Strathy Undergraduate Working Papers on Canadian English

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CANADIAN ENGLISH

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Preface

From St. John's sea shanties to Victoria slang, from the pronunciation of telephone area codes to the lexicology of *Harry Potter*, volume 5 of the *Strathy Undergraduate Working Papers on Canadian English* ranges across topics as diverse as the country it documents. This volume, the fifth in an ongoing series of essays published by the Strathy Language Unit at Queen's University, presents the undergraduate work of the LING 202 class, taught by Dr. Elaine Gold, at Queen's in the fall of 2003. LING 202 is a second-year half course examining Canadian English and its regional and social dialects. Because LING 202 has no prerequisite, the course attracts students with widely varying levels of linguistic training, and for some students even represents an introduction to the field. The work herein is thus the product of a broad array of academic backgrounds, and serves as both a record of undergraduate research in Canadian English and, hopefully, a catalyst for further scholarship. We hope you enjoy the collection.

We would like to thank, as always, Linda Garrison, Administrator of the Strathy Language Unit, for designing this book.

S. Morrison, Editor
E. Gold and J. McAlpine, Series Editors

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HARRY POTTER AND THE MONGERING OF BRITISH ENGLISH
THE INFLUENCE OF BRITISH ENGLISH ON CANADIAN ENGLISH

Vivien Hon and **Jennifer Ulrichsen**

1. Objectives

Our project had two objectives: the first was to discover whether Canadian English is still being influenced by British English; the second was to find out whether the success of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books has had any effect on the English spoken in Canada today. Since Canadian English is a product of both British and American English influences, we were wondering whether British English is still affecting Canadian English, and, if so, how strong this influence is. We chose to study only the influence of British English because it is obvious that Canadians are exposed to American English through television, cinema, and other forms of mass media. Furthermore, the United States lies directly below Canada, with no geographical barrier separating the two countries, permitting a free flow of language across the border. England, on the other hand, lies across the Atlantic Ocean, with a clear geographical hurdle inhibiting language flow to Canada. Compared to the pervasive influence of American media, there are relatively few British television shows available to Canadians that might influence our dialect of English. However, the immediate and widespread popularity of Harry Potter and his adventures may be restoring the influence of British English within the Canadian dialect. We chose to study Harry Potter specifically because the books' popularity spans age groups from kids to adults.

2. Hypothesis

We predicted that British English is still influencing Canadian English, especially among younger Canadians. We believed that this may be due to the prominence of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books in Canadian society.

3. Harry Potter Books

There are currently five books that have been published in the Harry Potter series by

J.K. Rowling. The first book, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, was published in June, 1997. The next three books in the series were published in the following three consecutive summers. The fifth and most recent book, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, was published in June, 2003.

4. Methods

4.1 Questionnaire

In order to determine the prevalence of British terms known or used by Canadians, we composed a questionnaire (reprinted in Appendix A) in which we selected 25 terms, 11 of which were "Canadian" terms, and 14 of which were "British" terms. By "Canadian," we mean terms of British origin which are now considered to be part of Canadian English, for example, the Canadian or British term *tap*, as opposed to the American term *faucet*. These terms were taken from Tables 3.1 and 3.3 in "Lexical Variants," a section of De Wolf's study, *Social and Regional Factors in Canadian English*. By "British," we mean words prevalent in British English, but unfamiliar to Canadian English, such as the British term *mollycoddling*. These words were taken from the first and fifth Harry Potter books, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. We created a questionnaire in which we listed the Canadian and British terms (Appendix A, Section B) and asked for a brief definition of each, as well as whether the respondent used any of the terms on a regular basis. We then asked each respondent to provide a short sentence for each British term in order to determine if the respondent fully understood the meaning of the term and was able to apply it to their daily speech (Appendix A, Section C). Finally, we asked if the respondent had ever read any of the Harry Potter books so we could establish any possible correlations between exposure to the books and heightened usage of British terms.

4.2 Test Group

We distributed the questionnaire to people residing in Kingston and Toronto. Questionnaires were given to family members, house-mates, co-workers, and family friends and their children, and were circulated in paper or electronic form. Completed surveys were collected either in person or via the Internet by e-mail. We divided the test group into 3 age categories: 10-18, 19-30, and 31-56 years of age. The last age group's cut-off age was 56 because that was the age of the oldest participant in our study.

4.3 Data Analysis

Each definition supplied by a respondent was checked against the definition found in the *Oxford Dictionary of Current English.* We calculated the average number of correct definitions for males, females, and males and females together, and then plotted these averages for each of our three age groups on a graph.

5. Results

The first graph displays the percentage of correct responses for all 25 terms, the second graph the percentage of correct responses for our 14 British terms, and the third graph the percentage of correctly-defined Canadian terms (see Figures 1, 2, and 3, respectively).

5.1 All terms: Age-Related Differences
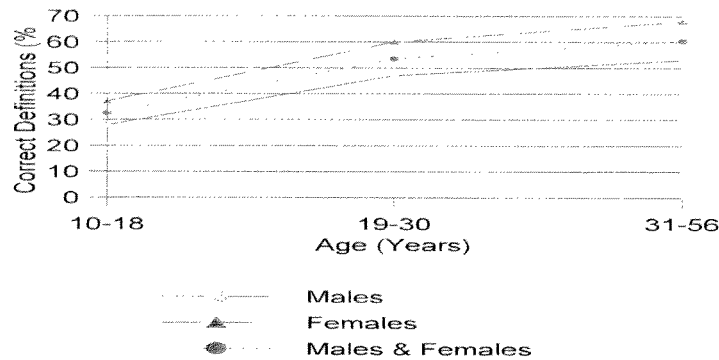
Figure 1. Percentage of Correctly-Defined Terms (both British and Canadian)

As shown in Figure 1, the 31-56 year-olds properly defined the highest number of terms, followed by the 19-30 year-olds, and finally by the 10-18 year-olds. These results produce an S-curve diffusion pattern: while 10-18 year-olds understood relatively few of the terms, the number of correct definitions rose progressively through the 19-30 and 31-56 age groups. If the graph in Figure 1 was extrapolated beyond its two end points, it is probable that children under 10 years of age would display even less understanding of our terms than do the 10-18 year-olds, and that respondents over age 56 would comprehend and use these terms more readily than the 31-56 years-olds. The number of correct definitions rose by roughly 20% between the 10-18 and 19-30 age groups, while increasing by only about 5% between 19-30 and 31-56 year-olds.

Educational differences may account for disparities in comprehension between the three age groups. Obviously, adults will understand more terms than do children; however,

when the adults were children, their teachers and parents also likely used more of the Canadian and British terms than teachers and parents do now. Consequently, today's children do not hear these terms used by authority figures in their lives, and do not know their meanings or use the terms themselves.

Another possible explanation for this divergence between age groups may be related to mass media. Television shows and movies appear to influence language development. Since American shows and movies saturate Canadian television, Canadian children who are learning the English language are being heavily influenced by what they see and hear on television and in the movies. These forms of media predominantly use American English as opposed to Canadian or British English, and today's children would thus probably tend to understand and use American terms over Canadian or British terms more frequently than respondents from the two adult age groups, who would have grown up with less access to American media than their children. Adults' language may also have been shaped more heavily by literature and learning.

Upbringing is also an important factor in language learning. Children whose parents use British terms are likelier to use these terms themselves, or at least to know their meanings. However, peers override the parental influence: children speak more like their peers than their parents, and this cohesiveness only serves to strengthen the language currently popular amongst their own peer group–in this case, a language lacking British English terms.

5.2 All Terms: Sex-Related Differences

For each age group, females gave a greater number of correct definitions for our terms than did males (see Figure 1 above). We believe that this discrepancy was due to the fact that British English is viewed as more prestigious and proper in Canadian society. Thus, women, who tend to be more sensitive to social status in linguistic matters, would have been more aware of, and more familiar with, the British terms we gave them. As well, British English may be seen by Canadians as more traditional and popular than other English dialects, especially amongst the oldest age group. Since women are more concerned with using what is popular and accepted in the eyes of society, this perception may have also caused heightened usage of British terms amongst females.

Women in the 31-56 age group likely have been exposed to more British English than anyone else. This increased exposure may be due to their heritage; they, or their parents, may have been born or raised in England, and therefore these women may have been brought up hearing or using British English. Also, 20 to 30 years ago there was a greater degree of British influence on Canadian English due to older teachers who spoke British English. The youngest age group is not being taught by these teachers who

instructed the older two age groups because they have since retired. Consequently, British English is seen by younger people as old-fashioned and traditional. (Females of the oldest age group have a greater knowledge of British terms than anyone else.)

5.3 British Terms
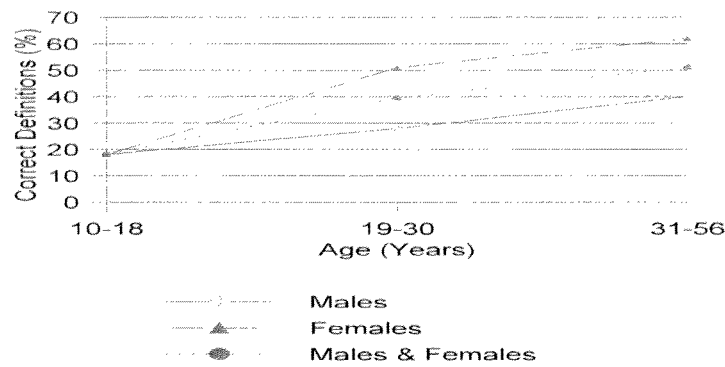
**Figure 2. Percentage of Correctly-Defined British Terms**

Figure 2 shows the percentage of correct responses for our 14 British terms. Like our results for all 25 terms (as shown in Figure 1), there was a 20% increase in the number of correct definitions between the 10-18 and 19-30 year-old age groups. This rate of increase fell to only 10% between the two older age groups, roughly parallelling the data of Figure 1. Discrepancies between age and sex groups likely arose from many of the same causes mentioned in our discussion for the results of all 25 terms, such as disparities in education and exposure to American media, as well as social and cultural mores. Interestingly, while males and females in the 10-18 age group provided the same number of correct responses, females in the two older age groups accurately defined about 20% more terms than their male peers. In this way, the number of correct responses rose more steeply between the 10-18 and 19-30 age groups for females than for males. What is more, males in the 31-56 year-old age group gave fewer correct answers than females in the 19-30 year-old age group, with a difference of about 10%. Sampling error may have contributed to this disparity, since more females than males took part in our questionnaire; a more thorough investigation with a larger number of respondents, as well as equal numbers of males and females, might yield different results.

5.3 Canadian Terms

As shown in Figure 3 below, our respondents possessed far greater knowledge of our 11 Canadian terms than of our 14 British terms, revealing the extent to which these 11 terms, originally British, have become integrated into the Canadian lexicon. These terms

have become truly Canadian terms, and are used in the everyday conversations of Canadians. Though there was a slight dip in comprehension in the youngest age group, this could have been due to age-grading, or perhaps to heightened exposure to American media from a young age amongst younger respondents. There was also an

Figure 3. Percentage of Correctly-Defined Canadian Terms
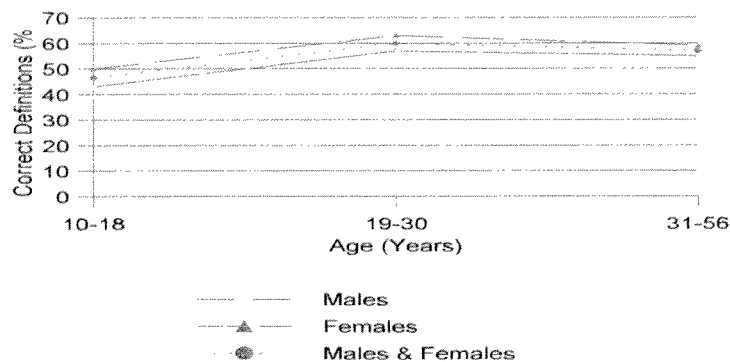
approximately 5% decline in knowledge from the 19-30 year-old age group to the 31-56 group. This may have been due to problems in our sampling group.

6. Conclusions

From our results, British English does not appear to be influencing Canadian English any longer. British terms foreign to Canadian English are receding in the vocabularies of young Canadians, while terms which once originated in British English have now been fully assimilated within the Canadian dialect.   Our results also reveal that Rowling's Harry Potter books, although popular, do not seem to be influencing the English spoken by younger Canadians today.

7. Possibilities for Further Research

One possible area of future inquiry could be to investigate Canadians' broad-mindedness concerning the prevalence of British terms in Canadian English, as well as the attitudes held by different age groups towards such terms. Another potentially fascinating study involving American English could examine the lexical differences between British and American editions of the Harry Potter books, as various phrases and words that stand in the Canadian editions of the books have been adjusted in the American editions to suit the audience in the United States (*The Harry Potter Lexicon*).

Appendix A
Questionnaire

A) Please circle one:

Age: 10-13   14-18   19-23   24-30   30-55   56+
Sex: Male   Female
Where were you born?
Where were you raised?
Are you a native speaker of English?

B) What do you think the following words mean? Please provide a brief (one or two words) definition for each term. Then, circle the words from 1-25 that you use on a regular basis.

1. notice board	14. pail
2. flagon	15. parchment
3. pavement	16. register
4. pudding	17. cupboard
5. goblet	18. chesterfield
6. postman	19. dunderhead
7. tap	20. galoshes
8. pasty	21. holidays
9. purge	22. helter-skelter
10. mollycoddling	23. blokes
11. staircase	24. biscuit
12. mongering	25. spotty
13. blinds	

C) Please create one short sentence for each of the following words.

1. flagon

2. pudding

3. goblet

4. pasty

5. purge

6. mollycoddling

7. mongering

8. parchment

9. register

10. dunderhead

11. galoshes

12. helter-skelter

13. blokes

14. spotty

D) Have you ever read any of the Harry Potter books?   Yes   No

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TAKE A BREAK! GO ON VACATION DURING YOUR HOLIDAYS!

Emily Porter and **Rebecca Winterton**

1. Introduction

The terms *holidays, vacation*, and *break* are all used when people are talking about taking some time off, celebrating a day that marks a religious event, enjoying some time away from school, or planning a trip for pleasure. Although these three terms have different origins, they all seem to have become synonymous with temporary absence from work or school in order to relax and enjoy some leisure time. Our study is an attempt to discover whether any patterns exist regarding the usage of these terms amongst different age groups. This topic was chosen out of personal interest in the hope of learning which terms are used most frequently, by whom, and in which contexts. In the course of our study, travel brochures were consulted in order to learn how often *holidays, vacation,* and *break* are used in widespread travel publications, which may or may not influence general usage. A study by Gaelan Dodds de Wolf on Canadian English in Ottawa and Vancouver entitled *Social and Regional Factors in Canadian English: A Study of Phonological Variables and Grammatical Items in Ottawa and Vancouver* was also consulted.

For our study the origins of *holidays, vacation,* and *break* were also examined, revealing subtle differences in their historical meanings. The term *holiday* traditionally refers to a day on which one is exempted from school or work in commemoration of a particular event, often one of religious resonance: *holiday* has its roots in the term *holy day*. *Holiday* is also a predominantly British term used to represent a period of relaxation. A popular American term for time off, *vacation*, like *holidays*, connotes rest, relaxation, and exemption from work, but this word may also suggest travel, not just time spent at home. Finally, *break* seems to be a recent addition to this group of terms, and simply means "to interrupt or suspend an activity temporarily."

Despite possible British and American preferences for *holidays* and *vacation* respectively, we predicted that the usage of the terms *holidays, vacations,* and *break* in Canada would depend mostly upon context. We expected *vacation* to be chosen primarily when referring to a trip taken for pleasure, and *holidays* to be used predominantly when referring to religious events and time for relaxation. The term

break we expected to be employed mostly when describing the *March break* for schools and the midterm week off in the university semester. For the latter, we anticipated that *reading week* would be a more popular term than the American term *spring break*. With regards to variations across age groups, we speculated that our older respondents would prefer the term more popular in Britain, *holidays*, while younger respondents would tend to use the preferred American term, *vacation*. This hypothesis was based on the fact that young people tend to speak more like their peers than their parents, and that today's youth are more heavily influenced by American mass media than were their parents, who may cling to British usages.

2. Methods and Procedures

We conducted a written survey with 7 questions concerning how respondents use the terms *holidays, vacation*, and *break*. (This survey is reprinted in Appendix A.) In each question, respondents were asked to provide a term with which to describe a particular type of time off. Our survey was distributed by hand as well as by e-mail, and was completed by a total of 46 respondents aged approximately 17 to 59. In order to uncover demographic trends, our respondents were asked to supply personal information, including gender, age group, place of birth, parents' birthplaces, and where they were raised between the ages of 8 and 18. This data was used to determine whether correlations exist between age and preferred usage when describing time off. Other research included consulting six different travel brochures as well as the study of Canadian English by Gaelen Dodds de Wolf mentioned above.

3. Results

The results of 44 surveyed respondents were tabulated and categorized according to 3 age groups: "young" (under-35), "middle-aged" (35-55), and "older" (over-55); the majority of our respondents (33 of 44), however, fell into the "young" category. Figure 1 shows recorded responses for all age groups with regards to each survey question.

Figure 1. Survey Responses (All Age Groups)

Question #	Holidays Y M O			Vacation Y M O			Break Y M O			Other Y M O			Reading Week Y M O		
1 (Summer)	13	7	2	Y	3	0	4	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0
2 (December)	14	8	2	5	1	0	11	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
3 (February)	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	2	1	1	0	26	8	0
4 (Schedule)	11	4	0	16	5	2	5	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0

Question #	Holidays			Vacation			Break			Other			Reading Week		
	Y	M	O	Y	M	O	Y	M	O	Y	M	O	Y	M	O
5 (Travel)	1	5	0	31	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
6 (March)	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	9	0	3	1	0	0	0	0
7 (Relaxing)	8	4	1	9	2	0	12	2	1	4	2	0	0	0	0

3.1 Results for Young Respondents

The results for each age group were tabulated and examined. In the young group, three major trends arose. Firstly, *March break* was used in question 6 to refer to the week-long period which elementary school students receive off in March by all but 3 of our 33 young respondents; these 3 instead employed the term *spring break*. For question 3, concerning the week which university students receive off in mid-February, *reading week* was used by 26 of 33 young respondents, while 1 suggested *March break* and 6 employed the term *spring break*. The question, however, which young respondents almost all answered in the same way, was question 5, concerning travelling to a foreign place such as Mexico: all but two of the young respondents stated that they would use the term *vacation* in this context.

Question 1, which concerned the two month recess from school between late June and early September, produced diverse responses in the young age group, with *holidays*, *vacation*, and *break* all used frequently, and with six respondents simply referring to this period as *summer*. The question regarding time off from school in December (question 2), again produced a split result, with most young respondents preferring either *holidays* (14 respondents) or *break* (11 respondents), but with 5 young respondents using *vacation*. Interestingly, one respondent who does not celebrate Christmas referred to this period as *winter break*.

The two questions referring to time off from work (questions 4 and 7) garnered roughly equal responses for *vacation*, *holidays*, and *break*. Respondents used few other terms in question 4. For question 7, on the other hand, when referring to relaxation time, our respondents provided several interesting alternatives to our three main terms, such as *slacking off*, *mental health day*, *taking some time off*, and *a rest*.

Perhaps the most striking finding of the younger group's responses was their frequent use of the term *break*, which is apparently becoming an increasingly popular variation on the traditional terms *vacation* and *holidays*.

3.2 Results for "Middle-Aged" Respondents

Responses from the "middle-aged" group featured much heavier usage of *holidays* than

of *vacation*, with *holidays* used far more frequently than any other term when speaking of Christmas, of summer, or of time taken off work to relax. While *vacation* received the most responses for questions 4 and 5, concerning taking a two-week hiatus from work and travelling to a foreign land, even for these questions the popularity of *vacation* did not far outstrip that of *holidays*. All but 2 (who used the term *spring break*) of our 10 middle-aged respondents referred to university students' mid-February recess as *reading week*, while 9 of 10 used *March break* when describing elementary school students' time off in March. One respondent referred to this period in March as *Easter holidays*, which apparently is a term unique to Newfoundland, where elementary school children receive time off over Easter as opposed to in March.

3.3 Results for "Older" Respondents

There were only two respondents over the age of 55, and, although one was from Newfoundland and one Ontario, their responses differed only on question 7, regarding time taken off simply to relax: one respondent described it as a *holiday*; the other, a *break*. Otherwise, both respondents used *holidays* to describe Christmas and summer periods off, while also using *spring break* when referring to university students' mid-February hiatus, and *March break* when referring to elementary school students' mid-March rest period. Trips abroad, as well as two weeks taken off of work, were also called *vacations* by both older respondents.

3.4 Age Results Across Questions

Figure 2 totals the responses from questions 1 to 7 and shows the popularity of various terms by age group.

When comparing results for our three age groups, perhaps the most striking finding is the increased usage of *vacation* and *break* in "young" vocabularies, at the expense of the predominantly British term *holidays*.

Figure 2. Usage of Terms by Age Group
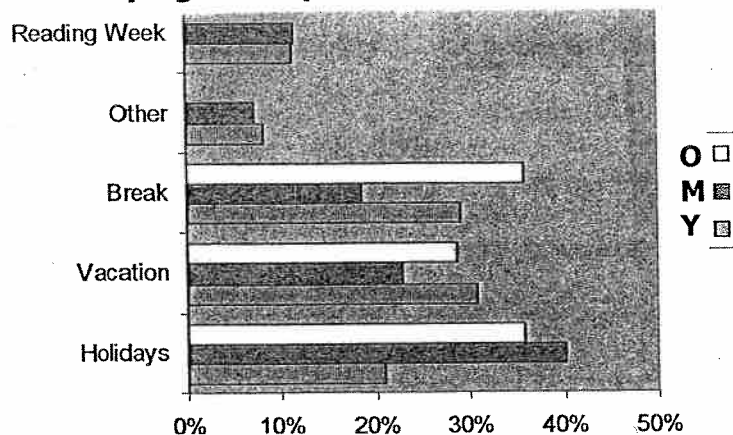
3.5 Terms in Print

Travel booklets were also studied for their usage of the terms *vacation, holidays,* and *break*, with five different publications examined: Sol Melici Hotels CUBA's *Hola Sun,* Red Seal Vacations' *Sunwing,* World of Vacations' *Winter Fun,* Conquest's *Winter Sun,* and Sunquest's *Winter Sun.* Of these five publications, two (*Winter Fun* and Conquest's *Winter Sun*) referred to their advertised "getaways" exclusively as *vacations,* two (*Sunwing* and Sunquest's *Winter Sun*) alternated between *vacations* and *holidays,* and one (*Hola Sun*) used only the term *holidays.* Notably, none used the term *break.*

4. Limitations

While our study yielded several distinct patterns of usage for describing time off, it was unfortunately hampered by several problems. First, since only 6 of the 34 respondents were male, we were unable to draw broad conclusions from our data with respect to sex. Another limitation was our study's lack of participants in the middle-aged and older groups: although some participants from both groups were included, they can hardly be considered representative of the general population, especially in the older category, for which we had only 2 respondents.

