

BABEL-BABBLE IN BAGHDAD-BY-THE-BAY:  
TOWARDS A SOCIAL DIALECTOLOGY OF THE  
SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

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California Dialectology

For American dialectologists generally, the first motivation for investigative work was an antiquarian one. The goal of the first dialectologists in 1889 was to produce a dialect dictionary that would relate contemporary forms (sounds and words) back to their past forms in England. Their attempts reflect the search for linguistic roots by the descendants of the first Anglo settlers on the East Coast. Later, the newly established American Dialect Society decided to imitate the work of the European dialect geographers and produce a Linguistic Atlas of the United States and of Canada. Since the beginnings of this project in 1929, only the sections of New England (1933-43) and the Upper Midwest (1973-76) have been published. Five other sections are now in the process of being published (The Gulf States 1972--; The North Central States 1976--; The Middle and South Atlantic States 1979--) or at least in a "state of progress" (Oklahoma; California-Nevada).<sup>1</sup>

The Atlas work is, no doubt, a superior scholarly achievement. Unfortunately however, the practical value of the Atlas is somewhat doubtful, especially in the American West. As Raven McDavid Jr., the leading American dialectologist says: "In linguistic geography it is necessary to choose informants from the longest settled and most stable elements of the population,"(1979:3). While in Europe it was comparatively easy to locate such informants, in the highly mobile society of California this proves more difficult. While in Europe, isogloss identified dialect areas can frequently be interpreted to be social dialect areas as well, such a coincidence appears to be near impossible in California. The data collected for the California Atlas 25 years ago by

David Reed and his Berkeley crew may reveal or at least corroborate some facts about the early settlement history of California, but with regard to the present day spread and variety of the English language in California they are of little use.

A case in point is David DeCamp's (1958) study of the English language in San Francisco (done under David Reed at Berkeley). Although DeCamp was aware of the cultural diversity of San Francisco, he was not interested in the varieties of English created by the various social and ethnic groups, but in finding traces of East Coast dialects transplanted in the West Coast. He indeed succeeded in finding a Bostonese dialect in the area south of Market Street, and these findings promptly made their way into accounts of California English. Twenty years later however, there is hardly anything left of that East Coast dialect once spoken in San Francisco. In Carroll Reed's updated edition of *American dialects* (1977), we still read that "San Francisco maintains a class dialect to this day which is strongly reminiscent of Bostonese," an assertion inaccurate from a present-day perspective, even though Reed tries to qualify her statement by adding that, "the vast majority of the people there use a typical Northern Midland type of speech such as one might encounter in Illinois, Iowa, or Northern Colorado" (1977:58).

This "Northern Midland type of speech" in turn has not received much attention by dialectologists. It was simply characterized as "General American," "Consensus English," "Network English," or what ever label was found fitting for such an "uninteresting" variety. Thirteen years after DeCamp, Elizabeth Bright had to agree that many regional and local forms characteristic of the Atlantic seaboard had been lost in California. In the absence of more fascinating dialect forms, California English came to be characterized as lacking any special features; as being uniform and uninteresting. Characteristic is this remark about Richard Nixon (McDavid 1975:114), "When the White House was recently occupied by a native Californian, he and his fellow pranksters exposed the American public to the most aggravated kind of deregionalized faceless English."

This echoes a judgement made by Mario Pei eight years earlier (1967:192):

If you want to hear the General American of the future, Hollywood and television studio based, go to California and listen to the speech of the California-born younger generation...

Do you recall how in the presidential campaign of 1960 Kennedy's ahsk and Africar stood out like sore thumbs, while Nixon never drew a lifted eyebrow? Nixon spoke the General American of the future, an American shorn of all local peculiarities.

In 1980, television commentators and journalists made the same point all over again. It was Jimmy Carter's colorful southern accent that was

compared to Ronald Reagan's bland, if correct, California English.

