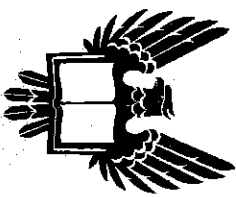


SHUY

**Sociolinguistics
in Cross-Cultural Analysis**

**David M. Smith
Roger W. Shuy**



1968. The Lappish movement. In: Local-level politics. M. Swartz, ed. Chicago, Aldine.
- Old, Ralph W. 1970. Models of individual bilingualism. Paper presented to Georgetown University School of Languages and Linguistics Faculty Linguistics Forum.
- Oppez, John J. 1964. Linguistic and social interaction in two communities. In: The ethnography of communication. John J. Gumperz and Dell Hymes, ed. Special publication of the American Anthropologist, vol. 66, no. 6.
- Oppez, Felix M. and Marie M. Keesing. 1956. Elite communication in Samoa. Stanford, Stanford University Press.
- Orman, Thomas. 1969. Rapping in the Black ghetto. In: Transactions, E. R. 1954. Political systems of Highland Burma. Boston, Beacon Press.
- Orman, Frank C. 1966. Problems of succession in a Chippewa Community. In: Political anthropology. M. Swartz, V. Turner, and A. Tuden, eds. Chicago, Aldine.
- Oppez, Richard. 1962. Notes on bilingualism and linguistics change in New Guinea. Anthropological linguistics, vol. 4, no. 7.
- Oppez, Joseph. The creative response in economic history. Journal of economic history, vol. 7:149-159.
- Oppez, Marc. 1968. Administration and political action. Local-level politics. M. Swartz, ed. Chicago, Aldine.
- Oppez, Victor. 1966. Ritual aspects of conflict control in African micropolitics. Political anthropology. M. Swartz, V. Turner, and A. Tuden, eds. Chicago, Aldine.

SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND TEACHER ATTITUDES IN A SOUTHERN SCHOOL SYSTEM

ROGER W. SHUY

Georgetown University

In recent years, there has been an increased interest in the relation of linguistic forms to social meaning. However difficult it is to put an exact date on the formal establishment of the field of sociolinguistics, the term has appeared increasingly in recent years in forms of courses, book titles, seminars, and even graduate programs.

This interest in the joining of language and social meaning comes at a period in the history of linguistics in which the major advances in knowledge about language have been made by linguists taking as primary data their ability to discriminate grammatical and ungrammatical sentences. With the exception of certain dialectologists and anthropologists, in fact, linguists have never really kept in very close contact with language as it is actually used. The separation of *langue* (language) and *parole* (speech) made by Ferdinand de Saussure has been well preserved by the generation which followed him although it still seems curious to some of us that *langue*, which Saussure thought of as the dimension of language shared by all its speakers, was considered so general that linguists could speculate about it from limited sources of speech (even their own) while *parole*, the individual dimension, was considered so variable that it would take large scale surveys to measure.

Despite this historical separation of language and social meaning by linguists, there has been a recent movement away from the asocial position in theoretical work toward a stance in which everyday speech plays a prominent role. Three factors seem to be responsible for this shift in focus:

- (1) the desire to find a sounder empirical base for linguistic theory;

- (2) the conviction that social factors influencing language use are a legitimate topic for linguistic investigation,
- (3) the response to the growing feeling that such sociolinguistic knowledge should be applied, if possible, to urgent educational problems. (See Shuy and Fasold, this volume, pages 1 and 2.)

It is this area of educational applications to which this paper is primarily addressed. Classroom teachers were among the first to assess the importance of a child's language. It is only natural that problems would be noticed first in the frustrations of teaching. As is often the case when there is a sudden national awakening to a social or pedagogical problem, the development of theory, materials, and the training of personnel relating to the general area of social dialects was dictated by expediency more than by any careful well-developed plan. As absurd as it may seem to produce classroom materials before establishing a theoretical base for their development, that is exactly what happened in this field. To complicate matters even more, sensitive teachers, realizing that their training had not been adequate for their needs, began asking for that training, preferably in condensed and intensive packages. And healthy as this situation appeared to be, it only triggered still another problem--that of finding adequately prepared professionals to provide this training.