Distributing our survey through e-mail also produced confusion, as some respondents were either unsure of the meanings of certain questions, or of how to answer, or they gave more than one answer. Also, the number of participants could have been increased so as to reduce the possibility of errors arising from sample size.

5. Discussion

Although the impetus for our study was to gauge the usage of *holidays,* a predominantly British term, and *vacation,* a term more popular in the United States, several other fascinating findings emerged. Our results upheld our hypotheses. V*acation* is used most frequently when describing trips abroad, while *holidays* is used primarily in reference to religious events. Also, as predicted, the term *vacation* is becoming more prominent in the youngest generation. Our third hypothesis that most people use *March break* and *reading week* when referring to the two periods which students get off from school was proven. Throughout this study, however, the emerging usage of the term *break* has been brought to light. *Break* is being used almost as frequently as *holidays* by the younger generation. The origin of *break* in this context is uncertain; it may in fact be an unrecognized Canadianism. This finding could lead to an interesting follow-up study to test the comparative usage of the term in America and Britain to determine whether it is a true Canadianism.

While conducting this survey, we consulted an extensive study on Canadian English by Gaelan Dodds de Wolf entitled *Social and Regional Factors in Canadian English: A Study of Phonological Variables and Grammatical Items in Ottawa and Vancouver.* In section 3 of this study, de Wolf examines British versus American lexical variants in Montreal, and compares usage of the terms *holidays* and *vacation* (Table 3.3: Lexical Item Variants in Montreal English of British English Preference). In de Wolf's findings, 52% of Montreal respondents preferred the British term, *holidays*, while the remaining 48% chose the American term, *vacation*. According to de Wolf, although both *holidays* and *vacation* exist in both British and American dialects, one term often predominates in a given dialect (de Wolf 26). Somewhat surprisingly then, de Wolf's findings reveal that in Montreal the two terms are nearly identical in popularity, with *holidays* only slightly preferred. Our study echoed de Wolf's Montreal findings, with *holidays* only slightly dominant in our general results.

As stated earlier, four of the five travel brochures we consulted used the term *vacation* more frequently than *holidays.* This reinforces our findings in question 5 that *vacation* is used mostly in reference to taking a trip, rather than when talking about simply taking time off.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, our study shows that *holidays* is used more frequently by Canadians to describe relaxation periods, as was hypothesized, while *vacation* is used primarily to describe trips to foreign places. *Break*, however, seems to be gaining popularity in today's younger generation. Although all three terms seem to have a home in the Canadian English lexicon, each seems to have found its own niche. However, whether going on a trip, relaxing at home, or taking some time off work, and no matter which term is used to describe the experience, almost every single person looks forwards to these "getaways" as an escape from the rigours of something we all refer to as "life."

Appendix A
Island in the Sun Survey

Gender: ___ male ___ female

Age: ___ under-30 ___ 30-55 ___ 55 and over

Where were you born? _____

Where were your parents born? _____

Where were you raised from the ages of 8-18? _____

1. When you were in Grade 2, what did you call the two months you got off between the end of June and the beginning of September?
    a. summer holidays
    b. summer vacation
    c. summer break
    d. other (please specify) _____

2. What do you call the time off students get in December?
    a. Christmas holidays
    b. Christmas vacation
    c. Christmas break
    d. other (please specify) _____

3. What do you call the time university students get off in the third week of February?
    a. holidays
    b. a vacation
    c. Spring break
    d. other (please specify) _____
    e. Reading week

4. When you get a week or two off work what do you tell your co-workers? You are going on:
    a. holidays
    b. vacation
    c. break
    d. other (please specify) _____

5. If you are going away for any length of time to a foreign place such as Mexico for pleasure reasons (not business) what do you tell people? I am going to Mexico on:
    a. holidays
    b. vacation
    c. break
    d. other (please specify) _____

6. Many elementary schools and high schools close for a week in March. What do you call this week?
    a. holidays
    b. vacation

c. March break
d. other (please specify) _____

7. When you are taking time off from school or work just to relax what do you tell people? I am on:
   a. holidays
   b. vacation
   c. break
   d. other (please specify) _____

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HALIGONIAN? IS THAT EVEN A WORD?
A STUDY OF ENGLISH AS SPOKEN IN HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

Robyn Saaltink and Katherine Salsman

1. Introduction

Halifax has a long and interesting history conducive to linguistic diversity. Founded in 1749 by the British, the town served as an important military base from which to attack Louisbourg, a nearby French fortress. Within decades of its founding, people of many nationalities were pouring into Halifax, bringing with them their own linguistic quirks. During the American Revolution (1775-1783), many loyalists to the British crown moved to Nova Scotia from the eastern states, with many settling in Halifax. These loyalists were mostly white--one group was the Quakers who came to Dartmouth--but there were also a number of black loyalists. Many more blacks migrated from Jamaica at around the same time and joined with these black loyalists to form what became one of Canada's largest black populations. Halifax was not untouched by various waves of immigration to Nova Scotia, and the legacies of many immigrant groups, particularly those of the Irish, Scottish, German, and French, can still be felt in the city today. Linguistically, their legacies linger in the unique amalgam of English dialects known as Halifax English. In 1928, the opening of Pier 21 also had a great formative effect on the city. Thousands of immigrants of diverse languages, accents, and cultures from across Europe poured into Canada through this gateway. While some of these immigrants moved to other parts of the country, many stayed, and all affected the city.

However, of immediate concern to our study is the present character of Halifax - a character rooted in the city's rich history. Although Halifax, with a population of only 350,000, is not a tremendously large city, it is the largest city in the Maritimes. As such, it has far more amenities than a city of its size typically would, including a bustling international airport and several vibrant cultural festivals. The city's three universities attract a burgeoning student population, a significant proportion of which comes from beyond Halifax. Since Halifax is the region's largest city, it attracts many rural Maritimers who seek the comforts of a major metropolitan centre but who don't want to live in a place as far from home or as intimidating as Montreal or Toronto. Thus, because of its regional centrality, Halifax has a significant population of rural "emigrants" who bring their customs and language to the city.

In one sense, the English spoken in Halifax is much as would be expected in any urban, middle-class, Canadian environment. No striking differences in accent or lexicon from other Canadian urban centres are discernible to the casual listener, and an Ontarian could likely hold a conversation with a Halifax resident without being able to tell whether the Haligonian is from eastern or central Canada. Conversely, in Ontario, natives of Halifax normally have no problem making themselves understood, and are not commonly regarded as having unusual accents.

However, while Halifax English is unremarkable to the casual listener, a listener with longer exposure to the dialect would note how it diverges from general urban Canadian English. Despite its urban, educated populace, Halifax is surrounded by, and draws a large portion of its population from, outlying rural areas whose English exerts an influence on the speech of the urbanites. Rural Maritime features embedded in Halifax English include certain pronunciations, for example, *aunt* to rhyme with *taunt*, and *tour* to rhyme with *bore*. Halifax English is also characterized by special meanings; for example, *letting on* means "playing pretend." Finally, Halifax English contains some words foreign to an Ontarian's lexicon, for example, *sook*, "crybaby," or even *Haligonian* in reference to a native of Halifax.

Our hope, in beginning this research, was to determine whether Haligonians speak more like central Canadians or like Maritimers. However, anecdotal evidence suggested not a stark preference for either central Canadian or Maritime English, but rather a hybrid of the two: since Haligonians live in an urban environment tinged with rural Maritime influences, we hypothesized that the speech of Halifax natives would likely resemble that of central Canadians in some senses, and that of Maritimers in others.

2. Methods

This study was undertaken to determine whether Halifax English more closely resembles Maritime English or Central Canadian English. Questions from Chambers' *Dialect Topography* survey (found at http://dialect.topography.chass.utoronto.ca) were used. The results Chambers reports from New Brunswick were taken as representative of Maritime English, while the results from the survey's Golden Horseshoe (Canada) region (the urbanized area bordering Lake Ontario from Toronto to Niagara Falls, Ontario) were taken as representative of Central Canadian English. We decided that it was unnecessary to use all of the questions in Chambers' survey; its length might have discouraged prospective subjects from participating in our study. Also, we felt that fewer questions could still provide an adequate idea of the nature of Halifax English.

Questions chosen for our study can be classified within two categories: 1) questions

which produced relatively divergent results in Chambers' survey between the New Brunswick and Golden Horseshoe (Canada) regions, and 2) questions which produced relatively similar results between these regions. (The questions we selected are shown in Appendix A.) Questions which revealed divergences between the New Brunswick and Golden Horseshoe (Canada) regions were chosen in order to determine the region to which Halifax English shows greater similarity, while questions which revealed congruence between the New Brunswick and Golden Horseshoe (Canada) regions were chosen in order to determine whether Halifax English contains words or phrases distinct from either region. The survey was completed by 50 native Haligonians by phone, e-mail, or personal interview. Results were then calculated and compared to those of the New Brunswick and Golden Horseshoe (Canada) regions, allowing us to determine whether Halifax English is more like the English used in the Maritimes or central Canada.

3. Results and Discussion

Our results largely confirmed our hypothesis: while Haligonians more frequently used Maritime English, there were many instances in which their usage more closely resembled that of central Canadians. However, perhaps most interestingly, Haligonians did not always favour either Maritime or Central Canadian English, occasionally displaying usage patterns different from both regions.

Halifax, with its long and layered Maritime history, is, of course, linguistically distinct from any central Canadian city; however, Halifax is also a major urban centre, attracting visitors from around the country and even the world, and thus possesses an environment different from that found in any rural Nova Scotian town. Halifax English is not likely to ever have been identical to the English of central Canada or of rural areas of the Maritimes. What our results suggest is that Halifax English is now increasingly influenced by Central Canadian English.

In comparison to that of Maritime English, the influence of Central Canadian English is now becoming more prominent. A few decades ago, there would have been far fewer linguistic influences upon Halifax English from western and central Canada, given Halifax's relative isolation from other major metropolitan centres. However, now, with students from across Canada flocking to its universities, and Haligonian students travelling west for study, with immigration and tourism rising, and with mass media increasingly exposing Haligonians to external cultures and dialects, the influence of Central Canadian English upon Halifax English must inevitably rise.

The general preference of Haligonians for Maritime English, as well as the increasingly pervasive influence of Central Canadian English upon Halifax's dialect, becomes

apparent when examining our data in greater detail. While it is beyond the scope of our paper to rigorously analyse all 25 questions of our survey, we have selected a few questions which illustrate our conclusions.

As was stated, Haligonians tend towards Maritime English more often than Central Canadian English, as shown in our results for the following questions: "What do you call the small cloth you use for washing your face?" (see Figure 1); "What do you call your evening meal?" (see Figure 2); and, "What do you call the rubber-soled shoes you'd wear with the above outfit [casual exercise clothing]?" (see Figure 3). It may be noted that the percentages in our results do not always add up to 100. This is because it was not always possible to include every response given for each question. We compared only the most popular responses.

Figure 1. What do you call a small cloth you use for washing your face? (Question 2)

	Halifax	Central Canada	Maritimes
Face cloth	90%	54.2%	81.7%
Wash cloth	10%	38.3%	14.1%

As shown in Figure 1, Haligonians, like other Maritimers, overwhelmingly preferred the term *face cloth* to *wash cloth*. While central Canadians also preferred *face cloth*, they did so by a much smaller margin than respondents from Halifax and the Maritimes. In fact, one Halifax respondent, in a note in the margin of our questionnaire, even wondered what term could possibly be used other than *face cloth*.

Figure 2. What do you call your evening meal? (Question 9)

	Halifax	Central Canada	Maritimes
Supper	78%	46.2%	77.7%
Dinner	20%	46.8%	18%

Figure 2 reveals Haligonians' closer affinity to Maritime English than Central Canadian English. While central Canada was fairly evenly divided over what to call their evening meal, both Halifax and the Maritimes showed a marked preference for *supper.*

Figure 3. What do you call the rubber-soled shoes you'd wear with the above outfit? (Question 14)

	Halifax	Central Canada	Maritimes
Sneakers	90%	16.7%	81.5%
Running Shoes	2%	54.4%	4.3%
Runners	4%	13%	1.5%

Question 14 of our survey asked respondents to provide the term they would use to describe rubber-soled exercise shoes. The results presented in Figure 3 show a radical lexical split between our two eastern Canadian regions (Halifax and the Maritimes) and central Canada. The use of the term *sneakers* was overwhelmingly preferred in the Maritimes and Halifax, but was not at all common in central Canada. Similarly, the term *running shoes* was the most popular choice in central Canada, but was almost unheard of in the east. Of the Haligonians surveyed, only one gave the response of *running shoes*. Clearly, some terms remain regionally distinct.

Although the speech of Haligonians was generally more closely aligned with Maritime English, there were still many terms for which Haligonian usage gravitated to the usage of central Canadians, as revealed by the following two questions: "What do you call the knob you turn to get water outdoors or in the garden?"; and, "Which do you say? *He has **drank** three glasses of milk* or *he has **drunk** three glasses of milk?*"

Figure 4. What do you call the knob you turn to get water outdoors or in the garden? (Question 1)

	Halifax	Central Canada	Maritimes
Tap	60%	60.4%	48%
Faucet	24%	10.4%	7.3%

As shown in Figure 4, the percentage of Haligonians who preferred the term *tap* was almost identical to that of central Canadians, but differed from that of other Maritimers, differentiating Halifax's unique dialect from Maritime English. One of our respondents even declared anyone using the term *faucet* a "heathen" (their word, not ours!). Non-Haligonian Maritimers, however, seemed ambivalent about which term to use, although *tap* was the most common choice.

Figure 5. Which do you say? *He has* drank *three glasses of milk* or *he has drunk* *three glasses of milk?* **(Question 10)**

	Halifax	Central Canada	Maritimes
Drank	44%	46.1%	57.6%
Drunk	54%	50.4%	39.3%

Although most Maritimers preferred *drank* to *drunk* (as shown in Figure 5), Haligonian usage roughly mirrored that of Central Canadian English, with a slight majority preferring *drunk*, again distinguishing Halifax's English from the Maritime English of the broader region.

While the previous examples have revealed close correspondences between Halifax English and either Maritime or Central Canadian English regarding certain popular usages, other results suggest that, for some terms, Halifax English is distinct from both Maritime and Central Canadian dialects.

Figure 6. Does the ending of "aven<u>ue</u>" sound like *you* or *oo*? (Question 12)

	Halifax	Central Canada	Maritimes
you	88%	82.5%	64.4%
oo	10%	16.8%	34.8%

Figure 7. Does the beginning of "<u>cou</u>pon" sound the same as *cue* or *coo*? (Question 19)

	Halifax	Central Canada	Maritimes
cue	48%	34%	54.6%
coo	25%	64%	43.6%

Halifax's singular dialect of English is shown by examining yod retention. As can be seen in Figure 6, when Haligonians were asked how they pronounce the -*ue* at the end of *avenue*, 88% retained the yod, pronouncing the -*ue* as *you* rather than *oo*. This finding is similar to the results obtained in the Golden Horseshoe (Canada) region, where 82.5% retained the yod.

However, while these results may give the impression that Halifax English more closely resembles Central Canadian English in its yod retention, yod retention in the

pronunciation of *coupon* differs starkly between Halifax and Central Canadian dialects. As seen in Figure 7, 48% of Halifax respondents retained the yod, pronouncing the first syllable of *coupon* as *cue* rather than *coo*, as opposed to 34% of Golden Horseshoe (Canada) respondents and 54.6% of Maritimes respondents.

Taken together, the results of questions 12 and 19 of our survey illustrate that yod retention in Halifax English is not firmly bound to either Central Canadian English or Maritime English, but rather varies from word to word. While these findings may depict a Halifax English in transition, shifting towards deeper linkages with either Maritime or Central Canadian English, they may also provide evidence that Haligonians have always had, and still have, patterns of yod retention distinct from both regions.

Figure 8. Does *shone*, as in "The sun shone brightly," rhyme with *John* or *Joan*? (Question 15)

	Halifax	Central Canada	Maritimes
John	78%	84.7%	70.5%
Joan	22%	17.7%	28.9%

The term *shone* provides another example of how Halifax English can differ from both Maritime and central Canadian dialects. For question 15 of our survey, the results of which appear above in Figure 8, 79% of Halifax respondents reported rhyming *shone* with *John*, as compared with 84.7% of central Canadians and 70.5% of Maritimers. The percentage of Haligonians rhyming *shone* with *John* lay roughly midway between those of Maritimers and central Canadians, distinguishing Halifax English from the English of both other regions. Because our Halifax respondents reported pronouncing *shone* to rhyme with *John* less frequently than Golden Horseshow (Canada) participants, our results could be interpreted as evidence that Halifax English is moving away from Maritime English towards central Canadian English. It is also possible, however, to view these results as evidence not of a Halifax English in transition, but rather of a dialect which has always been, and remains, distinct from both Maritime and central Canadian English.

4. Conclusion

Our results show that while Halifax English resembles Maritime English in certain traits (such as use of the term *sneakers*), and resembles Central Canadian English in others (such as yod retention), it is in some aspects distinct from both dialects, existing as a unique form of Canadian English. Our Halifax sample population, however, consisted primarily of young adults. A sample with a greater range of age groups could have

provided, through the use of apparent time graphs, insight into whether Halifax English is gravitating towards Central Canadian English. Furthermore, a study focussing on words unique to the Halifax area could have provided more detailed evidence about the ways in which Halifax English differs from the dialects of the Maritime and central Canadian regions. Appendix B lists such terms.

Appendix A
Questionnaire

1. What do you call the knob you turn to get water outdoors or in the garden?
_____

2. What do you call the small cloth you use for washing your face?
_____

3. Does the first part of *radiator* rhyme with: **glad** or **glade**?

4. For you, does *vase* rhyme with: **face, days, cause,** or **has**?

5. Does *roof* rhyme with *aloof*? **Yes** or **no**?

6. Does *roof* rhyme with *hoof*? **Yes** of **no**?

7. Do you have the same or different names for these decks at the front of a house that the steps are attached to? What do you call them?

a. A small platform with a few steps coming down from it:_____

b. A bigger one with a railing and a roof over it:_____

c. A covered one extending along the front of a house:_____

8. What time is it? (Please write in words what you would say.)
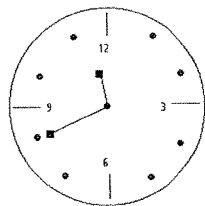
9. What do you call your evening meal?

_____

10. Which do you say?

___ He has **drank** three glasses of milk.
___ He has **drunk** three glasses of milk.

11. At meals, people are sometimes given a paper to wipe their fingers on. What do you call it?

_____

12. Does the ending of *avenue* sound like: **you** or **oo**?

13. What do you call casual wear for exercise - usually pull-on pants and a pull-over top?

_____

14. What do you call the rubber-soled shoes you'd wear with the above outfit?

_____

15. Does *shone*, as in 'The sun shone brightly', rhyme with: **John** or **Joan**?

16. Which of the following names do you use for a waterway smaller than a river?

___ crick
___ stream
___ brook
___ rill
___ snye
___ run
___ creek
___ other _____

17. What do you call someone who studies "too much" and tries very hard to impress the teacher?

_____

18. In "We are finally making progress," does the *o* of *progress* sound like the *o* of *go*, or the *o* of *got*?

_____

19. Does the beginning of *coupon* sound the same as *cue* or *coo*?

_____

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

_____

21. What do you call the piece of furniture where you keep your socks, underwear, and other clothing?

_____

22. What do you call the garment you wear over pajamas?

_____

23. What do you call food eaten between meals or before going to bed?

_____

24. Does route, as in "paper route," rhyme with: **shoot** or **shout**?

25. Which do you say?
___ The little devil **sneaked** into the theatre.
___ The little devil **snuck** into the theatre.

Appendix B

We limited our survey to questions on Chambers' *Dialect Topography* survey. This meant that we were unable to explore a number of other terms that were drawn to our attention which may be distinctive to the Maritimes or Halifax. These terms are listed here to perhaps inspire future research.

Sook is defined as a "whiner," or a "baby"--someone who wants to be pampered. Differing pronunciations of the terms *tour, aunt, tomorrow,* and *scallop* are noted. *Letting on* is sometimes defined as "pretending," while *scribbler* is often used to mean a "flimsy or cheap notebook." One respondent reported having a roommate from Ontario in college who used the phrase *it's pouring with rain* instead of *it's pouring rain* and suggested that we explore this further. We were unable to find out where the roommate was from, or even find anyone else who used this phrase.

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YA DUN KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT CANADIAN URBAN SLANG?

Tania Kalwani and Chris Kang

1. Overview

Canadian Urban Slang is a growing field of study within linguistics. The slang of Canada's largest cities is characterized by colloquialisms originating with the Caribbean immigrants who have come in the last 20 years. Canadian Urban Slang is gaining popularity as several urban musicians rise to prominence within the Canadian music industry. Canadian "Urbanisms" used in songs are now, through mass media, more likely to be disseminated nationally. This current study investigates the transmission of certain Canadian Urban terms from Toronto to Kingston. Specifically, the movements of 10 terms (as listed in Appendix A) were studied to track their usage in a major Canadian city (Toronto), in its suburbs (Mississauga, Brampton, Oakville, and Scarborough), and in a small Canadian city almost 300 kilometres away (Kingston).

2. Hypothesis

We hypothesized that the usage of the 10 Canadian Urban terms (*bashment, liming, put'ta clap, get mashed up, red cent, hol a fresh, ya breadren, gyal dem, drape up,* and *ya dun know*) would be higher in Toronto than in its suburbs. We also believed that those living in the smaller city of Kingston would not be familiar with any of the slang terms. When looking at age groups, we assumed that individuals who were under 20 years of age would be more familiar with Canadian Urban Slang than older speakers. Furthermore, we predicted that men would have a better understanding of such slang than women.

