

CONCORD AND CONFLICT IN THE SPEECH COMMUNITY

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1. INTRODUCTION. In a sense, language might be seen as the ultimate example of cooperation, since it exists, as DeSaussure noted around the turn of this century (1959:14) "only by virtue of a sort of contract signed by the members of a community." The contract he was referring to is the "collection of necessary conventions that have been adopted by a social body" (p. 9) to permit communication amongst its members. Clearly, if you call a "chair" a chair, while I call it a pfamo, that social contract is threatened. And it is quite decisively breached, I presume, if mi staat taak in kriiyool, an bos gyaf bout hau pikni a farin na a nyam di ool piip dem vitl, that is, if I switch to Creole, observing that children living abroad don't eat the food their forefathers did, and you don't speak Creole.

From this point of view, language is merely cooperation, and in view of the twin foci of this symposium, the organizers would be amply justified in paying for only half of my hotel costs, or half of my meals. But at the risk of being left both homeless and hungry tonight, let me hasten to add that there is competition and conflict in language too! One obvious instance would be where old and new pronunciations, words or structures compete, in the process of linguistic change. In the course of changing from Middle English [knif] to Modern English [naif], pronunciations of older [knif] must have competed, for a while, with newer [knaif], as the Great Vowel Shift began, and [knaif] in turn must have competed with [naif], as the initial k was lost. But I suspect that language-internal competition of this sort will be of less interest to you than competition between linguistic forms, dialects or languages associated with different classes, ethnicities, or other social groups, so let me assure you that we have

cases of that too. One has only to recall that the 1976 uprising in Soweto and its brutal suppression--which left hundreds dead and wounded-- was, initially, at least, about language, the attempt by the South African government to impose Afrikaans as a medium of education in Black schools (Dirven 1990:219). The columns of children who marched through Soweto on the morning of June 16, 1976 carried placards which read "Down with Afrikaans," "Blacks are not dustbins--Afrikaans stinks" and so on (Brooks and Brickhill 1980:8). Even though Winnie Mandela noted (ibid, 13) that the language issue was "merely a spark that lit the resentment . . . building up among Black people," her statement only serves to exemplify a general truth--that language almost never exists in vacuo. As Nadkarni (1990:135) observes, "A language is more than a medium of communication; it is also a conglomerate of emotional, cultural and racial ties." It follows that at least some of the processes of cooperation and competition which social scientists discover in other human institutions will also be reflected in language, and that the linguists who might be expected to recognize this most readily are sociolinguists, who study language in society.

And yet, what sociolinguists have emphasized in their models of the speech community is cooperation and consensus. I want to use the cover of this forum to show that this is so (for few sociolinguists recognize it) and to demonstrate, on the basis of an extended example from Cane Walk, Guyana, that our models need to provide for the potential of both concord and conflict (a common enough concept among sociologists) if they are to be adequate. Drawing on some other examples from the US, the Caribbean and Europe, I will then attempt to formulate some elementary principles about the conditions under which we might expect the concordant or the conflictual tendencies to be predominant.

2. DEFINITIONS OF THE SPEECH COMMUNITY. For Bloomfield (1933:29, 42-56), as for several other mainstream linguists in the structuralist and generativist traditions (Hockett 1958:8, Lyons 1970:326, Chomsky 1965:3), a speech community was defined by the use of a single language:

- (1) A group of people who use the same system of speech-signals is a speech community. Obviously, the value of language depends upon people's using it in the same way. (Bloomfield 1933:29)

Bloomfield's concept was not related to locale, so that he spoke for instance, of "the speech community which consists of all English-speaking people" (ibid:42), and we could speak equally of the French speaking community world wide, the Spanish community, and so on. As the second sentence in (1) suggests, this conception is closely related to DeSaussure's notion of a social contract, but it is in fact an outmoded view. To the extent that it survives, it is sometimes referred to as a "language community" (Kloss 1986:94-95).

The concept of the speech community was taken over by sociolinguists, from the 1960's on, for a unit of description which would facilitate comparison of work in linguistics and the social sciences. (Hence its appropriateness as a topic for this forum.) Gumperz 1962 was quite explicit about this:

- (2) Comparisons of linguistic and social behavior have been impeded by the fact that linguistic and anthropological studies are rarely based upon comparable sets of data. While the anthropologist's description refers to specific communities, the universe of linguistic analysis is a single language or dialect . . . (Gumperz 1962:28)

Gumperz noted that (p. 30) that "There are no a priori grounds which force us to define speech communities so that all members speak the same language", and suggested instead a definition which focused on community (common locale or social aggregate), rather than language, and on interaction therein:

- (3) [A linguistic community, or speech community is] . . . a social group which may be either monolingual or multilingual, held together by frequency of social interaction patterns and set off from the surrounding area by weaknesses in the lines of communication. (Gumperz 1962:31)

Sociolinguists who followed in Gumperz' wake prided themselves on their commitment to describing the verbal repertoires and linguistic heterogeneity of the people who lived within speech communities, and criticized generativists like Noam Chomsky for suggesting that:

- (4) Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, . . . (Chomsky 1965:2)

And yet, while emphasizing potential heterogeneity in language use, sociolinguists looked for uniformity on another level, treating it as axiomatic that the members of a speech community would be united with respect to shared norms for the use of language (cf Hymes 1967:18, 1972:54, Fishman 1971:272, Labov 1968:251, 1972b:121, Gumperz 1972:16, 1982:22, and Romaine 1982:23), although the specification of these "shared norms," varied slightly from one sociolinguist to the next. For Hymes (1967:18, 1972:54), knowledge of at least one variety and knowledge of speaking rules were both important:

- (5) ... a speech community is defined as a community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of one linguistic variety. Hymes (1967:18, 1972:54)

Labov (1968:251), on the other hand, emphasized the reflection of shared norms of social evaluation and abstract patterns of style shifting (see figure 1):

- (6) The speech community is not defined by any marked agreement in the use of language elements, so much as by participation in a set of shared norms; these norms may be observed in overt types of evaluative

behavior, and by the uniformity of abstract patterns of variation . . . (Labov 1968:250-1)

To summarize the points on which sociolinguists were agreed: Members of a speech community needn't speak one and only one language, but they should constitute an integral geographical/social unit (Hymes 1972:55) with shared norms for the use of language (shared speaking rules, patterns of style-shifting, or evaluation of language differences).

3. ... CANE WALK AS A SPEECH COMMUNITY. I wish to apply these criteria now to Cane Walk, pseudonym for a village in Guyana, South America, outside Georgetown, the capital. This will go on for about twenty minutes, and to help you keep track of where I'm going, let me note that I'll start by saying something about Cane Walk as a sociopolitical community, and then go on to show that its members cooperate or converge with respect to certain sociolinguistic norms. But then I'll complicate the picture by showing that Cane Walkers also conflict or diverge with respect to other sociolinguistic norms. This will demonstrate the need for us to complicate our abstract models of the speech community to include more diversity and conflict in underlying norms, and in the closing section of the paper I'll discuss some examples from other communities in which either the concordant or conflictual tendencies are dominant, and see if we can extract some general principles.

