs. houses	71 (10)	29 (4)
wife vs. wives	57 (8)	43 (6)
<b>ESL Section 1.2</b>	<b>Canadian Variant</b>	<b>American Variant</b>
eyes vs. ice	79 (11)	21 (3)
loud vs. lout	71 (10)	29 (4)
advise vs. advice	50 (7)	50 (7)
mouthed vs. mouth	79 (11)	21 (3)

### Section 2

<b>NES Section 2</b>	<b>Canadian Variant</b>	<b>American Variant</b>	<b>Other/Unknown</b>
News	70 (16)	26 (6)	4 (1)
Asphalt	61 (14)	30 (7)	9 (2)
Bite	100 (23)	0	0
Either	17 (4)	83 (19)	0
lieutenant	4 (1)	87 (20)	9 (2)
Wife	83 (19)	13 (3)	4 (1)
Lever	48 (11)	52 (12)	0
missile	39 (9)	57 (13)	4 (1)
House	65 (15)	30 (7)	4 (1)
avenue	100 (23)	0	0
schedule	13 (3)	87 (20)	0
Semi	61 (14)	39 (9)	0
Life	78 (18)	22 (5)	0
Z	57 (13)	43 (10)	0
Mouth	83 (19)	17 (4)	0
Route	83 (19)	17 (4)	0
Due	39 (9)	61 (4)	0
Ice	100 (23)	0	0
Caramel	57 (13)	43 (10)	0
Tuesday	74 (17)	26 (6)	0
Lout	70 (16)	30 (7)	0
Vase	70 (16)	26 (6)	4 (1)

<b>ESL Section 2</b>	<b>Canadian Variant</b>	<b>American Variant</b>	<b>Other/Unknown</b>
News	100 (14)	0	0
Asphalt	7 (1)	71 (10)	21 (3)
Bite	71 (10)	14 (2)	14 (2)
Either	29 (4)	71 (10)	0
Lieutenant	0	57 (8)	43 (6)
Wife	86 (12)	0	14 (2)
Lever	14 (2)	64 (9)	21 (3)
Missile	21 (3)	57 (8)	21 (3)
House	86 (12)	14 (2)	0
Avenue	93 (13)	0	7 (1)
Schedule	29 (4)	64 (9)	7 (1)
Semi	93 (13)	0	7 (1)
Life	71 (10)	7 (1)	21 (3)
Z	43 (6)	14 (2)	43 (6)
Mouth	86 (12)	7 (1)	7 (1)
Route	50 (7)	36 (5)	14 (2)
Due	71 (10)	29 (4)	0
Ice	93 (13)	7 (1)	0
Caramel	93 (13)	0	7 (1)
Tuesday	100 (14)	0	0
Lout	71 (10)	14 (2)	14 (2)
Vase	93 (13)	7 (1)	0

### Section 3

<b>NES Section 3</b>	<b>Canadian Variant</b>	<b>American Variant</b>	<b>Other/Unknown</b>
Tuesday	87 (20)	13 (3)	0
News	57 (13)	43 (10)	0
House	96 (22)	4 (1)	0
South	91 (21)	9 (2)	0
News	65 (15)	35 (8)	0
Enthusiastic	13 (3)	70 (16)	17 (4)
Student	70 (16)	30 (7)	0
Life	96 (22)	0	4 (1)
Avenue	83 (19)	13 (3)	4 (1)
Bite	91 (21)	9 (2)	0
Due	30 (7)	70 (16)	0

<b>ESL Section 3</b>	<b>Canadian Variant</b>	<b>American Variant</b>	<b>Other/Unknown</b>
Tuesday	93 (13)	7 (1)	0
News	100 (14)	0	0
House	93 (13)	7 (1)	0
South	93 (13)	0	7 (1)
News	93 (13)	7 (1)	0
Enthusiastic	36 (5)	36 (5)	29 (4)
Student	64 (9)	29 (4)	7 (1)

Life	86 (12)	7 (1)	7 (1)
Avenue	93 (13)	7 (1)	0
Bite	57 (8)	21 (3)	21 (3)
Due	64 (9)	36 (5)	0

#### Section 4

NES Section 4	Canadian Variant	American Variant	Other/Unknown
ice	100 (23)	0	0
house	87 (20)	9 (2)	4 (1)

ESL Section 4	Canadian Variant	American Variant	Other/Unknown
ice	71 (10)	14 (2)	14 (2)
house	86 (12)	14 (2)	0



## DO CANADIAN CHILDREN SPEAK AMERICAN ENGLISH?

Tara Blackstock and Amanda Bolton

### *1. Introduction*

Many American visitors come to Canada prepared to stay in igloos and go without the usual amenities of life. What they are surprised to discover about our country is that it is much like their own. We have houses, cars and electricity. We also have many of the same social standards, cultural arenas and retailers. We even speak the same language. Or do we?

English is not composed of a single dialect. In addition to the well-known British and American varieties, Canadian English holds its own as a distinctive variety of English. The "spelling, pronunciation and word choice are all attached to national identity and seen as distinctively Canadian" (Fee and McAlpine 1997: 1). The presence of such Canadianisms as "eh?" marks our speech as highly unique.

One interesting aspect of language is how it is formed. All English-speaking children learn the same basic communicative units first, namely command and name words. If the early learning experience is relatively homogeneous across different dialects of English, a matter of interest is at what point children assimilate the characteristics of language that make their national dialect unique, and how this process can be modified through conflicting influences, such as media and entertainment from other countries.

In the case of two groups of school children, one from kindergarten and the other from grade two, our hypothesis was that the older children would use fewer Canadianisms. These older children had been attending school longer and were, technically, more fluent in Canadian English. They had been subject to the influences of peers and teachers for several years, whereas the children in kindergarten had only had one or two years of schooling and had probably spent more time at home with their parents. Older children are also more avid television watchers than younger children, as they tend to understand more complex programs. We hypothesized that a presumed abundance of American-based media in their lives would lead them away from their Canadian linguistic base towards a more American style. Overall, younger children spend more time in regular routines at home, where the environment is more traditional than that of a school. At school, teachers encourage students to be open minded and regularly introduce them to new ideas. We, therefore, thought the language usage of the younger children would reflect their more sheltered environment

in that they would use more Canadian terms because they had not yet been introduced to American terms.

## 2. Procedure

The study was conducted at Yonge Elementary School in the village of Mallorytown, in south-eastern Ontario. This is a small, rural community with a population of about five hundred. It was assumed that all the participants in the study were born and raised in Canada. It was also assumed that the children's parents spoke Canadian English. Overall, thirty children were involved in the study. Fifteen four- and five-year olds from a kindergarten class and fifteen seven- and eight-year olds from a second grade class were questioned.

A corner of the classroom was used to conduct the interviews, to allow the children to remain in a familiar environment and reduce their anxiety about talking to strangers. The children were questioned one at a time to avoid peer pressure: one child influencing the next's answers. Each child was asked the same set of questions in the same order: six object identification questions and three personal preference questions.

To test the child's vocabulary for the lexical items, the six identification items were displayed on a table. For each item, the child was asked, "What do *you* call this?" and the item in question was placed in front of the child. When that question was completed, the item was returned to its original spot in order to avoid any confusion as to which item was meant. The children were asked to name the following objects:

- a) A boxed drink
- b) A can of cola
- c) A picture of a wooden toboggan/sled cut from a catalogue
- d) A knit winter cap
- e) Two different kinds of athletic shoes.

These items were chosen specifically as they are known to have clear Canadian and American name differences.

The question "What do *you* call this?" was articulated with emphasis on the word *you* in order to elicit the word that the child used the most, as opposed to any other conventional name for the item that the child might know or assume to be more proper. If either the Canadian variant or the American variant was given as the child's first response, then that variant was recorded and the experiment moved on to the next question. However, if neither of the two desired variants were given then the child was prompted with a second question: "Do you have any other names for this?" If an appropriate response was then obtained, then that variant was recorded. If an

expected response still could not be elicited, then the first response given was recorded. The second question allowed us to determine whether the children possessed other variants in their vocabulary besides their initial response. The final identification question was composed of two sections. First, a certain type of athletic shoe that some Canadians may exclusively call a *sneaker* was presented. This type of shoe can be thought of as a casual walking shoe with a rubber or plastic sole and toe cap, and a canvas upper. The second category of shoe presented was the comfortable, bouncy, vinyl or leather type, which is most often associated with sport and intense physical activity and the name *running shoe*. The purpose of this dual display was to determine if the Canadian children used the Canadian (or American) lexical variant categorically for all types of athletic shoes--and if not, to delineate the usage of the variants.

After the identification quiz, three personal preference questions were asked of the children to determine the degree of influence the media had in their lives. These questions were as follows:

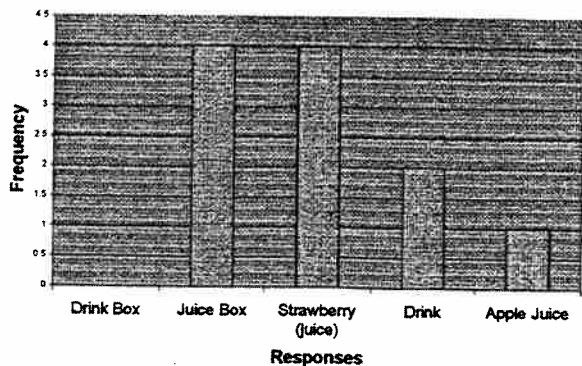
- a) What is your favorite TV show?
- b) What is your favorite movie/video?
- c) What is your favorite music group or band?

Each child was given the opportunity to list their favourite in each category and they were also permitted multiple responses, if they so desired, which ensured a large collection of data. The children were not questioned further if they had no initial response for the question. The procedure was conducted in exactly the same manner for the kindergarten students and for the second graders.

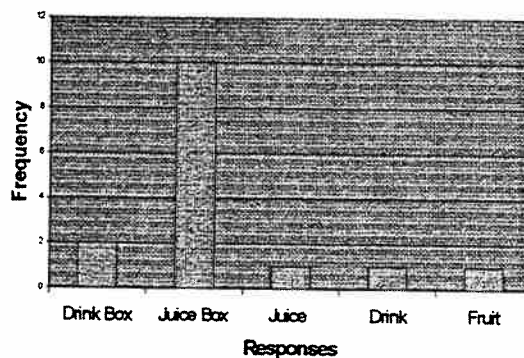
### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Drink Box vs. Juice Box

Question 1 Responses for Kindergarten



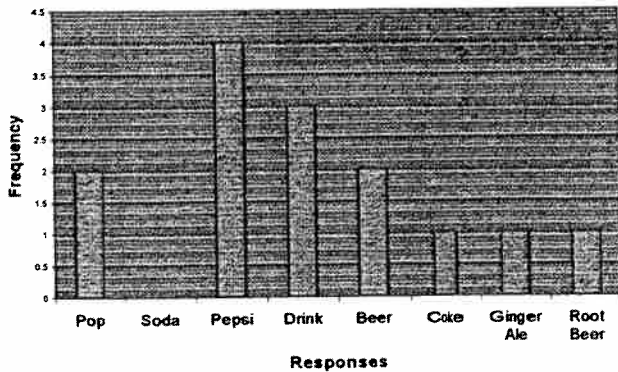
Question 1 Responses for Grade 2



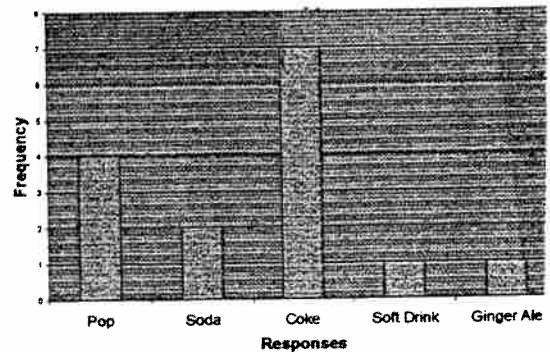
For the boxed drink, none of the kindergarten children sampled used the Canadian variant *drink box*, while 27% used the American variant *juice box*. Eighty-seven percent of the children asked had to be prompted in order for us to elicit either variant. Clearly, these children use the American variant more than the Canadian, but other forms are used 73% of the time, making them much more common than the two studied variants. Looking at the second grade children sampled, just 13% used the Canadian variant *drink box*, while 67% used the American variant *juice box*. With only 20% choosing another variant, this group shows a clear preference for the American variant. Only minimal prompting (20% of respondents) was required.