3. Introduction

Canada is a country rich in regional dialects and linguistic shibboleths. These variations largely stem from Canada's settlement and language contact patterns. An example of this is seen in Newfoundland, where the Irish settlers who arrived in the early 19th century (Kirwin 67) influenced not only Newfoundland's phonological variations but also some of its lexical items. Newfoundland words such as *slob*, meaning a thick type of slush, and *bungalow*, referring to a loose dress worn by pregnant women, come from Ireland's influence on Newfoundland. Similarly, B.C. English retains words found in the Chinook Jargon dialect of west coast Canada (McConnell 228). Aboriginals contributed to this dialect through words such as *saltchuck*, which means "ocean," and *skookum*, which means "big or strong" (McConnell 227). These words can be heard in Vancouver English to this day.

The fourth major immigration wave into Canada, following three earlier immigration waves peaking in 1793, 1850, and 1910, began in 1946. It brought natives from English speaking countries such as Hong Kong and the Caribbean

(Chambers 14). Caribbean immigrants have gravitated to the large cities and have brought with them lexical alternatives which have informed Canadian Urban Slang. Like Newfoundland English, Canadian Urban Slang is regionally confined. Slang is a form of casual speech that is usually transmitted orally among specific populations. In this case, it is believed that Canadian Urban Slang is a form of communication among individuals living in densely populated Canadian cities. It is a fairly new style of communication to Canadians because the Caribbean dialect has only existed in this country for the last 50-60 years (Chambers 14). Canandian Urban Slang has broadened its speaker base due to its use in mainstream Canadian music. Although these urban slang terms may be common within other nations, they are still gaining momentum in Canada's urban areas.

To us, this type of slang was intriguing because of its novelty, as well as its relative obscurity within Canadian speech. How widespread is Canadian Urban Slang? Is it expanding across age groups, genders, and localities, or is it stationary within certain categories and regions? These questions prompted our current research upon this emerging register. To focus our study, we decided to look specifically at the transmission of specific slang terms from Toronto and its suburbs to Kingston.

4. Method

A list of ten urban terms were chosen. They were selected based on their popularity and usage in Canadian urban songs. (A list of songs in which these words appear is provided in Appendix A.) The terms used in the survey and their definitions are as follows:

1) **Bashment** – basement party
2) **Liming** – hanging out
3) **Put'ta clap** – to beat up
4) **Get mashed up** – to get drunk
5) **Ya dun know** – you don't know
6) **Drape Up** – to get dressed up
7) **Gyal Dem** – girls
8) **Ya Breadren** – your friend
9) **Hol' a fresh** – to take a shower
10) **Red Cent** – to be broke

It was decided that a random subject sample would produce a fair representation of the regional populations being studied. Furthermore, it was felt that an oral survey would be the most effective means of collecting information because slang is used in oral speech. Therefore, we believed that an oral survey, in which the researchers pronounced the urban terms in question, would accurately depict the style of speech used in urban communities. A copy of the oral survey is provided in Appendix B.

All respondents were asked by the interviewers for their permission to record all answers. The respondents were treated in accordance with the guidelines for ethical research provided by Queen's University. Finally, all respondents were ensured of their anonymity in the project and were thanked for completing the questionnaire.

Results from Toronto were obtained in the downtown area of Queen Street and Spadina. Respondents were randomly stopped on the street and were asked if

they would like to participate in a survey about Canadian Urban Slang. Those individuals who agreed were asked to specify their age, gender, and length of residency in the city, and were then asked to respond to a list of urban terms read to them by the interviewer. They were instructed to listen to each word on the list and identify if they knew what it meant as well as to give a definition for it. A total of 30 responses were collected and analyzed from within greater Toronto. This method of collecting results was also followed within Toronto's suburbs. Once again, a total of 30 responses were collected from residents of Brampton, Mississauga, Oakville, or Scarborough. Finally, 30 more responses were obtained in the area of Kingston in the same manner. All 90 of these responses were then compiled and analyzed in various ways. The three independent variables being measured were age, gender, and location.

5. Results

Results have been divided into three regional categories (Toronto, Toronto suburbs, and Kingston). The influence of age and gender will be examined within regions. All results are reported graphically in Appendix C.

5.1 Results from Toronto

Within Toronto, males were consistently more likely to be familiar with Canadian Urban Slang terms (see Figure C.1 in Appendix C) than were females. Although males were not consistently familiar with all terms, they were significantly more successful than female Torontonians in identifying and defining them.

Greater male knowledge of Canadian Urban Slang is shown most forcibly in the term *get mashed up*, for which males widely outdistanced female respondents (see Figure C.2 in Appendix C). While comprehension of the term fell by 20% between the 20-and-under and 21-30 age groups for both males and females, males within the 31-40 age group demonstrated heightened levels of understanding, while female responses dived towards 0%. Within the two oldest age brackets, all male respondents living in Toronto were familiar with the term while all women were completely unaware that *get mashed up* means "to get drunk."

Interesting results were also seen with the term *ya dun know* (see Figure C.3 in Appendix C). Both males and females were correct at least 75% of the time in the <20 and 21-30 age groups. However, knowledge for this term plunged to 0% for women in the 31-40 category, while males continued to demonstrate 100% comprehension. Yet, surprisingly, within the 41-50+ age group, the women were at par with the men in their knowledge of *ya dun know*, with 100% comprehension.

The use of *drape up* had interesting findings as well (see Figure C.4 in Appendix C). Clearly, none of the women surveyed used the term at all, with none able to accurately define *drape up* in any age category. On the other hand, knowledge of *drape up* steadily declined for men across the 3 youngest age groups before rising to 66% in the 41-50+ group.

Another term with intriguing results was *gyal dem* (see Figure C.5 in Appendix C). Females in the <20 age group used the term more than their male peers. In fact, these women were at a 100% comprehension level while the men in the survey answered correctly only 75% of the time. However, as with all other terms, with

age, women began to decline in knowledge for *gyal dem*, eventually reaching an understanding level of 0%, while the men fluctuated between 50 and 75% comprehension across all age groups.

When analyzing the data for *liming* it was clear that the men in the 31-40 age category were more knowledgeable about the term than males in any other age group (see Figure C.6 of Appendix C). Females in this survey continued to be unaware of the meaning and definition, with 0% understanding for *liming* across all age groups. Overall, the results from Toronto clearly show that males are more knowledgeable than females about the use of Canadian Urban Slang terms. Also worth noting is that men in the 31-40 age brackets actually exhibited greater understanding than men of other ages for Canadian Urban Slang terms.

5.2 Results from Toronto's Suburbs

When examining the results for the surrounding areas of Toronto, it is clear that suburban females were more aware of Canadian Urban Slang terms than females from downtown Toronto (see Figure C.7 of Appendix C). Despite this trend, however, the men living in the suburbs continued to surpass the women in overall comprehension of Urban Slang.

With words such as *gyal dem*, *red cent*, and *liming* (see Figures C.8, C.9, and C.11 of Appendix C respectively), patterns between men and women were strikingly similar. Each gender group had a comparable level of understanding of the urban terms, with knowledge highest in the two youngest age cohorts. For example with the term *gyal dem*, understanding fell to 0% for both gender groups in the two oldest age categories (see Figure C.8 of Appendix C). Also, understanding for *red cent* plunged to 0% for both men and women after the age of 30 (see Figure C.9 of Appendix C). In their responses for *liming* (see Figure C.11 of Appendix C), while both men and women of the <20 age bracket were approximately equal in their familiarity with the term, within the 21-30 age group, only 20% of women accurately identified the meaning of *liming*, while 66% of men defined it correctly. Within the 31-40 and 41-50+ age groups, knowledge of *liming* fell to 0%.

Results for the term *ya breadren* (see Figure C.10 of Appendix C), however, were most interesting. Results revealed that while levels of knowledge were relatively equal between male and female respondents in the <20 age group before falling to 0% in the 31-40 group, after 41 years of age, comprehension of *ya breadren* for women soared to 100% while remaining at 0% for men. These results contradict our hypotheses that the greatest understanding of Canadian Urban Slang would be seen in males, as well as in those of the youngest age cohort.

When looking at all words, the results shown in Figure C.12 of Appendix C reveal that the most familiar slang term of the suburbs is *get mashed up*. In fact, 26 of the 30 informants in the survey knew that to *get mashed up* means "to get drunk." This is the same number of individuals who knew what *get mashed up* means in downtown Toronto (see Figure C.13 of Appendix C). However, a difference is seen between Toronto's suburbs and downtown when comparing the slang term *ya dun know*. In Toronto, 28 respondents knew the meaning of the term, compared to only 24 suburban respondents.

5.3 Results from Kingston

Within Kingston, overall knowledge of Canadian Urban Slang terms is lower than

in Toronto and its suburbs (see Figure C.14 of Appendix C). In fact, none of the surveyed individuals from Kingston knew the meaning of *hol' a fresh*. Also, of the respondents living in Kingston, only 2 knew the meanings *put a clap* and *bashment*, while only 4 understood the meaning of *drape up* (see Figure C.14 of Appendix C). On the other hand, more people from Kingston understood the meaning of *red cent* than from any other city. Nine individuals knew *red cent* in Kingston, while 8 in Toronto and 7 in the suburbs properly defined the term (see Figures C.14, C.13, and C.12 respectively of Appendix C). Taking a closer look at gender differences in Kingston, women tended to know more slang terms than men (see Figure C.15 of Appendix C), rendering Kingston the only area studied where females have a superior understanding of urban slang than males.

Also, Kingston females exceeded females of other cities in their comprehension of Canadian Urban Slang. For example, 10 females in Kingston knew the meaning of *ya dun know* while only 7 women in the suburbs and 9 in Toronto answered correctly (see Figures C.15, C.7, and C.1 of Appendix C respectively).

For both men and women, slang understanding peaked during the 21-30 age categories. For example, the term *get mashed up* was at 100% accuracy for men aged 21-30 but was at 0% for men aged 31-40 (see Figure C.16 of Appendix C). This pattern recurs with *gyal dem*, for which 50% of the men aged 21-30--but none of the men aged 31-40--answered correctly (see Figure C.17 of Appendix C). Men displayed a similar pattern in their knowledge of *ya breadren* (see Figure C.18 of Appendix C), with 100% of males aged 21-30 correctly defining the term against 0% of those in the 31-40 age group.

6. Discussion

All in all, our hypotheses were partially validated. Aside from the results found in Kingston, men generally had a better knowledge of Canadian Urban Slang. One possibility for this finding may be that men engage in more casual speech than women. During social gatherings like football games or outings to the bar, men are more likely to overhear new terms and attempt to integrate them into everyday speech. Also, men may have a superior understanding of Canadian Urban Slang because they are more likely than women to listen to hip hop music. Men may be more open-minded when listening to hip hop music compared to women, and thus may be more comfortable with new slang terms.

No single age group demonstrated consistently superior knowledge of Canadian Urban Slang. In some instances, younger generations were highly aware of certain terms, while in other instances older generations showed superior knowledge of the slang. Such variations between terms may have arisen from purely environmental circumstances such as familial situation. For instance, those in the 31-40 age bracket may be more familiar with slang if they have young children who use it. Basically, these older generations may be exposed to slang terms more often than younger adults who are still completing post-secondary education. Furthermore, increased knowledge among older adults may be due to the fact that certain slang terms may not actually be new to Canadian English. For example, those older adults living in rural areas of Kingston said that the term *red cent* had existed for generations as an expression for "being broke." Perhaps the longstanding existence of certain terms in Canadian English can be attributed to immigrants to Canada other than those from the Caribbean.

The final part of our hypothesis was actually disproved. While we had predicted

that those living in Toronto would have a broader understanding of Canadian Urban Slang, this was not true, because it was found that respondents from the suburbs had a wider knowledge of certain slang terms. One reason for this finding may be the diversity that is found in Toronto. Perhaps those we happened to sample in Toronto did not use these terms. This is in fact quite likely because a sample of only 30 was taken in downtown Toronto. Those 30 individuals may not have accurately represented the urban communities living downtown.

7. Problems Encountered

Many problems arose with our study. Firstly, our overall sample of 90 was not large enough to produce reliable conclusions. Also, our survey may not have been designed as effectively as possible. For instance, the type of music one listens to should have been noted. This would have allowed interviewers to correlate knowledge of slang terms with exposure to such terms through musical preferences. Also, while the survey was designed so that the interviewers pronounced the slang terms to the subjects, perhaps it would have been more efficient for the subjects to read the terms to themselves. We wonder if our respondents might not have better understood the slang terms had they pronounced the terms themselves. Another problem was that individuals were stopped on street corners and asked to participate. The respondents may not have been entirely forthcoming about their full knowledge if they were in a hurry to go somewhere and only answered the survey out of politeness. Finally, another problem with our study stems from our interviewing methods. While we approached strangers in Toronto and Kingston, respondents from the suburbs were selected from amongst our friends. Perhaps our results were slightly skewed by our confined suburban sample group, as our friends may have exceptional knowledge of slang that does not accurately represent that of the broader suburban communities.

8. Conclusion

Our study has potential for further investigation. Canadian Urban Slang clearly exists and is gradually gaining in popularity in certain regions. It would be beneficial for future work to be done in cataloguing these slang terms and their meanings, leading perhaps to the creation of a dictionary of Canadian Urban Slang. In fact, such a development would benefit all Canadians by acknowledging the fact that this type of slang exists and is acceptable for use in casual speech.

Appendix A

Source of Canadian Urban Slang Terms

1) **Bashment** - from "Bashment Sitt'n" by Tanto Metro and Devonte

2) **Liming** - from "Jonestown" by Sweet Thang

3) **Put'ta Clap** - from "What Happened to that Boy?" by Baby featuring Clipse and Pharrell Williams

4) **Get mashed up** - from "Clap your Hands" by A Tribe Called Quest

5) **Ya dun know** - from "Bacardi Slang" by Kardinal Offishall

6) **Drape up** - from "King" by Slick Rick

7) **Gyal dem** - from "Shake that Thang" by Saul Paul

8) **Ya breadren** - from "Jeevin' Life" by Kardinal Offishall

9) **Hol' a fresh** - from "How You Do Dat?" by Young Bleed

10) **Red cent** - from "Money Jane" by Baby Blue Soundcrew featuring Kardinal Offishall, Sean Paul, and July Black

Appendix B

Canadian Urban Slang Survey

1. How old are you?

2. What is your city of residence? Have you been living there for at least one year?

3. Sex:_____

4. What do you think the following words mean?

    a) *Bashment*

    b) *Liming*

    c) *Put'ta clap*

    d) *Get mashed up*

    e) *Ya dun know*

    f) *Drape up*

    g) *Gyal dem*

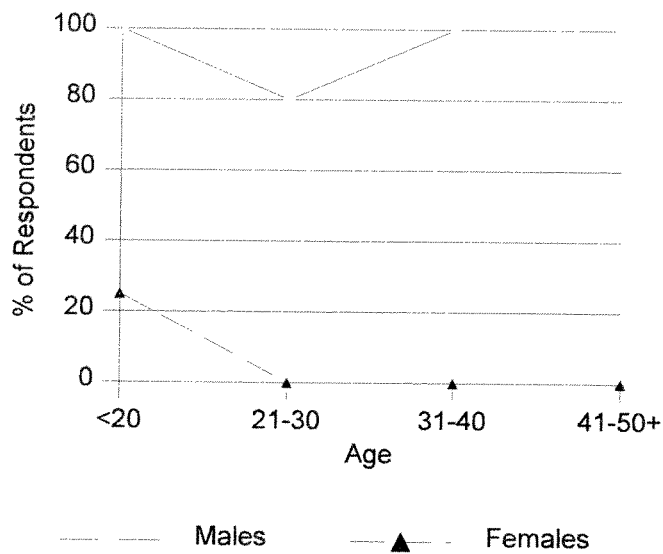   h) *Ya breadren*

    i) *Hol' a fresh*

    j) *Red cent*

Appendix C
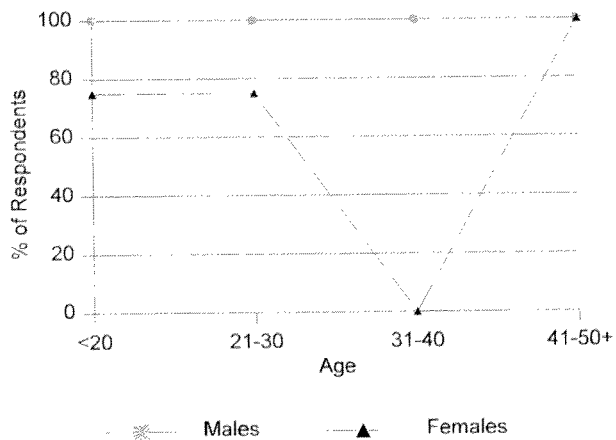## Statistical Figures

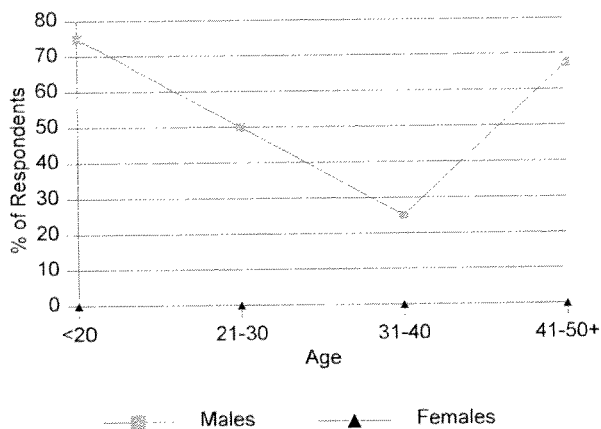## Figure C.1. Terms Known by Males and Females in Toronto
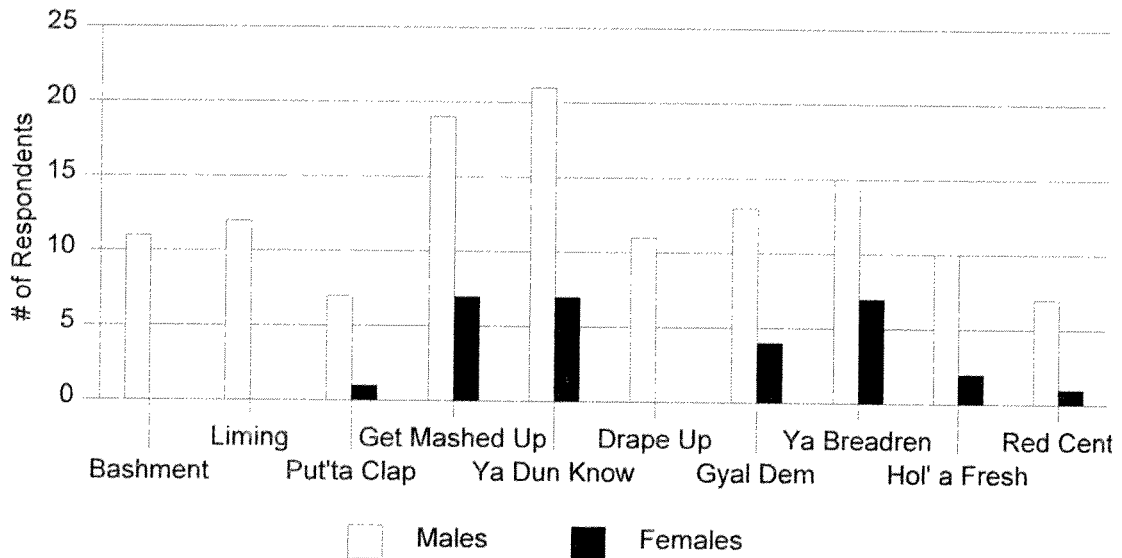
Figure C.2. Knowledge of *Get Mashed Up:* Males and Females in Toronto by Age

Figure C.3. Knowledge of *Ya Dun Know:* Males and Females in Toronto by Age

Fig. C.4. Knowledge of *Drape Up:* Males and Females in Toronto by Age

Fig. C.5. Knowledge of *Gyal Dem:* Males and Females in Toronto by Age
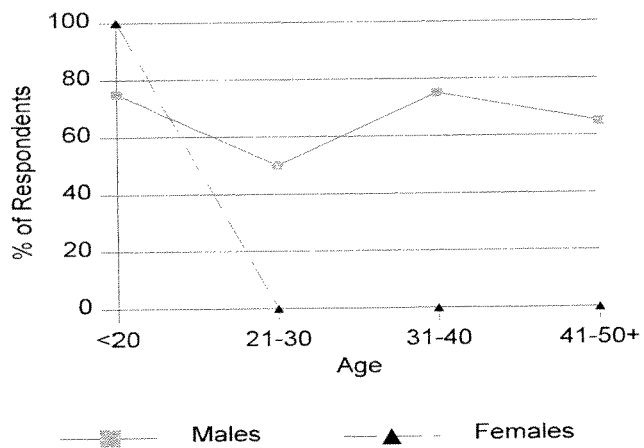
Figure C.6. Knowledge of *Liming:* Males and Females in Toronto by Age

Figure C.7. Knowledge of Canadian Urban Slang Terms by Males and Females in Toronto Suburbs
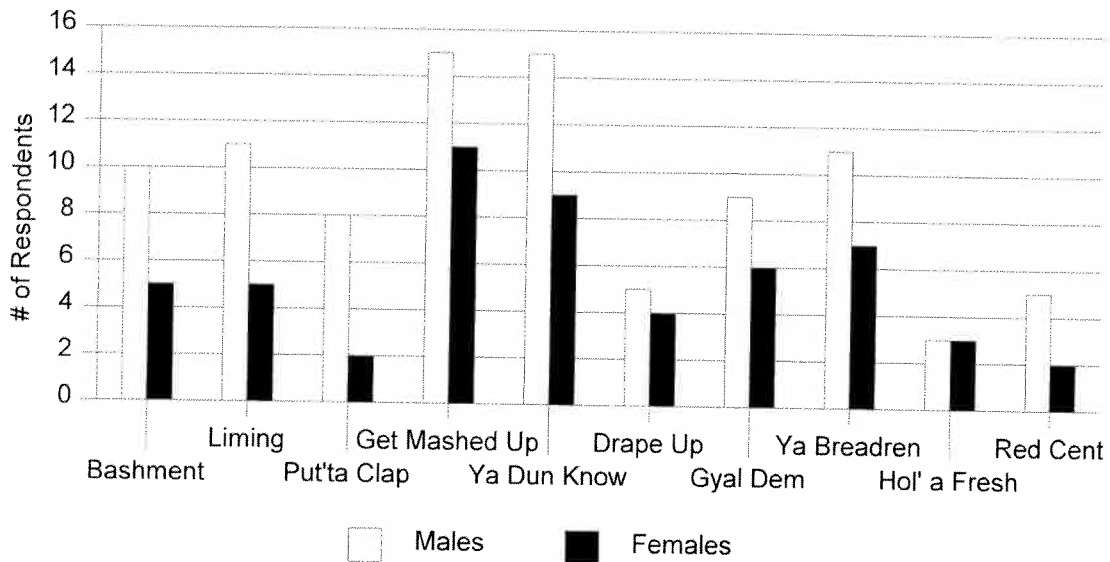
Figure C.8. Knowledge of *Gyal Dem:* Males and Females in Toronto Suburbs by Age