Dialectologists have repeatedly attributed the "deregionalized facelessness" of California English to the steady and substantial influx of immigrants from different parts of the United States and from various foreign countries. Because of the establishment of large urban centers and agricultural areas of this rapidly growing state in the United States, dialect conditions have indeed been less tenuous than say, in the Western mountain states. Californians themselves have also been found to exert pressure to wipe out dialect features in the speech of newcomers, as the following report about a speech therapist working with New Yorkers in Marin County documents:

Constance Goddard has a mission in life. Call it a vendetta. It's not aimed against any person or group of people. It's not a fight against wrong thought or some killer disease. Constance Goddard's enemy is the sound of a New Yorker talking. She doesn't mind a New York accent per se, as long as it is kept in the general vicinity of the Hudson River. But when New Yorkers began moving into her native Marin County, bringing their energetic speech patterns with them, Constance rankled.

"It's really a drag listening to people from New York talk," she says, her breathy voice untinted by regional color. "It upsets me when I hear a New York accent, or anything that grates my ears the way that does."

So she decided to do something about it. In the spirit of enlightened benevolence, she established California Diction, a sort of accent therapy center, which, at 25 bucks a throw (\$35 for house calls) will teach willing New Yorkers how to talk Californian.

"We're here to offer a service to newcomers to this area, especially to New Yorkers," she says. "They come here and find themselves okay as far as dress and looks and mannerisms. But when they open their mouths, they alienate everyone. We're here to help them, help them adjust to life in Marin County."

(Oakland Tribune, February 4, 1979:6E)

In spite of such evidence of "blandness" (Metcalf 1977),<sup>2</sup> saying that California English is completely uniform and faceless is just as wrong as the attempt to explain present-day California English in terms of Anglo settlement history. The "lively intermingling" of immigrant groups, of which Reed (1977:59) is aware, on the one hand has all but wiped out the remnants of East Coast dialects like Bostonese, and on the other hand, has created new varieties of English for which there is no antecedent on the East Coast or in Britain. Today we have to note that there exists no adequate treatment of California English. The failure to deal with California

English appropriately, as we see now, stems primarily from the narrow focus of traditional dialectological surveys of American English which restrict English to one ethnic variety only--Anglo English--and try to explain its varieties in terms of the original settlement history. Later population movements and other ethnic varieties are generally excluded.<sup>3</sup> Thus, accounts of California English do not consider Chicano English, Black English, or Asian English, although more attention is paid to these ethnic varieties individually than hypothetical relics of East Coast dialects in Anglo English. What is appropriate for the language situation in California is an approach emphasizing social dialectology rather than dialect geography.

#### Demography of the San Francisco Bay Area

The claim that the newcomer to the San Francisco Bay Area (SFBA) is struck first of all by non-standard ethnic and other group varieties (Durmuller 1982) is substantiated by a closer look at the population of the area.

The SFBA is often equated with the San Francisco-Oakland Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area as defined by the United States Bureau of the Census. As the map (next page) shows, it consists of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties, covering 2,480 square miles bordering the San Francisco Bay. The larger Bay Area includes Sonoma, Napa and Solano Counties to the north (bordering San Pablo Bay), and Santa Clara County to the south. San Francisco, San Jose (in Santa Clara County) and Oakland are the largest cities in the area. Most of the population and industry is located in the flatlands around the bay and in the interior valleys of Contra Costa and Alameda counties. Least populated are the areas along the Pacific Ocean and in the coastal mountains of Marin and San Mateo.

In 1970, the population of the larger Bay Area was close to 4,000,000 (5,000,000 in 1978). The Report of the Bureau of the Census, through presentation of its data, acknowledges the large admixture of non-white ethnic groups. It not only has separate reports for the Black and Spanish populations, but also separate entries for minority groups like American Indian, Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos.