### 3.2 Pop vs. Soda

Question 2 Responses for Kindergarten



Question 2 Responses for Grade 2



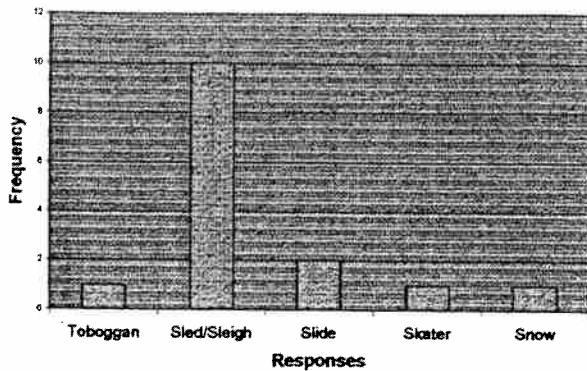
Only 13% of the kindergarten sample used the Canadian variant *pop*, while none used the American variant *soda*. One hundred percent of the respondents had to be prompted in an attempt to obtain one of the desired responses. Eighty-seven percent preferred another response, which was, interestingly, much more specific than the pop or soda label. It could be said that the Canadian variant is preferred, but specific responses were chosen more often.

Among the second graders, this question yielded 27% responses for the Canadian variant *pop*, more than for the American variant, which only yielded 13%. Yet the majority still chose another variant. It is interesting to note that one of the other responses was *soft drink*, another Canadianism. This was not included under the *pop*

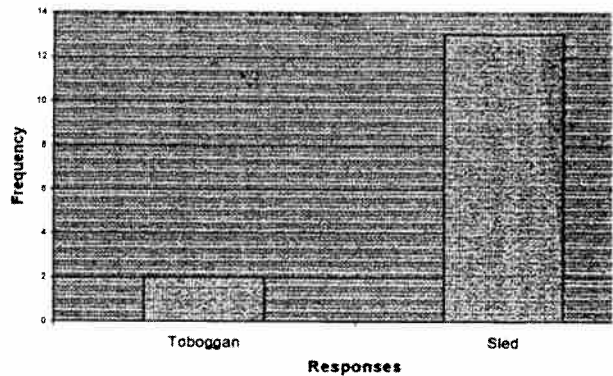
response as it was not the precise Canadian variant being studied. As was seen in the kindergarten responses, there is a tendency towards specificity in this question, with answers ranging from brand names to different flavours. A very weak generalization can be made saying that the Canadian variant was preferred but the preference for other responses was much stronger.

### 3.3 Toboggan vs. Sled

Question 3 Responses for Kindergarten



Question 3 Responses for Grade 2



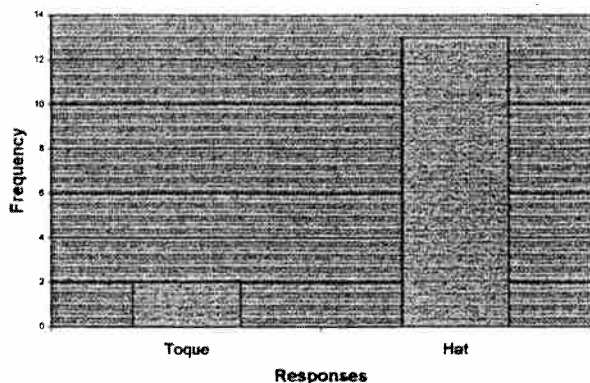
We are aware that the term *sled/sleigh* is not necessarily American; however, it is the most common American term and it is the closest substitution for the Canadian variant that could be found. This and other terms (like *hat* below) will therefore be called non-Canadian.

Just 7% of the kindergartens used the Canadian variant *toboggan* while 67% used the non-Canadian variant *sled/sleigh*. Only 27% preferred another response, but these respondents seemed to not clearly understand the picture. Few, just 27%, needed prompting. Clear preference is shown here for the non-Canadian variant.

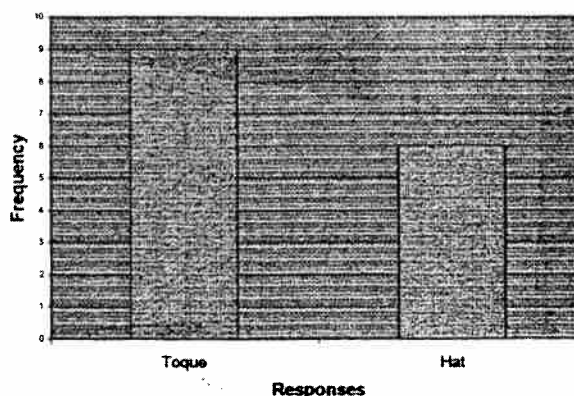
The second graders showed clear preference for the non-Canadian variant with 87% choosing the *sled/sleigh* variant and just 13% choosing the Canadian *toboggan*. No other variants were given and no prompting was required.

### 3.3 Toque vs. Hat

Question 4 Responses for Kindergarten



Question 4 Responses for Grade 2

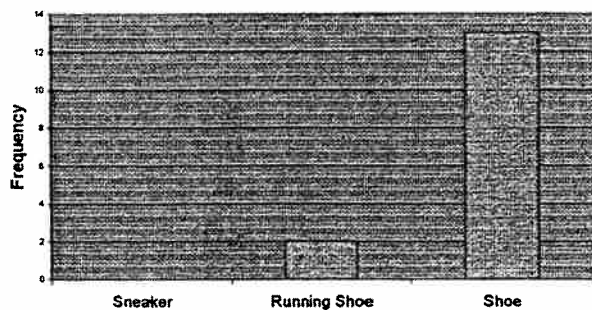


In kindergarten, 13% of respondents chose the Canadian variant *toque* while an overwhelming 87% chose the non-Canadian variant *hat*. No child had to be prompted. It is, therefore, obvious that the non-Canadian variant is preferred for this object.

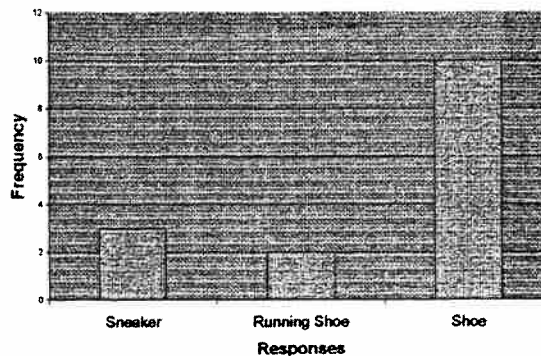
Among second graders, this question showed a tendency towards the Canadian variant with 60% responses being *toque* and 40% the non-Canadian *hat*. Once again, no other responses were obtained and no one had to be prompted.

### 3.4 Running Shoe vs. Sneaker

Sneaker Responses for Kindergarten  
Question 5A



Sneaker Responses for Grade 2  
Question 5A

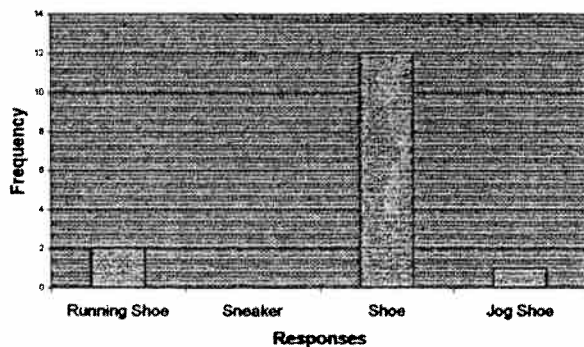




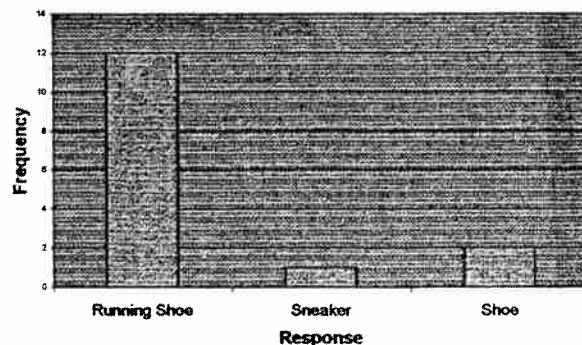
Our *sneaker* version of the athletic shoe (see above) yielded no *sneaker* responses from the kindergarten children; 13% of the sample replied *running shoe*. However, 87% created their own, more generic *shoe* response. All needed prompting. Thus, there is a slight tendency towards the Canadian variant here.

Among second graders, 20% used the *sneaker* variant in response to the *sneaker* version of the athletic shoe. Thirteen percent used the Canadian *running shoe* variant, while the remaining 67% gave a more general *shoe* response. Eighty percent of the sample needed prompting. These results suggest that the American variant, *sneaker* is more established in the vocabulary of older children.

Running Shoe Responses for Kindergarten  
Question 5B



Running Shoe Responses for Grade 2  
Question 5B



A similar pattern of response was produced by our *running shoe*. Among kindergarten children, all respondents who had previously used the Canadian variant *running shoe* for the canvas *sneaker* applied it again to this athletic shoe. The American variant, *sneaker* was never given. The 87% who previously responded *shoe* repeated that response. Thus, even though the majority preferred another word, there is a slight trend towards the Canadian variant.

In the grade two class, the *running shoe* version of the athletic shoe yielded an overwhelming 80% response rate for the Canadian variant and only 7% American variant *sneaker*. Still, 13% responded with *shoe*. This older sample acknowledges *sneaker* as a variant of athletic shoe, but the preference for the Canadian *running shoe*

is apparent. It is possible that as the children were anticipating that we were seeking two different names for the objects, and thus adjusted their lexical choice to make this distinction. We feel that had the children not been presented with two different types of athletic shoes, the *running shoe* variant would have been even more prevalent.

Overall, there is a trend here towards the Canadian variant with a small American influence.

#### 4. Media

With respect to the TV watching habits of our respondents, the majority of the responses from the kindergarten children showed partiality for American-based television shows. They also preferred American movies and music bands. Some recurring favourites were (in order of the questions) *Power Puff Girls*, *Rugrats: The Movie*, and Britney Spears. However, some Canadian responses were obtained such as *Clifford the Big Red Dog* and the Canadian folk singer, Michael Mitchell. This latter response however, was probably influenced by the fact that the singer had recently performed at the school! Overall, the responses leaned towards American-based media, suggesting that American variants may be much more prevalent in these young children's lives than Canadian. This is contrary to our hypothesis, as we thought there would be only minimal American influence at this young age.

Answers to the personal preference questions from second graders showed American media influences almost exclusively. Some favourites reported were *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, a television show, Walt Disney videos, and current American pop culture icons like Britney Spears and the Backstreet Boys. We found that many of the responses for second graders were duplicates of the kindergarten responses. This finding was not surprising in that there is on average just two years between the two groups of respondents. However, we found that the second graders did not give *any* of the Canadian television show responses that were obtained from the kindergartens. This finding can be explained by the fact that these particular Canadian television shows (e.g., *TVO Kids* and *Clifford*) are oriented towards the preschool age category and they would not continue to appeal to the older children. Thus, the overall media influence on the second graders is American. This finding supported our hypothesis as we assumed that the older children would experience a lot of American media influence.

Our media-related results do not indicate a preference for all things American. Our questions were designed to determine the *degree of influence* that American based media have on young Canadian children's speech. A high degree of influence doesn't necessarily translate into a preference for American variants; rather it suggests greater contact with American speech, which has a direct effect on the development of the child's vocabulary. Since so much of the media transmitted into Canada is



American-based, there is little opportunity for very young children to adopt Canadian lexical variants into their vocabulary. Canadian variants are encountered less often than the American variants. Our hypothesis was half disproved, since there was a lot more American variant usage and American media influence in the kindergarten than we expected. We had thought that children would learn Canadian variants from Canadian media and that these would change to American variants as children aged and were exposed to more American-based media. We were taken by surprise when we discovered that with only a few exceptions the American variant was learned first and used continuously.

### *5. Discussion*

Our hypothesis has been proven false. The older children were actually more adept at using and recognizing the Canadian variants of objects than the younger, even if their preference was still for the American variants. There are several factors that could have influenced our results.

One factor is that the children often referred to objects by brand names, rather than generic names. For example, when the children were shown a can of pop, and we were looking for the *pop* or *soda* variants, we often got answers like Pepsi or Coke. From these answers, we can conclude that maybe children are much more media savvy than we expected. Rather than having a generic, categorical name for all fizzy, canned drinks, they have internalized a separate name for each type of them.

Another factor that could have influenced our results is the type of English the children's parents spoke. We assumed that they spoke Canadian English and that the teachers did also. However, it may be that parents and teachers are speaking a variety of English that leans more toward the American style; if so, it's no wonder that children are using more Americanisms.

Regional differences must also be taken into account. It is important to keep in mind that our sample was not representative of all Canadian children. Other regions may very well use Canadian or American or other variants exclusively.

Our results show that the children in kindergarten had much more difficulty with naming objects than did children in grade two. We hypothesized that older children would use more American terms. They used a lot of American terms, but they were much more aware of Canadian terms than the younger children. It is possible that

children in kindergarten were just too young to participate in an experiment such as this. Maybe they had only learned the basics of the language and not enough terms identified as distinctly Canadian. For example, they might consider anything you wear on your head a hat, and not be aware that different types of hats, such as toques and baseball caps, each have their own name.

