

Surveying the linguistic terrain: Utilizing surveys near and far

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Outline of talk

- Pedagogical benefits of UG research
- Two projects
 - In different places
- Adapting projects to local needs
 - Of the students, of the communities

Undergrad research benefits

- Research skills (Kardash 2000)
- Independence (Seymour et al. 2004)
- Career preparation (Lopatto 2003, Russell et al. 2007)
- Grad school attendance (Hathaway et al. 2002)
- Degree completion, especially for non-traditional students (Nagda et al. 1998)

But...

- Most undergrad research is small-scale, late in degree, with lots of mentoring and collaboration with single students (Benson 2007, Nagda et al. 1998, Kardash 2000, Dotterer 2002)
- Time-consuming, rewards few students, happens too late

So...

- We developed large-scale collaborative projects that allow many students to be involved
 - See, e.g., Van Herk (2008)
- These have since been adapted (and, frankly, improved) by others
 - E.g., Mackenzie et al (2014)

The Newfoundland project

- Course: *Language in Newfoundland and Labrador* (LING 2210)
 - No prerequisites, sociolinguistics + dialectology
 - University requires majority of evaluation to be research/writing
- Occasional funding from MUN instructional development grant to hire TAs

Why usage surveys?

- (instead of earlier linguistic data collection)
- Surveys allow us to look at many linguistic features
- Students need less training
- Encourages engagement with community

How the survey works

when Gerard does it

- Numbered list of up to 41 features
 - Traditional NL (*I loves it*)
 - New/incoming (*I'm like*, “wow!”)
 - Regionally restricted (*I bin told him*)
 - Non-local as controls (*I done told him*)

1. <i>I'm all, "Wow!"</i>							
2. <i>I loves it.</i>							
3. <i>I goes there.</i>							
4. <i>Give it to he.</i>							
5. <i>Give it to un.</i>							

Linguistic questions

- Responses for each feature
 - *I use this or I hear this in NL*
 - Likert scale for how often
 - *always, often, sometimes, rarely, never*
 - Space for comments

Example: (if you use this yourself, and hear it often, from young girls at the mall)

<i>Oh my God!</i>	I use this	I hear this in NL...					Who uses this, where
	X	N	R	S	O	A	<i>young girls at the mall</i>
					X		

Demographic questions

- Sex
- Birth year (collapsed into decades)
- Region
 - St. John's, Avalon, Labrador, rest of NL, Canada, US, Britain, rest of world
- Amount of time spent outside NL

Information about you (Feel free to skip any question.)

2. Are you male or female? _____
3. What year were you born? _____
4. Please mark an X beside the area where you spent most of the first 10 years of your life:
St. John's and suburbs: ____ rest of the Avalon: ____ rest of Newfoundland: ____
Labrador: ____ rest of Canada: ____ USA: ____ Britain: ____ rest of world: ____
5. Please name the town where you spent most of the first 10 years of your life.

6. What's the longest period of time you've been out of Newfoundland & Labrador?

7. Please write any other comments or observations here:

Data management

- Students compile and electronically submit their survey results
 - Usually 10 surveys per student
- Prof compiles all results, does some analysis, returns findings to students
- Students pick an aspect of the findings to write about

Our current data set

- Over 5000 completed surveys from 15 classes and counting
- Refined over time for better learning experience
 - Thus much variation in features studied, usage measurements, etc.
- Data pool that can be used to inform our other research
 - See Childs & Van Herk (2014), Van Herk et al (2014)

Surveying different regions

- Newfoundland and Appalachia **share** some social features
 - Marked non-standard speech
 - New indexations
 - Post-insular, urbanization, cultural revitalization
- ...but enough things are **different** that methods must be adapted

What's marked about Newfoundland (and Memorial)

- Students are community members, participant observers
 - University attracts many non-traditional students, rural students
- Researchers benefit from in-group status, solidarity

The Appalachia project

- Course: *Language Variation in North America* (ENGL 350)
 - Sociolinguistics and dialectology
 - Data/research driven final paper
- CCU Professional Enhancement Grant to hire Research Assistant

Why usage surveys?

- Ease of data collection
 - amount of features
 - time
 - student researchers
- Active learning
- Guarantees “good” data for final papers

How the survey works

when Daniel and Becky do it

- Students not in Appalachia
- Online and paper version
 - Paper version distributed by students
- 31 traditional AppE features
 - lexical, phonological, and morpho/syntactic

Linguistic questions

- I use this & I hear this
 - Likert scale for how often
 - never, rarely, sometimes, often, all the time
- Open-ended who uses & where

How often...					Do you hear <i>others</i> use this expression?					
Do <i>you</i> use this expression?										
never	rarely	sometimes	often	all the time	never	rarely	sometimes	often	all the time	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oh my God!	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
					Radical, dude.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Who uses "Oh my God"?	<input type="text" value="Young girls"/>				Where?	<input type="text" value="At the mall"/>				
Who uses "Radical, dude"?	<input type="text" value="Teenage boys"/>				Where?	<input type="text" value="At the skate park"/>				

Demographic questions

- Age, gender, ethnicity
- State from, other states & how long
- Home community
 - rural, small town, large town, city, large city
- Settle down
 - home town, close to home town, Southern state, Northern state, Western state, outside US
- Speak with an accent
 - What do you call it?

Data management

- Students take online version
- Students administer paper version
 - 9 per student, balance for age/gender
- Professor combine results with online results and return findings to students
- Students choose some feature(s) to write about

Our current data set

- 383 completed surveys
- Paper data Southern community
 - South n 134
- Online data Appalachian community
 - Appalachia n 173

Appalachia data in South Carolina

- Students not in speech region
- Engage in theory and analysis of data
- Situate AppE within broader SUSE
- Adaptability of methods when outside the target speech region

What students get from this

(in both places)

- Better understanding of non-Standard varieties and their social embedding
- Better engagement with learning
- Investiture into community of scholars
- Understanding of messy, real data
- Fun

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