3.1: Status as an integral sociopolitical unit. The criterion that a speech community be an integral social unit is readily satisfied by Cane Walk. It is an established residential and municipal unit, recognized both by the nation-state, and by the nearby LBI sugar estate, which first established it in the 1950's as an "extra-nuclear" housing area. Its population in the 1970's was approximately 3,700. They were almost entirely East Indian, the descendants of indentured

laborers brought in from India between 1835 and 1917 to work on the colony's sugar estates, after the emancipation of African slaves in 1834 (Smith 1962:43).

The primary class distinction in Cane Walk is between those who work as laborers in the cane-fields behind the village (Estate Class, EC), and those who do not (Non-Estate Class, NEC), working instead as foremen or clerks on the sugar estate, or as shop-owners and skilled tradesmen elsewhere.

Since past ways of life, characters, values and attitudes can be an important resource in the symbolic construction of community (Cohen 1985:102), I wish to provide some historical background. Up until the 1950's, the site of the present community was open pasture, and the people who were to become its first settlers were laborers and junior staff personnel on a sugar plantation which was located to the right of the present Cane Walk community, further in from the public road. (See map 1.) This sugar plantation, like others originally established in the nineteenth century (Jenkins 1871), was self-sufficient--with its own hospital, cemetery, school and temple--and isolated from the larger society. The status system of the sugar plantation was reflected in the location and size of the housing units. (See map 2.) The manager's huge house was set off by itself, with the expatriate senior staff--factory managers, engineers, and high level supervisors--nearby. Housing for the junior staff members and laborers was in a separate block north-west of the manager's house. The field-foremen, clerks and drivers who had risen from the ranks of the laborers to become junior staff, shared small cottages. The laborers (cane cutters, weeders, shovelmen) occupied rooms within the long rectangular buildings known as logies.

-----INSERT MAP 1 AROUND HERE-----

-----INSERT MAP 2 AROUND HERE-----

The deplorable conditions in these logies contributed to the demise of the plantation community. They were condemned by the Venn Commission in 1949, and the sugar industry responded by establishing "extra-nuclear" housing areas like Cane Walk throughout the country. Between 1952 and 1966, the land in the Cane Walk extra-nuclear area was leased to the workers who had previously occupied the logies and junior staff cottages, and the site of the old plantation community was taken over by bush and sugar cane. Significantly, materials from the "old" logies and cottages were often used in the construction of "new" homes.

The current social organization of Cane Walk likewise retains traces of the "old" in the "new." The EC/NEC distinction is a modified form of the estate's occupational distinction between laborers and junior staff, as Jayawardena (1962) also found to be true of other Guyanese sugar estate communities. (The managerial and senior staff, it should be noted, moved into a separate fenced housing compound further up the coast with its own club, pool, and other amenities.) Going further back, the Estate Class members may be likened to the nineteenth century ex-indentured estate residents, insofar as their economic fortunes and social relationships remain tied to the sugar estate, and they live their lives primarily within the village and the cane-fields. The Non-Estate Class members are like the ex-indentured free villagers in that their economic fates and social relationships are much less significantly affected by the sugar estate and they have greater potential for outward geographical movement and upward socioeconomic mobility.¹

Having satisfied the requirement that it be an integral sociopolitical unit, let us look now for the concordant patterns of speaking and language evaluation which we need to establish Cane Walk as a speech community.

3.2. Concordant patterns of speaking and language evaluation. There is a wide range of structured speech events in which the members of this community participate daily. I will describe one of these--rowing--but wish to note first that verbal routines are an integral part of any community's shared speaking rules, and that failure to recognize or participate appropriately in them may be sufficient to brand someone as an outsider.

A full-scale row, in local terms, matches the Oxford Dictionary definition of the word as a "noisy quarrel" or "dispute," but one can row with someone without receiving an agitated rebuttal. Also known as mekkin noise or getting on bad, rowing involves the verbal expression of dissatisfaction with an action or state of affairs for which someone else is responsible. Sometimes a strong opening salvo from one party may settle the issue without contention. An example of such a one-sided row is provided by Irene, who became annoyed when a neighbor started to pelt bricks (i.e., "throw rocks") on her roof, and retaliated by rowing:²

- (7) Couple night well dem used to pelt brick pan dis house.
 . . . Till one night, me get vex, me come out, me tell dem,
 'Before aalyuh brick de house--de house na do aalyuh
 nutten--whoever feel dem gat seed more dan baigan, aalyuh come out a
 outside, an leh awe battle am. Wuh yuh a brick de house fah?!'
 Well, now me see de bricks santy ... (SI 59:133-36)
 "On several occasions, at night, they would throw rocks on this house.
 Until one night, I got mad, I came out and told them,
 'Before you guys throw rocks on the house--which hasn't done you
 anything--whoever feels they have more seeds than an eggplant, come
 outside and let's fight it out! Why are you stoning the house?!
 Well, now I see that the rock-throwing has stopped..."

From Irene's statement of the facts--admittedly her side of the story--her brief row is met with silence and brings the source of annoyance to an end. But even with potentially biased reporting, her words illustrate several aspects of what a good row usually includes: a claim that an attack on one's property is an attack on its' owner, an instance of the personal disrespect or eye-pass which is the subject of many rows (Jayawardena 1962); loud and vigorous delivery; and a threat of physical action which is couched in the form of a clever put-down or shot: "Whoever feel dem got seed more dan baigan, come a outside an leh awe battle am." Effective rowing often depends on the ability to put down one's opponent with clever shots like these, involving metaphor, rhyme, the use of puns and similar devices.

NEC members try not to row too frequently or loudly in public because it is considered low-class. In this respect they are somewhat like the Whalsay Islanders of Shetland, who "avoid open dispute or the public assertion of opinion" (Cohen 1985:16). But ultimately, when they feel their property, their families or their integrity threatened, NEC Cane Walkers can carry on as vociferously or loudly as any other member of their community. Not to be able to do so is to invite exploitation and "eye pass" (Jayawardena 1962).

Although more can be said about rowing, the aim here is not to describe it exhaustively, but to illustrate one aspect of the community's shared norms with respect to speaking. I will now turn to shared evaluative norms, revealed in the results of a matched guise experiment which I conducted in the village.

The matched guise test is a subtle way of eliciting a community's evaluative norms. Listeners hear samples of speech from the same speaker(s) recurring in the guise of different language varieties. They believe they are hearing different speakers, however, and the ratings which they give these samples on various dimensions are interpreted as indicators of their attitudes

towards the language varieties in each sample or the people stereotypically associated with them. In the first experiments with this technique, carried out by Lambert and his colleagues in the late 1950's (see Lambert 1967), English and French Canadian subjects in Montreal both rated bilingual speakers more positively in their English than in their French guise, revealing community-wide evaluative norms despite differences in language use. Similarly, in Labov's (1966) subjective reaction tests in New York City,³ speakers whose test sentences were closer to middle-class usage were rated higher on a job scale by both middle and working class respondents.