It is rather easy to fault the field of education for not adopting the basic research of the disciplines such as linguistics, anthropology, and psychology, since much of this seems highly relevant to classroom practice. But the truth of the situation is that the needs of the classroom developed a long time ago, many years before the disciplines that could aid these educational problems had developed a theory and a data base which was sophisticated enough to be helpful to these problems. As a result, education has had to go it alone and has had to develop its own approaches to problems in which the content fields have expressed little or no interest anyway. There is little reason for us to expect educators to look to us for answers when we have been rather elitist about their plight for so long. To be sure, educators charged into areas without adequate interdisciplinary breadth and descriptive depth; but this does not diminish the fact that they noted the problems and put forth solutions while other fields were still tending to internal matters.

But education is not alone in its elitism. There is a growing uneasiness among linguists about pursuing research projects which are totally irrelevant to contemporary social and political situations. The academic disciplines must be sensitive to such situations and be ready to plot new courses as conditions change. One of these conditions is the plight of American children and adults whose academic success and social mobility are severely restricted by the kind of English they use and by their difficulties in dealing with the written word. Recognition of this

problem has motivated many linguists and students of linguistics to utilize the knowledge of linguistics in such areas and to explore newer avenues of linguistics which might bring us closer to solution. They have recognized that many of the aspects of education are undelimited by sociolinguistic principles and processes. Much of the English teacher's job, usually unknown to her, is at the very core of problem of language interference, identifying speech functions, switching rules attitudes toward language diversity, language planning, etc. This is to have become apparent to many sociolinguists who are beginning to demand relevance of their field to real problems in the world out there. This demand is also coming from many of the students in linguistics who are not asking for a deemphasis of theoretical concerns, but for directionality in which theory will be aimed at real problems, especially those which are related to those of our society and world today. Such students are asking us to make our theory count. Some will hear this as a mere return to applied linguistics as it was once thought of--a kind of mindless addressing of current problems with a handed-down result and theory. But, this is not what the students are asking for. They want the real thing in terms of theory. They are no more enchanted with the simple 'how-to' application than theorists ever have been. But, the same to be telling us that our theory had better lead to relevant answers or else the field will degenerate to the kind of high-level academic playing that has taken over some of the other disciplines (such as literary criticism).

One example of the attempted educational emphasis of sociolinguistics may be seen in the recent interaction of sociolinguists from Georgetown University and the Center for Applied Linguistics with the Norfolk, Virginia Public Schools. The Norfolk schools invited this group to help them solve problems involving, in the broadest sense, racial integration of their students and teachers, and, more specifically, the reading, writing, and speech of their students. A team of three staff members and five advanced students engaged in a seven-month program involving first, a number of teacher preparation sessions and then, a series of visits and actual teaching interactions in the classrooms of these teachers. The major problem, planned and executed by the group as a whole, was in helping teachers appreciate linguistic diversity, teaching the recognition of different dialects as systematic, graceful, and logical, and in helping them understand some of the educational pitfalls involved in sociolinguistic information is not regarded.

A grant from the Emergency School Assistance Program enabled the Norfolk schools to request help with this problem. Mr. W. H. Norris, Director of Inservice Education in the Norfolk City Schools, applied for help from the Center for Applied Linguistics and from Georgetown University sociolinguists who responded to Mr. Norris with a two-phase program, by means of which professional linguists

and graduate students in sociolinguistics attempted to help identify, and suggest solutions for, the problems which different social dialects posed for the Norfolk City Schools.

