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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are two important reasons for bringing out this special issue of the *Cahiers linguistiques d'Ottawa* focussing on variationist methodology. The first is to disseminate the results of research that the students of the Sociolinguistics Research Group at the University of Ottawa have been engaged in. The second reason is the topical nature of much of this research.

We would like to thank Professor Shana Poplack for serving as guest editor for this issue. More generally, we would like to thank her for her ongoing support, both moral and financial, of the students and their work. Without her energy, motivation and feedback, the work presented in this issue would never have been possible.

We would also like to thank Dean Robert Major and the Faculty of Arts for their financial assistance in making this special issue possible.

The Editors

FOREWORD

The papers assembled in this special issue on *Perspectives on linguistic variation: The view from 70 Laurier*, all by students (or former students) of sociolinguistics from the University of Ottawa, were presented at the XXVIth conference on New Ways of Analyzing Variation (NWAVE) held in October 1997 at the Université Laval.

They illustrate the applicability of the variationist framework to a wide variety of phonological, morphological, syntactic and discourse phenomena characteristic of spoken language. They also reflect the diverse research interests and directions of the members of the Ottawa Sociolinguistics Research Group. Based for the most part on corpora housed at the department's Sociolinguistics Laboratory, these papers all have in common their use of the variationist method to evaluate competing theories and explanations of language use.

Harvie and LeBlanc both use the Ottawa-Hull Spoken English Corpus to examine issues in English grammar. Harvie examines null subject in English, a poorly documented phenomenon with important theoretical consequences. LeBlanc establishes the variable constraints on selection of *would*, *used to* and simple past to express past habitual aspect. Using data she collected in southern Alberta, Meechan shows how variable fronting and raising of the low diphthongs /ay/ and /aw/ in Canadian English correlate with ethnoreligious identity and dialect contact. Tagliamonte and Hudson trace the incipient grammaticization of *be+like* as a quotative in the speech of Canadian and British youths. Budzhak-Jones develops diagnostics for determining language system membership in mixed-language discourse, based on data she collected among Ukrainian-English bilinguals. Two papers analyze diaspora varieties of African-American Vernacular English collected in Samaná (Dominican Republic) and Nova Scotia, to disprove claims that specific linguistic variables are diagnostic of the creole origins of African-American Vernacular English. Van Herk relates the variable non-inversion of subject and verb in questions to ongoing processes of change in question formation initiated via *do*-support in early Modern English. Walker shows that factors conditioning variability between contracted and zero copula, previously attributed to the effects of the grammatical category following the copula, are in fact an epiphenomenon of the interaction between grammatical and prosodic factors.

Though most of the articles appearing here originated as research projects undertaken in partial fulfillment of the requirements of various sociolinguistics

seminars, their present form speaks to the level of initiative, involvement and mutual support among students in the Sociolinguistics Research Group. These papers are the result of a prodigious amount of work, ranging from the original conceptualization and implementation of the research they report, through painstaking preparation of abstract submissions, to the final writing of the papers and their presentation at NWAVE XXVI. The credibility they earned there is eloquent testimony that the investment of energy and enthusiasm was not in vain. The material and moral support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Faculty of Arts and the Department of Linguistics is gratefully acknowledged.

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