To test for similar evaluative norms in Cane Walk, a matched-guise test was administered individually to twenty-four Cane Walkers, twelve of whom were Estate Class members and twelve of whom were Non-Estate Class. They were asked to rate three "speakers"--one basilectal or deep Creole (MG1), one acrolectal or Standard English (MG3) and one mesolectal or in between (MG2). They were asked to rate them both on a job scale and a friend scale. The opening sentences of each sample will give you some idea of the linguistic differences between the three samples:

(8) MG 1 (Basilectal/Most Creole): Well, hear how de ting bin happen. Me frien dem did passin me house wan Saturday aftanoon. Me an me lil brudda--awee bin deh upstairs by de window. Well, dem call awee . . . (Rickford 1985:149)

(9) MG2 (Mesolectal/Intermediate): Well, how--how uh meet me wife is like dis. My modduh had a good frien who used to come an visit she reguluh. An my modda used to go around by she steady too. Dey was friends from long ...

(10) MG2 (Acrolectal/Most English): Well, actually, I'm a pretty shy type by nature, and I never had much to do with girls. But one day, my friends invited me to go with them to a party, and I went along, you know, just for the fun of it . . .

In discussing the results, we will focus first on the job scale ratings. Figure 1, which shows the mean ratings on the job hierarchy given to each of the matched-guise samples, is a dramatic demonstration of the uniformity of evaluative norms in this community.⁴ Although the EC ratings are all slightly higher than the NEC ones, the responses of the two groups are parallel throughout. Both sets of respondents associate basilectal speech (MG1) with the lowest occupation in the prestige hierarchy (Canecutter), acrolectal speech (MG3) with the highest (Field Foreman or Field Manager), and mesolectal speech (MG2) with an occupation of in between (Shopowner/Security Guard).

----INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE----

3.3 Conflict in patterns of speaking and evaluation. Here we could simply let the matter rest here, as others do. When sociolinguists demonstrate the existence of shared norms, they usually do so only with respect to a small subset of a community's ways of speaking or evaluative norms. The implication is that other subsets, if considered, would point in the same direction, but this is not necessarily the case. Although EC and NEC members both participate in the patterns of speaking and evaluative norms reported above, they diverge sharply with respect to others, two examples of which we will now consider.

The first example involves talkin nansi, a speech event in which EC members participate far more often than NEC members. Talkin nansi refers to the telling of traditional folktales or nansi.⁵ The term derives from 'Brer Anansi,' the clever spider who is the hero in a series of African and Caribbean folktales (Tanna 1984:77-107), but the stories need not feature Brer Anansi, and need not even involve animal characters. What unites them with the original Anansi stories is the fact that their central protagonists use wit, trickery or cunning to outwit bigger or more powerful opponents. This element is interwoven with other moral themes: the triumph of good over evil, poverty over wealth,

commonsense over book learning, and the oppressed over the oppressor. For example, humble 'Sense man' outwits the powerful governor; a poor woman's son surpasses richer suitors for the hand of the king's daughter; and the sore-covered Hafatania earns respect after saving her siblings from a hungry tiger :

(11) **A NANSI STORY: HAFATANIA** (On handout; don't read)

Although nansi-telling sessions remain popular among EC members, most NEC members rarely talk nansi, some of them explicitly eschewing such stories as "nonsense." [In fact, some make a play of it: nansi= nansens.] There are several reasons for this EC/NEC divergence. One is that talkin nansi is associated with logie life, and the limited education and low class status that it connotes. Shunning nansi stories is thus in keeping with other NEC steps to achieving upward social mobility. A second reason is that nansi stories are often framed in lower mesolectal or basilectal creole, and NEC members perhaps avoid them for the same reason they avoid basilectal creole more generally; in the words of Oxford, "it don't take you nowhere." A third reason is that nansi stories, with their depictions of the powerless overcoming the powerful, are particularly attractive to EC members for the vicarious triumphs they offer over the hard realities of everyday life. NEC members need these vicarious triumphs less, and since many adopt the ideologies of status groups above them, are less positively disposed to stories of the weak inheriting the earth. Finally, talkin nansi provides an opportunity for the achievement of community status outside of the socioeconomic estate hierarchy, in which increments of status are difficult if not impossible for EC members.⁶ Good nansi story tellers are in absolute command of the floor when their narratives are being told, and their reputations may be legion for miles around. One can see children being socialized into the performer role at nansi sessions, as they are encouraged to share rhymes, jokes and any other verbal skills. At one

memorable session, an EC member boasted of her young son's ability to curse, and he then delivered a breathless sequence of four letter words and other obscenities to the admiration of his mother and the assembled guests-- something difficult to imagine in an NEC household.

In short, the differing attitudes of EC and NEC members to talkin nansi symbolize their respective positions within the social order, and the different means available to them for augmenting status.

The second example of normative conflict involves the ratings which members of the two Cane Walk classes gave to matched guise speakers on the friend scale, shown in figure 2. The NEC and EC ratings here are almost diametrically opposed, with the EC respondents rating the basilectal speaker (MG1) most likely to fit in with their friends, and the NEC respondents rating the mesolectal and acrolectal speakers as most likely to do so.

----INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE----

When we match the distribution of linguistic features in the MG samples with their distribution in the speech of EC and NEC raters (Rickford 1985:151-52), it is clear that the most favorable friend rating is reserved by each group for the matched guise 'speaker' whose language use most closely matches theirs. MG1, for instance, uses basilectal mi as subject pronoun 90% of the time, and is rated most positively by the EC raters, whose recorded usage of basilectal mi is 89% (n=2309). Similarly, MG2, the sample which NEVER uses basilectal mi as subject pronoun, is rated most positively by the NEC raters, whose mean recorded usage of this feature is close to zero (11%, n=3012). (See tables 1 and 2 for further confirmation.) These results parallel Woolard's (1989:114) findings on the "solidarity" dimension of a matched guise test in Barcelona: "Catalan respondents gave higher ratings to the Catalan language guises while

Castilian (Spanish-speaking) respondents gave higher ratings to the Castilian guises."