Linguistic research in the past several years has been concerned in part with the identification and description of social dialects; that is to say language variations which pattern along social group lines. One variety of language which has been studied rather extensively is primarily, though not exclusively, found in urban Negro populations, and has been termed variously Non-standard Negro English (NNE) and Black English (BE). Research in the relevant populations of as many diverse locations as New York City, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, and Washington, D. C. has revealed a remarkable degree of continuity and homogeneity in the identifying features of this social dialect. However, few persons outside the small group of professional linguists who study social dialects have any systematic knowledge of Black English. Consequently, school teachers who find themselves suddenly faced with numerous speakers of that dialect, or of any of several other nonstandard social or regional dialects, experience--or feel they are experiencing--a communication breakdown.

A pre-project visit to Norfolk teachers and administrators indicated that the sudden contact of teachers with social dialects unfamiliar to them was in large part responsible for their feeling that there was a communication failure between them and their students. The teachers were also faced with a number of special pedagogical problems arising from dialect-related errors in student work.

In searching for the most rapid and efficient, and least expensive, method of dealing with the problems in the Norfolk schools posed by social dialects, it was suggested that a brief program of workshops and consultation with a small number of teachers from all the schools would be the most useful beginning strategy. There seemed to be little reason to expect immediate results from a program designed for the school children rather than for the teachers, given the restriction of time and resources. And there is not yet available any comprehensive program (including all relevant materials, texts, and training) designed to deal specifically with the problems of dialect variation.

After considerable planning, the Norfolk City Schools, through the Center for Applied Linguistics, were offered a brief project in two phases. The first phase was a series of four half-day workshops for selected Norfolk teachers and the second phase was a series of individual visits to the particular schools which had requested specific aid.

A series of brief workshops was held in which the Center for Applied Linguistics and Georgetown University personnel, acting as a consulting team, attempted to present to these Norfolk teachers some of the salient points from what is currently known about social dialects with

intended to deal with were: (1) How and why do languages vary, and what effects do these variations have on the listener? (2) What are the problems of reading, writing, and oral language which stem from a person's dialect, and how can these be distinguished from those problems which do not stem from a dialect? (3) What, if anything, can or should be done about dialect-related problems? (4) What techniques and materials are currently available which are designed to deal with dialect-related difficulties?

Two teachers from each of the target schools were selected for participation in these workshops. Their selection was designed to achieve a balance among factors of race, subject(s) taught, and grade(s) taught. These teachers then participated in four workshops held at the Norfolk Technical-Vocational Center in December 1970 and January 1971.

One of the aims of Phase I was to develop in teachers the ability to distinguish socially induced language variation from regional variation or pathologically produced problems. The initial step in achieving this goal involved the playing of tape recorded samples of speech to which the teachers responded by making judgments about the speaker's race and social status. This method of introducing the notion of social stratification by language was decided upon for several reasons:

- (1) It is a common practice among all people to make such judgments; teachers, therefore, should not feel singled out as a group different from any other.
- (2) One could justifiably expect teachers' assessments to be quite accurate; their resultant success would give them confidence in the succeeding attempts to understand the presentation of social dialect information.
- (3) The recorded samples provide tangible (rather than recalled) examples of features to be dealt with later in the workshops.

Following the completion of the taped exercise, teachers were encouraged to ask questions and comment honestly and freely on the speech they heard. This was the second opportunity for the teachers to engage actively in what was planned to be a reciprocal endeavor. The discussion period provided the consultants with some knowledge of the teachers' attitudes relative to the overall task; it provided additional evidence of the responsiveness of this particular group of teachers to new information about language variation; and, finally the large group discussion laid the groundwork for the small group discussions that followed.

As expected, the teachers' judgments on social status and race were reasonably accurate. It should be noted specifically that where differences occurred between their choices and the actual classification of the taped materials, the differences nearly always reflected social class-

clues (status) away from the actual rank. Moreover, social status determiners are not rigid and identical nationally.