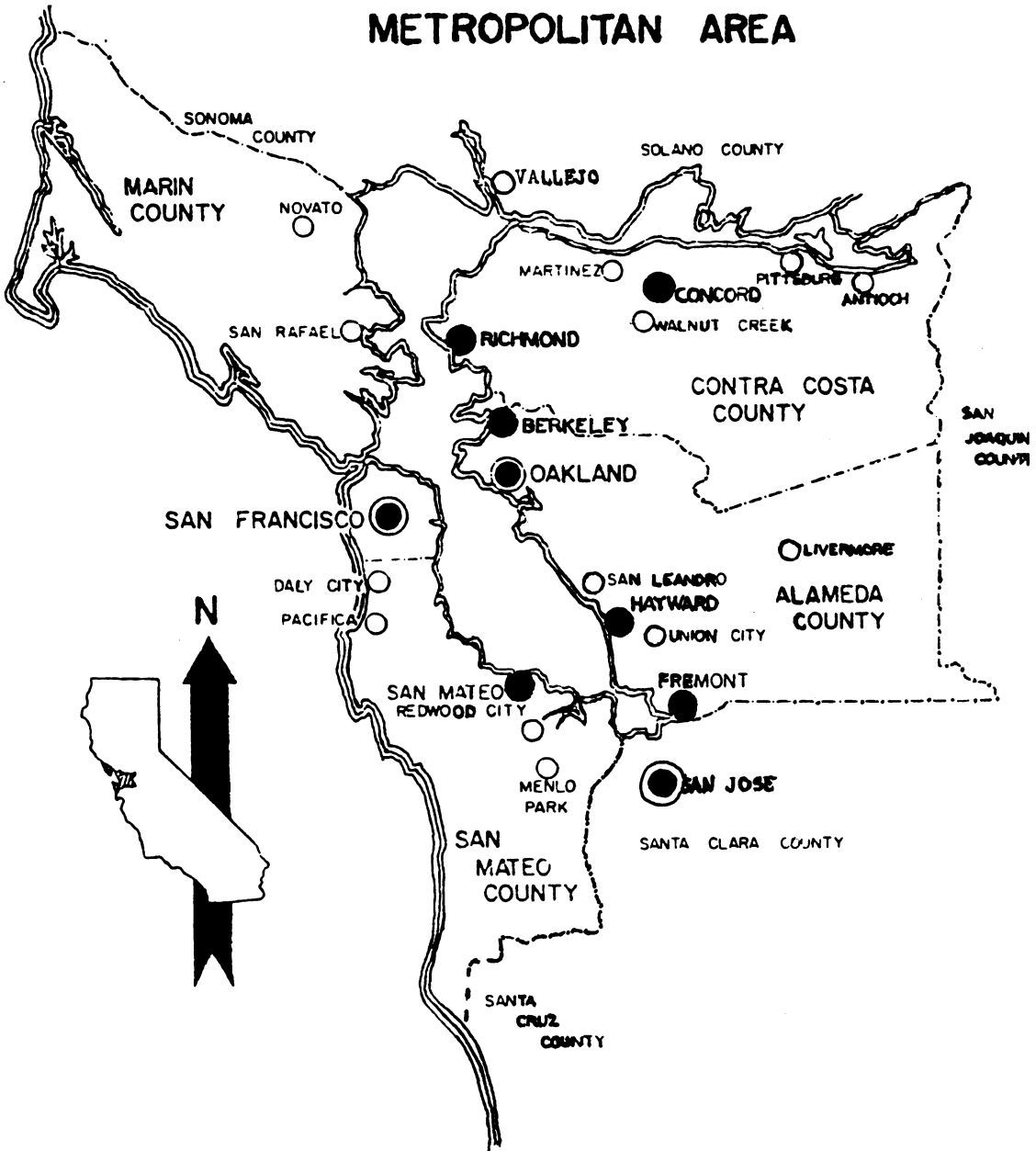
In 1970 the counties with the largest groups of non-whites were:<sup>4</sup>

San Francisco	28.6%
Alameda	20.2%
Solano	14.8%
Contra Costa	10.0%

The lowest percentages of non-white populations were recorded in:

Napa	2.8%
Sonoma	3.4%
Marin	4.1%

# SAN FRANCISCO—OAKLAND METROPOLITAN AREA



Within the San Francisco-Oakland Standard Metropolitan Statistical area the following cities had the largest ratio of non-white inhabitants:<sup>5</sup>

Oakland	40.9%
Richmond	40.1%
San Francisco	28.6%
Vallejo	21.8%

These cities had the lowest percentage:

Sausalito	2.8%
Tiburon	2.3%

If one takes the population of the San Francisco-Oakland Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area projected for 1979, the following figures for different ethnic groups apply:

White	2,486,410
Black	417,840
Chicano	387,980
Other	303,350

For the larger Bay Area only the 1970 figures were available.<sup>6</sup> These are presented here as rounded summations of the figures given for the San Francisco-Oakland, the San Jose, Vallejo-Napa, and Santa Rosa statistical areas:

White	3,995,000
Black	370,000
Chicano	570,000
Chinese	100,000
Japanese	35,000
Filipino	54,000
Indian	18,000

#### Ethnic Language Varieties

The demographic statistics suggest stratification of the English language in the San Francisco Bay Area according to social factors such as ethnicity. According to the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (1968), an ethnic group is "a distinct category of the population in a large larger society whose culture is usually different from its own. The members of such a group are, or feel themselves, or are thought to be, bound together by common ties of race, or nationality, or culture." This definition is loose enough to accommodate not only such obviously ethnic varieties as Black English, Chinese English, or Japanese English, but also "Mellowspeak", the variety favored by many whites, as well as "Gaytalk" and "Fraternity Talk." (It may be safer to simply call these latter three 'social varieties' or 'group varieties').

Groups are separated by boundaries which help to emphasize the cultures within these boundaries. In terms of language as an emblem of ethnicity, such boundaries clearly separate one language variety from another.<sup>7</sup> Within the larger social system of the SFBA, the English language is the vehicle of communication used by all ethnic groups, both for intergroup and intra-group communication (cf. more generally Fishman, Cooper and Conrad 1977). Although in some cases, a group may have its own different language (i.e. Mexican Spanish, Cantonese, Tagalog), all the groups have created their own variety of English. The point to be made with regard to this observation is that even without taking into account the original mother-tongue of say, the Chinese, the Filipino or Chicano, ethnicity is mirrored in language. In the English language, which is the language shared by all of the groups, it is differentiated by each according to cultural heritage and folklore, favored topics and techniques of narration and conversation, the conceptualization of the world in vocabularies and semantic fields, and pronunciation habits often acquired through interference phenomena.

Even if the grammar of English underlying the various varieties were identical for all those varieties—which it is only if a narrow definition of grammar is used and if a rigorous Transformational Grammar view is adopted—the social meaning (the symbolic significance) of the alternate surface forms would still be different (Gumperz 1977). In the study of ethnic language varieties, or more generally, in the study of group or culture-specific language varieties, it is therefore just as important to look at the symbolic value of language as it is to explain the formal characteristics of the language structure.

If the label "ethnic" is restricted to population groups identified in demographic studies, a synchronic outline of the varieties of English in the SFBA ca.1980 would cover: Anglo English, Black English, Chicano English, and Asian English as the most prominent ethnic varieties. Then Asian English would be subgrouped into: Chinese English, Japanese English, Filipino English, Korean English, and Vietnamese English. Further, less conspicuous varieties might be added to the list such as Indian English, Italian English and Irish English.