----INSERT TABLES 1 AND 2 HERE (if used) ----

But what of the uniformity in job scale evaluations which we discussed above? Closer questioning of respondents reveals that while both classes agree in associating occupational status and language use along the lines depicted in figure 1, their interpretations of the associations are different. The NEC members see English usage as contributing to more prestigious occupational and social status, while EC members see language use as merely reflecting social status. These differences in interpretation are typified by the scepticism which EC members display about the mobility value of speaking 'good English,': 11 out of 12 NEC members feel it will help them to get ahead, but only 5 out of 12 EC members feel the same way. These differences also reflect their different conceptions of the social order and their views of how individual mobility and social change might be effected. The NEC members are essentially functionalists or order theorists; they don't want the social order to change, they just want to increase their access to the material and symbolic capital (like Standard English) which guarantee progress on the social scale. The EC members, by contrast, share a Marxist or conflict view--some of them explicitly identify it as such--seeing the prestige value of English as just another aspect of ruling class ideology, and aspiring to social improvement through struggle against the dominant social order itself. Compare on this point, Reefer, leader of the canecutters in strikes and industrial negotiations, who said:

(12) Abee na waan dem Englishman teaching and ting da no mo, man. Dem ting da mus done. Yuh see, dem a write dem own book fuh suit dem own self, an awee mus larn from dem and subdue under dem! (SI44:588)

"We don't want the Englishman's teaching and so on any more, man. Those things must end. You see, they write their books to suit themselves, and we must learn from them and be subdued under them!"

Compare with this the statement by Count Ossie--Jamaican musician and spiritual leader--that in developing Rastafarian language and reggae music:

- (13) We were fighting colonialism and oppression, but not with gun and bayonet, but **wordically**, culturally. (Swing Sep/Oct 1972; quoted in Pollard 1983:54; emphasis added.) RESUME

3.4. Implications of the Cane Walk case for conceptions of speech community.

Although the evidence of competing or conflicting norms presented above might be interpreted to mean that Cane Walk does not constitute a coherent speech community, equally significant divergences have been reported for other speech communities, and it is clearly the conception of speech community itself that requires revision. Labov et al (1968:241) report, for instance, that the Northern Lower Working Class respondents in Harlem who participated in their subjective reaction tests differed from higher status respondents insofar as their ratings of speakers on a friend scale corresponded to their ratings of the same speakers on a fight scale ("in a street fight, who would come out on top?") rather than their ratings on a job scale. Although they do not explore its implications for the notion of "speech community", they at least recognize that these results threaten their notion of shared values or norms:

- (13) This is the first clear indication that there are value systems attached to language which do not copy the dominant middle class pattern--that there are positive values associated with the vernacular which are held by members of the NNE [Negro Nonstandard English = African American Vernacular English] sub-culture and not by those who have left it. (Labov et al 1968:241)

However, Gumperz (1982:26-7), reconsidering differences in the Norwegian community of Hemnesberget which he had described earlier (Gumperz 1964, Blom and Gumperz 1972), and noting that overt social boundaries and adherence to group norms were weakening everywhere, suggested that these problematized prevailing conceptions of the speech community :

- (14) The assumption that speech communities, defined as functionally integrated social systems with shared norms of evaluation, can actually be isolated thus becomes subject to serious question. For example, an ethnographic study of language behavior in what on the surface seemed like a relatively homogeneous, isolated and therefore presumably stable Norwegian community revealed fundamental differences in social values among individual residents, all of whom were born and bred in the locality. It is this difference in values which might not have been discovered if sharing of norms had been taken for granted, . . . that served to explain the basic facts of language usage in the community.
- (Gumperz 1982:26-7)

I agree with Gumperz that the prevailing conception of the speech community is idealistically functionalist. As I've suggested elsewhere (Rickford 1986a), the sociolinguistic approach to social class has been dominated by functional or order models, and it is clear that our conceptions of the speech community have been similarly affected. The emphasis on shared norms fits in with the assumption of functional theorists in the sociological literature (especially Parsons 1964) that "society is held together primarily by a general consensus over the major values and norms in the society" (Kerbo 1983:89). The countervailing assumptions of conflict theorists like Collins (1975) that "society is held together in the face of conflicting interests" (Kerbo, *ibid.*) are only now beginning to take root in sociolinguistics (cf Milroy and Milroy 1992; Williams

1992.) but we surely need to seek out evidence of competition and conflict with respect to norms as assiduously as we now pursue evidence of cooperation and concord. Much of the sociolinguistic variation in speech communities--including differences in the productive use of linguistic variables--can only be understood against the backdrop of differences in values and norms which lie beneath surface continuities. This is as true of Cane Walk as it is of variation in Harlem and Hemnesberget, and of the divergence between high school jocks and burnouts in Ann Arbor reported by Eckert (1989a, 1989b). If we persist in requiring concord with respect to linguistic norms as a necessary and sufficient condition for the definition of a speech community, we will be in danger of reifying a kind of homogeneity not too dissimilar from Bloomfield's or Chomsky's, and of hamstringing our own attempts to explain the kinds of variability which mainstream models ignore. If, however, we retain the twenty-five year old sociolinguistic insight that a speech community is first and foremost a community, and expect to find both concord and conflict therein, we will have a more realistic theoretical model to work with, and one which can more readily accommodate the internal diversity of Cane Walk and other communities.

Interestingly enough, the challenges which internally contrastive norms pose for the sociolinguists' conception of speech community are being faced by anthropologists too. Cohen (1985:20) emphasizes the importance of approaching "community" as a symbolic object which is continually being constructed and interpreted in the minds of its members, often in different ways, and notes the conflict with functionalist paradigms which this approach involves:

- (15) The picture we have so far sketched of the community as a *mêlée* of symbol and meaning cohering only in its symbolic gloss conflicts sharply with earlier, and particularly functionalist, accounts. ...

In this approach, then, the 'commonality' which is found in community need not be a uniformity. It does not clone behavior or ideas. It is a commonality of forms (ways of behaving) whose content (meanings) may vary considerably among its members. The triumph of community is to so contain this variety that its inherent discordance does not subvert the apparent coherence which is expressed by its boundaries. (Cohen 1985:20)

4. SOME PRINCIPLES ABOUT RELATIVE CONCORD AND CONFLICT

Having established that we need to provide for both concord and conflict in speech communities, I'd like to close with two general principles about when we might expect one or the other to be predominant. The principles themselves are already well established in the social sciences--what is new is their explicit extension to sociolinguistic values and behavior, and some of the limits to their applicability which the nature of language imposes.

4.1. Antagonistic Cooperation. The first principle is represented in (16):

- (16) Principle 1: In the face of a shared antipathy to an external group, the divisions between social groups within a community will be minimized, and their language use will become more convergent.

This is the linguistic instantiation of what Sumner (1906) called "antagonistic cooperation" and what Coser (1956), drawing on Simmel (1955:98-102), identified as Proposition 16: "Conflict creates associations and coalitions."