Usually in any large group only a few participants become overtly active early in the proceedings. This group was no exception. This is not to say that the majority were passive or uninterested. There were many one-to-one conversations taking place. However, some of the more vocal teachers revealed, by their questions and comments, the broad range of attitudes and knowledge among the teachers. The emergence of advocates of both the strict 'Standard English only' approach and the tolerance toward dialectal variation approach stimulated a lively, professional discussion.

Small group meetings followed the general session. Here the discussions focused on how the teachers made their decisions in the tape recorded experiment; that is, what clues (features) in the speaker's oral language, phonological or grammatical, led them to discern race and social status. The group leaders had previously determined that these discussions should be teacher-dominated rather than leader-dominated in order for the entire workshop to proceed from the realities of Norfolk instead of from the theories of sociolinguistics. These discussions produced two major results:

- (1) an outline of the stigmatized features of Nonstandard English
- (2) an urgent request for assistance in teaching strategies.

The last hour of the first session of Phase I was devoted to an informal presentation on the nature of language variation, with a particular focus on variety by region, age, sex, and time. Throughout the presentation, concentration on language variation in reading and writing, as well as the oral production of speech, was related to the teaching of English as a language for effective communication.

The first session concluded with a summary of the workshop's purposes and a preview of the next session's content and focal points. Copies of Labor's article, 'The Logic of Non-Standard English', were distributed and additional readings were suggested.

The second session was intended to introduce the topic of language variation in a sociolinguistic framework and to lay the foundation for subsequent small-group discussions. The main points of consideration were: (a) the historical sources (social and regional) of language differences; (b) the factors leading to the dominance of a standard dialect and social acceptability; and, (c) the definition of Nonstandard Negro English (NNE) or Black English (BE) and its population.

This presentation generated many questions, both general and specific, and prompted statements of personal experiences and beliefs. The questions and comments revealed to the consulting team the areas in which the audience was most in need of clarification and elucidation and helped determine the direction and content of succeeding sessions.

After a brief introduction, a 'Negro Dialect Grammar Test' was administered. This is a test in which the correct answers are locutions that are grammatical in Black English. Part of its purpose is to demonstrate that dialects are not simply flawed, mistake-ridden versions of some standard language, but rather complete, coherent, structured linguistic systems. During the discussion which followed the administration of the test, some distinctions between Standard English (SE) and BE were clarified. Specifically, it was noted that most SE constructions are not 'foreign' to BE; that is, that the differences between the two dialects are relatively slight. The point was also made that the scientific approach to language study requires that a rigorous distinction be made between carefully gathered empirical evidence and anecdotal observations and experiences.

In most instances, questions and statements requiring technical or lengthy responses were held in abeyance until the participants met in the seminar sessions, or until future meetings. In order to make the fullest use of all the available consultants, as well as to allow the maximum possible personal interaction with participants, the full group then broke up into three seminar groups of approximately equal size. These groups gathered in separate rooms for discussion led by at least two members of the consulting team. During these sessions copies of several books and articles relating to the topic of social dialects were distributed to the participants. The main topic of consideration by the three seminar groups was the features of BE. Both grammatical and phonological features were discussed, but no judgment was made regarding which was the more important.

The third workshop session was preceded by an introductory review of William Labor's 'The Logic of Non-Standard English', mimeographed copies of which had been made available previously to the participants. The discussion which followed brought out the salient aspects of the difference-deficit controversy, pointing especially to the idea that the ghetto child's failure in school may be the failure of the schools rather than the failure of the child. The teachers were then given a brief demonstration of the systematicity and structure of BE. Using a verb paradigm in the simple present tense of a regular Standard English verb, it was shown where the differences existed between SE and BE. The two contrasting paradigms might look something like the following:

<u>SE</u>		<u>BE</u>
I run	we run	I run
you run	you run	you run
he, she, it runs	they run	he, she, it run
		they run

It was suggested that a very common occurrence among speakers of

BE results from the failure to understand exactly what the constraints on the placement of the third persons singular ending -s are. The student may observe that there is an -s on some Standard English verbs where there is none on the same verbs in his own dialect. Then, unless the true situation is explicitly made clear to him, he may make an effort to shift his own speech and writing in the direction of SE by simply adding an -s to all verb forms in the present tense. This process of overgeneralization, which is sometimes called 'hypercorrection', leads him to produce forms such as 'I runs', 'you runs', or 'they runs'.