Quirk, et al. (1972) who recognize a separate Interference variety would probably extend this list to include further groups like German, French, or Czech. However, while it is true that some characteristics of Chicano, Chinese, or Filipino English can be explained in terms of interference phenomena, the case of the speakers of these varieties is clearly different from that of newcomers from say, Germany or France. While the latter have arrived as individuals and quickly merged with the dominant (Anglo) Californian society, the former have arrived in extended family groups. Generally they have not let themselves be fully assimilated into the dominant community, even as second or third generation Americans. Although some of them, particularly among the Irish, Italians, Japanese, and Blacks have learned to speak General American in a way undistinguishable from the manner of Ronald Reagan, they have not simply adopted the patterns of white speech. Instead they first created and then preserved their own variety of English. If they also speak the Standard Anglo variety, they can be observed to switch between what might be called their 'home variety' and what is their 'public or official variety.'<sup>8</sup>

In a geographical overlook of the SFBA it is not difficult to make out ethnically populated areas: the hills of the East Bay (white), the flatlands of the East Bay (Black), the crammed sections of the South Bay (Chicano), Chinatown, Japantown, Boystown (where the Gay community lives) and Little Italy in San Francisco. It is in such areas that one would find the typical representatives of ethnic varieties. The city of San Francisco, which was populated earlier than the rest of the SFBA, reflects the situation in the Greater Bay Area on a smaller scale. When looking at San Francisco only, DeCamp (1958:388) gave the following description:

San Francisco has always been quick to swallow, but slow to digest its immigrants. This is particularly true of the foreign-born groups who have lived side by side in the city, generally with little prejudice or intolerance, but with little assimilation. Until World War II there was a distinct Chinatown, an Italian quarter, a Japanese section, a Negro district, etc. Each foreign and racial group tended to settle in its own district, not primarily because of such external pressures as zoning regulations and restrictive covenants, but because each wished to preserve its premigration culture. Consequently, San Francisco has never really been a "melting pot" like New York. The national and religious holidays of many countries are still observed in parts of the city. Foreign foods appear in its restaurants and grocery stores. Foreign languages are heard on its streets. Indeed, this cosmopolitan nature has always been the basis of the city's appeal to the tourist trade.

Twenty years later, DeCamp's account is still basically valid. In the greater Bay Area it is Blacks, Chicanos, Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipinos, and to a somewhat lesser extent it appears, the Japanese, Italians, and Irish that have kept their cultural unity most intact. In addition, a sizeable portion of middle class whites have recently created their own separate culture complete with their own language variety, "Mellowspeak." Recent immigration groups, like the Koreans, Filipinos and Vietnamese have again tended to move to the urban centers of the SFBA in extended family groups. Like the minority groups who came before them, they appear to settle close to each other and thus to form visible sub-groupings of the population with separate cultural organizations and developing language varieties of their own.

If a particular language variety is attributed to a particular ethnic group, this is not to say that the members of that group can express themselves in that variety of English only. After all, ethnic boundaries are permeable (Barth 1969). Depending on the networks of social interaction, members of an ethnic group can switch to another variety, as in these examples:



<u>English Ethnic Variety</u>	<u>Additional Varieties</u>
Black English Vernacular	Network English, Standard Academic English,
Chicano English	Network English, Chicano Spanish, etc.
Mellowspeak	Network English, Standard Academic English, Gaytalk, etc.

Ethnic language varieties, like other varieties, are thus seen as frequently constituting part of a speech repertoire comprising two or more separate language varieties.

Such ethnic and other group varieties are understood to be *typolects*-- language varieties typically associated with particular groups and having emblematic status for these groups within the scope of the English language in the SFBA (Dürmüller 1982).