It is possible that some of the confusion was due to experimenter error. The objects chosen may have been confusing or ambiguous. Or the experimenters, in spite of being expert users of Canadian English, could have chosen objects that were not actually representative of distinctly American and Canadian variants. To people our age, items such as toques, toboggans, running shoes and drink boxes are distinctly Canadian. But it is possible that, like chesterfield, these terms represent "vanishing isoglosses" (Chambers 1995: 1).

### *5. Conclusions*

The results obtained did not show strict adherence to American or Canadian variants. More research should be done to determine whether culture has a certain effect on the language characteristics of specific regions. The variants tested should be chosen carefully, with an eye to what the younger generations are using. Our results saw our hypothesis reversed. Where we had expected to see more Canadianisms from younger children, the older children were more aware of them, in addition to the American variants they were more likely to use. This tells us that children in the seven- to eight-year age group have a much richer vocabulary than we expected. Finally, we can conclude that media does influence how we speak. Although the extent of this influence still needs to be determined, it is fair to say that media may be creating a merger between Americanisms and Canadianisms. Children aren't necessarily using the American variants; they are simply using the variants the media gives them.

### **Bibliography**

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## CANADIAN EH?

San Lai and Selena Rutherford

### *Introduction*

To many people "eh?" is a symbol of Canadian identity. Commercials and slogans across the country play on this little Canadianism with pride. For example, "Going south, eh?" is a caption we noticed on the back of a travel magazine, obviously targeting the snowbirds who fly south every winter to escape the frigid temperatures in Canada. This all too familiar word was of such interest, that we decided to embark on a journey to survey Canadians on their attitudes toward, and individual usages of, "eh?"

To begin our research, we developed a hypothesis that consisted of two parts. Our first claim was that males would use "eh?" more than females. Our reasoning is related to traditional gender roles, which we believe still have an effect on behaviour. Traditionally, mothers were the primary caregivers and the first educators of their children; they were responsible for teaching their children the correct use of the language. Therefore, females, we speculated, would tend to use more formal speech, hoping to see it reflected in their children's speech.

Second, we thought the younger generation in Canada would use "eh?" more than older people. In a discussion in our Canadian English Linguistics class, the class concluded that as people age, their speech has a strong tendency to become more conservative. For this reason then, we hypothesized that younger people would admit to using "eh?" more than older people.

In addition to our formal hypotheses, we were interested in two other questions. First, we wanted to determine whether or not Canadians considered "eh?" to be a Canadianism, that is, unique to Canada. Secondly, we wanted to see how Canadians gauged their usage of "eh?" in everyday speech.

After our hypotheses were developed and we knew what we wanted to study, our next step was to figure out how to collect the necessary data. What approach should we take? Who should we include?

### *Methodology*

We decided that a survey would be the best method to test our hypotheses and reach a

logical conclusion. How could we create a survey that was long enough to have some sort of value, but be short enough to be fair to our respondents? If we focused solely on "eh?" then our respondents would think too consciously about it and that would likely affect their answers. To combat this problem, we combined three questions based on "eh?" with twenty other miscellaneous questions on Canadian English. Our survey, reproduced in Appendix A, drew questions from the Golden Horseshoe Survey, developed by J.K. Chambers at the University of Toronto, and other surveys mentioned in class. We used the contemporary approach, which we learned in class, for survey design. In other words, we designed our survey to correlate our dependent variable ("eh?") with chosen independent variables: sex and age. At the beginning of the survey our respondents were told that we were doing a general survey on Canadian English, but when they were finished we revealed to them that our true focus was on "eh?"

To choose our respondents we followed the random stratified sample approach. We knew that we wanted an even split between male and female respondents and an even distribution among the six age groups that we created (15 – 24 years, 25 – 34 years, 35 – 44 years, 45 – 54 years, 55 – 64 years, 65 – 74 years). People were randomly selected to fill these categories and give us a total of 120 respondents. Based on this sample, we would be able to draw accurate conclusions comparing gender and age groups. Our inclusion criteria required that the respondents had to be born in Canada and be raised with English as the mother tongue.

We gathered our data from a variety of people, including friends, relatives, sales representatives from the malls, co-workers, etc. To begin, we asked that each respondent sign a consent form, which stated that their participation was voluntary and they could, at any time, discontinue the survey. We also thanked them in advance for their participation. The survey required only short answers, so it did not take long to fill out. When our respondents were done filling out the survey, in addition to revealing the purpose of our study, we told them that, if they were interested, we would be able to provide them with our results when we completed the project.

As mentioned above, only three questions in the survey were based on "eh?" They were questions 13, 17, and 22 (see Appendix A). The rest of the survey served as a distraction. What follows is a brief description of each of the three real test questions, followed by the results of our survey.

Question 13 asked, "Do you consider 'eh?' to be a Canadianism, that is, unique to Canada?" We started with this general question because we felt that it was important to determine the attitudes of the respondents towards "eh?" Question 17, on the other hand, was much more detailed, as it targeted the amount that respondents thought they used "eh?" Eight different types of "eh?" were provided, seven of which were

taken from Marion Johnson's analysis in "Canadian *Eh*." In her article, Johnson associates "eh?" with different speech acts, such as distinguishing a request from a command and marking a statement as personal opinion (1976: 23). The respondents were asked how often they used each of the various types of "eh?"; the choices were *never, rarely, sometimes, usually, and always*. The last question that focused on "eh?" was number 22. Here the respondents were asked how often they thought they used "eh?" in a day at school or work.

### *Results*

After our surveys were tallied, we were a bit surprised by the results. We found that of our two hypotheses, one was proved wrong, while the other was confirmed. Our results disproved our presupposition that males would use "eh?" more than females. In fact, the usage of "eh?" was evenly split between the sexes for every type of "eh?" covered in question 17. Appendix B shows detailed results for question 17 in graph form. The differences found were so minute that it was clear that there are not any major differences between genders. Males were more likely to choose the *always* category, but when the overall usage of "eh?" was compared (by combining the *always* and *sometimes* categories), the female percentages evened out with the males.

As mentioned above, we had included five categories of levels of usage for the respondents to choose from. However, when we tallied our results and began to analyze our data, we found that including all five categories obscured the results. Therefore, the graphs in Appendix B show combinations of the extreme choices. *Never* and *rarely* are labelled *rarely*, while *usually* and *always* have become *always*. This clumping made the graphs much easier to read and interpret.

An interesting aside, unrelated to our hypotheses, is that the type of "eh?" marking a personal opinion ("It's a nice day, eh?") is the most popular type of "eh?" across both genders (see Graph (e) in Appendix B). Johnson (1976) suggests that "eh?" is used in this context to invite the listener to concur with the speaker. Our respondents expressed to us through the survey that this form of "eh?" is the one that they use most often. In contrast, the narrative type of "eh?" ("I went downtown, eh? . . .") was the least popular (see Graph (h) in Appendix B).

Our results did corroborate our second hypothesis. We stated above that we predicted that the younger generation would use "eh?" more than the older generation. After tallying our results, we created tables to compare the differences between the six age groups for each type of use in question 17 (see Appendix C). In these tables, males and females have been clumped together in order to focus on the age groups. For

almost all types of "eh?" the two youngest age groups (15 - 24 and 25 - 34 years) report more usage than the older generations. For example, **Table (f)** ("The show starts at seven, eh?") indicates higher usage among these younger groups than among other age groups. More specifically, over 50% of the youngest two age groups report using this type of "eh?" *always*, whereas no one in the other four age groups admits to such frequent use. We were able to conclude that as people age, they tend to engage in more formal, conservative speech.

In Appendix C, the figures in the tables are given in percentages. We found that it was much easier to do analyses and see differences when percentages were used rather than raw numbers. Also, using percentages in the age tables made the comparison between the graphs in Appendix B and these tables easier.

Now we'll turn to the two more general questions in our survey pertaining to "eh?": question 13 asked, "Do you consider 'eh?' to be a Canadianism, that is, unique to Canada?" Overall, 95% of our respondents agreed that "eh?" is a typical Canadianism. Of the 5% who disagreed, all were in the oldest age category. In answer to question 22, which asked, "How often in a day at work or school do you use 'eh?'", 43% claimed that they use "eh?" at least once every hour, while 9% reported using it once every three sentences.

### *Discussion*

During the oral presentation portion of this research assignment, we asked our class which gender they thought would use "eh?" more often. Twenty-seven of our classmates said male, while one said female. We also asked them to predict which generation, older or younger, would use "eh?" more. Sixteen students felt that the older generation would use "eh?" more, while ten felt it would be the younger generation. In terms of gender, the class had the same hypothesis as we did, but they differed from us in their age prediction.

### *Conclusion*

Canadian lexicographer Walter Avis pointed out that, although "eh?" did not originate in Canada and is not peculiar to English spoken in Canada, there is no doubt that Canadians use it much more extensively than Americans or the British (Johnson 1976: 25). In our research, over 50% of the respondents claimed that they use "eh?" at least once every hour. "Eh?" is not only found in the daily informal speech of Canadians, but also in commercials, slogans, and the informal articles and reports found in magazines

and newspapers. There is no other country that uses "eh?" the way Canadians do. In fact, the Canadian usage of "eh?" can be so distinctive that some customs officers use it to distinguish between Americans and Canadians. Hence, we are not surprised that 95% of our respondents regarded "eh?" as a Canadianism. Our research further delineated the use of "eh?" in Canada: we found that females use "eh?" as much as males and that the younger generation uses it more than older people.

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### Appendix A: Linguistics Survey Queen' University

Thank you so much for your participation in our survey. We are doing a research project on Canadian English for a Linguistics course at Queen's University. Please keep in mind that we are only interested in what you say when you are among friends--not what you think you should say. The questions start on the next page and they should take about ten minutes to complete. Please use a check mark in the appropriate space for your answer. Enjoy yourself while doing it! We don't want you to take a long time answering the questions--remember that your first answer is likely to be the best, so please don't look back. Answer each question as it comes. Before you begin, we need some general information about you:

Gender: male \_\_\_\_\_  
          female \_\_\_\_\_

Your occupation: \_\_\_\_\_  
If you are retired, what was your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_

Age: 15 - 24 \_\_\_\_\_  
      25 - 34 \_\_\_\_\_  
      35 - 44 \_\_\_\_\_  
      45 - 54 \_\_\_\_\_  
      55 - 64 \_\_\_\_\_

Education: Grades 1 - 8 \_\_\_\_\_  
              Grades 9 - 11 \_\_\_\_\_  
              Grades 12 - 13 \_\_\_\_\_  
              University \_\_\_\_\_  
              College \_\_\_\_\_

Where were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you live now? \_\_\_\_\_

1. For you, does VASE rhyme with \_\_\_\_ face \_\_\_\_ days \_\_\_\_ cause \_\_\_\_ has?
2. At meals, people are sometimes given a paper to wipe their fingers on. What do you call it? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How do you spell . . . ? (Pick one.)  
 \_\_\_\_ colour    \_\_\_\_ color  
 \_\_\_\_ traveled    \_\_\_\_ travelled  
 \_\_\_\_ odour    \_\_\_\_ odor
4. Which do you say?  
 \_\_\_\_ Can you lend me \$5?  
 \_\_\_\_ Can you loan me \$5?
5. Does the *sch* of SCHEDULE sound like the *sch* in \_\_\_\_ school  
 or like the *sh* in \_\_\_\_ shed?
6. Where do you get your Canadian news? \_\_\_\_ newspaper  
 \_\_\_\_ TV  
 \_\_\_\_ radio  
 \_\_\_\_ gossip
7. Does NECKLACE rhyme with \_\_\_\_ brace \_\_\_\_ less?
8. Is the *ei* of EITHER pronounced like the *ie* of \_\_\_\_ pie  
 or like the *ee* of \_\_\_\_ bee?
9. What does TWACKING mean? \_\_\_\_ garbage picking  
 \_\_\_\_ window shopping  
 \_\_\_\_ breaking a tree branch  
 \_\_\_\_ don't know
10. In the word TOMATO do you pronounce the middle part of the word as  
 \_\_\_\_ eight \_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_ ought?
11. What do you call a hockey game when several people get together at a rink or  
 frozen pond and pick teams? \_\_\_\_\_



12. I had a piece of chocolate cake today. The chocolate cake was  
       \_\_\_ awful good \_\_\_ very good \_\_\_ some good.
13. Do you consider "eh?" to be a Canadianism, that is, unique to Canada?  
       \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no
14. Do you pronounce the letter Z as \_\_\_ zee \_\_\_ zed?
15. What do you call the leafy sheath that covers an ear of corn? \_\_\_\_\_
16. Which do you say?       \_\_\_ She is going to bath the baby.  
                               \_\_\_ She is going to bathe the baby.
17. Do you use any of the following forms of "eh?" If so, how often?  
       (check all that apply)
- a) Wash the dishes, eh?  
    \_\_\_ never \_\_\_ rarely \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always
- b) I'll cook supper, eh?  
    \_\_\_ never \_\_\_ rarely \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always
- c) He's from out of town, eh?  
    \_\_\_ never \_\_\_ rarely \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always
- d) You got a new car, eh?  
    \_\_\_ never \_\_\_ rarely \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always
- e) It's a nice day, eh?  
    \_\_\_ never \_\_\_ rarely \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always
- f) The show starts at seven, eh?  
    \_\_\_ never \_\_\_ rarely \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always
- g) Eh? (for please repeat yourself)  
    \_\_\_ never \_\_\_ rarely \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always
- h) I went downtown, eh? And I saw this dog, eh? It had only three legs, eh?  
    \_\_\_ never \_\_\_ rarely \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always

18. What do you call the upholstered piece of furniture that 3 or 4 people sit on in the living room? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Does GREASY rhyme with \_\_\_\_ cheesy \_\_\_\_ fleecy?