Figure C.9. Knowledge of *Red Cent*: Males and Females in Toronto Suburbs by Age
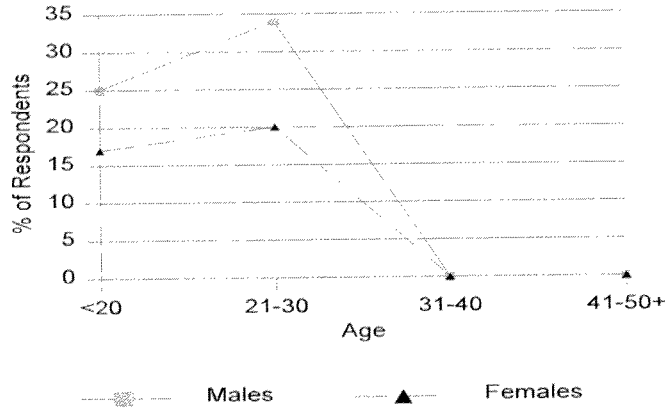
Figure C.10. Knowledge of *Ya Breadren*: Males and Females in Toronto Suburbs by Age

Figure C.11. Knowledge of *Liming*: Males and Females in Toronto Suburbs by Age
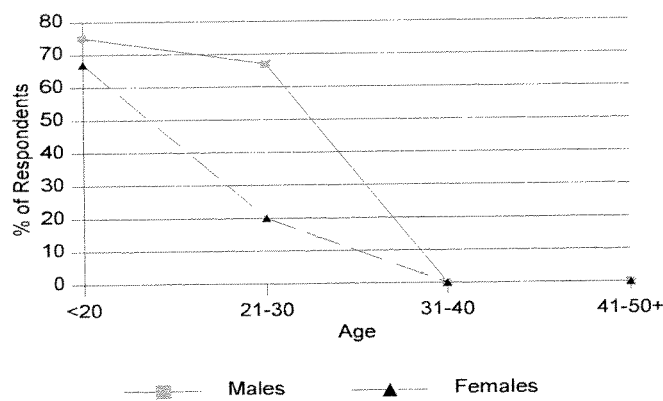
Figure C.12. Knowledge of Canadian Urban Slang Terms in Toronto Suburbs: All Respondents (N=30)
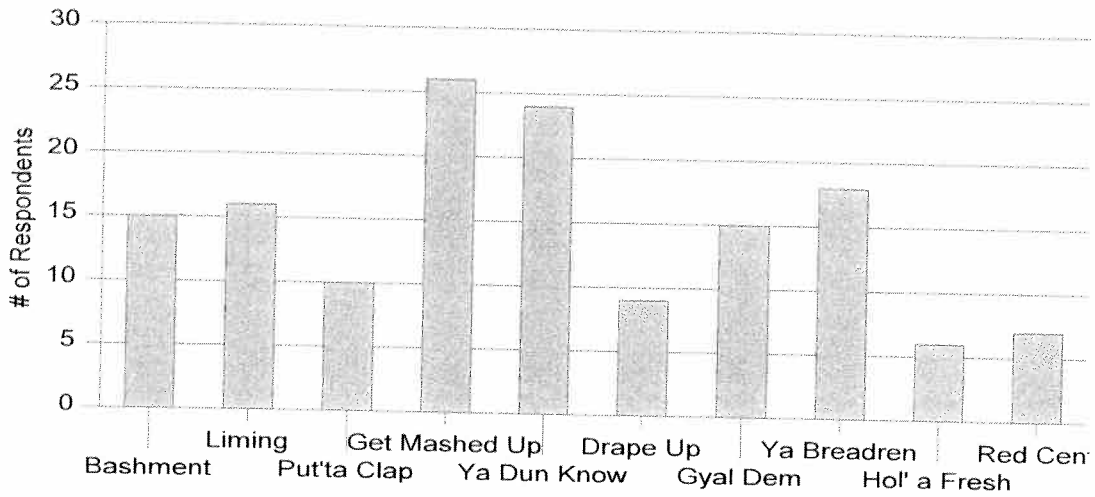
Figure C.13. Knowledge of Canadian Urban Slang Terms in Toronto: All Respondents (N=30)
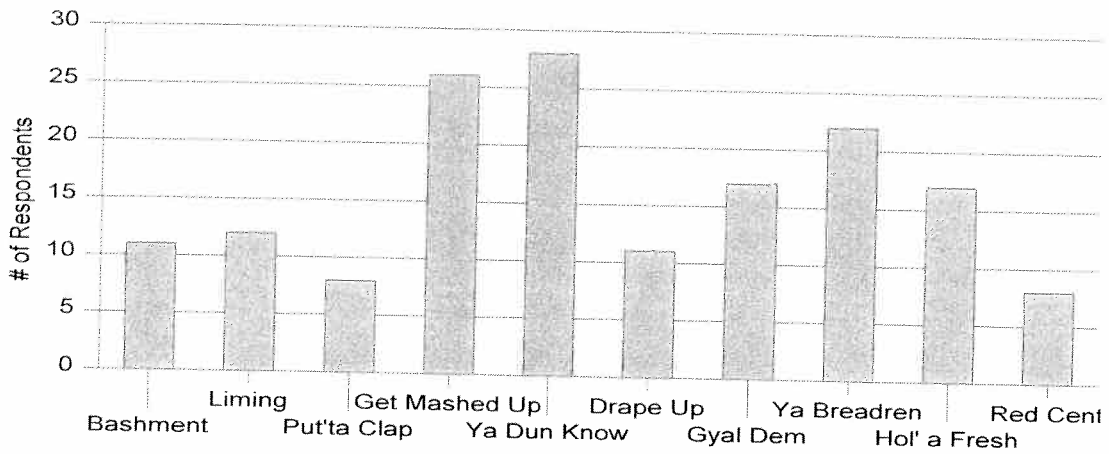
Figure C.14. Knowledge of Canadian Urban Slang Terms in Kingston: All Respondents (N=30)
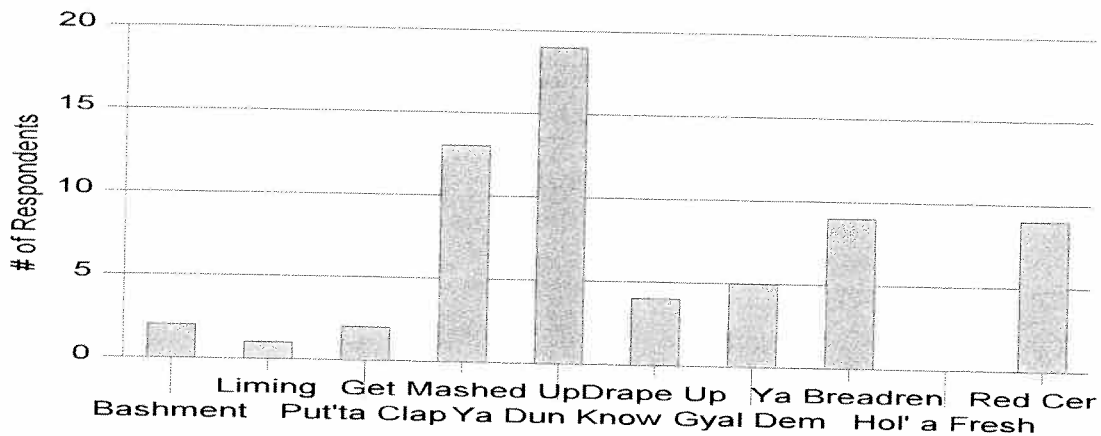
Figure C.15. Knowledge of Canadian Urban Slang Terms by Males and Females in Kingston
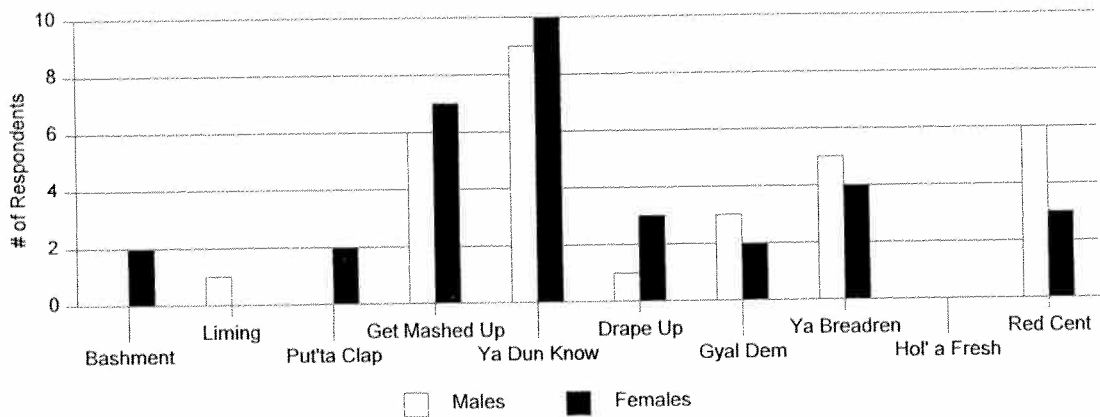
Figure C.15. Knowledge of Canadian Urban Slang Terms by Males and Females in Kingston

Figure C.16. Knowledge of *Get Mashed Up*: Males and Females in Kingston by Age

Figure C.16. Knowledge of *Get Mashed Up*: Males and Females in Kingston by Age

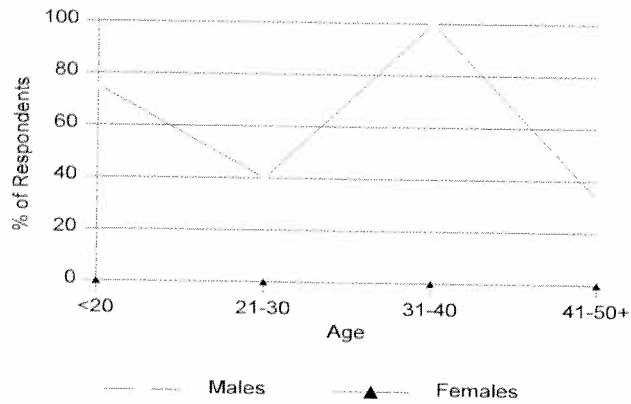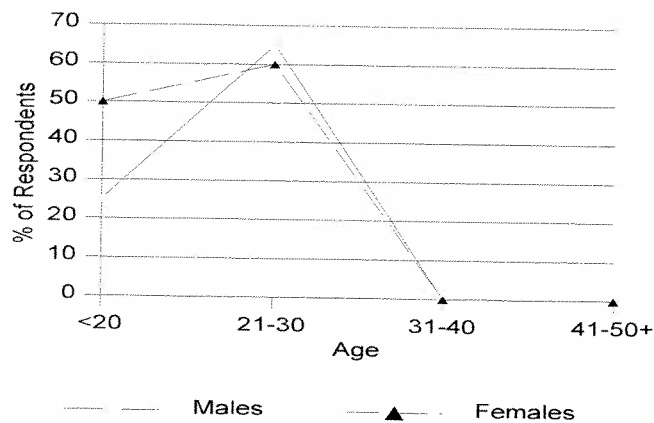## Figure C.17. Knowledge of *Gyal Dem*: Males and Females in Kingston by Age

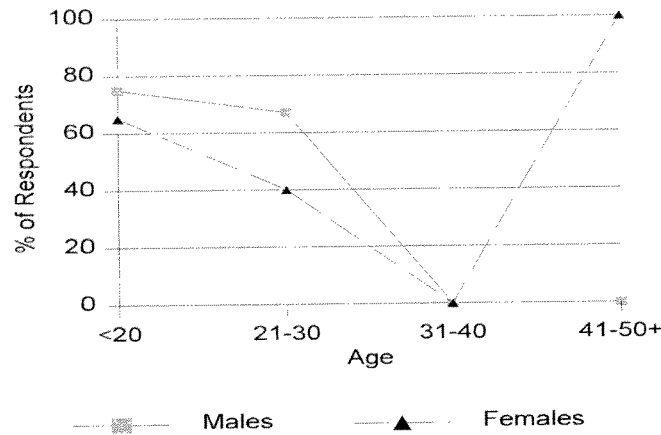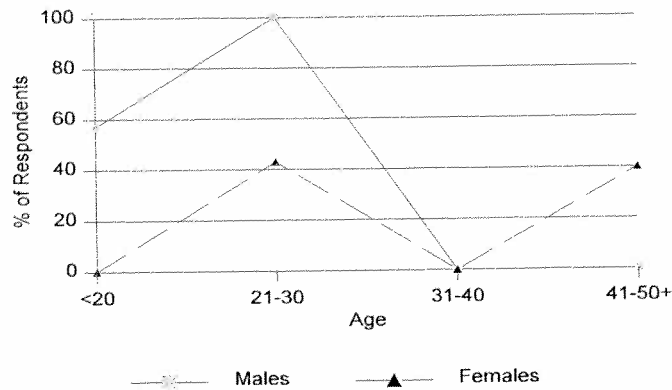Figure C.17. Knowledge of *Gyal Dem*: Males and Females in Kingston by Age
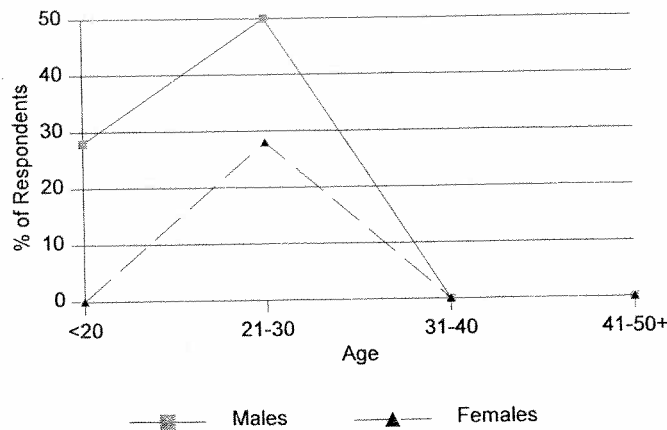
Figure C.18. Knowledge of *Ya Breadren*: Males and Females in Kingston by Age
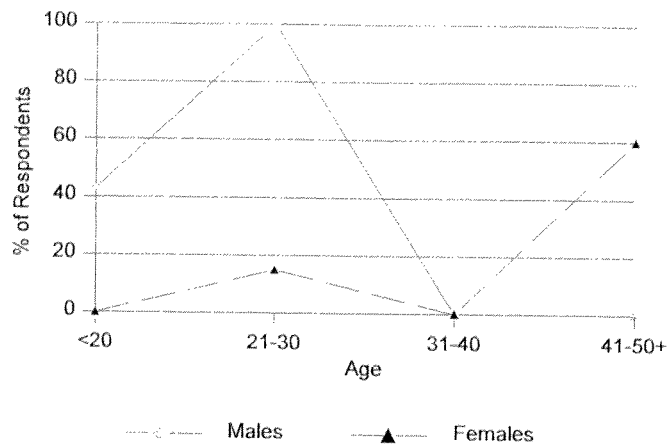
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I AM CANADIAN!
A STUDY OF CANADIAN ENGLISH AT QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

Kaleena Branchaud and Joanna Rekas

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

Inspired by Professor Jack Chambers' *Topography of the Golden Horseshoe Survey*, as well as the Molson "I Am Canadian" advertisements, the purpose of this study was to see if Queen's University students follow the stereotypes attributed to Canadian English.

1.2 Hypothesis

Since our subjects were all Canadian post-secondary students, we hypothesized that the majority would follow the stereotypes of standard Canadian English, because they are likely to be aware of these stereotypes and because they would want to adhere to Canadian "norms."

1.3 Survey Set-up

Our survey was composed of 5 sections, each comprising 5 questions. To see the survey in its entirety, please refer to Appendix A.

1.4 Methods

Our survey was handed out to 50 students in different years, classes, and social groups at Queen's University. Respondents were asked to fill out the survey to the best of their knowledge and ability. If participants had questions or problems with any area in the survey, they were encouraged to ask for assistance. The responses provided for our questionnaires were then tallied and compiled to produce the results outlined below.

2. Pronunciation

2.1 Summary of Findings

With respect to the question, "How do you pronounce the following words?", the overall results are shown below in Figures 1 and 2:

Figure 1. Overall Pronunciation Results - Canadian vs. Non-Canadian Usages (N=50)

Canadian Usages	# Respondents	Non-Canadian Usages	# Respondents
about - ou as in *louse*	20	*about - ou* as in *lousy*	28
zed	38	*zee*	12
Kay-beck	24	*Kwe-beck*	26
die-rect	33	*dih-rect*	17
Tronno/a	18	*Toronto*	32

*Two respondents did not circle an answer for "about." One stated, "I can't tell."

Figure 2. Popularity of Canadian Pronunciations Amongst Survey Respondents.

Canadian Pronunciations

- Aboot
- Kay-beck
- Tronno/a
- Zed
- Die-rect
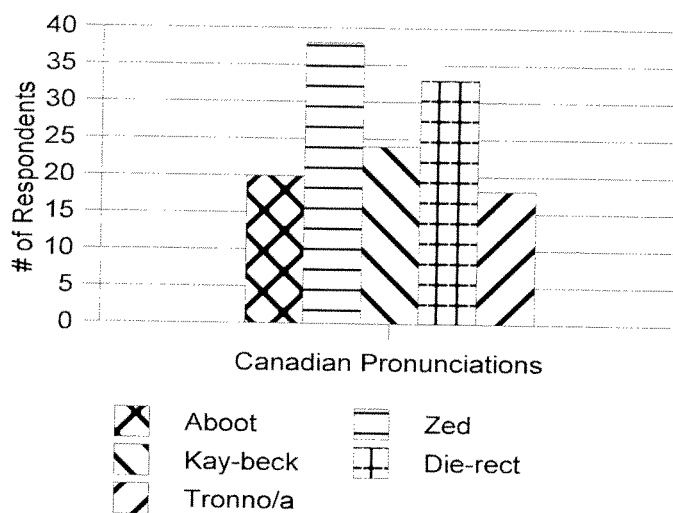
By examining the above results, it becomes apparent that Queen's students do not always prefer Canadian pronunciations for the terms presented in our survey. Many respondents were even unaware of the existence of stereotypical "Canadian" pronunciations for these terms. The following are the terms for which our responses did not follow what has been described as typical Canadian usage:

2.1.1 About

The Canadian pronunciation of *about* in our survey was determined to be [abʌwt], containing the *ou* of *louse*. However, the majority of our respondents (28 of 48) circled the non-Canadian pronunciation [abɑwt] (or, in our survey, the *ou* of *lousy*). One possible reason for this finding could be that our respondents did not recognize the difference in pronunciation created by the raised diphthongs of typical Canadian English.

2.1.2 Québec

In their pronunciations of *Québec*, our respondents were very closely split between Canadian and non-Canadian usages, with 26 participants preferring the Canadian pronunciation [kebɛk] and 24 selecting the non-Canadian [kwɑbɛk]. This split may be due to regional differences, with different regions more and less influenced by the French language.

2.1.3 Toronto

The pronunciation of *Toronto* with the elimination of the second *t* was found to be distinctly Canadian in prior research. Despite this finding, however, 32 of 50 respondents reported pronouncing *Toronto* with the second *t* included. As before, these results may have arisen partly from respondents' misinterpretations of their own pronunciations.

3. Spelling

3.1 Summary of Findings

The overall results of our survey's spelling section can be seen in Figures 3 below, which demonstrates the preference amongst many respondents for Canadian as opposed to non-Canadian spelling variants. Only one term, *analyse*, showed a significant divergence from its stereotypical Canadian spelling.

3.1.1 Analyse vs. Analyze

For question 2c of our survey (shown in Appendix A), only 14 of 50 respondents favoured the Canadian spelling *analyse*. Such low preference for the Canadian variant may have stemmed from an attempt to separate noun and verb forms (for instance, *analyses* vs. *analyzed*). Also, since most computer spell checkers employ American rather than Canadian English, in many word-processing programs, *analyse* is

automatically changed to *analyze*. Unless the student has changed this setting to Canadian English, the computer would automatically change the spelling *analyse*, thus making the student think it was wrong.

Figure 3. Overall Spelling Results: Canadian vs. Non-Canadian Spellings

Canadian Spellings	# Respondents	Non-Canadian Spellings	# Respondents
light	49	*lite*	1
colour	41	*color*	9
analyse	14	*analyze*	36
travelled	43	*traveled*	7

3.1.2 License vs. Licence

License was the spelling preferred by 36 of our 50 respondents. However, after collecting our data for *license* vs. *licence* (Appendix A, question 2.E), we realized that we hadn't taken into account the fact that some British and Canadian writers use different spellings to distinguish the noun *(licence)* and verb *(license)* forms. Thus, we cannot comment on whether our respondents' usage reflects the Canadian norm.

4. Naming

4.1 Summary of Findings

Figure 4 displays the results of our naming questions, and reveals a clear preference amongst respondents for what previous research has designated as the "Canadian" names for our survey objects. The name for only one object had changed according to our survey results, and that was the piece of furniture. Canadians demonstrated a preference for the name *couch* when describing objects similar to that pictured in question 3b of our survey (reprinted in Appendix A), followed by *sofa* and, lastly, *chesterfield*, which in previous studies was the favoured Canadian name. However, we believe that the language of Canadian society (or at least of the Queen's University student body) is becoming increasingly informal, *couch* was posited as the corresponding informal name used by Canadian students of Queen's University.