For the remainder of the third workshop the consulting team focused on the topics of reading, composition, and oral language skills in relation to the evidence so far presented about social dialects, and BE in particular. With respect to reading, the groups were led to focus on potential solutions to reading problems faced by students whose BE may interfere with the acquisition of reading skills. The teachers were first presented with a chart illustrating the possible interrelationships of language accesses to reading at given points on a continuum, starting with the onset of reading and ending with well-developed reading. These accesses involve such aspects of language as letter-sound relationships, recognition of small units of language ranging from syllables, graphemes, bases, and morphemes to words, and of larger units ranging from phrases to clauses to sentences, and finally to units of discourse such as the paragraph. The idea is that at any given point in the acquisition of reading skills, the interrelationship of these accesses, based on the degree of their usefulness or importance to the learner, is different. To illustrate with extremes, a beginning reader probably makes nearly exclusive use of letter-sound relationships, while the better, more experienced reader probably focuses on the larger units of language. It is hoped that future research will reveal the precise interrelationship of these accesses at any given point in the learner's development.

Four methods were also suggested by which interference of BE in the acquisition of reading skills might be overcome. The first is to teach pupils to speak Standard English before teaching them to read. The second is to teach teachers to recognize the features of BE so that they will be able to distinguish cases of dialect interference from real reading mistakes. The idea here is that the pupil would be permitted to translate the Standard text into his own dialect as he reads. The third method is to use dialect primers from which the pupils would gradually be weaned as their control of Standard English increased. The fourth is called the avoidance method. It involves the exclusion from primers and primers of any cases where BE could conceivably interfere with learning.

The first alternative puts pressure on the pupil, the second, on the teacher, and the third and fourth, on the materials developer. Certainly

the placement of pressure needs to be taken into consideration. There are more pupils than teachers, more teachers than materials developers. The teachers were urged to consider where the pressure has been in the past, who is best able to cope with it, and so on.

Each method has inherent strengths and weaknesses, advantages and disadvantages. It was the opinion of the teachers that various combinations of a few of the methods would be better than the exclusive choice of any one method. Most agreed that teaching reading and Standard English simultaneously, the method which has been used most widely to date, is unsatisfactory. Too often the result is high school students who have some competence in speaking Standard English, but virtually none in reading it. All agreed that if one must make extreme choices, it is better to have the opposite situation, a high school student who can read, but cannot speak, Standard English.

Several group members mentioned the use of experience charts as a viable alternative to the four methods already mentioned. Ideally, experience charts insure interesting content and allow students to develop reading and writing competence at their own speed. Several teachers expressed interest in the use of the avoidance method, combined with their own learning about the features of BE. All were eager to know about available materials (presented in the fourth session) in order to determine the usefulness any might have in their own particular classroom situations.

Also considered were the ramifications of various social dialects for the teaching of composition. The main thrust of the remarks of the consultants was that two quite separate problems may produce the same sort of results in student writing. Errors in compositions can come either from a failure on the students' part to grasp the basic means by which skillful written communication is produced; or, errors can arise which may be attributed to the students' inability to handle the standard dialect of English, or, more accurately, the special formal written variety of the language. Most of the participants seemed to feel that an understanding of the process of constructing a communicatively effective written composition was the primary desideratum. To this end, it was noted that an ability to distinguish between dialect-related errors and those which were evidence of other kinds of mistakes might be helpful. The teachers were given an annotated bibliography to assist them in identifying dialect features, especially of BE, which might occur in student papers. It was generally agreed that, however difficult it might be for the teacher, it was a good idea to try to ignore the dialect-related errors, at least until the basics of effective writing were taught. The salutary effect on the student of not getting back a paper that was not a mass of red pencil marks was cited as beneficial by several participants.