20. There is a prank (a kind of mean joke) that grade-school boys sometimes do to another boy: they grab his underpants at the back and hoist him up. What do you call that prank? \_\_\_\_\_

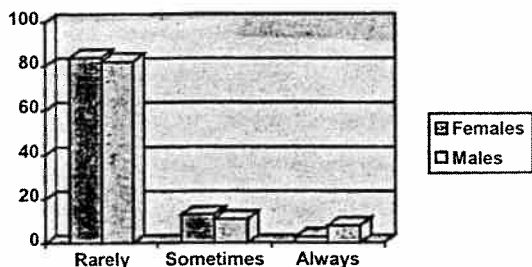
21. Which do you say? \_\_\_\_ Yesterday he dove into the quarry.  
\_\_\_\_ Yesterday he dived into the quarry.

22. How often in a day at school or work do you think that you use "eh?"  
\_\_\_\_ every sentence  
\_\_\_\_ every 3 sentences  
\_\_\_\_ once in an hour  
\_\_\_\_ I know I don't use it very much

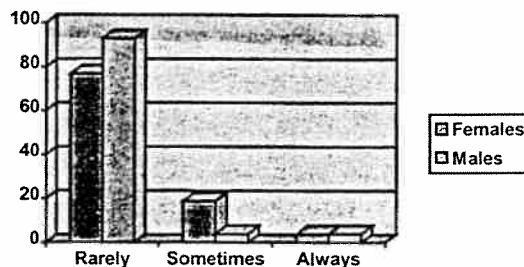
23. Which of the following names do you use for a waterway smaller than a river?  
\_\_\_\_ crick \_\_\_\_ stream \_\_\_\_ brook \_\_\_\_ rill  
\_\_\_\_ snye \_\_\_\_ run \_\_\_\_ creek \_\_\_\_ other

Thanks for contributing to our survey. We hope that you had fun! If you are interested in seeing our results we would be happy to let you know. Thank you again for your participation.

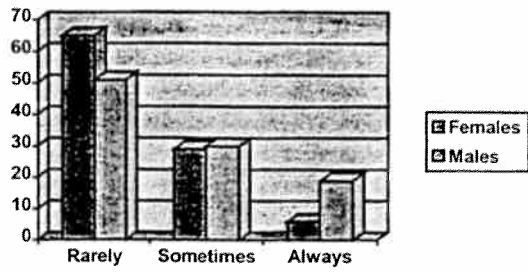
### Appendix B: Results by Gender for Question 17



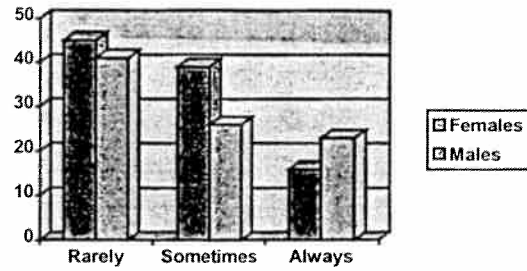
a) Wash the dishes, eh?



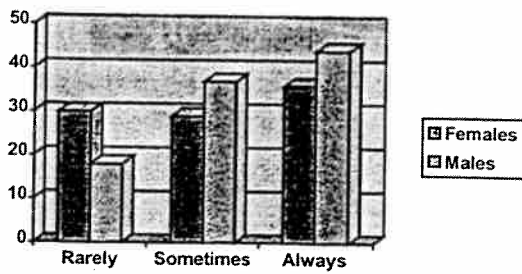
b) I'll cook supper, eh?



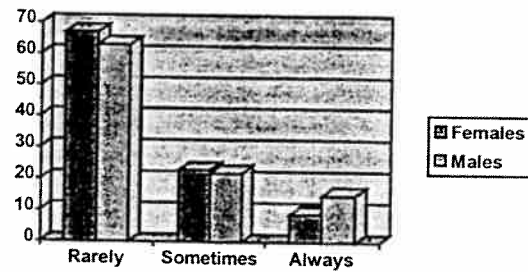
c) He's from out of town, eh?



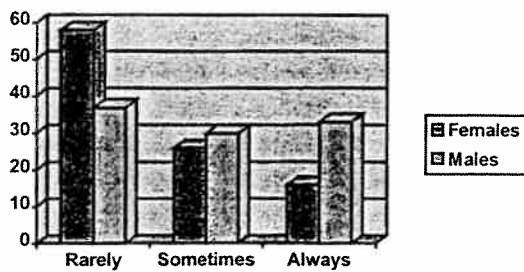
d) You got a new car, eh?



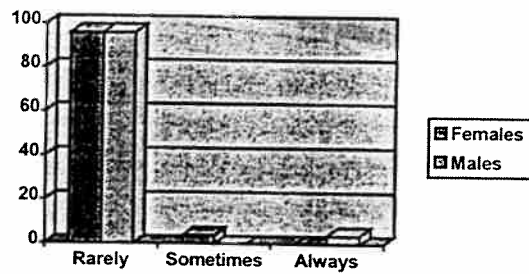
e) It's a nice day, eh?



f) The show starts at seven, eh?



g) Eh?



h) I went down town, eh? And I saw this dog, eh? ...

## Appendix C: Age Group Results for Question 17

a) Wash the dishes, eh?

	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
15-24	79	7	14
25-34	67	25	8
35-44	100	0	0
45-54	86	14	0
55-64	86	14	0
65-74	86	14	0

b) I'll cook supper, eh?

	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
15-24	80	7	13
25-34	75	25	0
35-44	90	10	0
45-54	100	0	0
55-64	71	29	0
65-74	86	14	0

c) He's from out of town, eh?

	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
15-24	26	47	27
25-34	50	33	16
35-44	70	30	0
45-54	86	14	0
55-64	71	29	0
65-74	86	0	14

d) You got a new car, eh?

	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
15-24	7	47	47
25-34	33	33	33
35-44	60	40	0
45-54	72	14	14
55-64	57	29	14
65-74	72	14	14

e) It's a nice day, eh?

	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
15-24	0	33	67
25-34	33	8	58
35-44	20	50	30
45-54	57	29	14
55-64	14	72	14
65-74	58	14	29

f) The show starts at seven, eh?

	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
15-24	67	7	27
25-34	42	33	25
35-44	80	20	0
45-54	86	14	0
55-64	43	57	0
65-74	86	14	0

g) Eh?

	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
15-24	40	20	40
25-34	42	42	16
35-44	50	20	30
45-54	58	28	14
55-64	72	14	14
65-74	43	43	14

h) I went down town, eh? And I saw this dog, eh?,,,

	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
15-24	86	7	7
25-34	100	0	0
35-44	100	0	0
45-54	100	0	0
55-64	100	0	0
65-74	100	0	0

## **YOU SAY POTAYTOE AND I SAY POTAHTOE**

**Emily Longworth and Naomi Saunders**

### *1. Introduction*

This research paper is an exploration into Canadian English as adopted by immigrants to Canada from the British Isles. In the paper we hope to illustrate the changes which occur in the English spoken by British immigrants to Canada. Thus we will depict the differences between British and Canadian English and also highlight those stereotypical Canadianisms that, over time, are taken up by immigrants. The first goal of our research was to conduct a survey among Canadian immigrants. This survey would then enable us to analyse the extent to which our respondents had acquired the traits of Canadian English. We aimed to examine both vocabulary and accent to discover any correlation between changes in these elements and also to examine the factors that determined such changes. We were also interested in the opinions of immigrants to Canada, their attitudes to Canadian English as a whole and also their personal feelings about language change.

### *2. Hypothesis*

After considering our topic we produced a set of hypotheses around which to construct our research. Our first hypothesis was that vocabulary and accent are two separate elements in language acquisition and as such do not change at the same rate. Following this came our second hypothesis: vocabulary gain and change occurs more readily than accent change. Thirdly, from general and private observations we hypothesized that language assimilation varies depending on the following factors: immersion into culture, proximity to speakers of native dialect, age and psychological features.

### *3. Method of research*

We distributed our survey to 20 people of all age groups who fitted our requirements as British immigrants. It is often difficult to recognise such immigrants as many have lost or seriously modified their British accents. Therefore, we were only able to distribute the survey amongst people we already knew. Our survey group came from across Canada and we reached these people via e-mail. There was a disadvantage to using this far-ranging medium because a couple of our questions were confusing to some

informants and, as we were not present when the informants completed the survey, we were unable to clarify these issues. This meant that some of our questions were not answered well enough for us to be able to effectively analyse the data. However, on the whole we found our survey to be successful and much of the data highly informative.

The survey was divided into three parts. The first part was biographical and this information helped us to analyse the social and personal factors which affect language acquisition. The second part, containing 24 short-answer questions, presented Canadian and British variants. Of these questions, 15 were vocabulary related and 8 were accent related (rhyming pairs were often used to force an easily quantifiable response). We also looked at grammar in Canadian English (see Appendix A, Part 2). The third and last part of the survey consisted of 7 longer-answer questions designed to elicit the personal opinions of our respondents with regard to their usage of Canadian English.

#### 4. *The Results*

On the whole we found that the results of our survey supported our hypotheses. Moreover, we identified a number of other points that were interesting and relevant to our topic.

##### 4.1 *Accent vs. Vocabulary*

Our hypothesis was that accent and vocabulary assimilation do not occur at the same rate. This was corroborated by the results of our survey. The data suggest that vocabulary change happens far more readily than accent change. Out of the 15 vocabulary-related questions only 11 were answered consistently enough for us to analyse the results. However in this set of 11 questions, 82% of the responses showed the Canadian variant to be predominant. Compare this to the figures for the accent questions: the Canadian variant was predominant in only 14% of the responses (Appendix A, Part B, questions 1, 13, 16, 17, 22, 23). We can therefore conclude that assimilation to Canadian English happens far more readily in terms of vocabulary than accent.

In analysing these questions we discovered a number of interesting points concerning Canadian versus British vocabulary. Although most vocabulary questions had a majority Canadian response, two of the questions were answered overwhelmingly with the British response. For almost every respondent, *queue* and *tap* had not changed to *line up* and *faucet*. This result could suggest that these particular variants (i.e., *queue* and *tap*) are also used in Canada to a certain extent and that a person using these words

would be understood in Canada. In contrast, if British immigrants did not modify their vocabulary to replace words such as *petrol* with the local equivalent (*gas*), they might find it impossible to be understood. Another point that came up in our survey is that certain traditional Canadian words are falling out of general usage. For example when we asked, "What do you call the piece of furniture that 3 or 4 people sit on in the living room?" only one person responded with the word *chesterfield* and that person admitted that they used *sofa* as well. This result shows that *chesterfield* is no longer commonly used, even among respondents who have lived in Canada for more than 30 years.

#### *4.2 Accent as a Psychological Feature*

In our hypothesis, we isolated accent as a psychological feature and speculated that there was an element of conscious decision in terms of accent change. This theory was verified by two of our male respondents. Both men had immigrated to Canada from Ireland around the same time and are of a similar age, yet their assimilation to Canadian English has followed a very different pattern. Respondent 1 had a somewhat snobbish attitude towards Canadian English. He stated that "better English is spoken and written in the UK or Ireland than in Canada or the US." He also pointed towards a greater volume of "inaccurate" jargon and abbreviations used in North America. However, despite this partiality towards British English, his survey response depicted that he has an overall shift in his *vocabulary* to the Canadian variants. On the other hand, his accent appears to have remained almost entirely Irish in the questions we asked. Respondent 1 can be contrasted with our second Irish respondent who showed an overwhelming shift towards Canadian English in terms of both accent and vocabulary. Respondent 2 was conscious of his assimilation and contributed it to his "objective to fit in quickly to the Canadian business milieu." The differences in these two respondents suggest that accent change can be consciously controlled but vocabulary change appears to happen despite previous prejudices and attempts to limit assimilation.

#### *4.3 Assimilation Varies According to Social Features*

We found that, on the whole, vocabulary and accent assimilation vary with a number of factors including proximity to people of native dialect, age, and psychological features. Once again, the results we observed reflected our prediction.

We assessed the first factor, proximity to people of native dialect, by asking participants how many people they came into contact with from their country of origin within a typical week. Answers varied from none to 15 people; however, we found no direct correlation between these numbers and adaptation of Canadian accent and/or vocabulary. In other words, our results did not show clear evidence that the greater

the contact with people from one's country of origin, the greater the likelihood of maintaining one's original accent. It is important to note that we did find a definite trend when participants spoke to people from their country of origin; however, we will discuss this phenomenon later on.