One example is changing attitudes towards Creole identity and Creole English in Belize (formerly British Honduras), shown in Map 3. Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) report that in 1978 they found much more positive attitudes towards Creole English than they found in earlier visits in 1953 and 1970; formerly regarded as "idiosyncratic rule-less broken Negro English," Creole was now regarded as "the real language of a new nation" (p 13). In

1970, the proportion of adults in a Cayo District sample who claimed "Creole" as their ethnic identity and language was relatively low (8% and 17% respectively); but by 1978, the proportion of their children who claimed Creole identities and language use was much higher (39% and 53% respectively), while the number claiming to be or speak Spanish or Mayan had dropped (p. 220). As one interviewee noted, the Creole was "bit by bit wiping out the Spanish" (p 221). One factor in this shift was "the recurrent threat of invasion from Guatemala or Mexico" (p. 13), particularly Guatemala, whose threats "to annex the territory as its own as soon as the British left" delayed the progress to Belize's independence which took place between 1970 and 1978. (Independence was finally achieved in 1981.) Among Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's informants, there was widespread hostility to the Guatemalan claim, and increasing recognition of a Belizean identity, mediated by Creole (pp 212- 217).

-----INSERT MAP 3, OF BELIZE, AROUND HERE-----

Labov (1963) reported a somewhat different case of language change involving convergence on Martha's Vineyard, off the Massachusetts coast. The percentage of centralized pronunciations of the diphthongs [ay] and [aw] seemed to have increased greatly among Vineyarders, reaching its peak in the 31-45 age group (Labov table 1.2, 1972:22?). As it turns out, these centralized pronunciations are closely associated with the assertion of pride in being a Vineyarder and with resistance to the increasing incursions of summer visitors and the general dependence on tourism which had accompanied the decline of fishing and agriculture as the traditional mainstays of the island's economy (pp 27-28). The centralization of diphthongs was originally most marked among up-island Chilmark fishermen (pp 29-30, 37), the group furthest removed from the down island tourist centers, and most characteristic of independent Vineyard tradition (see map 4), and this feature was progressively

adopted by other groups as a symbol of Vineyard identity. Within the critical 31-45 age group, centralization was highest among Vineyarders of English descent, the ethnicity of the core group of Chilmark fishermen, but it was also very high among those of Portuguese and Indian descent, who did not experience the same bars to participation in island life which their parents did, and who were more interested in asserting their identity as Vineyarders (p.38).

-----INSERT MAP 4, OF MARTHA'S VINEYARD, AROUND HERE-----

4.2 Oppositional Identities. We might formulate the second principle as follows:

- (17) Principle 2: Oppositional social identities (Ogbu 1991:34) will tend to create linguistic divergence between social groups, particularly when social, political or economic forces exacerbate competition between them and reduce the interaction or sense of common interest between them.

One exemplification of this principle is the rioting and warfare that broke out in 19th century American cities as Irish immigrants and African American migrants from the South competed for scarce resources (jobs, food); this social context may have eroded some of the linguistic links which were forged earlier between African and Irish bond-servants who were both oppressed by English masters in seventeenth century American colonies, and who would even rebel together and hide out together (Rickford 1986b) , exemplifying principle 1.

More generally, the profound communicative and dialect differences between Black and White Americans which persist despite hundreds of years of their co-presence in America (Labov et al 1968, Rickford 1985, Smitherman 1986, Kochman 1986) may reflect in part their oppositional social identities and their limited sense of commonality. It has even been suggested (Labov and Harris 1985, Bailey and Maynor 1989, Rickford 1992) that, as a result of increasing separation between the races in inner city areas, and an increased antipathy to "acting white" (Fordham and Ogbu 1986), Black and White

vernaculars have been diverging even further over the past few decades. This is reflected in increased rates of African American Vernacular English features, including:

(18) Copula absence: "They Ø walkin" (AAVE) vs "They re walking" (SE)

(19) Invariant habitual be: "They be talkin" (AAVE) vs "They're usually talking" (SE)

A final example is provided by the shift from Hungarian to German in the village of Oberwart, Austria. As described by Gal (1978), this shift is occurring throughout the community as a whole, but it is especially marked among young women, who have turned their backs on the peasant way of life still favored by many men, in which Hungarian thrives. In general, Oberwarters with primarily peasant networks use less German than Hungarian (see table 3), but among the youngest group of women (14-34 years old), peasantness of network does not matter; both groups of young women "use more G[erman] and less H[ungarian] than anyone else in the community, including the youngest men" (Gal, p. 300). As Gal goes on to explain:

(20) . . . in their stated attitudes and their marriage choices the women evaluate peasant life more negatively than men and reject the social identity of peasant wife. The women of Oberwart feel they have more to gain than men in embracing the new opportunities of industrial employment. (Gal 1978:303)

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION. In this paper, I have tried to show that any viable model of the speech community must provide theoretically for both concord and conflict. I have exemplified the co-presence of these forces in Cane Walk, Guyana, and argued that their presence in other communities necessitates a decreased reliance on functional or order models within sociolinguistics, and increased attention to conflict models. Finally, I outlined

two principles about when convergent and divergent tendencies in language might be present.

Two additional points need to be briefly made before I close. The first is that sociolinguistic situations that appear to represent cooperation or concord often mask underlying competition or conflict, with the result that the centripetal or homogenizing forces of one era might give way to the centrifugal or diversifying processes of the next. This point is eloquently made by Rodby (1992:200), who describes the English Only initiatives in America as centripetal forces which "plead for linguistic unity," but actually achieve it through exclusion, through enforcing social stratification and hierarchies. Similarly, diglossia, the situation in which two language varieties, one High and one Low, coexist through functional separation (Ferguson 1959), is superficially cooperative; but unity is achieved only through the subjugation of one language and its speakers to another, and as speakers of the latter rise up to assert their rights, concord often yields to conflict (Valdman 1987), sometimes resulting in a new kind of diglossia which may in turn be later overthrown (Devonish 1986).

My second is that unlike other forms of social behavior, language adjustment in response to social forces takes time (unlike dress or political party membership, which one can change in an instant), and there are limits to it due to internal linguistic constraints and limits on competence. For instance, Labov (1972:104) records the case of Steve K, a New Yorker who, disillusioned with college and interested in returning to his grass roots in Brooklyn, professed that he could produce greater or lesser frequencies of (r) pronunciation at will, but proved unable to do so. At the same time, these limits on the use of linguistic features as ideological expressors enhance their value as social diagnostics.

I trust that thanks to my coverage of both cooperative and competitive forces, I can remain outside the ranks of the homeless and hungry tonight.****

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APPENDIX

(11) A NANSI STORY: HAFATANIA (Narrated by Derek, SI 51/Appendix)

Dis bina one lady, an she got five pikni. One name Meeni Meeni, one name Seera Ji, one name Kwaku Tania, one name Hafa Tania, and one name Haga Tania.

Well--well dem na bin like Hafa Tania because she skin bin full o' sore, an dey use to put she in--in fowl pen fuh sleep. Well, dis lady does go beg, an when she come way, if she bring but--bread or butter or anyting, she does go, she go holler:

"Me Meeni Meeni come ya, me Seera Ji come ya, me Kwaku Tania come ya, me Haga Tania come ya, me Hafa Tania one stan dey!"