Spelling errors were also the subject of some attention. It was pointed out that even in this area there may be mistakes which can be

identified as dialect-related, and which might be consequently temporarily overlooked. If the teacher has some idea of how words are pronounced in another dialect, she may be able to see how those pronunciations have influenced spelling.

Several consultant staff members then led the groups in a discussion of oral language skills. A short demonstration of one possible type of oral drill was given using the participants as an imaginary class. The materials from which the drills were taken were English Now, developed by Irwin Feigenbaum, which show clear emphasis on the differences in the structures of SE and BE. The particular drills used had to do with the different systems of marking plurality after numbers (i. e. ten dollars, fifteen cents) in the two dialects.

Among the topics discussed by the groups after the demonstration drills were: Should the teacher attend specifically to the question of dialects in class? What can be done if not all students know BE? What ages can use materials like English Now, and how can such materials be adapted for other ages? How aware are students of dialect differences and of differences in appropriateness of various forms of language?

The emphasis of the fourth workshop meetings was on materials which were either directly related to social dialects as a subject of study or were primarily concerned with some other content area, but designed to eliminate or alleviate any social dialect interference in their use. The participants were divided into three groups, each of which spent about one-third of the available time with the consultants in one of the three areas of reading, composition, and oral language skills.

A critical survey of currently available materials on reading and oral language skills was presented, but the paucity of texts on composition, even for speakers of standard dialects, made it necessary to deal with that subject somewhat programmatically. Samples of student writing brought in by some of the participants were projected and analyzed for dialect-related and other errors by various staff members.

The second phase of the Norfolk Project, which was intended to arise naturally out of the first phase, was a series of visits to individual schools in the Norfolk City Schools system. The teachers who participated in the first phase workshops were invited to suggest, based on what they had heard in the workshop sessions and on what they could learn from conferring with their fellow teachers at their own schools, ways in which they thought their schools might be helped by one or more visits from a consultant or consulting team from the Center for Applied Linguistics and Georgetown University.

Several such visits were requested by persons from various schools in the system, and the following summarizes the reports on what took place there.

Several teachers at one elementary school requested that the consulting team work with them on teaching the acquisition of standard

English. This particular school was an experimental elementary school, almost a classroom-without-walls type, which emphasized individual motivation in the learning process. The children often work on their own or in groups, with occasional guidance, rather than in the traditional structure of the classroom with one teacher instructing the entire class on one subject at a time.

On both visits, a written exercise was given to the students. On the first visit, one of these was introduced at the beginning of the class and consisted of one mimeographed sheet (i. e. Doris _____ to cook. like). Ideally, these exercises would be part of a long series, moving from more simple tasks to tasks of increasing complexity. A complete program would include several series of this type with one feature chosen for each series of exercises. For a long term plan, a number of features in which dialect interference can be expected to occur would be chosen and presented, one feature per series of exercises, in order of frequency of interference. In other words, those features which interfere most frequently would be presented first, and those features which may interfere least frequently would be presented later. Many such sentences, which are completion exercises, were given to the class on the second visit. These deal with third person singular present tense -s, which is a very frequent interference feature in the compositions of nonstandard dialect speakers.