Some people commented that being married to a Canadian or American made significant impact on their original accent. These participants reported adapting much more quickly to the Canadian accent and vocabulary than those who were married to someone also from their country of origin. One of the latter type of participants wrote, "If I was married to a Canadian I would probably have lost more of my accent, as I would not be hearing an English accent around the house the whole time." It is interesting to note that *all* the participants who had married Canadians or Americans commented on their partner having an effect on their accent (but not necessarily vocabulary). Yet, only some of the participants who married someone from their country of origin commented on it having any effect. The second factor influencing accent and vocabulary assimilation is the participant's age when he or she immigrated to Canada. According to our results, the younger participants were when they immigrated to Canada, the faster they assimilated in both ways: losing their original accent and developing Canadian vocabulary. This could have to do with the fact that the vocabulary one develops between the ages of 8 and 16 becomes the foundation of a person's lexicon, though it will continue to grow for the rest of one's life. Therefore, if immigrants come to Canada during this "developing" age, Canadian vocabulary would be embedded into their lexicon a lot faster than if they immigrated here after their core lexicon had been developed.

Some psycho-biological factors that determine variations in accent and vocabulary assimilation are linked to age. Many participants who were parents commented on the fact that their children adapted to the Canadian words much faster than they did, and that while their children lost their original accent almost entirely, they (the parents) kept it almost intact. Studies have proven that children pick up second languages, accents and other linguistic features much more rapidly than adults (due to psychological and neurological factors) and these studies corroborate our data.

It was also interesting for us to compare two of our participants. Both had immigrated to Canada at the same time and both have had the same amount of contact with people from their country of origin; yet, one has completely lost a British accent and the other has completely retained it. This contrast indicates that there must be other factors at play and that no matter how much an individual tries to control accent adaptation, it can happen subconsciously and will vary from one individual to the next. We did not explore this idea in great detail, but we believe that accent adaptation could possibly be a genetic trait due to the fact that one of our participants (who is co-author Emily Longworth's father) has completely lost his Irish accent, while his Canadian raised



daughter (Emily's sister), who is currently living in London, acquired somewhat of a British accent within months of being exposed to it. Both the father and daughter are extremely quick to pick up accents, indicating a possible correlation between this trait and genetic endowment.

#### *4.4 Change in Environment Results in Change in Accent*

The next conclusion we drew was one that occurred to us only after we gauged the personal opinions expressed by our respondents. We discovered that when individuals spoke to others from their country of origin, a definite shift in accent and vocabulary occurred. Half of our participants come into contact with five or more individuals per week from their country of origin. All of these participants commented on a change in accent while speaking to individuals "from home" but a retention of Canadian vocabulary acquired. However, when our participants visit relatives and friends in their home country, the majority of them commented that their accent gets noticeably stronger, and they also consciously try to use British words and expressions, such as *petrol* and *queue*. The observation that accent change happens subconsciously, while vocabulary change needs to be thought about further confirms our hypothesis that these are two separate linguistic entities, which operate on separate psychological levels.

#### *4.5 Use of Canadian "Eh?"*

We asked participants to comment on their use of "eh?": whether they had in fact acquired it and how long they had been in Canada before this acquisition took place. Only 40% of our participants (most of whom were under the age of 25) admitted to using this Canadian shibboleth. The time it took to develop this trait ranged from three months to ten years. Some of our younger participants indicated that they used this trait prior to immigrating to Canada; however, they have noticed an increase in usage since they've been here. We were surprised to discover a few of the older participants who we had heard utter "eh?" on occasion, not actually admitting to the fact that they had developed this trait. This caused us to consider that perhaps these individuals are not actually aware that they make use of "eh?" in their casual everyday conversation. It is also possible that these individuals are concerned with maintaining their British roots and do not want to admit to having developed such a Canadianism as "eh?"

#### *4.6 Possible Shift in British English*

As previously mentioned, some of our younger participants had acquired Canadian traits

even before immigrating to Canada, such as the use of "eh?" We also noticed that some individuals who had been in Canada for only a short while and who had developed little Canadian vocabulary, answered a few of our questions overwhelmingly with the Canadian variant. In answer to the following question, "Does the beginning of the words *Which* and *Witch* sound the same to you or different?" 18 of 20 respondents said the same (i.e., chose the Canadian variant) leading us to believe that some Canadian traits are becoming standard in British English, and are being acquired by people young enough to be still be in the "developing" language acquisition period of their lives. One of our participants also observed that, when he listens to younger people (mid to late twenties) speaking on British radio stations, he notices the use of the short A [æ] instead of [ɑ], as in words such as *bath* and *class*. Thus, we have discovered something else that perhaps requires further investigation: the question of whether British English is shifting to become more Canadian or American.

#### *4.7 Retention of British Words and Expressions*

In the final section of our survey, we asked participants whether there were any British expressions or words that they still used on a day-to-day basis. An overwhelming 88% of participants responded positively and most gave frequently used expressions such as *please and thank you* and *bin it* (put it in the garbage) or words such as *torch* (flashlight), *petrol* (gas) and *fortnight* (two weeks). One man wrote that he used "some [British expressions] in jest, some in parody, some from movies" and another wrote that he always still used British profanities (and even though they are part of our data, we will refrain from listing them in this paper!) A few wrote that they were sure they used British words from time to time but they couldn't remember specific examples. The 10% who responded negatively said they had been here too long to still be using such words or expressions.

#### *4.8 Acquisition of Unusual Canadianisms*

We also asked whether there were any characteristics of Canadian English that participants found strange when they first arrived but they now used as part of their everyday vocabulary. Surprisingly we had quite an array of answers, ranging from a simple no to a 20-word list comparing British words with the Canadian equivalents that this respondent now uses (see Appendix B for a list of all the equivalents suggested by our respondents). A few of the interesting responses were as follows: 1) I now say "It's raining already" instead of "It's already raining" (a switch in position of the adverb); 2) use of "Americanisms" such as *pavement*, *sidewalk*, *you're welcome*; 3) more jargon used and more abbreviations; 4) I now say "going to the bathroom" instead of "having a pee" or "going to the loo." We can conclude from this that even

when immigrants initially find Canadian words and expressions strange or obscure, over time, this vocabulary is acquired into their lexicon and used habitually. Interestingly enough, no matter how unusual vocabulary initially seems to an immigrant, it is acquired much faster than a new accent: once again our suspicion was confirmed.

### 5. Conclusion

We have examined in detail our hypothesis that vocabulary assimilation happens more rapidly than accent assimilation, and our survey data confirms that this is indeed true. However, we have only discussed a few of the possibilities for why this is and what influences the assimilation rates. Although we are confident that accent change happens subconsciously while vocabulary change happens consciously, we believe there must be other factors at play here. Something that is interesting to consider is whether vocabulary assimilation occurs simultaneously with social and cultural assimilation. When people move to a foreign country that has a different culture (including vocabulary, customs, dress, etc.) it is not unusual for them to want to change in order to better fit in. It is plausible that immigrants come to Canada and appropriate Canadian vocabulary in order to be better understood and liked. It is obviously easier to change *what* one says than *how* one says it; thus vocabulary assimilation happens more rapidly than accent assimilation.

On the whole, our research turned out to be highly informative and extremely interesting. Although our research validated all of our hypotheses, it also gave us new insights. A vast amount of information regarding accent and vocabulary assimilation was revealed that neither of us had even considered prior to conducting this survey and analysing our results. There was, of course, room for improvement: had we worded a few of the questions differently and distributed our survey to a more diversified group of British immigrants, our results might have been more varied. However, for the first survey of this type conducted by either of us, we were extremely pleased with the results obtained and sincerely hope to come across additional studies in this subject area in order to satisfy our newly developed curiosity.

## **Appendix A: The Survey**

### **Exploring the Effect Canadian English Has on British Immigrants' Accent and Vocabulary**

Dear Participants:

Thank you for taking the time to help us with our survey. We are trying to gather information to analyse the extent to which people who came to Canada from the British

Isles have acquired the features of Canadian English. We will analyse your current vocabulary and accent, and how long it took for any changes to take place. Please answer all questions according to what you would say in casual conversation with friends, family, etc., not according to what you think you should be saying. If you find that your vocabulary changes according to who you are speaking with, please indicate these changes at the end of the survey.

### **Part A:**

*First, we need to ask you some general questions:*

1. Birthplace:
2. Age:
3. Gender:
4. Marital Status:
5. Year immigrated to Canada:
6. Country raised from ages 8-18:
7. Current city/town of residence:

### **Part B:**

*The second part of the survey consists of questions that will enable us to determine how much your vocabulary and accent have been affected by Canadian English. Answer with the first word that comes to mind, or whatever word sounds best when you say it aloud.*

1. Does the IT in VITAMIN rhyme with *knit* or *knight*? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What's a shorter version of the word you use for "mother"? \_\_\_\_\_
3. When it's cold outside, what's the article of wool clothing you put on over your t-shirt? \_\_\_\_\_
4. When the clock says 5:30, what time would you say it was? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What do you call the piece of furniture that 3 or 4 people sit on in the living room? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What do you call the cloth you use to wash your face? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What word would you use to categorize the following items: jeans, khakis, overalls? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What do you call the hard thing inside a cherry? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What's the word you use for the ladies/men's room? \_\_\_\_\_
10. When you're about to use the telephone, you say you are about to \_\_\_\_\_ someone.
11. After you've made the call you hear beeping noises; that means that the line is? \_\_\_\_\_

12. What do you call the shoes you wear to go running in? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Does the word AUNT rhyme with *daunt* or *pant*? \_\_\_\_\_
14. What do you call the liquid you go to a station to fill up your car with? \_\_\_\_\_
15. What is the piece of cloth you use to wipe your face after a meal called? \_\_\_\_\_
16. Do the words MERRY/MARY/MARRY all sound the same to you or different? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Does the word LEISURE rhyme with *treasure* or *seizure*? \_\_\_\_\_
18. What's the word for the knob you turn to get water in a sink? \_\_\_\_\_
19. What do you call the piece of furniture where you keep your socks, underwear and other clothes? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Does the word CALM rhyme with *bomb* or *Sam*? \_\_\_\_\_
21. Does the beginning of the words *WHICH* and *WITCH* sound the same or different? \_\_\_\_\_
22. Which would you say? (Circle A or B)
  - a) The boy dived to the bottom of the lake.
  - b) The boy dove to the bottom of the lake.
23. Does the A in POTATO rhyme with *may* or *mah*? \_\_\_\_\_
24. When a group of people are waiting one behind the other to pay for their groceries at the grocery store, you say they are forming a \_\_\_\_\_.

### Part C:

*The last section consists of questions that will help us learn more about your background and current Canadian English usage. Please answer them to the best of your ability, but if there are any you are unable to answer, don't worry about it!*

1. In an average week, how many people do you converse with who are from your country of origin?
2. Which would best describe how much of your original accent you have kept:
  - a) Completely retained (no Canadian accent whatsoever)
  - b) Some loss but mostly retained
  - c) Mostly gone but some retained
  - d) Completely changed (no hint of a British accent whatsoever)

If you chose "d" as your answer, could you please give a rough approximation of how long you had been in Canada before your British accent disappeared completely.

3. Comment on your use of the Canadian "eh". If you have acquired this trait, approximately how long had you been in Canada before you developed it?
4. Are there any British words or expressions that you still find yourself using on a day-to-day basis?

5. When conversing with others from the British Isles, do you find yourself using different words/expressions than when speaking with Canadians? Does your accent seem stronger when talking with them or does it stay the same?
6. Can you think of any characteristics of Canadian English that you found strange when you first got here and now find yourself using as part of your everyday vocabulary? Are there any that still seem very strange to you?
7. Please feel free to make any other comments about your use of Canadian English, loss of original accent, vocabulary changes, etc!

*Thank you so much for taking the time to do our survey. We will certainly let you know what we find out once all the data has been collected! Have a great day, eh?*

### **Appendix B: Canadian Words Compared With British Equivalents**

#### **Data collected from our participants**

<b>Canadian Word</b>	<b>British Word</b>	<b>Canadian Word</b>	<b>British Word</b>
Eraser	Rubber	Toilet paper	Loo paper
Trunk	Boot	Boots	Wellingtons
Candies	Sweets	Touch base	Contact
Backpack	Rucksack	Phone	Ring
Stove	Cooker	2 weeks	Fortnight
Flashlight	Torch	Bangs	Fringe
Gas	Petrol	Hood	Bonnet
Movie	Film	Fender	Bumper
Truck	Lorry	Closet	Cupboard
Oatmeal	Porridge	On the weekend	At the weekend
Cookie	Biscuit	Pharmacy	Chemist
Binder	File	Pinky	Little finger
Dinner	Supper	Jacket	Anorak
Kleenex	Tissues	Rugs	Carpets
Undershirt	Vest	Take-out food	Take-away food
Pants	Trousers	Band Aids	Elastoplasts
Vest	Waistcoat	Elevator	Lift

## TOWN AND COUNTRY: AN URBAN MYTH?

Clara Wong and Christina Alyea

### *1. Introduction*

The age-old tale of town and country mice brings back memories of childhood for most people. The two cousins discover that the worlds they live in are very different from each other. Thinking of the mice, we were curious to know whether the English language of urban and rural Canadians differed very much. Our hypothesis was very basic: that rural Canadians would have a significantly different vocabulary and grammar usage than urban Canadians; our specific focus was on Toronto and Prince Edward County.