Figure 4. Overall Naming Results - Canadian vs. non-Canadian Names

Canadian	# Respondents	Non-Canadian	# Respondents
Pop	40	*Soft drink, soda, coke*	10
Couch	34	*Chesterfield, love seat, sofa*	16
Toonie	50	*N/A*	0
Toque	33	*Hat, cap*	14
Timbit	42	*Munchin, cake, rolled batter*	7

3.1.1 A Carbonated Drink

The results for question 3a of our survey, which asked respondents to provide a typical name for "a carbonated drink," are reported in Figure 4 above. The Canadian term *pop* was the choice of 40 of 50 respondents. Other respondents said *soft drink* (5), *soda* (2), and *coke* (3).

3.1.2 Sofa, Couch, or Chesterfield

While Jack Chambers, in his *Topography of the Golden Horseshoe Survey*, notes that the "Canadian" name for the piece of furniture pictured in question 3b of our survey (shown in Appendix A) has been *chesterfield*, in the past, our results revealed that most respondents preferred *couch* (34 respondents), followed by *sofa*[1] (10). Only 5 respondents chose *chesterfield*, while 1 suggested *love seat*.

3.1.3 A Two Dollar Coin

For question 3c, our respondents were unanimous; all 50 wrote some variant of *toonie* when describing a two dollar coin.

3.1.4 Hat or Toque

The most common responses[2] for the article of clothing pictured in question 3d (see Appendix A) were *toque*, the choice of 33 respondents, and *hat*, preferred by 13 respondents. *Cap* was mentioned by 1 respondent.

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[1]One respondent wrote "sofa/couch"; only the first response, "sofa," was used for this project.

[2]Two respondents did not answer this question, possibly due to the ambiguity of the picture for this question.

3.1.5 Timbits

For question 3e, when describing "a small donut with no hole in it," respondents generally provided the typical "Canadian" name, *timbit*[3] (42 respondents). Four chose *munchin*, while *doughnut*, *cake*, and *rolled batter* were selected by 1 respondent each.

4. Definitions

4.1 Summary of Findings

Figure 5 below indicates the number of respondents (out of 50 total respondents) who correctly defined the terms presented in section 4 of our survey (see Appendix A).

Figure 5. Overall Definitions Results--Number of Correct Definitions (N=50)

Chinook	27
Hoser	5
Mickey	36
Poutine	47
Canuck	37

With the exception of *hoser*, Queen's University students were normally able to correctly define our Canadian terms. Perhaps the term *hoser* is becoming outdated; this would account for the low response rate in our survey.

4.1.1 Hoser

The term *hoser* was obscure to many of our respondents, as only 5 were able to properly define the term as "a beer-drinking country dweller, or uneducated, 'happy-go-lucky' Canadian." However, 10 respondents defined *hoser* as "a loser," which is apparently becoming an increasingly popular definition for the term. Furthermore, 21 participants did not respond to this question at all, while 14 provided an incorrect answer.

4.1.2 Mickey

---

[3]One respondent wrote "timbit/doughnut hole"; only the first response, "timbit," was used for this project.

It was found that 36 respondents correctly defined *mickey* as "a bottle of alcoholic liquor." However, these correct definitions might have been more frequent had we placed the determiner *a* in front of *mickey* in our survey, possibly rendering the object itself slightly clearer. Many respondents thought that the term was associated with Disney's Mickey Mouse.

5. Slang Usage

5.1 Summary of Findings

Figure 6 shows the number of respondents who correctly used each of our 5 Canadian slang terms within a sentence.

Figure 6. Overall Slang Results--Number of Correct Uses (N=50)

Slang Term	Number of Respondents
Pogey	8
The Basket Weave	2
The Rock	10
Two-four	47
Eh	47

This section of our survey generated fewer correct responses than any other. Although the terms *two-four* and *eh* were properly used by a vast majority of respondents, the other three terms were familiar to very few. These three more obscure terms may either be highly regional or are becoming outdated.

5.1.1 Pogey

When asked to use *pogey* (slang for "employment insurance") in a sentence, only 8 participants were able to define and employ the term correctly. Most others wrote that they did not know.

5.1.2 The Basket Weave

The term *the basket weave* (referring to Highway 401, which snakes through the Greater Toronto Area) produced an even lower response rate than that for *pogey*, with only 2 respondents using *the basket weave* correctly within a sentence. Again, many wrote that they did not recognize the term.

5.1.3 The Rock

The Rock, a popular moniker for Newfoundland, seemed to be a highly regional term which was only used properly by 10 respondents, all of whom came from the east coast.

5.1.4 Two-Four and Eh

Despite the obscurity of our first three terms, the definitions of *two-four* and *eh* were well-known, with 47 of 50 respondents using each term correctly.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Problems Encountered and Possible Solutions

Several problems arose within our study due to miscommunication or our lack of specificity. For instance, as noted earlier, in question 3d of our survey's *naming* section, the picture of the *toque* was ambiguous. One respondent originally identified the object as a "tombstone" because it was black and read "pushing daisies." This confusion could have been avoided had a clearer image been chosen. Also, in question 4c of our survey's definitions section, many respondents associated the term *mickey* with Disney's Mickey Mouse--a misperception which could have been prevented by placing the determiner *a* in front of the term *mickey*. Finally, in a few sections, some respondents provided more than one answer. We should have indicated that only one was needed.

In addition to those related to communication and clarity, numerous other problems hindered our survey. For example, in our survey's pronunciation section, many respondents were unable to accurately identify which pronunciation they used - a problem which was partly remedied by having respondents read the terms aloud. Also, while we had initially intended to include gender as a variable, not enough males participated in our study to provide a representative sample. A similar problem arose with respect to regional distribution. We couldn't follow through on our intention to compare language usage between different provinces. Finally, the number of respondents (50) was too small to provide a fair representation of the Queen's community. Some of these problems would have been avoidable given more time, as well as judicious editing of the original survey.

6.2 Overall Summary of Findings

Despite certain aberrations from prior findings, the results of our survey generally confirmed our hypothesis that Queen's University students are "Canadian" in their English language usage. In their naming, spelling, and defining of terms, Queen's students mostly adhered to typically Canadian usages, as defined by previous research. Pronunciation and slang usage, however, produced deviations from expected Canadian

usages; nevertheless, we believe that if our sections had been more clearly defined and our wording more precise, our survey's results for slang and pronunciation would have been in accord with previous findings regarding Canadian usage. Future research which could flow from our findings include investigations into Canadian English within the Queen's community in relation to other areas of Canada, inter-provincial variations in language usage, and detailed analysis of the usage of individual terms collected in our survey.

Appendix A

I am Canadian Survey

Hello,

We are two students who are conducting research for a paper to be submitted in LING 202. This study involves gathering data from Queen's students on various aspects of their language by use of a short questionnaire. We are asking for your voluntary participation and the use of the data that we collect from your responses on this survey. Data collected is anonymous and will not be presented in any way that could identify any individual person. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us at [e-mail addresses].

Thank you for your time!

Joanna Rekas and Kaleena Branchaud

Personal Information:
What is your home Province? _____
What is your home City? _____
What is your gender? _____

1. Pronunciation

How do you pronounce the following words?

A) About	-	"ou" like in louse	"ou" like in lousy
B) "Z"	-	Zee	Zed
C) Quebec	-	Kay-beck	Kwe-beck
D) Direct	-	Dih-rect	Die-rect
E) Toronto	-	Toronto	Tronno/a

2. Spelling

Please circle the following spellings that you prefer:
A) Light   Lite
B) Color   Colour
C) Analyse   Analyze
D) Travelled   Traveled
E) Licence   License

3. Naming

Please give the names that you would call the following:
A) A carbonated drink _____
B) _____

C) A two dollar coin _____
D) _____

E) A small donut with no hole in it _____

4. Definitions

Please define the following words:
A) Chinook
B) Hoser
C) Mickey
D) Poutine
E) Canuck

5. Slang Usage

Please write a sentence containing each of the following:
A) Pogey
B) The Basket Weave
C) The Rock
D) Two-Four
E) Eh

Once again thank you for your participation in our study!

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DIALECTS AND SONG
EXAMPLES OF MARITIME DIALECTS IN TRADITIONAL FOLK MUSIC

Adrienne Nobbe and **Pamela Russell**

1. Introduction

Folk music is the music with which the people of a nation or an ethnic group most specifically identify themselves. Folk songs are a good source of linguistic information because their lyrics tend to tell a narrative. Rather than repeating phrases in order to accentuate repetitions in melody, folk songs emphasize plot. Storytelling and language are at the centre of most folk music. More than any other Canadian province, Newfoundland celebrates its distinct regional culture through folk music. Many of Newfoundland's traditional songs, such as "I'se the B'y" or "Kelligrew's Soiree," are nationally recognized, rendering folk music an effective and creative way to transmit Newfoundland's culture, including its language and dialect, beyond its borders. Our research paper will highlight the uniqueness of Newfoundland's dialect and culture by examining the linguistic traits of several folk songs common to the Maritime provinces.

Folk music consists of songs or pieces taught through performance rather than through written musical notation. A folk song is passed orally from singer to singer, and tends to undergo variation through the inventiveness, stylistic values, and (occasionally) slipshod memories of individual artists. A folk song does not have a standardized form. Rather, its words and music exist in more than one variant, or in slightly different versions.

There are many types of folk songs, including ballads, epics, work songs, love songs, children's songs, and religious songs. Ballads are songs centering upon one main incident, and often concern unhappy love, murders, warfare, and tragedies such as shipwrecks. Epics are lengthy narratives relating the adventures of a hero. Children's songs include lullabies, game songs, counting songs, and nursery rhymes. Work songs such as sea-shanties, railroad songs, or agricultural songs seek to strengthen the solidarity of a working group.

2. Lyrical Analysis

2.1 Stan Rogers' "Bluenose"

The term *bluenose* is an informal Canadianism specifically indigenous to the province of Nova Scotia. Originally a nickname, the term was first applied to both Nova Scotians and New Brunswickers, but later came to refer exclusively to Nova Scotians. *Bluenose* is a friendly nickname, implying that the person is thrifty and hardworking. Presently, the term is used in connection with many Nova Scotian enterprises and activities. Stan Rogers' song "Bluenose" refers to a famous racing schooner of the same name which first won the International Fisherman's Trophy in 1921 and never relinquished it, defending it four times against American competitors.

Rogers' song is replete with sailing phrases. For instance, "She is always best under full press / Hard over as she'll lay" means that the vessel, with all its sails set, will tilt when blown from the side by wind. Likewise, "They snapped their spars and strained to pass her by / But she left them all behind" means that the strain of the ship's sail could snap masts and spars, as often happens when the wind is strong and too many sails have been set. Finally, "That stings the cheek while the rigging will speak" refers to the sounds--the speech--of rigging absorbing the stress of a vessel under stinging gales.

2.2 Gordon Lightfoot's "Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald"

Though not a Newfoundland song, Gordon Lightfoot's "Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald" also deals with sailors. The following verse of Lightfoot's song refers to the fact that very few bodies are ever recovered from Lake Superior.

> The legend lives on from the Chippewa on down
> Of the big lake they call Gitche Gumee
> The lake it is said never gives up her dead
> When the skies of November turn gloomy

As the traditional First Nations name for Lake Superior, *Gitche Gumee* can be translated roughly as "Shining Big-Sea-Water." The cold and deep waters of Lake Superior allow bodies--the lake's "dead"--to sink rapidly, but are not conducive to natural processes of decomposition. This lack of decomposition causes a corresponding lack of oxygen-producing organisms in the water, allowing submerged bodies to remain indefinitely on the lake's bottom.

2.3 "I'se the B'y"

"I'se the B'y," like Stan Rogers' "Bluenose," is a popular song about sailing. When sung

with a Newfoundland accent, the lyrics "I hear with my ear" will sound like "I ear with me hear." For many Newfoundlanders, the sound [h] is added before a word beginning with a vowel, while [h] is not pronounced in words where *h* is the initial letter. This is a phonological trait of West Country English, derived from southwestern England.

Another phonological feature of the Newfoundland dialect is its diphthongs. Newfoundlanders often pronounce words with the diphthong [oj] to rhyme with *eye*, and merge the sounds [aj] and [oj], as shown in the title of the song "I'se the B'y", or "I is [am] the Boy." In this instance, *b'y*, or *boy*, is pronounced not as [boj], but rather as [baj], producing a rhyme with *I'se*, [ajz].

"I'se the B'y" also contains examples of Newfoundland's singular lexicon. For example, the line "Sods and rinds to cover your flakes, cake and tea for supper" refers to Newfoundland's fisheries. A *flake* is a platform on which fish are dried, and is made with branches and covered with pieces of peat and bark, known as "sods and rinds." *Flakes* are integral to the drying process which preserves the fish.

2.4 "Donkey Riding"

"Donkey Riding" is another song depicting the hard lifestyles of Newfoundland fishermen. A *donkey* is a timber ship's winch, which is a hoisting machine using cable wound around a drum. "Riding the donkey" refers to sitting on the ship's winch and turning it. A morpho-syntactic feature of this song is the use of the singular *was* for all persons, rather than the plural *were*. For instance, the line "was you ever in Miramichi" would be "were you ever in Miramichi" in Standard English. The song also features several second-person pronouns that are distinctly characteristic of the Maritimes, for example, *ya* for the singular second-person pronoun *you*, as well as *ye* for the plural second-person pronoun. Also, both *you* and *yer* are used as the plural possessive pronoun *your*.

2.5 "Mari-Mac"

"Mari-Mac" is a fast-paced folk song that reveals several linguistic traits unique to Newfoundland. The chorus is as follows:

> Mari Mac's mother is making Mari Mac marry me.
> My mother is making me marry Mari Mac.
> Well, I'm going to marry Mari, for when Mari is taking care of me
> We'll all be feeling merry when I marry Mari Mac

When sung with a Newfoundland accent, the *th* in the word *mother* is pronounced as a voiced alveolar [d] rather than a voiced interdental [ð], so that *mother* is pronounced as

modder. The *-ing* is replaced by *-in* at the end of words. When people replace *-ing* with *-in*, they are using an alveolar nasal instead of a velar nasal. In this context, the alveolar nasal helps to ease pronunciation. The tongue is at the front of the mouth for the [ɪ], and it is thus more efficient to leave the tongue forward for the alveolar consonant in *-in* rather than pulling it back for the velar [ŋ] *-ing*. Also, "Mari-Mac" features distinct pronunciations for *merry* and *marry*, whereas most Canadians do not distinguish between the two. While most Canadians pronounce both *merry* and *marry* as [ɛri], Newfoundlanders use [ɛri] for *merry* and [æri] for *marry* and *Mari*. Thus, when sung with a Newfoundland accent, the chorus sounds as follows:

Mahri Mac's modder's makin' Mahri Mac mahry me.
My modder's makin' me mahry Mahri Mac.
Well, I'm gonna mahry Mahri, for when Mahri's takin' care o'me
We all be feelin' merry when I mahry Mahri Mac

2.6 "Jakey's Gin"

The song "Jakey's Gin" contains numerous Newfoundlandisms referring to alcohol, as shown by the lines, "Others will swear by a drop of moonshine / But as for myself I'm a bottle of each, / Mixed in with a gallon or dipper of screech." From the dawn of Prohibition in 1929, illegally distilled whiskey, or "moonshine," was smuggled out of the backwater towns in which it was brewed. A "dipper" is a long-handled utensil similar to a ladle, and is used to obtain a drink from a barrel of alcohol (*Canadian Oxford Dictionary*). Finally, "screech" is a popular term for Jamaican rum. The story behind the name is that, during World War II, when American soldiers were stationed in Newfoundland, one soldier, eager to try a traditional Newfoundland drink, took a shot of local rum. When the American was once again able to breathe, he made a noise that could be described only as a horrible screech, giving the rum its popular local name. Also, it is important to note that in this song, words spelled with *ea*, such as *tea*, rhyme with *way*.

2.7 Stan Rosers' "Barrett's Privateers"

"Barrett's Privateers" is often mistaken for a traditional sailor's song because it uses sailor's jargon, as shown in the line, "The Antelope sloop was a sickening sight," in which the term *sloop* identifies a single-masted vessel with triangular sails rigged to its mast, rather than square sails rigged to spars on the masts. In this song, the "Antelope" is a cheap and poorly equipped vessel. Similarly, in the line, "The Yankee lay down with gold," the term *Yankee* refers to a New Englander. While the American sailors usually carry trade goods rather than large shipments of gold, the impoverished fishermen of "Barrett's Privateers" believe that these American ships represent untold wealth.

2.8 Gordon Lightfoot's "Canadian Railroad Trilogy"

In this section, we return to the songs of Ontarian Gordon Lightfoot. One of his best-known songs, the historical epic "Canadian Railroad Trilogy" contains lyrics which detail the work in the nineteenth century of building the first railroad that spanned the country. The opening lines of the song are steeped in natural imagery:

> There was a time in this fair land
> When the railroad did not run,
> When the wild majestic mountains stood alone against the sun,
> Long before the white man,
> Long before the wheel,
> When the green dark forest was too silent to be real.

Rather than using terms specific to any particular province or territory, the song describes the vastness of Canada's wilderness, allowing listeners from coast to coast to share in the history of a landscape that the railway tamed, as well as in the sacrifices of the workers who constructed it. "Canadian Railroad Trilogy" uses adjectives familiar to all Canadians because we live and breathe what those adjectives describe.

2.9 "Two Jinkers"

The song "Two Jinkers," concerning two men known as "jinkers" named Jimmy Walsh and Stephen, contains numerous Newfoundland localisms. For instance, the term *jinker*, derived from *jinx*, signifies a person who brings bad luck. "Two jinkers" tells how Jimmy Walsh and Stephen brought constant rounds of bad luck to the song's narrator while accompanying him and his crew on a sea voyage. In the line, "To the offer ground you see them bound, look out for squalls that even," the term *offer ground* refers to the off-shore. The song's next line concerns "landing on the Funks," with *the Funks* representing a group of small islands roughly 20 miles from Newfoundland's northeast coast. The narrator's final adventure with Jimmy Walsh and Stephen ends with their boat crashing into a *growler*, a submerged block of ice. *Growlers* are especially hazardous to ships because of their indeterminate size. During this collision, Stephen steers the boat under the guidance of Jimmy Walsh, who is the *scunner* (a "lookout" or "scanner") aboard their ship. In the song's final line, the narrator vents his frustration over his voyage with the two hapless jinkers: "Such constant strain might crack the brain; the fishery game I'm leaving / And if I raise, give all the praise to Jimmy Walsh and Stephen!" Notably, in this line, the narrator uses the term *raise* rather than the common term *rise* to describe becoming successful, or rising in the world (Mills 3).

2.10 Arthur R. Scammell's "The Squid-Jiggin' Ground"

"The Squid-Jiggin' Ground" was written by a teacher in Newfoundland named Arthur R. Scammell. This song simply describes how men go fishing for squid. The song's title describes the site where the *squid-jiggin'* (a form of fishing) takes place--usually an area of inshore waters with a seasonal abundance of squid. The song's opening lines describe some of the equipment used by fishermen who jig for squid:

> Oh, this is the place where the fishermen gather,
> With oil-skins and boots, and Cape-Anns battened down,
> All sizes of figures, with squid lines and jiggers,
> They congregate here on the squid-jiggin' ground.

From these lines, *oil-skins* are garments (of a wide variety) worn by fishermen which have been waterproofed with oil, while a *Cape-Ann* is a broad-brimmed rain hat with an extended back flap. A phrase used in reference to *Cape-Anns* in these lines, *to batten down*, normally means "to fasten or secure with a long, flat strip of wood or metal." While the term *batten down* is often used in the context of sailing, in which a sail's proper shape is preserved through the insertion of wood strips into its pockets, in this instance, the term is used figuratively to describe the act of securing one's hat. *Jiggin'* (or *jigging*) refers to fishing for cod as well as squid using squid lines and jiggers, the equipment needed to jig. While the term *squid lines* can refer to a line upon which squid are hung to dry, in this case, the term describes a strong, light line about 4 to 15 fathoms (7.3 to 27.4 metres) long to which is attached a jigger (a weighted line with 20 to 40 small, unbaited hooks). To catch a squid, this line is jerked sharply upwards. Finally, another piece of equipment mentioned later in the song, a *dory*, is a small, flat-bottomed fishing boat with high sides.

Localisms abound in the description of the fishermen as well as the equipment. For instance, in the line, "There's men from the harbour, there's men from the Tickle," *the Tickle* refers to a narrow strait or channel separating an island from another landmass. Also, these fishermen are "chawin' hardtack on the squid-jiggin' ground." The narrator is describing the chewing of a coarse, oval-shaped biscuit, kiln-dried and baked without salt, known as *hardtack* or *ship-biscuit*. The song ends with "spots of...squid juice...flying around," and "one poor little boy [getting the squid juice] right in the eye." In these lines, the *squid juice* is the dark, gooey liquid that the squid squirts when disturbed or caught.

2.11 John Burke's "Kelligrew's Soiree"

Part of the charm of the fun song "Kelligrew's Soiree" is its fast tempo, which makes keeping pace with the lyrics difficult. The song, written by John Burke, tells the story of

a large party held in Kelligrew, a small fishing village about 15 miles southwest of St. John's, Newfoundland.

The chorus abounds with vocabulary foreign to non-Maritimers. As these localisms are listed in the lyrics apparently at random, the composer's goal seems to have been to employ as many terms unique to the area as possible, as shown in the following lines:

> There was birch rine, tar twine, cherry wine and turpentine,
> Jowls and cavalances, ginger beer and tea;
> Pig's feet, cat's meat, dumplings boiled up in a sheet,
> Dandelion and crackie's teeth at the Killigrew's Soiree.

Birch rine (or "rind") is the bark or cortex of a birch tree, and is used in the fisheries as covering or insulation. Some fishermen even use *birch rine* to insulate cellars and barrels. *Tar twine* is twine which has been strengthened and waterproofed through a coating of tar. *Jowls* in this context refers to the fleshy part of a cod's head, but can also sometimes refer to a pig, while *cavalances* (also known as *callivances* and *calavances*) are small white beans often used in soup. While in Ontario we think of *ginger beer* as the effervescent soft drink that tastes strongly of ginger, in Newfoundland the beverage is often mildly alcoholic, with the alcohol made from a fermented mixture of ginger and syrup. The term *pig's feet* really does refer to a pig's feet; however, the *cat* in *cat's meat* refers to the flesh of a baby seal. *Dandelion* is a noun meaning "a bold stare," so that one could say, "He gave me a dandelion look." *Crackie's teeth*, an even more obscure localism, is used in reference to a small, yapping dog--a *crackie*--so-called because of its shrill bark. *Crackie* is also used in the popular Newfoundland phrase, "saucy as a crackie" (*Dictionary of Canadianisms*).