#### Linguistic Folklore and Typolects

For the purpose of identifying *typolects*, especially ethnic and other group varieties, linguists and ethnographers profitably turn to folklore. Even a superficial inspection of the Berkeley Folklore Archives (Folklore Program, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley) shows that there is ample evidence for ethnic varieties of English in the SFBA apart from that provided in demographic studies. In the SFBA, as much as elsewhere, the folk are aware of their own and especially others' way of speaking. They are aware of some Whites talking in a particular, funny way (Mellowspeak), of Black English being different from Chicano English; of Asian English being different again from Black English and Chicano English; of the Berkeley Fraternities and the San Francisco Gay communities employing vocabularies of their own, etc. Such a folk classification of English language varieties in terms of ethnic and social groups in general makes much more sense than a conservative dialectological classification of language varieties in regional terms. Although speakers of Mellowspeak predominate in Marin County (Northwest), and speakers of Chicano English in Santa Clara County (South), there is no point in distinguishing South Bay English from North Bay English or, for that matter, East Bay English from West Bay English. In most localities there are representatives of various social and ethnic groups and the speech repertoires of the communities are multi-varietal. Instead of using a system of arbitrary regional classification then, social dialectologists are better advised to follow the hints of folklore when attempting an identification and classification of the English language varieties in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Folklore materials may reveal a group's image of itself as well as the representations of that image by members of other groups. Social and ethnic groups have traditional rivals and scapegoats for which the folklore acts as a unifying force by means of identifying the out-group, and as a divisive force by means of molding or confirming a group's attitude toward another group. The genre of folklore descriptive of this purpose is *blason populaire*, comprising ethnic slurs, prejudiced attitudes and stereotypic judgements (Dundes 1975). Examples of *blason populaire* well illustrate the existence of boundaries between groups in order to identify solidarity

within groups. Jansen (1965) distinguishes between the esoteric and exoteric factor in folklore: "esoteric" referring to what a group thinks of itself and what it imagines others think of it; "exoteric" referring to what a group thinks of another group and to what it imagines another group thinks it is saying about this group. Stereotypes can thus be inwardly directed to establish strong in-group identification or they can be outwardly directed for the purpose of drawing attention to, or depicting the characteristics of other groups (1965:47).

When dealing with stereotypes of the kind represented by *blason populaire*, the question arises as to what extent these can be taken to reveal something generally valuable. Since I claim that examples of *blason populaire* can be used to identify language varieties of social or ethnic groups, I obviously think that folklore stereotypes are of some validity. Looking back to historical definitions of stereotypes in the United States, I find support for my view in Walter Lippmann's (1922) classical account. Lippmann characterized stereotypes as (1) means of organizing images, (2) fixed, simplex impressions, and (3) as salient features chosen to stand for the whole. I am concerned mainly with the third point; the selection by the folk of a few salient features exhibited by another group—these features summing up in a short-hand way its characteristics in various areas, including language. (Lippmann has also noted that such stereotypes are convenient, time-saving, and necessary; for without them we would have to interpret each situation as if we had never experienced any of the kind previously).

A study more closely concerned with stereotypes and language is that by Ogawa (1969). Ogawa deals with the stereotypes in small-group communication. He shows how Caucasian UCLA students expect Japanese Americans to behave in discussions, and—this is the result I want to emphasize—that these stereotyped expectations are indeed represented in actual communicative behavior. Japanese Americans behaved as the stereotypes predicted they would. Equally, in my own research on examples of *blason populaire*, and their relevance to social and ethnic varieties of English in the SFBA, I came to conclude that the materials stored in the Berkeley Folklore Archives not only document the awareness that other social and ethnic groups are different from their own, but that the kind of English used by the members of these groups may differ from their own. Such points singled out by the folk turn up in linguistic accounts of the varieties in question as well.

It is usually isolation due to different geographical and cultural origins, to differences in apparent behavior, countenance and customs, to differences in occupation, education, age, and social status, and finally, to speaking the commonly shared language in a somewhat marked way that causes the creation of group stereotypes and ethnic slurs. If language is addressed in *blason populaire*, it is perceived not simply as any one of the cultural emblems marking off a group, but as the one feature that can also include and express all other emblems like clothing, manners, diets, beliefs, myths, etc.

*Blason Populaire* can identify the cultural background and the char-

acteristics of the kind of language typically used by the speakers in a certain group; it can point out the existence of what I call *typolects*. Folklore as a whole can establish the link between language and its function in different communities. "The ways in which language and folklore differ in function from one community to another are the most revealing," is what Hymes (1972:44) says on the subject. Folklore, in general, may point to "the amount, frequency, and kinds of speech that are typical; the valuation of speech with respect to other modes of communication; and the valuation of different languages and ways of speaking (1972:44)."