Since teachers are concerned with the practical details of designing such exercises, and since they want to know which particular features of the nonstandard dialect of their students interfere most frequently and therefore should be presented first, some suggestions were given along these lines. First, to acquaint them with the major features of Negro dialect, the consulting staff recommended the article by Ralph Fasold and Walt Wolfram, 'Some Linguistic Features of Negro Dialect' in Teaching Standard English in the Inner City (eds. R. Shuy and R. Fasold). Second, it was suggested that the teachers analyze their students' compositions for dialect interference. Those 'errors' which occur frequently in many of their students' compositions and which can be attributed to dialect interference are the features to present first in several series of exercises. The teachers were told that research done on dialect interference in composition shows that the following features can be expected to occur fairly frequently: the absence of third person singular present tense -s, plural -s, and possessive -s, and a consonant cluster reduction which results in the absence of -ed suffixes (e. g. miss for missed). In addition to these four phenomena, teachers were encouraged to be aware of other features which consistently crop up in their own students' writing.

The aim of these classroom exercises was to develop in the students an automatic response to supply the Standard English variant of a given feature when they are writing a Standard English composition. For

example, in many nonstandard dialects no -s suffix is required in the third person singular present tense verbs. Thus, it is correct in these dialects to say His dog bark at night for the Standard English sentence His dog barks at night. However, from the teachers' point of view, nonstandard English speaking students learning to write in Standard English must acquire the habit of including that -s suffix whenever they write a third person singular present tense verb. The students must learn to distinguish between these two types of verbs, and initially are given clues to help them distinguish between the two types.

A different type of exercise was tried out with individual students on the first visit. Four girls and four boys, selected by the teacher as dialect speakers with difficulty in writing Standard English, were asked to relate a brief story (approximately 8-10 sentences) to an interviewer about something that had happened to them. The interviews were tape recorded. After the brief narratives were recorded, each student was asked to write down exactly what he has said into the tape recorder, and was told that the recording would be replayed as often as necessary for the student to complete the task. The aim of this exercise was to impress upon the students the concept that writing is speech written down. The procedure worked fairly well, but only with those students who had basically learned how to spell. In such an exercise a few misspellings scarcely constitute an obstacle; however, if a student has to ask how to spell almost every word, the procedure takes too long and becomes tedious for both the student and teacher.

On the second visit, the above exercise was changed slightly in an attempt to expand the technique to an entire class. The change avoided two problems encountered with the earlier method: first, working with individual students is quite time-consuming, and second, the earlier method worked well only with good spellers. The aim, however, was the same: to teach the concept that writing is essentially speech written down. In this exercise, a composition was written on the blackboard from a group effort. The first sentence was provided by the teacher. The rest of the story was written by volunteers from the class who would each give a sentence to add on to the story. At this stage in teaching writing, errors which are based on dialect interference are not altered; the teacher writes down the sentences just as they are given by the students (in standard orthography since details of pronunciation are not transcribed as said).

Two or three of these compositions were written with the entire class, at which point the students' interest began to fade. Later in the day, this same technique was used with groups of four or five students. Because with a small group everyone gets to participate more frequently, and some students are not allowed to dominate the game more than others, it worked more successfully with the smaller groups.

Finally, an oral exercise was tried with small groups of students, based on English Now materials mentioned earlier. Best titled a

sentence game, the exercise is started off by the teacher, who gives a sentence using the first person singular, such as: When I get up in the morning, I wash my face. A volunteer from the group of about five students goes next, changing the sentence to the third person: When he (or she) gets up in the morning, he washes his (or her) face. The aim of the game is obviously to get the students to practice using the third person singular -s suffix in their speech. The game was not explained in terms of first person and third person usage, but the students were shown how to play it by illustration, and then, after the game was in progress, it was pointed out where to say washes instead of wash, for example. Once the students get accustomed to using the -s suffix appropriately, the game can turn competitive, each student getting one point for each -s suffix correctly used. It should be pointed out again here that using -s suffixes correctly is much more difficult for nonstandard speakers than most teachers assume. Consequently, any exercises dealing with Standard English features should be handled carefully so as not to discourage or humiliate those students for whom this is a difficult task.

Several teachers at a Norfolk high school asked advice on 'how to introduce bidialectal methodology into classroom situations where availability of audio-visual assistance is limited'.