Da mean she--da mean she [Hafa Tania] deh in de fowl-pen. When dey hear da, dem go--dem go come, an dem go get.

Well, one day, dis lady gone go beg. An Tiger mus' be hear de lady, an she--an e a come, an e holler hard. He--de Tiger--got big voice, an e a holler. Well, when de lady dem say--de pikni dem say dat how, "Dis na a Mammy, beca' Mammy voice na so big." Well, Tiger hear, an e go back a shop, an e drink ghee, an e voice ge' fine, an e a call, an when e ge' ... Dey open de door, an e catch all o' dem an carry dem out dem house.

Well now, dis lady come back, an she a call, an nobody na answer. Den de one pon de fowl pen come out an seh:

"Yuh Meeni Meeni na deh, yuh Seera Ji na deh,

Yuh Kwaku Tania na deh, you Hafa Tania one deh!"

So e a talk.

Well, de la--well de lady aks de gyal, "Which side e deh?" and she say dat how, "Tiger carry dem way!" Well, dey na go Tiger house?! Well, Tiger bin

ga one--one fowl cock, an anytime anybody call, dis ting does crow, an dis Tiger does know. Well de lady dem a call. Dem a holler fuh:

"Meeni Meeni come ya, me Seera Ji come ya,

Me Kwaku Tania come ya, me Hafa Tania one deh hey!"

Well dem--well, when dem see da, dem run come, but dis fowl cock staat crow.

But dem jump in--over dis paalin, an dey come. When dem come, Tiger a run

deh an dey--Tiger bin get one boat side o' dis trench and dem jump in dis

trench an dem a h--dem a go down an holler:

"Coco benjiman zipa laka langtang, Coco benjiman zip.

Shimbuk, shimbuk, shimbuk, shimbuk, Coco benjiman zip."

An dem a stay. When dem meet home, dem bathe de--de sore one skin, an pon

den, de lady start like she, an she na like de rest o' dem.

Gloss:

'There once was a lady who had five children. One was named Meeni Meeni, one was named Seera Ji, one was named Kwaku Tania, and one was named Haga Tania.

Well, they didn't like Hafa Tania, because her skin was full of sores, and they used to put her in the fowl pen to sleep. Well, the lady used to go out to beg, and when she returned, if she'd brought bread or butter or anything else, she'd holler:

"My Meeni Meeni come here, my Seera Ji come here, my Kwaku Tania

come here, my Haga Tania come here, my Hafa Tania alone stay there!"

That meant--that meant that she [Hafa Tania] was in the fowl pen. When they [the others] heard that, they would come and get [food].

Well, one day, this lady went out to beg. And Tiger must have heard the lady, and he came, and he hollered in a loud voice. He--the Tiger--had a deep

voice, and he was hollering. Well, when the lady--the children--said [to themselves], "This isn't Mummy, because Mummy's voice isn't so deep," Tiger heard, and he went back to the shop and he drank ghee and his voice got fine [high-pitched], and he began calling when he got back ... They opened the door and he caught all of them and carried them out of their house.

Well now, the lady came back, and she was calling out, and nobody answered. Then the one in the fowl pen came out and said:

"Your Meeni Meeni isn't here, your Seera Ji isn't here,
Your Kwaku Tania isn't here, your Hafa Tania alone is here!"

That's what she said.

Well, the lady asked the girl, "Where are they?" and she said, "Tiger carried them away!" Well, didn't they set out to Tiger's House?! Well, Tiger had a fowl cock, and whenever anybody called out, this fowl cock would crow, and Tiger would know. Well the lady and the child called out. They were hollering:

"Meeni Meeni come here, my Seera ji come here,
My Kwaku Tania come here, my Hafa Tania alone is here!"

Well they [the children]--well, when they saw that, they came running, but the fowl cock started to crow. But they jumped over the fence and came. When they came, Tiger ran behind them--Tiger had a boat at the side of the canal and they jumped into this canal and they got down and hollered [this magical chant is untranslatable]:

"Coco benjiman zipa laka langtang, coco benjiman zip.
Shimbuk, shimbuk, shimbuk, shimbuk, coco benjiman zip."

And they [Tiger and the fowl cock] stayed. When they [the old lady and the children] got home, they bathed the one whose skin had sores, and from then the lady started to like her, and didn't like the others.'

¹Compare Smith (1976:202): "Since there has been little or no mobility from lower to upper levels within the sugar industry, ambitious Indians--like the Africans before them--moved out before moving up in the occupational prestige hierarchy."

²The code in parentheses following a quotation or narrative indicates the type and number of the tape recording from which it is drawn; SI 49 = Spontaneous Interview (Cane Walk series), number 59.

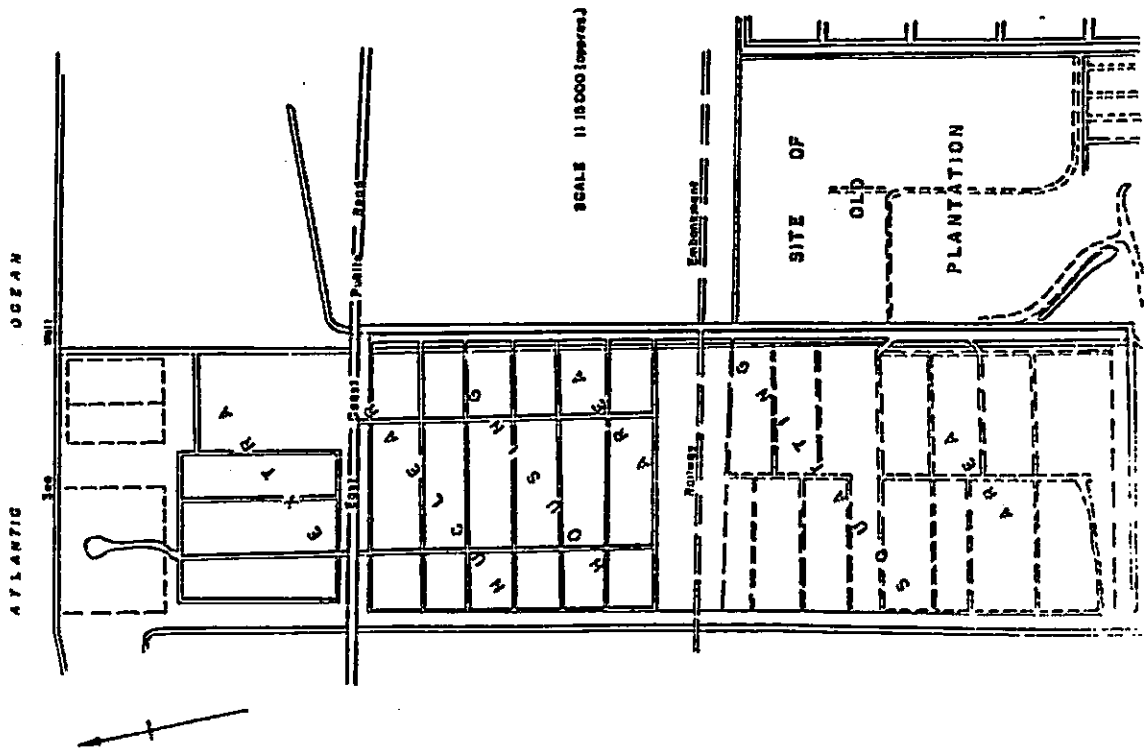
³Labov's subjective reaction tests were like traditional matched guise tests insofar as they indirectly elicited language attitudes, using recorded speech samples as test stimuli. But they differed from traditional matched guise tests in the following respects: (1) The stimuli consisted of brief sentences from a reading passage instead of longer texts; (ii) some of the different versions of each test sentence were produced by different speakers instead of one or more speakers performing in different linguistic guises; (iii) listeners rated the speakers on a job scale instead of the personal characteristic scales used by Lambert and his colleagues; (iv) the stimuli were controlled 'in such a way as to make it possible to identify the particular features to which hearers were reacting' (Hudson 1980:205). My Cane Walk test was like traditional matched guise tests with respect to (i) and (ii), but like Labov's subjective reaction tests with respect to (iii) and (iv).