*Blason Populaire* in particular, can reveal how ethnic and other social language varieties are valued and which of their features appear as the most salient ones. Since folklore analysis is concerned above all with speech acts, genres, and phraseology, its comprehension of language is quite holistic. This is why I agree with Hymes on the point that folklore can ...direct attention to essential features of language that are now neglected or misconceived in linguistic theory" (1972:47). Indeed, descriptions of language varieties like Black English, Chicano English or Fraternity Talk remain incomplete without proper considerations of those "matters" that have so wrongly been termed "extralinguistic." Linguistic folklore appears to be particularly suited to reveal the cultural background relevant to further characterization of the varieties in question. Where differences between language varieties are to be listed, it is insufficient to account only for what can be placed within the conventional narrow scope of linguistics: particulars of phonetics, of phonology, morphology, syntax, and certain aspects of semantics. A different notion of the scope of linguistics is required, one that can also accommodate variation in contextual and cultural frames.

#### Babel-Babble in Baghdad-by-the Bay

Like few other cities in the world, San Francisco has attracted people from many nations, speakers of many different languages; representatives of diverse cultures. In Baghdad-by-the-Bay, as the folk call San Francisco when they want to refer to its exotic charm, the "curse of Babel" would certainly have had drastic effects upon communication if the many immigrant groups had not all accepted English as *lingua franca*. There are still many members of ethnic groups—especially among the Chinese and the Mexicans—who stick to their original mother-tongue. Other speakers have had less reservations about taking up English as their second language and handing it on to their children as their first language. But even where the original mother-tongues have lost ground, the cosmopolitan character of Baghdad-by-the Bay is still noticeable linguistically: in the various varieties of English that have emerged in the SFBA.<sup>9</sup>

Since English is the language used by all the groups, and since a particular variety of English is taught at school to the members of these groups, communication between population groups in the SFBA is not impossible. Nevertheless, some differences between the various group-specific varieties persist. These differences can be traced on the various levels of language: suprasegmental and segmental phonology, morphology and syntax, text structures and discourse conventions, lexicon and speech genres, semantics and

pragmatics. On the surface, the points of difference may seem insignificant at times; in their totality however, they are bound to be of some consequence. Recent work by John Gumperz (1978; 1979b) has shown that miscommunication between speakers of English from different cultural or ethnic origins are very frequent. In England, speakers of British English and Indian English were found to lack understanding of each other's way of using English. Both groups needed help as to how to decode each other's speech. It could be demonstrated that many prejudiced judgements made by members of different ethnic groups about each other had roots in their lack of knowledge about each other's way of speaking English (Gumperz et al. 1979). The fact that there are so many examples of *blason populaire* in the folklore of the SFBA suggests that misunderstandings of the kind reported by Gumperz are probably quite common in California as well.

A knowledge of the various varieties of English in use in the SFBA can certainly help to relieve such misunderstandings and some of the tensions resulting in *blason populaire* stereotypes. Where people from different cultural, ethnic, social or educational backgrounds have to interact, they are in need of information about the factors that might cause breakdowns in communication. The factors that produce communication difficulties cannot be attributed only to problems of accent, lack of adequate knowledge of vocabulary, or the structure of English. They also stem from different conventions in the use of English, conventions which are, as much as accent or syntax, variety-specific. Accent, vocabulary, and syntax are three levels of language where varieties may differ; but they do not comprise the source of all the differences. Equally important are the cultural conventions associated with particular varieties. It is not only when one phoneme is mistaken for another, when the meaning of a word or phrase is wrongly interpreted, or when grammatical categories are realized differently; but also when attitude and meaning are conveyed through one set of conventions and interpreted through another, that breakdowns in communication may occur. Any successful interaction between members of different groups depends on each party interpreting correctly what the other has tried to convey. These interpretations, Gumperz holds, are what judgements about the speaker's ability and intention are based upon. If the speakers in the interaction are using different strategies and signals from each other to convey attitude and meaning, wrong inferences are likely to be drawn. Over a period of time, these tend to build up into stereotyped attitudes, and produce the folklore of *blason populaire*.