The first major problem at this school was identified as reading. In the remainder of this visit, the second problem was revealed: a difficulty in communication between teachers and students. Some of the teachers were inclined to believe that their dialects and the students' dialects were mutually unintelligible. It was noted that this might be partially an acoustic problem in the high-ceilinged, old building, rather than entirely a dialect-related difficulty. The additional suggestion was made that, merely for the sake of efficiency, if for no other reason, some attempt by the teachers to learn the main features of the students' dialects might help improve communication.

Advice was sought on the feasibility of establishing optional courses in oral language and reading for students who show special motivation. The participants agreed, however, that oral language competency in SE is not as important as ability in reading and composition.

The preceding examples were rather typical of the kinds of Phase II on-site assistance requested by the school system. In addition, the consultants were asked to help individual schools tool-up for adopting specific social-dialect oriented materials, interpret standardized tests relating to language arts and reading, and develop individual diagnostic abilities in the teachers involved.

At this point, approximately one year after the Norfolk in-service project began, it is possible to assess the interrelationship of sociolinguistics and education a bit more clearly.

For one thing, it is perfectly clear that the usefulness of sociolinguistics to education will not come about without the thoughtful cross-

pollination which can come about only if both fields are willing to be vulnerable and willing to learn things about the other. Traditionally, linguistics has offered its regular courses to educators without trying to meet them halfway. There is reason to believe that a great deal of what our introductory courses in linguistics contain is irrelevant to the educator, sociologist or the psychologist who is trying to find out enough about our subject to relate it to his own field. To obtain such cross-pollination, both participating fields need to want each other's expertise.

This project has also revealed that certain basic concepts or research assumptions of sociolinguistics are not at all obvious to scholars in other fields. That is, there is nothing perverse or inherently stupid about certain slow learnings about sociolinguistics. Generations of teaching, both from without and within the field of linguistics, which stress only the invariable nature of language along with its abstract nature will be sure to interfere with more recent notions about language variability and the need to see language in actual social interactions. For education, the stumbling blocks will continue to exist when sociolinguists observe that different dialects are equally systematic, regular, useful, and graceful. This will continue to be understood by many educators as meaning that all standards are being replaced by an era of utter permissiveness. Changes in attitudes are brought about slowly, if at all, and they are brought about only with utmost patience.

The Norfolk project also verified our suspicion that abstract workshop sessions which tell teachers what they need to know about sociolinguistics are not as effective as sessions which show them real language situations, and in which the teachers work on the real sociolinguistic situations found in their own classrooms. Phase II of this project provided its most distinctive characteristic as the college people worked in actual classrooms trying to put flesh on the abstractions of the workshops. This was no small matter for both the consulting staff, who had to put their money where their mouth was, and for the Norfolk schools, which had to trust the consultants and put up with their lack of knowledge of how schools work.

Perhaps the most immediately useful aspect of the project is the ultimate reality which the classroom interfaces provide. It is probably impossible to bring about large scale changes in the pre-service education of teachers without first providing tangible models that have been shown to be effective. Such models are often brought about through in-service education. It is our hope that all teachers eventually will be trained adequately in language variation so that in-service programs such as this one will not be necessary. But, ironically enough, it is often more convincing to begin with in-service programs since they can be done on a small enough scale to be visible and, hopefully, attractive.

Lastly, the Norfolk project has given heart to those who advocate the application of linguistics to educational problems. It has become

fashionable among certain linguists to observe that the state of the art with respect to theory is so nebulous that it does not justify applying anything to the schools. It is hard to argue with such a statement without appearing to be either ignorant of the speculative status of current theory or condescending about the low state of educational practice. Yet, one need not be guilty of either. A trip to an actual classroom will be a convincing argument against non-involvement. Regardless of how tentative our theories may be, there is a great deal that sociolinguists can say to modify or divert current misconceptions and misinformation. In such cases, sociolinguists are more guilty of negligence if they abstain from educational problems than if they participate in them.