⁴Means can mask wide variance in individual ratings, but this is not true of these data. Twenty-two of the twenty-four respondents rated MG1 as a canecutter, and the standard deviation in numerical ratings for each MG sample was only 0.7 (EC and NEC responses combined).

⁵It should be distinguished from the Nansi tory sessions at funeral wakes (Edwards 1979:91), which involve different kinds of performance.

⁶Compare Abrahams' (1971:28) definition of folklore as 'all conventional expressive devices available for performance and the achievement of performer status within a socially bounded group.'

MAP 1
THE CANE WALK COMMUNITY



MAP 2
THE OLD PLANTATION SHOWN IN MAP 1, AS IT WAS IN THE LATE 1940'S

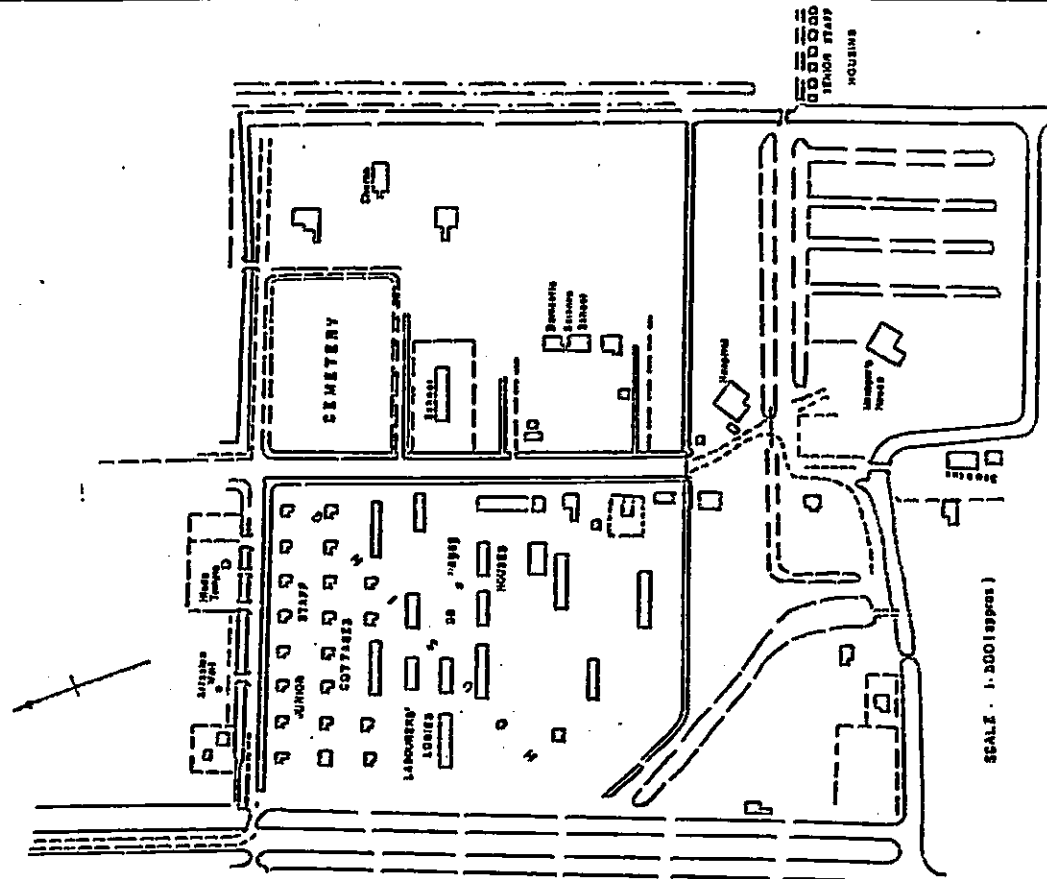
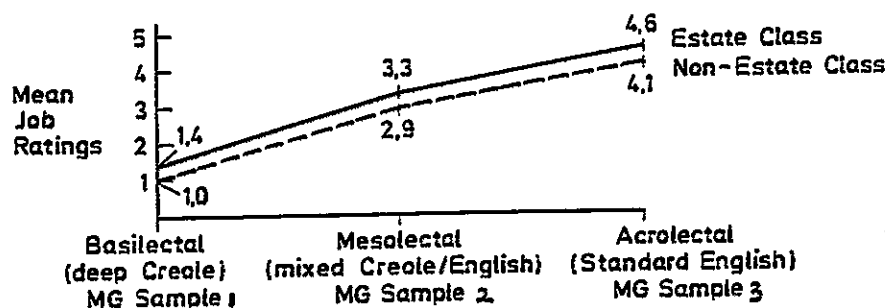


FIGURE 1
MEAN RATINGS OF THE MATCHED GUISE (MG) SAMPLES, JOB SCALE



Note: 5 = Field Manager/Headmaster; 4 = Field Foreman/Book-keeper; 3 = Shop-owner; 2 = Security Guard; 1 = Canecutter. (Highest to lowest socioeconomic status.)

FIGURE 2
MEAN RATINGS OF THE MATCHED GUISE (MG) SAMPLES, FRIEND SCALE

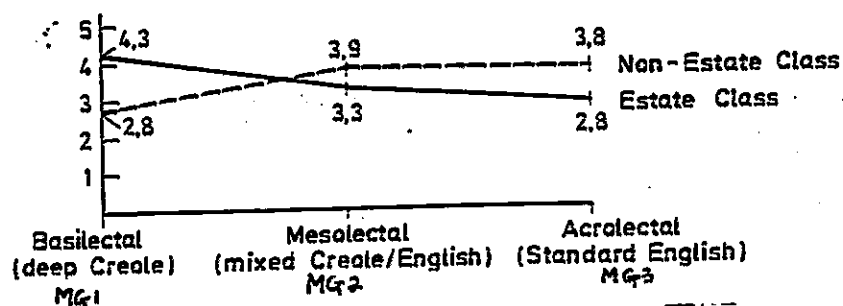


Table 1: Relative frequencies of pronoun variants in the speech of Case Walk respondents by pronoun subcategory and social class.