The survey (see Appendix A) comprised 20 questions, concerning pronunciation, identification of certain items, and grammar usage. The criteria for selecting respondents were (1) having English as the mother tongue, and, (2) having been raised, since the age of 6 in Toronto or Prince Edward County (a few respondents lived in other Ontario rural or urban areas). We e-mailed and also handed out the surveys to friends and family. In total, there were 25 respondents who met the criteria. The majority of respondents were between 20-30 years old; 14 respondents were from urban areas and 11 were from rural areas; there were 10 males and 15 females.

### *2. Prince Edward County*

For the rural representation of our survey, we focused on Prince Edward County, which is a large peninsula between the Bay of Quinte and Lake Ontario, located in south eastern Ontario, just south of the city of Belleville. There is a heavy British influence in this area. Many of its early settlers were Loyalists and British immigrants. Prince Edward County has a rich history of shipbuilding, fishing and farming. Today, a great number of farmers and fishermen still live there. As well, attractions such as Sandbanks/Sand Dunes Provincial Park, Lake on the Mountain, Glenora Ferry and Roblin Lake draw a large number of tourists each year. Prince Edward County is affectionately referred to as simply "The County", both by its inhabitants and those who live in the surrounding area.

### *3. Toronto*

Toronto was the urban focus of this survey. Situated next to Lake Ontario on its northwestern shore, Toronto is in the heartland of Ontario. It is a busy hub for

commercial and industrial organizations and is home to over 4 million people. It is a multicultural city, with a long history of drawing many different kinds of immigrants. In the fifties, sixties, and seventies, immigrants from the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia came to Toronto because of political instability or civil wars. Today, Toronto is still a popular choice for many immigrants.

#### 4. *Our Survey Results*

Our first survey question dealt with social interaction, what greeting people use when they meet. In general, urban responses were more varied, with answers ranging from the formal "How are you?" to the very informal "Whassup?" "How are you?" was a more common response for rural residents.

##### 4.1 *British Influence*

For certain words used in our survey, we found that people in Prince Edward County tend to use the British form of the word rather than the American form. Some examples include the word *route*. While everyone surveyed in Toronto pronounced it to sound like *root*, 20% of the rural respondents pronounced it to rhyme with *trout*.

Another British variant we discovered was the pronunciation of the word *schedule*. Again, everybody in the urban area of Toronto pronounced the *sch-* to sound like the *sch-* in *school*. The majority of people in the Prince Edward County pronounced it in this manner as well. However, a small percentage (8%) pronounced the *sch-* to sound like *sh-*. We also noticed distinct differences in the usage of the word *fries*. Respondents in Toronto simply called them *fries* or *french fries*. The majority of respondents in Prince Edward County used these terms as well. But about 12% of rural respondents also used the term *chips* to refer to fries. This usage was not found at all among Toronto's respondents. Since British variants of these words were used only in Prince Edward County, we concluded that speech in the County had been affected by its majority British ancestry.

One question, however, had unexpected results, reversing the trend we had noted. That was the pronunciation of the word *unt*. The results showed that most rural respondents rhyme the word with *ant* rather than *taunt*. Surprisingly, 24% of urban respondents used the British pronunciation of *unt*, which rhymes with *taunt*. One explanation for this result might be the influence of Hong Kong English. Since many of our urban Toronto respondents have parents who were raised and learned English in Hong Kong, a former British colony, our urban respondents may have been



influenced by the way their parents say certain words.

#### 4.2 County and Urban Words

Our survey results revealed two features that are characteristic of Prince Edward County and its residents. The first is the pronunciation of the word *creek* as *crik*. Almost everyone in Prince Edward County gave this answer. People in Toronto and other areas we surveyed did not use this pronunciation at all; they simply pronounced the word to rhyme with *leek*. We learned that the pronunciation *crik* predominates in Prince Edward County because of a small marshy area in the town of Massassauga, which is called Black Crik. The people that we surveyed in Prince Edward County apply this name to other marshy or swampy areas as well.

Perhaps unique to Prince Edward County is the pronunciation of the name *Petre*. There is a place in the County known as Point Petre. It is a rocky area along the shores of Lake Ontario that is a popular spot for picnics and swimming. While respondents in Toronto pronounced *Petre* like *Petra* or *Petrie*, everybody that we surveyed in Prince Edward County pronounced it like the name *Peter*. Probably, the people we surveyed in Toronto were not familiar with Point Petre and were unsure of the correct local pronunciation. According to those in Prince Edward County, the name has always been pronounced *Peter* and it is a common term shared by County inhabitants.

The most interesting discovery, and the strangest, was regarding the use of *couch/chesterfield/sofa*. Both urban (40%) and rural (44%) respondents used *couch*, with urban respondents having a little more variation since 8% also used *sofa*. The surprise came with the word *chesterfield*: 4% of urban respondents used the term! This completely baffled us. Why would respondents between 20 and 30 years old use *chesterfield*?

#### 5. Our Conclusions

When we first decided on this topic, we were unsure of what we would discover. We were simply curious to see what differences, if any, existed between urban and rural speech patterns. The research we conducted provided a great deal of information and helped us to make some surprising discoveries. Overall there was not a large difference between rural and urban speech. There were, however, some small variations in vocabulary and pronunciations as our survey results show. Toronto and Prince Edward County are relatively close to one another; and Prince Edward County is probably influenced by the nearby urban areas. This could account for the similarity in speech patterns between the two areas. Perhaps if another study were performed comparing

other urban and rural groups, there would be more noticeable differences. Overall, we discovered that there are only slight differences in urban and rural speech between Toronto and Prince Edward County.

We learned a lot from our research and thoroughly enjoyed conducting the surveys and obtaining the results. The topic of urban and rural speech in Canadian English is definitely one worth pursuing further.

### Appendix A: Our Survey

#### General Background Information:

Gender:

- a. male
- b. female

Age:

- a. < 19 years old
- b. 20-30 years old
- c. 31-55 years old
- d. 55+ years old

Where you grew up for the majority of your childhood:

- a. Toronto
- b. London
- c. Prince Edward County
- d. Glencoe
- e. other: \_\_\_\_\_ (if it is a small town/county, please also specify the nearest urban city)

Where do you currently live? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Survey Questions:

1. How do you pronounce *creek*?
  - a. rhymes with *lick*
  - b. rhymes with *leak*
  
2. How do you pronounce *ewe*, name of a female sheep?
  - a. rhymes with *you*
  - b. rhymes with *yo*

3. How would you pronounce *Petre* in Point Petre (name of a place)
  - a. sounds like *Peter*
  - b. sounds like *Petra*
  
4. When you meet people and ask about their well being, what do you say?
  - a. How are you?
  - b. How y'all doing?
  - c. How are you doing?
  - d. How ya doin'?
  - e. other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. What do you call the mammals that produce the milk we drink?
  - a. beasts
  - b. cows
  - c. cattle
  
6. What do you call your noonday meal?
  - a. lunch
  - b. dinner
  
7. Do you pronounce the "l" in *palm*?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
  
8. Which do you say?
  - a. I saw the movie before.
  - b. I have seen the movie before.
  - c. I seen the movie before.
  
9. How do you pronounce the *es* in *wrestling*?
  - a. like the *es* of *Esther*
  - b. like the *as* of *ask*
  
10. What do you call the piece of furniture which seats two or three people in a row and has upholstered arms and back?
  - a. couch
  - b. chesterfield
  - c. sofa
  - d. other: \_\_\_\_\_

11. How do you pronounce the *sch* in *schedule*?
  - a. like the *sch* in *school*
  - b. like the *sh* in *shed*
  - c. either way
  
12. In this phrase, "He will be going with us also," how do you pronounce *also*?
  - a. altso
  - b. also
  
13. How do you pronounce *route*?
  - a. rhymes with *trout*
  - b. rhymes with *boot*
  
14. What do you call the deep-fried potato pieces that are usually oblong-shaped and served hot?
  - a. fries
  - b. chips
  - c. french fries
  
15. Do you pronounce the "l" in *almond*?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
  
16. What do you call the small square of *paper* with which you can wipe your fingers during a meal?
  - a. serviette
  - b. napkin
  - c. either one
  
17. How do you pronounce *unt*?
  - a. rhymes with *ant*
  - b. rhymes with *taunt*
  
18. How do you pronounce the *ei* in *either*?
  - a. like the *i* in *bide*
  - b. like the *ee* in *beet*
  - c. either way
  
19. Which do you say?
  - a. You guys ....
  - b. Yous guys ....

20. How do you pronounce *any* in *anyway*?
- a. rhymes with *henna*
  - b. rhymes with *penny*

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**CANADIAN SPELLING VARIANTS: DO PEOPLE CONSCIOUSLY CHOOSE  
BRITISH SPELLING VARIANTS?  
(OR DO THEY JUST THINK THEY DO?)**

**Jennifer Thorburn and Jennifer Wall**

*1. Introduction*

Canadian orthography has a mixture of American and British variants because it stems from both American and British English. We decided to further explore this issue and determine if Canadians, or more specifically Canadian university students, display a preference for one type of variant. Based on our own usage, we thought the British variant the more likely preference.

Our hypothesis is, therefore, that there will be a mixture of American and British variants but that there will also be a noticeable preference for the British variants. However, we predict that this preference will lead to instances of overcorrection, i.e., incorrect spelling.

*2. Methodology*

Our survey was based on the second edition of *Editing Canadian English* (Cragg). One chapter of this book deals with spelling variants in different dictionaries, two of which were *Webster's* and the *Concise Oxford*. We used the information collected from these dictionaries for the American and British standards, respectively, to form the basis of our questionnaire.

We looked at six different aspects of variation in Canadian orthography: (1) *-or* vs. *-our*, (2) *-s* vs. *-c*, (3) *-er* vs. *-re*, (4) single vs. double consonants (e.g. *traveled, travelled*), (5) *-e* vs. *-ae*, and (6) noun vs. verb forms, as well as certain specific words that do not fall into a particular category.

In order to test the second portion of our hypothesis, we included questions where the American and British variants are the same. Would people choose what they think is the British variant to the point of selecting an unacceptable spelling? For eliciting noun and verb forms, we provided a sentence with a blank to fill in rather than directly asking which form the respondents thought was the noun and which they thought was the verb.

This multiple-choice questionnaire was distributed to a random stratified sample of 46 university students. There were both male and female students and they were either native Canadian English speakers or had spent their formative years (10 to 18 years of age) in Canada. Participants were asked to choose one of two spellings for a given word and then indicate whether they thought their preferred spelling was American or British (see Appendix A for the entire survey).

### 3. Results

When analysing the data we collected, we divided our results by gender to see if there was a significant difference between the two groups, as well as looking at our respondents as a whole. See Appendix B for tables showing respondent percentages; the accepted spellings are marked with an asterisk (\*).

#### 3.1 *-or* vs. *-our*

In general, the British standard uses the ending *-our* in words such as *labour* and *honour*, while the American standard prefers *-or*. To test our hypercorrection hypothesis, one of the comparisons made was between *glamour* and *glamorous* because both *Webster's* and *Oxford* accept *only* these spellings. In the case of *glamour/glamor* (See Appendix B, Table 1), the vast majority of respondents (98%) chose the accepted variant and indicated that it was British.

However, *glamorous/glamor* also followed our expectations, as once again the majority of respondents (67%) chose the British-looking *glamorous* and indicated that it was British. This is not an accepted form according to either the British or American standard and is therefore an instance where our hypothesis was proved correct.

#### 3.2 *-s* vs. *-c*

For most instances in this group, the British spelling uses *-c* where the American uses *-s*. But there are cases where there is only one accepted form. We chose to use the *defense/defence* word family because there is variation for words such as *defenseless/defenceless* but only one accepted form for *defensible*.

Most participants, (see Appendix B, Table 3) prefer the British spelling--*defence*. And whether they chose the American (*defense*) or British variant (*defence*) almost all groups show a marked preference for what they believe to be the British variant.

The results for *defenseless/defenceless* (Appendix B, Table 4), display a similar pattern for the female and total groups. The males, however, show a clear preference for what they believe to be the American variant.

In the case of *defencible/defensible* (Table 5), the majority of respondents chose the only accepted spelling. This time, the results contradicted our hypothesis because the greater part of this group (39%) considers the word *defensible* to be the American variant while only 26% consider it to be British. This difference is particularly apparent with the males. The reasoning behind this is perhaps because they think it follows a pattern of the American variant always containing *-s*.