The song continues by describing a mishmash of miscellaneous items that the narrator borrowed from various friends for the soiree:

> Oh, I borrowed Cluney's beaver as I squared my yards to sail,
> And a swallow tail from Hogan that was foxy on the tail;
> Billy Cuddahie's old working pants and Patsy Nolan's shoes,
> And an old white vest from Fogarty to sport at Killigrew's.

In these lines, the term *beaver* refers to a hat made from a beaver pelt, while *squaring one's yards to sail* describes the positioning of a ship's sails at 90 degrees to the mast. A *swallow tail* is a codfish with an angular cut in the tail to mark ownership (*Dictionary of Newfoundland English*). The phrase *foxy on the tail*, used here to describe Hogan's swallow tail, is used to describe an object which has faded in colour due to old age.

Other lexical oddities arise in later verses of Burke's "Killigrew's Soiree." For example,

the term *pickaninnies* refers to a small, and probably black, child. In the line, "Boiled duff, cold duff, apple jam was in a cuff," *duff* refers to a pudding made of water, flour, and occasionally suet and raisings which is often boiled in a cloth bag. The term *cuff* is a Newfoundland regionalism for a thick, usually fingerless mitten made of wool, leather, or a woolly material known as *swanskin* which is worn in the winter.

2.12 Lumberjack Songs

Two popular Maritimes songs teem with terms concerning men forced to leave their homes during the winter months in order to make money driving logs. These songs portray the hardships of the lumberjacks, or the "shantyboys" or "shantymen" as they were often called because of their log cabins known as "shanties."

2.12.1 "The Badger Drive"

In "The Badger Drive," we are introduced to three types of equipment used by loggers: pike-poles, peavies, and caulks. A *pike-pole* is a long rod with a sharp point and hook used for moving floating logs. A *peavie*, named after its American inventor, Joseph Peavey, resembles a *pike-pole* in its elongated, rod-like frame, but ends, unlike the *pike-pole*, in a metal spike and hinged hook. Finally, *caulks* are small spikes fitted to the sole of a boot to avoid slipping while on logs.

2.12.2 "Hurlin' down the Pine"

In the song "Hurlin' down the Pine," we are introduced to new types of logging equipment. For instance, the term *double sled* refers to a heavy sled drawn by two horses which has linked sections used to haul wood long distances. Those involved in transporting the wood are the *chopper, sawyer, swamper,* and *teamster.* After the *chopper* has felled the trees, the *sawyer* cuts them into sawlogs. The *teamster,* guiding a team of animals, conveys the sawlogs along a path which has been cleared by the *swamper.* This process of removing clearing trees and undergrowth in preparation for hauling logs is called *swamping.*

3. Conclusion

As Newfoundland becomes socially and politically integrated with mainland Canada, its distinct English dialect has become increasingly influenced by Standard Canadian English. Heightened tourism has also forced Newfoundland's folk culture to adapt to meet the entertainment expectations of international audiences. For these reasons, the border distinguishing Newfoundland's folk music from other types of music has become

less distinct, revealing the importance of documenting Newfoundland's folk art as a measure of its linguistic, and thus cultural, heritage before it disappears.

Appendix A
Song Titles Appearing in our Paper

"Barrett's Privateers," by Stan Rogers
"Bluenose" by Stan Rogers
"Canadian Railroad Trilogy," by Gordon Lightfoot
"Donkey Riding"
"Hurlin' down the Pine"
"I'se the B'y"
"Jakey's Gin"
"Mari-Mac"
"The Badger Drive"
"Two Jinkers"
"Kelligrew's Soiree," by John Burke
"The Squid-Jiggin' Ground" by Arthur R. Scammell
"Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald," by Gordon Lightfoot

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HOW *REGIONAL* IS REGIONAL CANADIAN SLANG?

Aisling Boomgaardt

1. Introduction

Unlike many other national varieties of English, Canadian English is homogeneous across the country. This homogeneity exists because of Canada's relatively short history, lack of class distinctions, westward patterns of settlement, and mobile citizenry, who never stay in one place for too long.   Thus, in terms of lexicon, accent, and grammar, citizens of Vancouver and Ottawa speak nearly indistinguishable dialects. This similarity occurs in formal or standardized speech, but may not always occur during informal speech. Conversation among friends and peers is usually much more casual, and here lexical differences do appear. Within such casual speech, words arise that are deliberately used in place of standard terms for effects of humour or in-group camaraderie; these are called slang. Often, words employed in standard Canadian English are also used in informal contexts with different meanings. These slang words occur in disparate areas of Canada. Research done by Christina Cheung and Sarah Clarke (2002) revealed that some of these words are confined to small communities, such as schools, while others are used within cities, and others are even used nation-wide. Like Cheung and Clarke, I am investigating words that occur both in standard Canadian English and in the slang used in various areas of Canada, as well as how widely these slang terms are used. For my research, I had hoped to study different terms than Cheung and Clarke, but was ultimately forced to complement my own slang terms with terms from their earlier study (see Table A).

2. Words Used in the Survey

Residents of different parts of Canada were only to glad to volunteer terms that they use as slang amongst friends which, beyond their respective regions, are often misunderstood by others. The only restriction on words for the study was that they had to have a conventional dictionary meaning as well as a slang meaning. I also explored whether or not Cheung and Clarke's slang meaning for *shark* had expanded (either geographically or semantically), and I used the Newfoundland term *stunned,* just as they did.

Table A. Words Used in the Survey

Word	Acquired From	Slang Meaning	Dictionary Meaning
Shark	Victoria, BC	*v.* To relentlessly pursue romantically.	*n.*1. Carnivorous fish of the subclass Elasmobranchii. 2. Person regarded as ruthless, greedy, or dishonest.
Welfare	Vancouver, BC	*adj.* Ugly, cheap looking.	*n.* 1. Health, happiness, and good fortune. 2. Financial or other benefits provided, esp. by government, to people in need.
Power	Edmonton, AB	*n.* The device used to control the television from a distance.	*n.* 1. The ability or capacity to perform or act effectively. 2. The energy by which a machine is operated.
Tool	Saskatoon, SK	*n.* 1. A person who is impressionable, easily used by others; a loser. 2. A person who is dishonest.	*n.* A device, such as a saw, used to perform or facilitate manual or mechanical work.
Sauce	Winnipeg, MB	*n.* Steroids. *adj.* Drunk, inebriated.	*n.* A flavourful seasoning or relish served as an accompaniment to food, esp. a liquid or topping.
Camp	Thunder Bay, ON	*n.* A recreational property with a house, esp. for summer use; a cottage.	*n.* A place where tents, huts, or other temporary shelters are set up.
Hook up	Toronto, ON	*v.* 1. To form a romantic relationship. 2. To meet someone.	*v.* 1. To assemble or wire (a mechanism). 2. To connect a mechanism to a source of power.
Sketchy	Kingston, ON	*adj.* Untrustworthy, questionable, or uncertain.	*adj.* 1.a. Lacking in substance or completeness; incomplete. b. slight, superficial.
Random	Kingston, ON	*adj.* Unexpected, abnormal, or odd. *n.* A person you've never seen before in your life.	*adj.* Having no specific pattern, purpose, or objective.
Sweet	Ottawa, ON	*exc.* An exclamation of excitement or enthusiasm.	*adj.* 1. Having the taste of sugar or a substance containing or resembling sugar. 2. Pleasing to the senses; agreeable.
Jet	Ottawa, ON	*v.* To leave, depart.	*n.* A jet-propelled vehicle, esp. an aircraft.
Slam	Montréal, QC	*v.* To play basketball.	*v.* To shut with force and loud noise.
Jig	Carleton County, NB	*v.* To commit the act of truancy.	*n.* 1.a. Any of various lively dances in triple time. b. The music for such a dance.
Flat	Yarmouth, NS	*n.* A commercially packaged cardboard tray containing twenty-four cans of beer.	*adj.* Having a horizontal surface without a slope, tilt, or curvature.
Stunned	St. John's, NF	*adj.* Stupid, illogical, or ridiculous.	*adj.* Dazed or rendered senseless, by or as if by a blow.

As the slang and conventional meanings of the survey terms are juxtaposed (as in

Table A), it becomes clear what kinds of relationships exist between them. The most obvious relationship is one of expansion, wherein the dictionary meaning of a term is broadened to incorporate related ideas. For instance, the adjective *sweet* is used as an exclamation of enthusiasm, which is an extension of its standard usage as an expression of agreeability. In the case of *flat*, the adjective describes a commercially packaged cardboard tray, and so, by extension, *flat* is used as a noun. The same is true of the terms *welfare, hook up, power, sauce, jet, tool,* and *camp*: their slang meanings are directly linked to their standard meanings, and were most likely derived directly from them.

Misinterpretation of the standard meaning of words also affects the evolution of slang, as shown by the Kingston-area terms *sketchy* and *random*. These terms have been misused so often that they are readily accepted in their slang forms in many cases. For example, the slang meaning of *sketchy* now encompasses "untrustworthy" as well as "incomplete," darkening the term's connotations. In this instance, misinterpretation has facilitated expansion. The meaning of *random* has also widened to include "purposeless" in addition to "abnormal, unusual, or uncharacteristic." *Random* is an adjective in both cases, but has also become a noun which refers to an unidentifiable person. Clearly, these slang usages are misinterpretations of standard Canadian usage.

The last relationship to be expected between slang and standard meanings is that some terms have slang meanings that just do not have any obvious relationship with the standard definition. For instance, *slam* is a slang word from Montréal which also has nothing to do with its dictionary definition: although the term most likely derives from basketball's "slam dunk," there is no logical connection between playing basketball and shutting something with force and loud noise. Also, according to Cheung and Clarke, the romantic meaning of *shark* originated from an international college in Victoria, while *stunned* is largely confined to Newfoundland. Since these expressions are unique, they were likely coined by one person, or perhaps by a small group, and then spread within the community. Radically divergent from their standard definitions, these slang meanings will not likely be understood by anyone outside of their respective communities.

3. Procedure

My research was done by distributing a survey over e-mail to a variety of people aged 12 to 55 (see Appendix A: Canadian English Slang Survey). My goal was to reach people from diverse regions of Canada so that I could see how far a slang meaning, or term, travels. I relied on people passing the survey along to contacts in other provinces, which worked quite well. Because I was also interested in whether young British adults use slang terms similar to Canadians', I attempted to obtain a few

responses from the United Kingdom.

At the beginning of the survey, respondents were asked to give their age, gender, mother tongue, and a list of all the places in which they had lived for more than five months. The survey contained 30 sentences, in which each of the 15 terms was used in two sentences. The first sentence employed a term in the context of its standard dictionary meaning, while the second sentence used the word in its slang context. After each sentence the participants were asked to state if they understood the term as used in that particular context, as well as whether or not they would use the term as slang in that particular context. For the sentence featuring the slang meaning, participants were also asked to define the term. This question was asked to determine whether the participant truly understood the slang meaning of the term.

4. Results and Analysis

A total of 47 people responded to the survey (see Table B below for city of residence). The majority of respondents were students, many of whom have lived in different cities. To take into consideration the fact that a respondent who has lived in both Ottawa and Toronto has been exposed to both lexicons, this respondent would be placed in the "Ottawa" group for an Ottawa-area term like *jet*, and in the "Toronto" group for a Toronto-area term such as *hook up*.

LOCATION	# OF RESPONDENTS
Vancouver, BC	5
Kamloops, BC	1
Edmonton, AB	2
Saskatoon, SK	1
Winnipeg, MB	2
Thunder Bay, ON	1
London, ON	3
Kitchener-Waterloo, ON	2
Toronto, ON	6
Peterborough, ON	2
Kingston, ON	7
Ottawa, ON	36

LOCATION	# OF RESPONDENTS
Montréal, QC	3
Cheticamp, NS	1
Yarmouth, NS	1
Onslow, NS	1
U.S.A.	6
London, UK	4

Table B. Summary of Respondents' Various Areas of Residence

All of the respondents understood and would use each survey word with its standard meaning, likely due to the fact that every respondent's first language or mother tongue was English. Thus, there is no need to present any results for the (a) sentences, in which the terms were employed in their standard form. The results (as shown in Tables C.1-15) for the second and, in one case, third sentences for each word, which illustrated the slang use of the word, were much more interesting, and are discussed below in detail.

Shark, as stated above, is a local expression from a small college in Victoria, British Columbia. Although there are no survey respondents from that city, two people from British Columbia understand this meaning of the word, but would not use it themselves. Similarly, the word is understood by other respondents outside of Canada - albeit a low percentage (15%) - but would never actually be used by them in a sentence.

The rate of comprehension of the slang meaning of *welfare* is identical between British Columbians and non-British Columbians. Because many people already understand the standard definition of *welfare*, we believe they are able to deduce the slang meaning. Surprisingly, more people outside of British Columbia would actually use the slang term: 32% vs. 16% for B.C. residents.

Tool seems to be a slang word that is popular all across Canada, with nearly 50% of all Canadians using it. The wide use of this slang term could be due to the fact that it has several different meanings: in western Canada, a *tool* is someone who can be easily used by others; in eastern Canada, especially in Ontario, it is someone who is dishonest or a loser. One person suggested that it was a derogatory term for a homosexual, and older respondents all thought of it as related to the phrase *useless tool* – referring to someone who is not the brightest.

While the slang definition we used for *sauce* in my survey related exclusively to illegal drugs or steroids, many respondents used the term as slang for "alcohol" or "being inebriated." Both Manitoban respondents would use the term, while only 17% of non-Manitobans would use it, suggesting that *sauce* is a highly localized word.

Many respondents understood the meaning of the slang term *power* merely because of its use in the context of my sample sentence. I discounted these responses. I found that only 50% of Albertans would use the word, while no other Canadians would use it. The 2% in the non-Alberta box (see Table C.5) represents the response of one British fellow who said he would use the term.

The use of *random* as a noun is a very interesting phenomenon. In most cases, it simply represents the shortened form of "random person." Comprehension of its slang meaning is higher in Kingston (100%) than elsewhere (65%), suggesting that this usage has mainly become popular in Kingston. Kingstonians also seem to realize that *random* is a special term that only they use in this way.

The responses for *sweet* (see Table C.7) are the highest of the entire survey in both the understanding (90%) and usage (90%) categories. Although provided by a resident of Ottawa, this slang term is obviously not restricted to Ottawa, or even Canada, because all of the respondents who currently live in the United States also understood and would use this slang term. The widespread distribution of this slang usage for the word *sweet* suggests it has perhaps been conveyed to Canada through media or other means. Interestingly, all of the British respondents also understood the term, but would never use it because it sounds too "American."

Similarly, *jet* is understood by most Canadians (80-83%) and all of the American respondents. Oddly, however, only about 53% of Canadians would actually use the term in casual speech. It seems again that *jet* has likely been transmitted through the media, but it is not popular enough to actually be used by everyone.

The use of *camp* to refer to a cottage likely represents an expansion, but despite its semantic transparency it remains a highly localized slang term. The term was provided by a Thunder Bay native who used it frequently, but the only other respondents who understood the slang meaning were those from the United Kingdom or those who heard residents of Northern Ontario use the word.

Hook up resembles *sweet* in its high responses (see Table C.10) for both understanding and usage within Toronto (89% understanding and 71% use), as well as in other parts of North America and the United Kingdom (98% understanding and 80% use). Many of the American respondents reported using it, suggesting that it likely originated in the United States.

The use of *slam* emerged as highly localized, despite the fact that it comes from a large metropolitan area, Montréal. Only 33% of residents from that city understood its meaning and would use the term. The 5% of non-Montréalers who would actually use the term came from London, England, suggesting that perhaps it is a popular word in England. Many Kingston respondents were confused by the term and believed that it referred to to the tradition of jacket-slamming by Queen's University's engineering students.

Flat is a term unknown to most: only 66% of the Nova Scotian respondents understood and would use it. Ontarians and British Columbians were the only others who understood the term (43%) and might use it (11%).

Stunned has a traditional Newfoundland usage, but, sadly, there were no respondents from Newfoundland through whom to gauge its current popularity. Among respondents from beyond Newfoundland, the term was mainly understood (26%) and used (13%) by respondents from the Maritimes and rural Ontario (see Table C.13).

Unfortunately, there were also no respondents from New Brunswick, which meant that the New Brunswick slang term *jig* could only be examined outside that province. Only 32% of respondents, some of whom were from other Maritime provinces, actually understood the term, and none of them would use it (see Table C.14).

Sketchy, like *random*, is a slang term that Kingston residents use more frequently than anyone else. It has the same popularity as *random:* 100% of Kingston respondents understand the slang meaning, and 70% would use it. However, only 56% of non-Kingston respondents understood the slang meaning of *sketchy*, and only 35% would actually use the term in its slang context.

Tables C.1-15: Survey Results (%)

C.1: **Shark**

	Understood	Would Use
British Columbia	33	0
Non-British Columbia	15	0

C.2: **Welfare**

	Understood	Would Use
British Columbia	50	16
Non-British Columbia	51	32

C.3: **Tool**

	Understood	Would Use
Saskatchewan	100	0
Non-Saskatchewan	65	50

C.4: **Sauce**

	Understood	Would Use
Manitoba	100	100
Non-Manitoba	38	17

C.5: **Power**

	Understood	Would Use
Alberta	50	50
Non-Alberta	42	2

C.6a: **Random (noun)**

	Understood	Would Use
Kingston, ON	100	71
Non-Kingston	65	25

C.6b: **Random (adjective)**

	Understood	Would Use
Kingston, ON	86	70
Non-Kingston	78	66

C.7: **Sweet**

	Understood	Would Use
Ottawa, ON	88	72
Non-Ottawa	90	90

C.8: Jet

	Understood	Would Use
Ottawa, On	83	53
Non-Ottawa	80	54

C.9: Camp

	Understood	Would Use
Thunder Bay, ON	100	100
Non-Thunder Bay	30	11

C.10: Hook Up

	Understood	Would Use
Toronto, ON	89	71
Non-Toronto	98	80

C.11: Slam

	Understood	Would Use
Montreal, QC	33	33
Non-Montreal	20	5

C.12: Flat

	Understood	Would Use
Nova Scotia	66	66
Non-Nova Scotia	43	11

C.13: Stunned

	Understood	Would Use
Newfoundland	N/A	N/A
Non-Newfoundland	26	13

C.14: **Jig**

	Understood	Would Use
New Brunswick	N/A	N/A
Non- New Brunswick	32	0

C.15: **Sketchy**

	Understood	Would Use
Kingston, ON	100	70
Non- Kingston	56	35

5. Problems

Numerous difficulties arose during research. The first of these was trying to find words for the survey that had not been investigated by Cheung and Clarke, as well as words originating from diverse regions of Canada. While I did manage to obtain words from widely distributed communities, I found that I had to recycle some of the words from the previous survey. Another problem surfaced as the survey was being composed. It was easy enough to write sentences containing the standard and slang meanings of each word, but, within a few sentences, the slang meaning was revealed contextually. A few respondents acknowledged that they *understood* the meaning of a term although they had never previously encountered it in such a context. Although I tried to counteract this problem by discounting positive "understood" responses from anyone unable to define the slang term, I still suspect that the percentage of people who truly understood each term in its slang form is slightly lower than the results presented in Table C. Finally, many of my survey results are lower than those recorded by Cheung and Clarke. This may be because my respondent pool included a higher number of adults, who were less likely to use the slang terms.

6. Conclusion

I thoroughly enjoyed collecting the interesting slang words and expressions needed for my report. It seems that while certain slang expressions are indeed restricted to a local setting, many others are used all across Canada. Thus, like Cheung and Clarke, I must conclude that Canadian slang can be divided into three categories: words confined to small communities; words particular to Canada; and words acquired from other countries, usually the United States.

Appendix A
Canadian English Slang Survey

The purpose of this survey is to discover some words in Canadian English that are also used as slang in different areas of the country and to determine how widely they are used.

Before you start, please provide the following information about yourself:

Age:
Gender:
Is English your first language?
Places you have lived for more than five months:

Now, on to the questions. When we ask about a word, we are referring to the one in bold:

1. a) A common misconception is that **sharks** love to eat humans.
    Do you understand the word in this context?
    Would you yourself use the word in this context?

b) John got my number from Sue and is always coming over to our house; he **sharks** me, but I am not interested in him.
    Do you understand the word in this context?
    Would you yourself use the word in this context?
    What does this word mean?

2. a) It seems that nowadays the people on **welfare** are not actually the ones who need it.
    Do you understand the word in this context?
    Would you yourself use the word in this context?

b) Why did you buy that shirt? It is so **welfare**.
    Do you understand the word in this context?
    Would you yourself use the word in this context?
    What does this word mean?

3. a) Can you pass me that **tool**? I need to fix the cabinet.
    Do you understand the word in this context?
    Would you yourself use the word in this context?

b) You should never have dated him – he is such a **tool**.
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?
What does this word mean?

4. a) You're putting carrots in the spaghetti **sauce**?
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?

b) That boy on the track team is definitely on the **sauce**.
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?
What does this word mean?

5. a) The **power** has been shut off – that's why it's so dark.
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?

b) Could you pass me the **power** so I can change the channel?
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?
What does this word mean?

6. a) The experimenters took a **random** sample to ensure their results were unbiased.
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?

b) I just saw my best friend from kindergarten walking down Princess St. How **random**.
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?

c) The morning after the party I found some **random** sleeping on my couch.
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?
What does this word mean?

7. a) That cake is too **sweet** for me.
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?

b) Party tomorrow at your place? **Sweet**!
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?
What does this word mean?

8. a) I flew to Halifax on a Jumbo **Jet**.
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?

b) It's been nice chatting with you, but I've got to **jet**.
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?
What does this word mean?

9. a) The sun is going down – this is a good place to set up **camp**.
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?

b) I'm going to my **camp** for the long weekend with my parents.
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?
What does this word mean?

10. a) I'm trying to **hook up** the TV to the VCR.
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?

b) So did you and Sally **hook up** over the weekend?
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?
What does this word mean?