SOC. CLASS	N	FIRST SING. SUBJECT		N	THIRD SINGULAR FEMIN. POSSESSIVE		
		Bas.	Acr.		Bas.	Mes.	Acr.
		'me'	'I'		'he'	'she'	'her'
EC	(2309)	.89	.11	(120)	.46	.53	.01
NEC	(3012)	.11	.89	(142)	.04	.38	.58

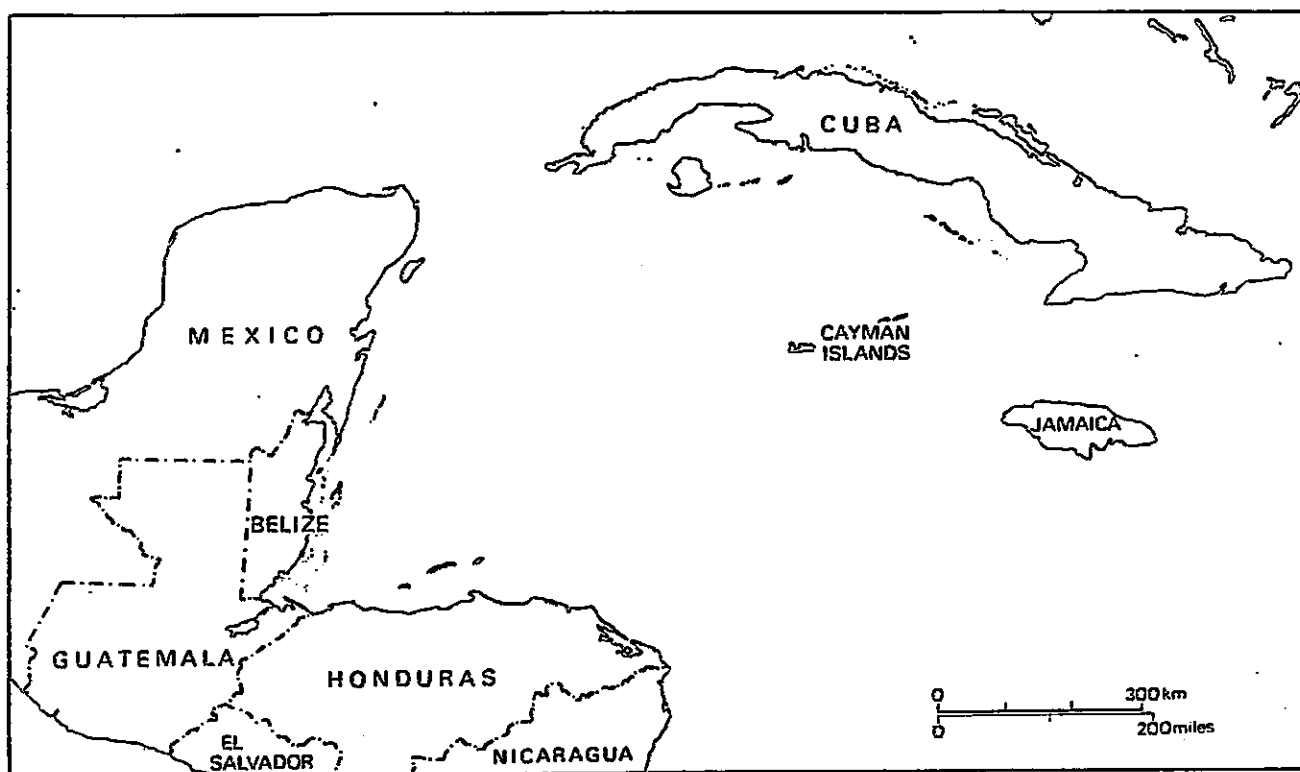
Note: Numbers in parentheses represent total number of pronoun tokens or occurrences considered in each category.

Table 2: Relative frequencies of pronoun variants in the matched guise samples.

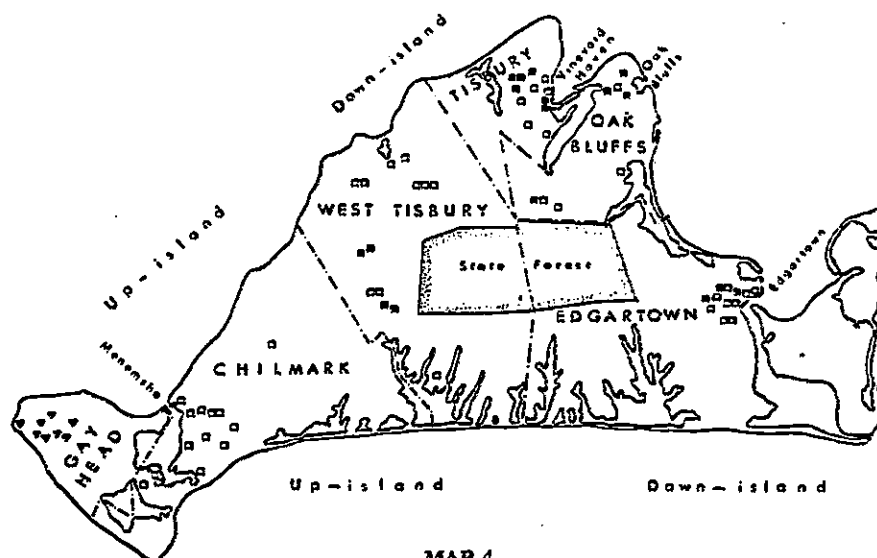
MG SAMPLE	N	FIRST SING. SUBJECT		N	THIRD SINGULAR FEMIN. POSSESSIVE		
		Bas.	Acr.		Bas.	Mes.	Acr.
		'me'	'I'		'he'	'she'	'her'
MG 1	(31)	.90	.10	(3)	.33	.67	.00
MG 2	(22)	.00	1.00	(3)	.00	.33	.67
MG 3	(15)	.00	1.00	(3)	.00	.00	1.00

Note: As in table 1, numbers in parentheses represent total number of tokens or occurrences per subcategory.

Compare
EC ↔ MG1
NEC ↔ MG2



MAP 3
BELIZE AND THE WESTERN CARIBBEAN (LE PAGE AND
TABOURET KELLER 1985:118)



MAP 4
MARTHA'S VINEYARD, SHOWING LOCATION OF 69
INFORMANTS (LABOV 1972:5)
Ethnic origin is indicated as follows: □ English. ■ Portuguese.
▼ Indian. Symbols placed side by side indicate members of the
same family. Source: Labov 1972