### 3.3 *-er vs. -re*

In this category, the American variant is *-er* and the British is *-re*. It was expected that respondents would match the correct spelling with its standard, e.g., *center* as American, and that they would prefer the British variant. This theory held true for *center/centre* (Table 6), although a surprising 14% of respondents incorrectly matched spelling and standard. This was one case where we thought the distinction was commonly known. Two respondents thought that there was a different meaning associated with each of the different variants so perhaps this is an explanation for this discrepancy.

### 3.4 *Single vs. Double Consonants -l vs. -ll*

According to the *Guide to Canadian English Usage*, there is a set of words (*appal, enrol, etc.*) for which the British standard is to use *-l* at the end of the word and before suffixes beginning with a consonant and to double it before suffixes beginning with a vowel. The American norm is to always use *-ll* (*appall, enroll, etc.*). To see whether respondents understood this distinction, we used words from the *fulfill/fulfil* family. As seen in Table 7 in Appendix B, the majority of respondents chose what they believed to be the British variant; it was in fact the American variant. Only a small percentage (7%) actually selected the British variant and considered it to be British.

The data gathered for *fulfillment/fulfilment* (Table B) shows the same pattern as that for *fulfill/fulfil*—all the groups had a majority selecting what they incorrectly assume to be the British variant (*fulfillment*).

*Fulfilled/fulfilled* (Table 9) is a case where there is only one accepted spelling. Both *Webster's* and *Oxford* acknowledge *fulfilled* as the proper spelling. Our results show



that 98% of respondents chose the accepted spelling with the vast majority considering it the British variant.

The data for the *fulfill/fulfil* are remarkably consistent in all three examples--all the groups follow an almost identical pattern.

### 3.5 *-e vs. -ae*

In the past, *-ae* was typically considered the British standard. According to *Editing Canadian English*, this form is now considered to be archaic. To see if this was true, we included *encyclopedia/encyclopaedia* (Table 10). As it turns out, *encyclopaedia* is still in use, with 30% of respondents selecting it, and 28% correctly identifying it as the British variant. The overwhelming majority, however, opted for the American variant: 66% of respondents chose this spelling and correctly identified it as the American standard.

We also used *archaeology/archeology* (Table 11) as a test item because only *archaeology* is accepted by both *Webster's* and *Oxford*. The majority of respondents (68%) correctly chose *archaeology*. Contrary to what we predicted, nearly 1/3 of respondents chose what they believed to be the American variant.

### 3.6 *Verb and Noun Forms*

In the British standard, some nouns and their corresponding verbs are spelled differently, such as *licence* (noun) and *license* (verb). In the American standard, this distinction does not exist as both forms of the word are spelled *license*. It is clear from our results in Table 12 that the majority of respondents (41%) chose the British variant for the noun form--*licence*. There was, however, no marked preference for the other three choices in all the groups.

As previously stated, both the American and British standards acknowledge only one correct form of the verb *license(d)*. The majority of males (40%) chose the correct spelling, while the slight majority of females chose an incorrect spelling and considered it British (Table 13).

### 3.7 *Specific words*

We decided to look at specific words such as *grey/gray* and *toward/towards* because we thought they were points of confusion. For *grey/gray* (Table 14), the majority once again chose the British variant. In the first pair of *grey (Am)/\*grey (Br)*, all groups

showed a marked preference for the British variant. In the second pair of *gray* (*Am*)/*grey* (*Br*), females selected the American variant while male and combined groups continued to prefer what they (wrongly) believed to be the British variant.

Another specific word we looked at was *toward/towards*. Although the American variant is *toward* and the British is *towards*, most respondents indicated the opposite with the majority indicating that *towards* is American. This appears to contradict our hypothesis but perhaps this has to do with the connotations the variants carry.

#### 4. Conclusion

As a whole, our hypothesis was accurate. In all of our data, with the exception of *glamour*, respondents chose a mixture of American and British variants, as predicted. With respect to the female/male breakdown, males seem to prefer the American variant in some instances but this does not occur with enough frequency to conclude that males generally prefer American variants. More data is needed to draw a proper conclusion on this topic. The respondents did show an overall preference for the British variants in each of our categories. Our data also show that people do prefer what they believe to be the British variant in the majority of, but not in all, instances; it might have been better to make specific hypotheses for each category. Despite this, our research was fairly conclusive and the results show an overall preference in Canadian orthography for British variants.

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## Appendix A: The Survey

### LING 202: Canadian English

We are doing a survey on Canadian spelling, looking at whether you use American or British spelling variants. This survey is completely voluntary and you can stop at any time. All personal information will be kept confidential, even if the results are published. If you are interested in the results, write your email address in the information box below and you will be notified when the project is finished.

Please fill in this box before you begin the survey.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_ F \_\_\_

Were you born in Canada? Y\_\_\_ N \_\_\_

If not, where? \_\_\_\_\_

How old were you when you came to Canada? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your first language? English Other \_\_\_\_\_

If other, how old were you when you started learning English? \_\_\_\_\_

Email address (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Please go with your first instinct and **DO NOT go back** to look over or change your answers.

Please check the box that best corresponds to your spelling of the following words and indicate whether you think your spelling is American or British.

**YOUR PREFERRED SPELLING**

**IS YOUR SPELLING THE  
AMERICAN OR  
BRITISH STANDARD?**

		<b>AM</b>	<b>BRIT</b>
caliber	calibre		
apologise	apologize		
focussed	focused		
glamorous	glamorous		
neighbour	neighbor		
honor	honour		
fulfiled	fulfilled		
programme	program		
reflection	reflexion		
moustache	mustache		
labouring	laboring		
center	centre		
organization	organisation		
benefited	benefitted		
honorific	honourific		
encyclopedia	encyclopaedia		
defense	defence		
mould	mold		
fulfill	fulfil		
breathalyzer	breathalyser		
labour	labor		
organize	organise		
defenseless	defenceless		
pedaled	pedalled		
honourary	honorary		
fulfilling	fulfilling		
omelette	omelet		
laborious	labourious		
theatre	theater		
archaeology	archeology		
glamor	glamour		
toward	towards		
budgetted	budgeted		
defencible	defensible		
fulfillment	fulfilment		
inflexion	inflection		
grey	gray		
offensive	offensive		
James Bond has a ___ to kill.	license licence		
James Bond is ___ to kill.	licensed licenced		
I ___ juggling every day.	practice practise		
Juggling ___ starts at five.	practice practise		

Accepted spellings are marked \*.

### Appendix B: The Results

**Table 1**

	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Glamor (Am)	0	0	0
Glamor (Br)	0	0	0
*Glamour (Am)	0	8	2
*Glamour (Br)	100	92	98

**Table 2**

	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Glamorous (Am)	0	8	2
Glamorous (Br)	73	50	67
*Glamorous (Am)	18	25	20
*Glamorous (Br)	9	17	11

**Table 3**

	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
*Defense (Am)	15	9	14
Defense (Br)	27	0	20
Defence (Am)	15	36	20
*Defence (Br)	43	55	46

**Table 4**

	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
*Defenseless (Am)	15	18	16
Defenseless (Br)	34	0	25
Defenceless (Am)	15	46	23
*Defenceless (Br)	36	36	36

**Table 5**

	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Defencible (Am)	3	17	7
Defencible (Br)	29	33	30
*Defensible (Am)	35	42	37
*Defensible (Br)	33	8	26

**Table 6**

	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
*Center (Am)	13	25	16
Center (Br)	6	8	7
Centre (Am)	9	0	7
*Centre (Br)	72	67	70

**Table 7**

	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
*Fulfill (Am)	35	25	32
Fulfill (Br)	53	59	54
Fulfil (Am)	6	8	7
*Fulfil (Br)	6	8	7

**Table 8**

	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
*Fulfillment (Am)	29	25	27
Fulfillment (Br)	51	67	55
Fulfilment (Am)	9	8	9
*Fulfilment (Br)	11	0	9

**Table 9**

	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Fulfilled (Am)	0	8	2
Fulfilled (Br)	0	0	0
*Fulfilled (Am)	29	25	28
*Fulfilled (Br)	71	67	70

**Table 10**

	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
*Encyclopedia (Am)	64	67	66
Encyclopedia (Br)	6	0	4
Encyclopaedia (Am)	3	0	2
*Encyclopaedia (Br)	27	33	28

**Table 11**

	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
*Archaeology (Am)	3	0	2
*Archaeology (Br)	68	58	66
Archeology (Am)	26	42	30
Archeology (Br)	3	0	2

**Table 12**

(Noun)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
*License (Am)	22	30	24
License (Br)	22	20	21
Licence (Am)	16	10	14
*Licence (Br)	40	40	41

**Table 13**

(Verb)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
*Licensed (Am)	23	30	24
*Licensed (Br)	26	40	29
Licenced (Am)	19	0	15
Licenced (Br)	32	30	32

**Table 14**

	<b>Female (%)</b>	<b>Male (%)</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Grey (Am)	29	27	29
*Grey (Br)	47	46	46
*Gray (Am)	18	9	7
Gray (Br)	6	18	18

**Table 15**

	<b>Female (%)</b>	<b>Male (%)</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
*Toward (Am)	15	10	14
Toward (Br)	21	10	18
Towards (Am)	41	50	43
*Towards (Br)	23	30	25

## **LOONY, LOONEY, LOONIE? TOONY, TOONEY, TOONIE, TWOONY, TWOONEY, TWOONIE?**

**Kate Wringe and Jeanne Archambault de Beaune**

### *1. Introduction*

The purpose of this project is to examine Canadianisms in the names of Canadian coins. In particular this report will examine the spelling of names of the one-dollar and two-dollar coins, hereafter spelled, for simplicity, *loonie* and *toonie*. We were especially interested in the names for these two coins because they are common currency in Canada but unique to this country.

Canadians and Americans share the same names for their one cent, five cent, ten cent, and twenty-five cent coins, but who originally coined them? After researching the origins of the words *penny*, *nickel*, *dime* and *quarter* in the *Dictionary of Canadianisms*, we discovered that Canadians have borrowed these terms from their American neighbours. The terms *penny*, *dime* and *quarter* all came to Canada from the United States. Interestingly the earliest record of *penny* was in 1902 while *dime* and *quarter* were used in Canadian newspapers in the 1860s. Nickel is a great example of how names for Canadian coinage were influenced by the United States. The United States called their five cent coins *nickels* because they were made of nickel. Canadians adopted this name for their five cent coin even though it was made of silver until the 1920s (Avis 1967). Since the names of the one cent, five cent, ten cent and twenty-five cent coins are shared with, and originally came from, the United States, they can not be considered real Canadianisms. Therefore the remainder of this project will focus on the two coins unique to Canada.

On May 8, 1987 Canada replaced its one-dollar bill with an eleven sided aureate coin, bronze plate over pure nickel. The purpose of the switch was to save money as the life span of the dollar bill was on average, nine months while the coin is expected to stay in circulation for twenty years (Royal Canadian Mint). This new coin quickly became known as the *loonie* because of the picture of the loon, designed by Robert- Ralph Carmichael, on the back of the coin. It is amazing how ingrained the loonie is in Canadian consciousness. Financial reports often refer to Canadian currency as the *loonie*, as in, "The loonie closed today up .3 of a cent" and in the next breath they refer to the European Euro.

The *toonie* refers to the Canadian two-dollar coin. Released February 19, 1996, the backside of the coin features "an adult polar bear in the early summer on an ice floe" and was designed by Brent Townsend (Royal Canadian Mint). The polar bear was chosen because it "embodies the Canadian spirit of strength, beauty and intelligence



and it is North America's largest land-based carnivore" ("Coin Reactions," *National Post* 1995). The switch from the two-dollar bill to the two-dollar coin was made for the same financial reasons as the switch to the loonie. The two-dollar coins will allow the government to save \$250 million for the twenty years that they are in circulation.

One might call loonies and toonies Canadian shibboleths as they quickly distinguish a new visitor to Canada from Canadian citizens. Americans, as discussed above, do not have any trouble with our pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters but have to learn the terms *loonie* and *toonie*. In fact the importance of loonies and toonies in Canadian culture is noted at <[www.travelcanada.ca](http://www.travelcanada.ca)>, the official website for the Canadian Tourism Commission, which offers advice and hints to people around the world planning on visiting Canada. On this website, visitors from both the United Kingdom and the United States receive the same advice regarding Canadian money. The names *loonie* and *toonie* are given while *penny*, *nickel*, *dime* and *quarter* are not: "Canada now has one- and two-dollar coins, affectionately called the *loonie* and the *toonie*, in addition to 1 cent, 5 cent, and 25 cent coins" (<[www.travelcanada.ca](http://www.travelcanada.ca)>).

A Canadian can hardly avoid hearing and seeing the words *loonie* and *toonie* every day, if not in the business and financial reports, then on the machine they buy their newspaper from or on the numerous vending machines for parking, photocopying, beverages, which are all loonie and toonie friendly.