11. a) Please don't **slam** the door.
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?

b) Do you want to go outside to **slam**?
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?
What does this word mean?

12. a) This countryside is **flat** and boring.
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?

b) Phil, you were supposed to pick up a **flat** at the store so we could party.
Do you understand the word in this context?
Would you yourself use the word in this context?
What does this word mean?

13. a) The child was a little **stunned** after he walked into the wall.
   Do you understand the word in this context?
   Would you yourself use the word in this context?

b) You are some **stunned** – that's a ridiculous idea!
   Do you understand the word in this context?
   Would you yourself use the word in this context?
   What does this word mean?

14. a) A **jig** is a lively kind of dance.
   Do you understand the word in this context?
   Would you yourself use the word in this context?

b) I'm going to **jig** this afternoon and go fishing instead.
   Do you understand the word in this context?
   Would you yourself use the word in this context?
   What does this word mean?

15. a) Sorry, I can't help you study, my knowledge of that subject is pretty **sketchy**.
   Do you understand the word in this context?
   Would you yourself use the word in this context?

b) That caf food looks pretty **sketchy** – I wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole.
   Do you understand the word in this context?
   Would you yourself use the word in this context?
   What does this word mean?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The information you have provided will remain confidential and will be an invaluable component to our research.

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HOW'S SHE GOIN' B'Y?
A STUDY OF NEWFOUNDLAND'S BEST-KNOWN COLLOQUIALISM

Elizabeth Cook and Kristina Kolly

1. Introduction

While subtle, regional differences in Canadian speech abound, one of the most distinct regions of speech within Canada is Newfoundland: its historical and geographical isolation from the rest of the country has greatly influenced the evolution of speech patterns and colloquialisms. The province's location has also greatly affected its language use, as certain linguistic tendencies specific to maritime fishing culture have permeated the everyday speech of all residents. One colloquialism of particular interest to us was the word *b'y*; in this paper, we will examine the term's historical origins and current usage.

2. Origins and Development

B'y clearly derives from the word *boy*, and in many ways simply represents the word's singular Newfoundland pronunciation. Interestingly, however, *b'y* has undergone a distinct evolution within Newfoundland in both usage and meaning, rendering the term regionally unique.

Not surprisingly, because of Newfoundland's connection to fishing life, it was among fishermen that the term *b'y* first gained popularity. In British fisheries as early as the late 1700s, inexperienced men on their first fishing voyage would be referred to as "b'y" by their fellow crewmen. Fishermen also used the term as an expression of jovial condescension towards less experienced fishermen (Stroy, Kirwin and Widdowson 60).

Because of the economic and cultural significance of fishing within Newfoundland, many of the province's folk songs and tales are steeped in its imagery. Below is a verse from one such Newfoundland folk song, entitled "For the Fish We Must Prepare":

> The winter will soon be past, b'ys,
> Look out for maggots and flies
> Summer time is drawing near,
> For the fish we must prepare. (Somers and Peacock 130)

In this excerpt, the word *b'ys* refers to young fishermen who are being told to prepare for the summer fishing season after a long winter. The song's narrator is a more

experienced fisherman, who is instructing them. While *b'ys* is in this case uttered by a superior speaking to his subordinates, the term is not used patronizingly. Rather, it is used almost as a term of endearment, or at least as a very casual--but still respectful--form of address.

Another popular Newfoundland folk song which contains a fishing theme is called "Lukey's Boat". The following verse from the song presents another usage of the word *b'y*.

> "Oh, Lukey's boat is painted green,
> Aha, me b'ys.
> Oh, Lukey's boat is painted green,
> The prettiest boat you ever seen.
> Aha me riddle I day." (Ellis and Pottie 43)

In this case, *b'y* is preceded by *me,* which here is possessive, evoking a certain degree of affection. Thus, within this particular song, the term possesses somewhat genial connotations. Often when the term refers to people familiar to the speaker, *b'y* seems to be used as a very casual term of endearment.

Given the term's longstanding popularity within Ireland, it is quite possible that *b'y* was first transmitted to, and popularized within, Newfoundland by Irish settlers. The gender-neutrality of the Newfoundland *b'y*, however, distinguishes it from the traditional Irish term *boy,* which commonly refers exclusively to men (Story, Kirwin and Widdowson 60).

Evidence for an Irish source for Newfoundland's *b'y* can also be found within folklore and folk songs. For example, in the song, "The Derby Ram," an Irish folk song which subsequently gained popularity in Newfoundland, there is noted usage of *b'y*.

> There was a ram in Derby,
> I've heard the people say,
> He was the finest ram, sir
> That was ever fed on hay
> Carry me coo, me heart's a-doo,
> And Billy O'Rourke's the b'y sir. (Ellis and Pottie 114)

In the above example, *b'y* replaces *boy,* indicating the use of this colloquialism in Ireland long before its proliferation within Newfoundland. The word was likely popularized in Newfoundland by the many Irish settlers that migrated to Newfoundland during the colony's formative years (Kirwin 75).

In the examples above, *b'y* seems similar to the word *boy,* and may merely represent an

altered pronunciation of the standard English term. Although the two variants do differ semantically, it could be that the *b'y* pronunciation is the product of a phonological rule similar to Canadian raising. Although we were unable to verify our theory through research, it is supported by Sandra Clarke's article on Newfoundland English, which refers to the tendency for [oj], in words such as *toy,* to be pronounced as [aj], as in *tie* (Clarke 213).

Regarding the geographic scope of *b'y,* we have reason to believe that it is not exclusively a Newfoundlandism: while its origins may lie in that province's Irish heritage, the term does occur within a small geographic region beyond Newfoundland. One of our friends from Cape Breton, N.S., recently commented that everyone in her town used *b'y,* and that the term is frequently heard elsewhere on the island. While this represents only one person's observation, it is worth noting that Newfoundlanders were among those who settled Cape Breton, and the Newfoundlanders may have brought the expression with them:

> Areas of Whitney Pier, Sydney, were home to many of the Newfoundlanders who lived seasonally in Cape Breton or moved permanently to work at the steel mill. The unmarried Newfoundlanders without family in Sydney would like in the "shacks" or company constructed bunkhouses near the steel mill. Oral evidence indicates many of these Newfoundlanders settled in the Pier, on or near Broadway Street. (Davey and Mackinnon 2)

3. Methods and Hypothesis

In order to further investigate the usage of *b'y,* we decided to research the current status of the expression by interviewing Newfoundlanders on the subject. Our original plan was to devise a usage survey, but it soon became apparent that this form of research would be nearly impossible to conduct. A research trip to Newfoundland was out of the question, so our respondent pool was restricted to a small number of university students. Unfortunately, we couldn't interview elderly, rural respondents from working-class backgrounds, whose speech more frequently retains characteristics of traditional Newfoundland English. To maximize the information obtained, we decided upon a more qualitative research method, the interview (see Appendix A).

The main objective of the interview was to obtain information regarding current trends and attitudes toward the use of *b'y.* All interviews were conducted orally, either in person or by telephone. We felt that oral interviews would be more effective than written questionnaires, as the former allow for greater flexibility in interview questions, and often elicit pertinent personal anecdotes. As we had only four respondents, we were not interested in examining specific co-variables such as age and sex, but decided to include the preliminary questions, 1-3 (Appendix A), in order to trace the background

of each respondent. The most significant of these preliminary questions (3) asks respondents to indicate their place of origin, which, in a larger-scale survey, could be correlated to the usage of *b'y*. Three of our four respondents were from Newfoundland, while one was from Cape Breton. We sought to interview someone from Cape Breton because we consider Capers' use of *b'y* to be derived from Newfoundland English.

The purpose of questions 4 and 5 was to determine the social settings in which *b'y* is most (question 4) or least (question 5) likely to be heard. We hypothesized that setting D (fishermen at work) would be selected by all respondents as being characteristically associated with the use of *b'y*, while settings B (a university lecture) and F (a business meeting) would be unanimously selected as environments where *b'y* would not be used. The settings listed in question 4 can be divided into two main categories: informal (A, C, D, and G) and formal (B and F). As *b'y* is typically employed informally, we expected respondents to select informal settings as most the conducive to its use (question 4) and formal settings as the least conducive (question 5). Setting E (a department store) hovers between these two categories, and we were curious to chart the usage of *b'y* within this more neutral environment.

Through question 6, we sought to gain a better understanding of the term's current stature, as well as its potential for future growth. Although our responses solely reflect the perspectives of young university students, and all of our respondents were under the age of thirty, our results remain significant because future speech trends typically flow from the language of the youngest generations. We expected all respondents to answer "no" to this question, indicating that they do not use *b'y*. If, however, any did answer "yes," we expected them to state that their use of *b'y* is restricted to informal settings, such as in the company of family or friends.

Question 7 explored social attitudes surrounding *b'y* by examining how respondents perceive others' use of the term. We included several possible linguistic functions for the term: as an expression of informality (A and B), a socioeconomic marker (D, G, and J), an element of folklore (F and H), and as superfluous jargon (C, E, and I). Because we considered many of these functions to be popularly associated with *b'y*, we were not expecting one particular response to predominate.

The final two questions (8 and 9) of our survey were optional, as we thought it would be unfair to expect respondents to come up with an answer for these questions within a short time period. Question 8 asked respondents to list expressions including *b'y*, while question 9 essentially asked them to define the term.

4. Results and Analysis

Of our respondents, two (R1 and R3) were female, and two (R2 and R4) were male.

The respondent from Cape Breton (R1) was from Glace Bay, on the east side of the island. R2 was from the St. John's area, R4 from Springdale (central Newfoundland), and R3 had spent most of her childhood in Cornerbrook (west coast), and had since moved St. John's. Significantly, R3 pointed out that while *b'y* is uncommon on the west coast, it is much more prevalent in St. John's. The quantitative results of our questionnaire (concerning questions 4, 5, and 7) are shown in Appendix B.

The results of question 4 confirmed our hypothesis that *b'y* is a term most likely to be heard in informal settings, with D (fishermen at work) and G (a bar) emerging an unanimous selections. Most respondents attributed the more frequent use of *b'y* in informal settings to the relaxed, casual connotations of the term. Question 4 also elicited several unique comments: one respondent noted the declining use of *b'y* in today's generation, associating its use with increasingly isolated areas, while another speculated that while she had not personally heard *b'y* at any parties, the term could conceivably have been used at other local gatherings. Finally, one respondent was hesitant to select setting E (a department store) due to ambiguity over whether *b'y* was a term used in this context by a sales clerk or a customer. Perhaps our question should have been worded more precisely.

The results of question 5 also upheld our hypothesis that *b'y* is a term least likely to surface within formal environments, with all respondents selecting F (a business meeting), and three of our selecting B (a university lecture), as settings in which *b'y* would not likely be heard. As expected, the non-use of *b'y* within these settings was attributed by most respondents to social mores, as well as dictates of professionalism.

For question 6, two of four respondents reported using *b'y* rarely, and only within an informal setting amongst close friends. The other two respondents had never used the word, and thought its use unnatural. However, one respondent said he might use *b'y* when joking around, or perhaps within the context of a story.

Question 7 elicited several interesting responses in the form of anecdotes. Three of four respondents selected A (high comfort level), C (normal occurrence in daily speech), and F (an affirmation of one's linguistic or cultural identity), revealing comfort level to be intimately tied to the use of *b'y*. It was also noted by one respondent that the majority of speakers who use *b'y* do so unconsciously, as it comes naturally to them. One respondent commented that some Newfoundlanders from isolated areas are unaware that the expression is largely unique to Newfoundland. The rare usage amongst young Newfoundlanders of *b'y*, a term replete with cultural resonance, even caused one respondent to lament the drawbacks of Newfoundland's entry into Confederation. Interestingly, while none of the respondents selected D (in which *b'y* represents a marker of low socioeconomic status), some did say that this would have been the case in the past, when few Newfoundlanders had access to higher education.

Question 8 (expressions containing *b'y*) produced diverse responses, which are shown in Appendix C. For question 9, all respondents defined *b'y* as a term which, while superfluous, adds emphasis to what one is saying. One respondent referred to the use of *b'y* as an expression of affability, but quickly added that *b'y* can also be used when one is mad. Thus, while *b'y* is typically used in informal settings amongst friends, it does not necessarily denote friendliness. Finally, *b'y* functions to direct a speaker's comments towards a specified audience.

5. Conclusion

Although the size and variety of our respondent pool was limited, precluding rigorous quantitative analysis, it did furnish qualitative responses unavailable through a more conventional survey method. Our results were consistent with or hypothesis that *b'y*, a term initially popularized within Newfoundland's fishing culture, has been adopted for broader informal used by Newfoundlanders. It seems to be a friendly term, usually applied to familiar people, but sometimes used to engage strangers in friendly banter. It has seen its popularity recede amidst younger speakers. However, while the use of *b'y* is in decline, the term remains widely recognized within, and lexically unique to, Newfoundland and the surrounding area.

Appendix A: Response Interview

Elizabeth Cook and Kristina Kolley

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our response interview for our "b'y" project. The interview will only take a few minutes of your time. Please keep in mind that this is not a test, and that there are no right answers. All we are looking for is your valuable input. Feel free to relate personal experiences or anecdotes if applicable. Also, you may skip the optional questions.

1. Are you male or female?

2. Please select your age category:
    A. 20-30
    B. 30-55
    C. 55 and over

3. Which part of Newfoundland/Cape Breton are you from? Please give place name and/or region (e.g. Northwest Newfoundland).

4.   In which of the following situations are you most likely to hear the word "b'y?"
     Why? You may select as many as you want:
     A. a party with friends
     B. a university lecture
     C. your elderly relatives talking
     D. fishermen at work
     E. in a department store
     F. a business meeting
     G. at a bar

5.   In which of the same situations would you least likely heard the word "b'y," and
     why?

6.   Do you ever use "b'y?" If so, with whom and under what circumstances?

7.   I interpret the use of b'y by others as (a sign of) _____. (Again, you may choose
     more than one of the following.)
     A. high comfort level
     B. friendliness
     C. nothing in particular (a normal occurrence in everyday speech)
     D. low socioeconomic status and/or minimal schooling
     E. a space filler similar to the use of "like" in youth slang
     F. an affirmation of one's linguistic or cultural identity
     G. a usage restricted to a particular age group or segment of society
     H. a colourful element of story telling
     I. something equivalent or similar to the use of "eh"
     J. poor knowledge of grammar

8.   (Optional question) Can you think of any specific expressions which include the
     word *b'y?*

9.   (Optional question) In your opinion, what function does *b'y* serve?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix B: Quantitative Results

Question 4: Likeliest settings in which to hear b'y

Respondent	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1			X	X	X		X
2				X	X		X
3				X	X		X
4			X	X			X

Question 5: Least likeliest settings in which to hear *b'y*

Respondent	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1		X				X	
2		X				X	
3		X				X	
4						X	

Question 7: Interpretations of *b'y*

Resp.	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	X					X				
2	X	X	X		X	X				
3			X		X		X	X	X	
4	X	X	X			X		X	X	

Appendix C: Responses to Question 8 (Expressions Containing *b'y*)

Respondent 1:   *How ya doin' b'y?*
What's up, b'y?

Respondent 2:   *T'was some shockin' good, b'y!*

Respondent 3:   *Hey, b'y(s)!*
Whaddaya at, b'y(s)?

How's she goin', b'y(s)?
Yes, b'y (as an expression of sarcasm).
I tells ya, b'y.
You're some stunned, b'y.
I'm goin' out with the b'ys.

Respondent 4:   *How's she goin', b'y?*

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DID YOU JUST SAY "NINE-ZERO-FIVE"?
THE USE OF "ZERO" OR "OH" WHEN RECITING PHONE NUMBERS

Matthew Cathcart and **Nicole Gray**

1. Introduction

When reciting phone numbers, people normally use the standard names for each digit (i.e. *one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine*), but, when it comes to the digit "0", they sometimes use *zero* and sometimes *oh*. This practice rarely creates confusion; it seems that people readily accept and understand either name. In our project, we set out to determine whether this alternation between *zero* and *oh* has any pattern dependent upon either the position of the digit in the phone number or the characteristics of the respondent (age or sex).

2. Hypothesis

As we were unable to find any previous research upon this topic, we were on our own in creating hypotheses. We decided to predict what we felt would be the more popular answer (*zero* or *oh*) in a variety of cases.

We chose four series of digits configured like phone numbers (i.e. a three digit area code, three digits, then four digits, with each group separated by a hyphen). The phone numbers were as follows:

1) 905-483-7165
2) 012-483-3278
3) 613-544-5290
4) 416-726-4002

The numbers were chosen so that the digit "0" holds a different position within each. For each of the four test numbers, we devised an individual hypothesis.

2.1 **905-483-7165**--This phone number contains the area code "905"; *nine-oh-five* is its popular pronunciation. Since this area code corresponds to a part of the greater Toronto area in fairly close proximity to the homes of all of our respondents, we hypothesized that all respondents would know and use the *nine-oh-five* pronunciation.

2.2 **012-483-3278**--By placing the "0" at the beginning of the phone number, we hoped to determine which pronunciation was more often used as the onset of a list of digits. Although we were unable to find any previous research upon the pronunciation of "0", we hypothesised that people would be more likely to use *zero* at the beginning of a list, first because we ourselves would be more likely to use this pronunciation, and also because we felt that beginning a list with *oh* would sound awkward.

2.3 **613-544-5290**--With "0" in the final position, we felt that either *zero* or *oh* would be a comfortable pronunciation. We predicted that the responses would be evenly distributed between *zero* and *oh*.

2.4 **416-726-4002**--Our purpose for using this phone number was two-fold: firstly, we felt that all respondents would give the same name to both "0"s in succession; secondly, we felt that people would be more likely to use *oh* instead of *zero* in this case, in an effort to reduce the number of syllables pronounced.

We also sought to determine whether preference for *zero* or *oh* was attributable to age or sex. As for age, we felt that younger people would likely use *zero* over *oh* because, as they have grown up using computers, younger people have learnt that the distinction between the letter "o" and the number "0" is a crucial one. The older respondents may not have had as much exposure to computers, and, although they may understand the importance of distinguishing between the letter "o" and the digit "0" when using a keyboard, they may not retain this distinction while reciting phone numbers. For these reasons, we felt that young people would be more likely to use *zero*, while older respondents would be more likely to use *oh*, creating an S-curve diffusion pattern.

3. Methods

We collected our data through a series of personal interviews. To collect the data, we devised an oral survey that would allow us to record the words used by respondents when listing digits. The respondents read the phone numbers from cards, and we recorded whether they said *zero* or *oh* when naming the digit "0."

Although we obtained consent from participants in the study, we did not inform them of the survey's purpose because we felt that it would affect their responses. We hoped that respondents would read the phone numbers as they would in day-to-day life since our purpose was to discover a pattern for the alternation between *zero* and *oh*. We also recorded each respondent's age and sex so that we could see if the alternation between the two pronunciations was linked with either variable.

Before conducting our survey we asked each respondent to try to answer each question as naturally as possible, and not to let us know if in the middle of the survey they realized our survey's purpose. We knew that with only four questions, each with a zero carefully planted in the number, it might become obvious to the respondent what information we were trying to collect. Therefore, with some surveys conducted in a group setting, we asked that our respondents not reveal the purpose to other members of the group until all had been surveyed. At the end of the survey, we asked each person if they knew what we were looking for, and, if they did know, we had a short discussion about their opinions on the different pronunciations of "0."

4. Results and Discussion

Figure 1 shows the individual percentage responses for *zero* and *oh* for each question. For our first phone number, *all* respondents read the area code as *nine-oh-five*, with no other alternatives given. For the second phone number (see section 2.2), the results were split almost evenly, with *zero* being slightly

more popular. For the third (section 2.3) and the fourth (section 2.4) phone numbers, the results were again quite similar, but with *oh* more popular in both cases. We encountered an unexpected alternative to *zero* and *oh* when one respondent read the sections of the phone numbers as three- or four-digit numbers (i.e. "4002" was read as *four thousand and two*).

Figure 1. Pronunciation of the Digit "0"
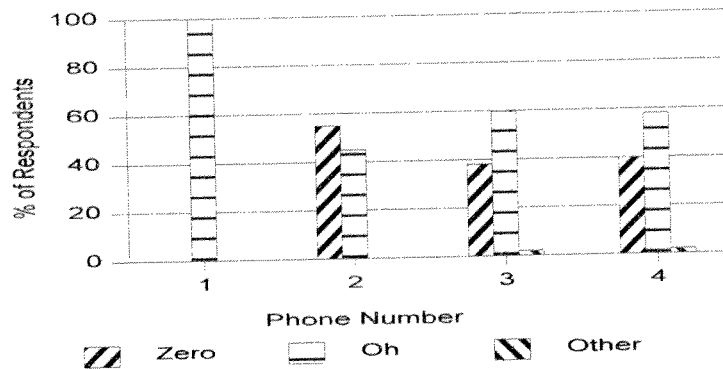
4.1 Results by Gender

Next, we analyzed our results on the basis of sex with hopes of discovering a trend similar to that discovered by Howard Woods in the *Ottawa Survey of Canadian English* in 1980. Woods (277) discovered that females were more likely than males to choose terms associated with higher prestige or class. Because the responses for the first phone number (2.1) were completely unvaried, no sex breakdown graph is shown here.

In reading aloud our second phone number (see Figure 2), the female respondents were equally divided between *zero* and *oh*, while males were more likely to choose *zero*.

Figure 2. Pronunciation by Sex of the "0" in "012-483-3278" (Phone Number 2)
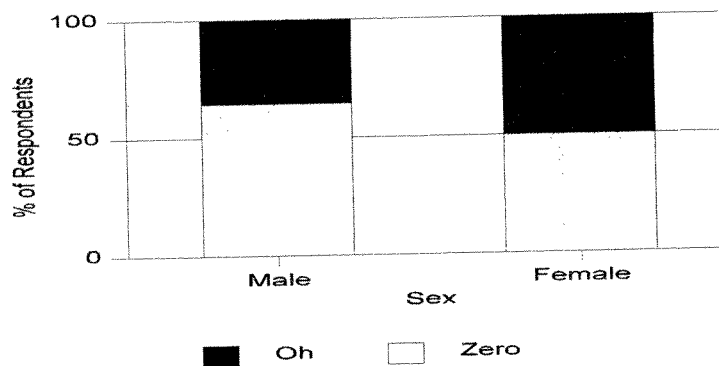
For phone number 3 (section 2.3), distinctively different results were seen between the sexes (as shown in Figure 3), with males equally divided between *zero* and *oh*, and females preferring to use *oh*.