Illegal immigrants also recognize that *loonie* and *toonie* are important Canadian words. A man was arrested in May of 2000 at the Toronto Airport in possession of documents designed to help illegal immigrants enter Canada. Among the documents were Toronto tourist kits and Canadian trivia fact sheets including an explanation of the money terms *loonie* and *toonie* ("Airport Seizure," *Toronto Star* 2000).

Not all Canadians are happy with the name *loonie*; some believe that it is a diminutive term which reduces respect for Canada in the world financial markets. Two widely known homophones of *loonie* are *loony*, a slang term meaning "mentally unbalanced," and the Warner Brothers' cartoon series *Looney Tunes*. Nevertheless, there was little debate about the popular name of the new coin. There was much more debate about the spelling.

According to Don McGillivray, in the *Calgary Herald*, "In December 1988, the Canadian Press news agency sent out an advisory message to say that 'the nickname for the new Canadian \$1 coin has been appearing variously as *loonie*, *looney* and *loony*. Our style will be *loonie*, unless of course, one of the other spellings eventually prevails.' Since then, *loonie* has become established as standard Canadian English although it appears in few dictionaries" ("Will Canadians be known as the loonie-twoonies?" 1996).

The preference for the spelling of the one-dollar Canadian coin as *loonie* is also upheld in the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*. In researching the spelling variants for the one-dollar coin, the editor of the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* scanned a corpus of over 16 million words of Canadian English and discovered that the corpus had eighteen examples of *loonie*, one example of *looney*, and two examples of *loony* (<www.oupcan.com>). In the end, the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* listed *loonie* and *looney*. However, the *Nelson Canadian Dictionary* lists *loonie* and *loony* as the two variants for the coin. It lists *loony* or *looney* as the variants for describing craziness. Interestingly, both dictionaries list *toonie* and *twoonie* as the two variants for the two-dollar coin. The *Gage Canadian Dictionary* lists *loonie* and *loony* for the correct spellings of the one-dollar coin, and *toonie* and *toony* as the correct spellings for the two-dollar coin. So which dictionary is correct? Are *loonie* and *toonie* the standard variants? What then is the next most frequently used variant? And are there any other variants?

## 2. Procedure

In order to try to answer these questions it was decided that the best method would be to examine the use of *loonie*, *looney*, and *loony* and of *toonie*, *tooney*, *toony*, *twoonie*, *twooney*, and *twoony* in Canadian newspapers. Two national Canadian papers, the *Toronto Star* and the *National Post*, were chosen as representative of the national standard. The *Charlottetown Guardian*, the *Calgary Herald*, and the *Montreal Gazette* were chosen to reflect regional differences across the country. The *Canadian NewsDisc*, at Queen's University Library, was used to search the chosen newspapers from 1998 to 2001. Searches on each of the three variants for *loonie* and the six variants for *toonie* were conducted on all five newspapers. Each article was verified to make certain that the variants referred to money. The only exception to this method occurred when searches yielded more than 200 results; in these cases, the reference to money was verified for only the first 100 articles.

## 3. Results

All three variants, *loonie*, *looney*, and *loony*, appeared and referred to the Canadian dollar in all five newspapers. Overall the newspapers preferred the spelling variant *loonie*. The exception was the *Montreal Gazette* which showed a strong preference for the variant *loony*. All three variants, it was noted, sometimes also referred to craziness or to the *Looney Tunes* cartoon program. Although the variant *looney* appeared more frequently than *loony* in the *National Post*, *Toronto Star*, *Charlottetown Guardian* and *Calgary Herald*, for a total of 33 times, it is not the second preferred spelling. For the variant *loony* appeared in the *Montreal Gazette* 183 times, making the total number of times that *loony* appeared in all newspapers 198. Thus, overall *loony* is used 33% of the time and *looney* is only used 3% of the time.

It was also interesting that there was confusion surrounding the terms *looney* and *loony*. These two terms seemed to have also been used interchangeably to refer to the cartoon program and to mean "foolish" or "crazy." Although our study did not focus on these other meanings, it was evident that the variant *loonie* was also used to describe craziness.

**Variant 1: Loonie**  
**Number of times *loonie* appeared in five newspapers by definition**

	Number of Results	\$1 COIN	CARTOON	CRAZY
National Post	200	198 99%	1 1%	1 1%
Toronto Star	200	199 99%	0 0%	1 1%
Calgary Herald	200	200 100%	0 0%	0 0%
Charlottetown Guardian	200	200 100%	0 0%	0 0%
Montreal Gazette	37	37 100%	0 0%	0 0%

**Variant 2: Looney**  
**Number of times *looney* appeared in four newspapers by definition**

	Number of Results	\$1 COIN	CARTOON	CRAZY
National Post	52	7 14%	30 58%	15 29%
Toronto Star	52	11 21%	22 42%	19 37%
Calgary Herald	65	3 5%	25 38%	37 57%
Charlottetown Guardian	22	5 23%	6 27%	11 50%

**Variant 3: Loony**  
**Number of times *loony* appeared in five newspapers by definition**

	Number of Results	\$1 COIN	CARTOON	CRAZY
National Post	96	4 4%	2 2%	90 94%
Toronto Star	51	1 2%	7 14%	43 84%
Calgary Herald	60	3 5%	1 2%	56 93%
Charlotte Guardian	18	7 37%	1 6%	10 56%
Montreal Gazette	200	183 91%	3 2%	14 7%

**Overall Results and Percentages for the Three Variants Only in Reference to the Canadian One Dollar**

	Number of Results	Loonie	Looney	Loony
National Post	209	198 95%	7 3%	4 2%
Toronto Star	211	199 94%	11 5%	1 1%
Calgary Herald	206	200 97%	3 2%	3 2%
Charlotte Guardian	212	200 94%	5 2%	7 4%
Montreal Gazette	227	37 13%	7 2%	183 65%
<b>Total</b>	1065	<b>78%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>19%</b>

#### 4. Discussion of Results: Loonie

##### 4.1 The National Newspapers

Not surprisingly the national papers were the most consistent in their use of the variant *loonie* as the spelling for the Canadian dollar. The *National Post* only used *looney* 3% of the time and *loony* 2% of the time to refer to money but *loonie* 95% of the time. Similarly the *Toronto Star* used the variant *loonie* 94% of the time and this spelling was never used to refer to any meaning but the money meaning.

##### 4.2 The West

The *Calgary Herald* used the spelling *loonie* in reference to the Canadian dollar 97% of the time. The variants *looney* and *loony* were each used about 2% of the time. The spellings *looney* and *loony* referred to money only 5% of the time.

##### 4.3 The East

The *Charlottetown Guardian* was also strict in its usage of the variant *loonie* to refer to money. The *Guardian* used the variants *looney* and *loony* with that meaning only 2% and 4% of the time. The percentage of times that the terms *looney* and *loony* referred to money was 23% and 37% respectively.

##### 4.3 Montreal

The major difference in chosen variants occurred in the *Montreal Gazette*. The *Gazette* showed a clear preference for the variant *loony*. Although the variant *loonie* was used exclusively for the one dollar coin, it only appeared 37 times or 13% of the time. In contrast, the variant *loony* appeared over 200 times and, when it appeared, 83% of the time it referred to the Canadian dollar. In fact, by a stroke of luck, an article was discovered which appeared first in the *National Post* (November 6, 1999) and was reprinted in the *Montreal Gazette* November 8, 1999. The spelling of the word *loonie* in the *National Post* was changed in the *Montreal Gazette* to *loony*. Compare the original *National Post* version—"The previous week he had borrowed a *loonie* so he would have enough money to buy his umpteenth pack of Pokemon trading cards" (Turchansky, "There's no need for crying when teaching kids about money")--with the *Montreal Gazette* version—"The previous week he had borrowed a *loony* ..." (Turchansky, "Balanced budget? It's child's play. Author offers some suggestions about kids and their allowances").

Why would there be such a difference in the spelling of *loonie* in Quebec? Loon, the bird, is *huard* in French, so *loonie* definitely comes from English. The French section of the Royal Canadian Mint website gives *loonie* and not a French equivalent for the coin's common name. Therefore both variants, *loonie* and *loony* come from English. A possible explanation is that the plural form *loonies* suggests the regular singular form *loony*.

Unlike the name for the *loonie* there was some controversy about the nickname of the two-dollar coin. Some proposed names were *bear*, *bearback*, *bearbuck*, *bearbutt*, *deuce*, *doozie*, *doubloon*, *doubloonie*, *moonie*, *nanook*, *teddy* (MacGillivray 1996). In the article "Two cents' worth for new coin" (*Vancouver Province* 1996), the names *barely*, *poly* and *ponie* are suggested. This article gives the reasons for such names. One reader argues that "like the country it represents, the coin is barely [bear-ly] staying together and, after removing the GST and PST, its real value is approximately \$1.70--barely anything at all." Another reader writes, "I am not happy with any of the proposed names for the two-dollar coin. It should be called the *poly* because of the Polar Bear on the front, just like the *loonie* has a loon on it." Finally, another reader proposes *ponie*: "Po for the first two letters in polar bear, and nie for the last letters of the *loonie*."

But by September 1996 the general consensus was that the second new coin was called the *toonie*. Again there was some disagreement about how *toonie* should be spelled. Indeed, we discovered that there are many variations of the word *toonie*, including **twoonie**, **twoony**, **twooney**, **toonie**, **toony**, **tooney**. With *loonie* the variation only occurs at the end of the word; the variations with *toonie* occur at the beginning as well as at the end. *Toonie* can begin with *too* or *two* and it can end with *-ey*, *-y* or *-ie*.

### 5. *Toonie Results*

As with the one-dollar coin, the variant ending in *-oonie* turned out to be the preferred one. However, in each newspaper we found at least two variations, and we were somewhat startled that the preferred variant was *toonie* because we thought that perhaps the variant *twoonie* might be the most popular since it contains the root word *two* and it is a two-dollar coin. We suspect that the spelling of *loonie* has influenced the spelling of the word *toonie*. Indeed, *loonie* was already well established when the *toonie* was put into circulation. *Toonie* certainly makes sense in that both words end in *-ie* and follow the same pattern if the "w" in *twoonie* is dropped.

### Spelling Variants of Toonie in Five Newspapers

	Number of Citations	Toonie	Tooney	Toony	Twoonie	Twooney	Twoony
<b>National Post</b>	24	22 92%	1 4%	1 4%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
<b>Toronto Star</b>	48	43 90%	3 6%	2 4%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
<b>Calgary Herald</b>	22	11 50%	0 0%	0 0%	11 50%	0 0%	0 0%
<b>Charlotte-town Guardian</b>	35	34 97%	0 0%	0 0%	1 3%	0 0%	0 0%
<b>Montreal Gazette</b>	25	6 24%	2 8%	12 48%	3 12%	1 4%	1 4%

#### 6. Discussion of Results: Toonie

##### 6.1 The National Newspapers

In the two national newspapers the *toonie* variant was the one mostly used. Thus, the *National Post* used the variant 92% of the time and the *Toronto Star* used it 90% of the time. However, as one may notice, the variants *tooney* and *toony* were also found. In the *Toronto Star* *tooney* is used in the sense of the two-dollar coin, *toony* as well; however, in the *National Post*, *tooney* is used in the name of a cottage the "Tooney Loons" and *toony* is used in reference to the Warner Brothers cartoon show.

##### 6.2 The West

Greater variation is found in the regional newspapers. The *Calgary Herald* seems to be split between the variants *toonie* and *twoonie*. These two variants were found in equal numbers.

### 6.3 The East

The *Charlottetown Guardian* was the most consistent in its use of the variant *toonie*. Indeed, it was used 97% of the time. The other variant, *twoonie*, occurred only once.

### 6.4 Montreal

Again the major difference found was in the *Montreal Gazette*. Indeed, it seems that their preferred variant is *toony*; it occurred 48% of the time. However the variant *toonie* also appeared 24% of the time, which is a large percentage for position number two in comparison to the other newspapers. The *Gazette* is actually the only newspaper that uses all the different variants. It is interesting to note that, however, it is consistent in its spelling rule, since the variant ending in *-y* was the preferred variant for *loonie* as well.

This difference in spelling between the *Montreal Gazette* and the other newspapers is difficult to explain. Some morphological knowledge would have been helpful. Unfortunately, our time and space didn't allow us to go into further detail.

### 7. Conclusion

Whereas *loonie* is clearly the preferred standard for the spelling of the name of the one-dollar coin (except in the *Montreal Gazette*) the spelling of the name of the two-dollar coin is a not quite as stable. The *Calgary Herald* uses the two variants *toonie* and *twoonie* equally and the *Montreal Gazette* shows a strong preference for *toony*. Perhaps this instability can be explained by the fact that newspapers generally don't use the word *toonie* as often as the word *loonie*. In the research for *loonie*, over 200 articles were found in some of the newspapers, whereas for *toonie* the largest number of articles was 48. Another reason for the comparative stability of *loonie* is that the one-dollar coin has been in Canadian circulation for over 10 years whereas the *toonie* has only been in circulation for 5 years. Perhaps the spelling of *toonie* will move towards one variant in a few more years.

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