Figure 3. **Pronunciation by Sex of the "0" in "613-544-5290" (Phone Number 3)**
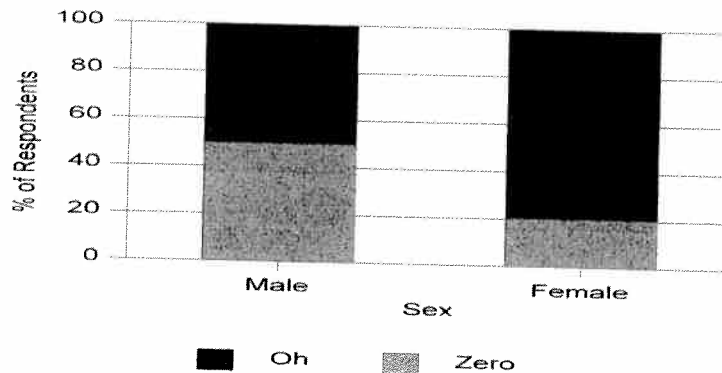
In reading our fourth phone number (section 2.4), males and females gave identical responses (see Figure 4), slightly favouring *oh* over *zero*.

Figure 4. **Pronunciation by Sex of the "0" in "416-726-4002" (Phone Number 4)**
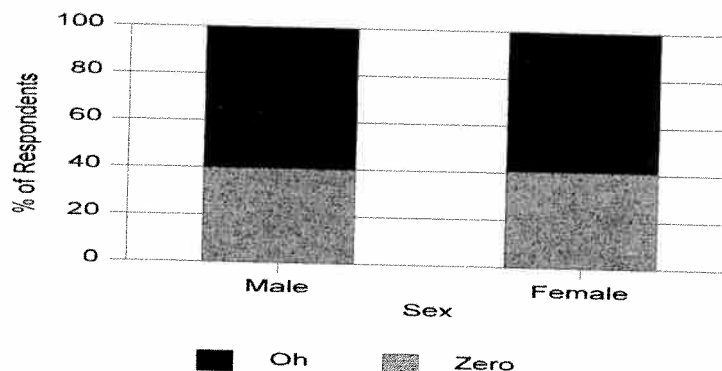
As no marked and consistent pattern of preference arose across genders, our results were inconclusive, revealing no firm link between gender and pronunciation of the digit "0."

4.2 Results by Age

Next, we divided our results by age group, to see whether they would produce the S-curve diffusion pattern often seen when an older term is replaced by a new one. S-curve diffusion patterns arise because change in linguistic usage typically begins slowly, with only a few people initially using a new variant. Once it catches on with a certain portion of the population (between 10-20%), the usage of the new variant grows quickly, replacing the older variant. The usage of the new variant eventually stabilizes once its usage becomes commonly accepted. As before, because we received a single response for phone number 1, its graph is

not shown in the age-distribution.

As displayed in Figure 5, when the "0" was placed at the beginning of the number, as in phone number 2, we found an S-curve diffusion pattern developing between respondents under 25 and those between 25 and 40. The preference for *zero* found in younger respondents could be explained by the importance of distinguishing between the digit "0" and the letter "o" when using computers.

Figure 5. Pronunciation by Age of the "0" in "012-483-3278" (Phone Number 2)
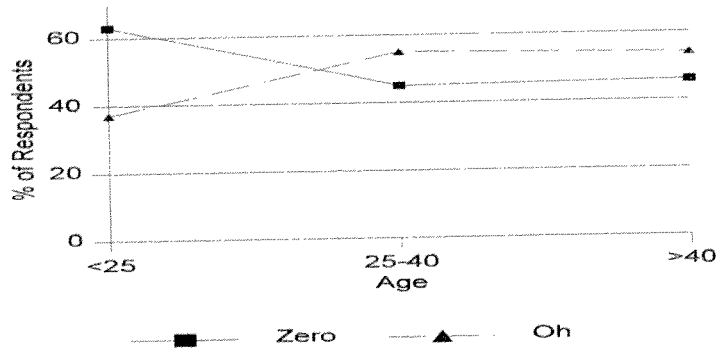
The results for our third phone number (as shown in Figure 6) show that *oh* was the most popular answer for all age groups, with only a slight dip in the 25-40 group. Unfortunately, this question does not support our hypothesis that younger generations are more aware of the distinction between "0" and "o".

Figure 6. Pronunciation by Age of the "0" in "613-544-5290" (Phone Number 3)
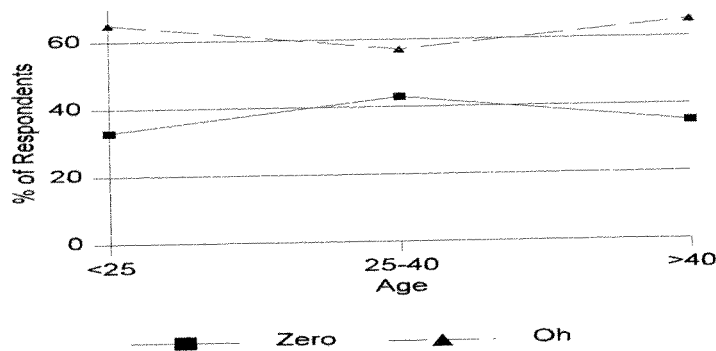
For phone number 4 (see Figure 7), *zero* was more popular in the 25-40 age group, while *oh* was preferred by both other age groups.

Figure 7. Pronunciation by Age of the "0" in "416-726-4002" (Phone Number 4)
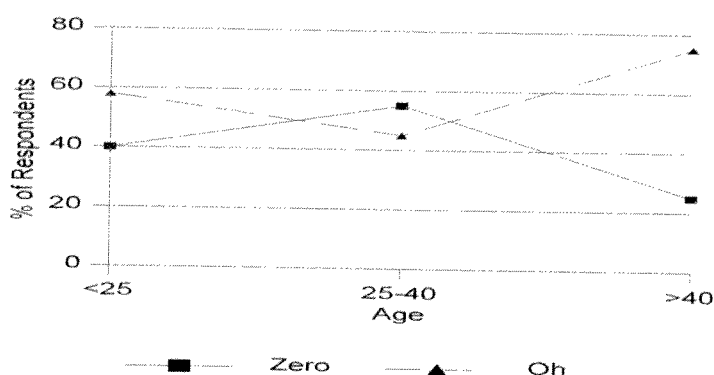
When looking at all results shown by age, it is difficult to reach any definite conclusions regarding age and pronunciation of the digit "0." Although we can say that the youngest respondents preferred the pronunciation *zero* in the initial position, they did not retain this preference throughout the survey.

5. Problems

Throughout this project we encountered numerous problems. First of all, we could find no prior research with which to compare our data. Without this resource, it was difficult to formulate our hypotheses or see whether our data corresponded with patterns found elsewhere.

Another problem was our small number of respondents. Since this was an oral survey, it was sometimes difficult to find willing respondents, and it took longer to conduct our in-person surveys than it would have to distribute a questionnaire on paper or via e-mail. We were able to find 51 respondents, but, as there were only a handful of respondents from older age groups, data for the over-40 group may not be truly representative of that population.

There were only four questions on our survey, each containing the digit we were collecting information on. The purpose of our survey might have been better concealed if there had been other numbers without "0." Using additional phone numbers might have increased the validity of our results since some respondents did realize the purpose of our survey before they answered all four questions. When the respondents realized our survey's purpose, they may have altered their responses to what they believed to be the "correct" response. Although there was no "correct" response, they may have felt, for example, that they should choose one pronunciation and not alternate between pronunciations, regardless of the digit's position within the phone number.

6. Conclusion

Our hypothesis for phone number 1 (section 2.1) was correct; all respondents used *oh* when pronouncing "0" in this familiar area code. For our second phone number (section 2.2), we had predicted that *zero* would be more popular, and

this was the case for all age groups except the older males. For phone number 3 (section 2.3), while we had thought that the responses would be equally divided between *zero* and *oh*, we found that *oh* was in fact more popular, especially with female respondents. With our fourth phone number (section 2.4), our hypothesis was also correct, because all respondents used the same pronunciation for both digits, with *oh* being the most popular pronunciation for all respondents except those in the middle age group. We were unable to draw any broad conclusions from the data broken down by age and sex. Unfortunately, while trends were observable on the individual graphs, no discernible patterns arose tying either of the age and sex variables to a particular pronunciation of "0." Future research could be conducted in this area, for example, by examining whether respondents unfamiliar with "905" as an area code concur with residents of the greater Toronto area in pronouncing the digits *nine-oh-five*. Also, further research could investigate the difference between pronunciations used for initial and final "0"s.

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"Fewer: See LESS"[1]
WHY NATIVE SPEAKERS OF CANADIAN ENGLISH DON'T KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

Kimberley Leppik

1. Introduction

1.1 Content

The prescribed usage of the words *fewer* and *less* is one that is well known to second language learners of English, but elusive to many native speakers. The prescriptive rule-governed usage of this pair of words seems to be disappearing among native speakers of Canadian English. In this paper, I will trace the respective roots and paths of change of these two related words from their entrance into English through to their current usage in a Canadian context.

1.2 Structure

First I will provide the usage rule for *fewer* and *less*, followed by a discussion of actual usage in contemporary Canadian English. I will discuss some generalizations arising from the data. Next, I will show common idiomatic usage of *less* where the rule would predict *fewer*, and provide some possible explanations for these deviations. I will then present Weiner (1983) on the seeming syntactic change in progress. Finally, I will use historical and current evidence to propose that *fewer* and *less* are not mutually exclusive comparatives in the Canadian English speaker's mental grammar.

2. Usage Rule

2.1 Count vs. Non-Count

The Guide to Canadian English Usage (Fee and McAlpine) states that *fewer* should be used when referring to a smaller number of things that can be counted, while *less* should be used to refer to a smaller amount of things regarded as wholes. Other English usage guides state the same rule with minor variations: for example, that one should use *fewer* with plural count nouns and *less* with non-count nouns, as in *less employment, fewer jobs* (Wilson). A slightly amended version of this rule is to use *fewer* with plural nouns that are counted, and *less* when referring to quantity or amount among things that are measured (Gilman).

3. Actual Usage

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[1] This title appears as a cross-reference in Wilson (193).

3.1 Data

Data on current Canadian usage were obtained from the corpus at the Strathy Language Unit. Additional data were acquired through casual observation of conversations between students, class lectures, as well as from a survey taken of students of Linguistics 315 at Queen's University. Consent was obtained before any data were used in this paper.

3.2 Spoken Canadian English

The following data were extracted from casual conversations, class lectures, and religious and political speeches.

(1)   a. "...less parameters..."
        b. "...less than 20 houses..."
        c. "...fewer people, so the costs are less..."
        d. "...less and less places, or fewer and fewer places..."
        e. "...200 words or less..."

A search performed on 95 spoken English files at the Strathy Language Unit yielded *less than + plural count-noun*, as in example (b) above, 56 times. The opposing *fewer than + plural count-noun*, as in "fewer than 20 houses," appeared only twice in the same sample. The construction *fewer + plural count noun* appeared 52 times, while *less + plural count noun* appeared ten times. All but one of the students of Linguistics 315 at Queen's reported using *less* in all contexts in spoken English. In other words, the majority did not know the rule or did not apply it consistently or correctly on a task calling for choice between *less* and *fewer.*

3.3 Written Canadian English

A search performed on 95 written English files at the Strathy Language Unit (newspaper and magazine articles and academic writing) yielded *less than + plural count-noun* hundreds of times, and *fewer than + plural count-noun* 26 times. The construction *fewer + plural count-noun* occurred 106 times, while *less + plural count-noun* occurred only once. Examples are shown in (2) below.

(2)   a. "...requires considerably less resources..."
        b. "...less than 10 miles..."

4. Generalizations Based on the Data

4.1 Native vs. Second Language Learners of English

Usage of *fewer* in accordance with the rule outlined in section 2.1 is much more common in second-language learners of English than in native English speakers. This would suggest that the distinction between *fewer* and *less* is still being taught in English grammar textbooks, although it is losing ground among native speakers. The use of *fewer* was actually overextended by exchange students (from France and Germany) at Queen's University. It was used in cases where the rule dictated *less.* This pattern was never observed among native speakers.

4.2 Age Cohorts

University students are much less likely to use *fewer* by the book than older age groups. Immediate self-corrections, as in 1.d, section 3.2 "...less and less places, or fewer and fewer places..." were observed only among middle-aged adults. University students did not attempt self-correction. While people in older age groups usually knew the rule (regardless of whether they followed it), university students reported uncertainty as to when they should select *less* and when they should select *fewer*.

4.3 Written vs. Spoken English

As can be clearly seen in the data above, the distinction between *fewer* and *less* is retained much more frequently in written English than in spoken English. This divergence is strong evidence that the grammar rule maintaining the usage of *fewer* is a prescriptive one. Although *less* was found 56 times in the spoken English data in violation of the rule, *less* was only used in error once in an identical amount of written data. Since writing allows for editing, authors were able to find and correct their mistakes (in terms of textbook grammar). But these changes obviously do not reflect their mental grammars.

4.4 Idioms

There are some extremely common idioms that employ *less* where *fewer* would be expected according to the rule. One such idiom is the "less than" construction, as in "less than 100 words". Some of these idioms are so strong that replacing *less* with *fewer* actually results in a sentence that sounds ill-formed to native speakers of English. Consider, for example:

(3)   a. "...100 words or fewer..."   b. "...100 words or less..."
       c. "...fewer than 10 dollars..."   d. "...less than 10 dollars..."

While both (a) and (c) would be considered more grammatically correct according to the usage rule, most native speakers of English will select (b) and (d) as correct. What's more, they report that neither (a) nor (c) sound correct to them. Fee and McAlpine (1997) have provided a possible reason for this usage. They posit that in the *less than X* construction, *X* is considered to be a non-divisible, non-countable unit:

(4)   a. "...less than 10 dollars..."   b. "...fewer than 10 dollars..."
       c. "Ten dollars is enough."   d. "Ten dollars are enough."

(5)   a. "...less than 10 miles..."   b. "...fewer than 10 miles..."
       c. "Ten miles is enough."   d. "Ten miles are enough."

Since (c) sounds better to speakers of English than (d), and the verb in (c) is singular, we can say that "ten dollars" is considered to be a unit and not able to be counted. In this case, *less* would be the more appropriate selection (Fee and McAlpine 1997). I posit that the effect is not as strong with "ten miles" as with "ten dollars." This suggests that the usage of *less than X dollars* is more strongly idiomatic than *less than X miles*. A further example of the strength of the idiom is supplied by Fee and McAlpine in the form of a citation from *Pay Equity* by Carl Cuneo.

> "Job ranking is feasible in small organizations or businesses with roughly a hundred jobs or fewer." (Fee and McAlpine 208)

They note that the use of *fewer* in this case is what would be termed appropriate and correct but that native English speakers expect *less* in this context and the use of *or fewer* is rare (Fee and McAlpine).

5. Weiner's Proposal (1983)

5.1 The Proposal

Weiner posits that *less* came to be used as an alternative comparative form of *few* by analogy to *more,* which is the comparative form of both *much* and *many.* Initially, *little* had *less* as a comparative, while *few* had *fewer.* Then, by analogy to *more, few* acquired *less* as an alternative comparative form. This would account for the fact that although *less* is often seen where *fewer* would be expected, the opposite is never true; *few* is linked to both *fewer* and *less,* while *little* remains linked only to *less* as a comparative form (Weiner 189). In Figure 1, I have created a schematic to visually represent Weiner's proposal.

Figure 1. Schematic Representing Weiner's Analysis
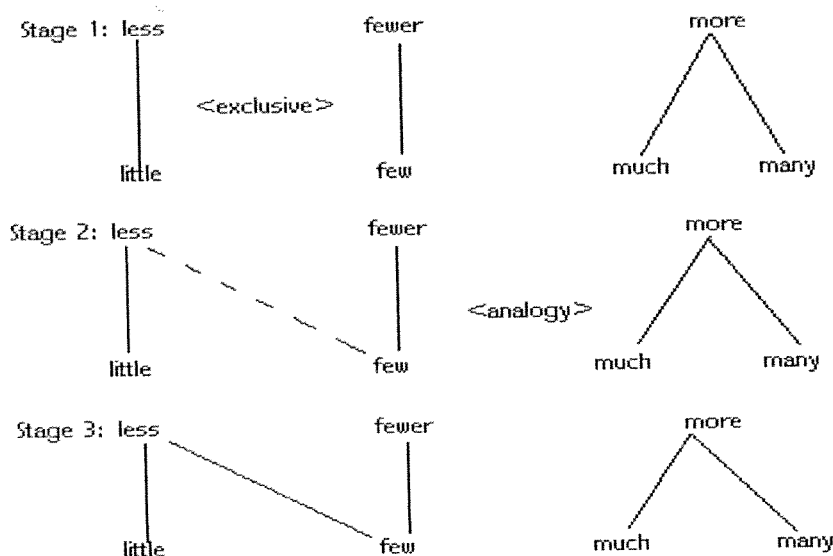
6. An Alternative Proposal

6.1 Data

The above proposal does seem to account for current usage of *fewer* and *less;*

however, when one examines the etymology and history of these two words, the data tell a different story:

(6)   a. "Swa mid **læs worda** awa mid ma..." c888 King Ælfred, *Boeth;* xxxv (Simpson and Weiner, *Oxford English Dictionary* 962)
        b. "Witodlice micel rip ys, and **feawa wyrhtyna**" c1000 Gospel of Matthew 1x37 (*OED* 583-4)
        c. "I thinke there are few Vniuersities that haue **less faultes** than Oxford..." c1579, Lyly, *Euphues; 208* (*OED* 962)
        d. "I may see them all doing with still **less comforts**." c1862 M.D. Colt, *Went to Kansas;* 84 (*OED* 962)
        e. "The 47-page prospectus... shows that there are **less restrictions**... than is generally supposed." c1971 *Guardian 16 December; 16/1* (*OED* 962)

6.2 Etymology

Both *less* and *fewer* have their etymological roots in Old English (Onions). *Fewer* is a regularly derived comparative of *few,* which came to Old English from Old High German. *Few* has cognates in many Indo-European languages, for example *peu* in French. In his *Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary*, Klein suggests that *less* (*laes* in Old English) is related to Old Saxon and Old Frisian forms. *Laes* had the regular comparative form *læssa*, and was not related to *little* (Klein).

6.3 Discussion

Although Weiner's proposal does seem to account for the current shift in usage, it is inconsistent with what was being said, and written, as early as the 9th century by English speakers. The above data clearly show that *less* has been in use as an alternative comparative of *few* since the period of Old English. The first recorded usage of *less* with a plural count-noun actually predates the first recorded usage of *fewer* in the same context. Clearly, *fewer* and *less* did not originate as mutually exclusive comparatives for *few* and *little*. However, did they come to be used as such over the centuries as English developed? Based on the data available, the answer is no. Throughout the history of English, many learned, respected people have used *less* with plural count-nouns. Even in formal writing, such as a commentary on Oxford University, people were using *less* where the rule would dictate *fewer*. Currently, Canadian English speakers are inconsistent in their usage of *fewer*, often correcting themselves in an attempt to adhere to the rule.

6.4 Proposal

Based on the data given above, I propose the following alternative explanation: Wilson (*Columbia Guide of Standard American Usage*) reports that in 1770, grammarian Robert Baker wrote "This Word [less] is most commonly used in speaking of a number; where I should think *Fewer* would do better. *No Fewer than a Hundred* appears to me not only more elegant than *No less than a Hundred,* but more strictly proper." (Wilson 269). It follows then that the distinction between *less* and *fewer* may indeed be one that was imposed on the language, and not a natural development. One can only speculate as to Baker's reasons for creating such a strict rule. The distinction may have already been in progress of forming, or Baker himself may have decided that it was much neater to divide the duties of *less* and *fewer*. Since he found variation, he perhaps decided it was more proper to have a strict rule prescribing a mutually

exclusive set of comparatives.

Other grammarians began following Baker in this regard, citing his rule in grammars. The rule began to be strictly taught in English classes. It is meticulously applied in formal, especially written, English. However, it never caught on in mental representation for most people, and thus has remained a prescriptive rule.

6.5 Schematic

Figure 2 visualizes my proposal.

Figure 2. Alternative Schematic for *Less* and *Fewer*: Development from Old English to Present Usage
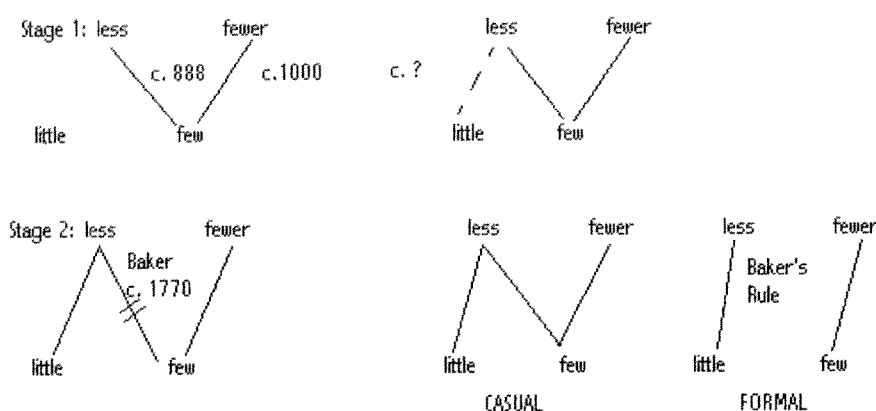
7. Conclusion

Less has been used as a comparative form for *few* as far back as English is recorded. My proposal accounts for the predominantly prescriptive usage of *fewer* since that time. It also accounts for the fact that we find *less* where *fewer* would be predicted, but not the opposite.

Although almost completely non-existent in the spoken English of university students, *fewer* remains in use in written English. Baker's attempt at organizing English grammar was only successful in creating a separate grammar for formal English. Whether *fewer* will disappear in written English remains to be seen. Other questions that could be studied are how *less* came to be the comparative of *little,* how its original comparative *lesser* shifted in meaning, and how this affected the relationship between *fewer* and *less.* Furthermore, it would be useful to study current usage in other English speaking countries, in order to discern whether the prescriptive rule has reached the status of mental representation in non-Canadian English.

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