If the varieties of English in the SFBA are presented as group varieties, it is possible to approach them in terms of *blason populaire*, giving folklore a key function within sociolinguistics. This also reflects the fact that in the SFBA, ethnic and other social varieties are the most distinct, not local-regional ones. All these varieties are varieties of English; clearly related to, and part of a whole represented by the English language (American English), each of them overlapping in certain areas with other varieties, but still having its own distinct identity.

Given a network of interactive ties an individual speaker of English in the SFBA is placed somewhere on the continuum of these varieties, with one functioning as his home variety. We could thus imagine a black student

having as his home variety, Black Vernacular English; as a student, command of Academic Standard English; Fraternity Talk when appropriate as a member of his fraternity; and depending on our imagination, we could easily associate him with further varieties of English. The speech repertoire of a white lawyer, to launch into another imaginary example, might include Mellowspeak as his home variety, Standard Academic English and American Legal Jargon as his professional varieties, and Gaytalk as the variety used by him after work when visiting certain San Francisco bars. Since some of his clients might be Black, Chicano or Chinese, he would at least have to have a passive knowledge of these varieties too.

Individuals like these two fictitious characters will have acquired full or partial competence in varieties of English other than their home variety by long exposure to, and regular interaction with speakers of these other varieties. Yet, as the research of Gumperz has made clear, even native speakers of English are in need of further elucidation about varieties of English encountered by them in daily interaction. A guide to various varieties of English is required not only for the benefit of the outsider, the non-native speaker of English, but also the insider. Only if such a guide is made available will the effects of the "curse of Babel" be removed from the cosmopolitan center represented by Baghdad-by-the-Bay,

#### NOTES

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I would like to express my gratitude to Alan Dundes and his collaborators at the Berkeley Folklore Archives not only for having made the Archives accessible to me, but also for copiously and generously offered advice.

<sup>1</sup> For information of the history of dialectology, especially dialect geography in the United States, I am indebted to various publications of Raven McDavid; particularly McDavid 1979.

<sup>2</sup> In his 1977 account of Riverside English, Metcalf notes a general blandness in California English, but moves away from Carroll Reed's characterization of California (Anglo) English as a "typical Northern Midland type of speech" (1978:58) by showing a certain influence of the Midlands and Southern pronunciations from the East.

<sup>3</sup> It has been calculated that "the typical informant for the Linguistic Atlas of the Pacific Coast would have been a Caucasian, a rural Californian, born in 1897 and educated through the eleventh or twelfth grade; a not too active member of a major Protestant denomination, and interviewed for the Linguistic Atlas in 1955" (Metcalf 1977:23).

<sup>4</sup> There are indications that the 1980 Report will show higher percentages for non-white population groups (J. Fishman, personal communication).

<sup>5</sup> Again, for 1980 the figures are expected to be considerably higher; additional cities will pass the 20% limit observed here.

<sup>6</sup> No projections for the larger Bay Area have been made. First results of the 1980 census may be available in late 1981. Final reports however, are not expected before 1983.

<sup>7</sup> This view is based on the sociolinguistic axiom that language is cultural behavior. Socio-cultural differences between population groups are not only manifested in non-linguistic behavior, but also in language; and language differences presume social-cultural differences. With Wolfram (1971) I hold that language differences result from socio-cultural differences among population groups. On the basis of this assumption, the research procedure in social dialectology is quite straightforward: (1) Isolate the population groups, (2) Examine the kind of language used by them, (3) explain the second in terms of the first. The description of linguistic differences is thus dependent, as Hymes (1969) says, upon an ethnographic description. Accordingly it would be wrong to group speakers solely on the basis of linguistic differences as done by DeCamp (1968). Wolfram's 1969 approach seems to be more valid. He based the description of linguistic differences solely on the description of pre-determined groups. Although this second approach is to be favored over the first, the first should nevertheless be used in a second step in order to check the validity of the pre-determined socio-cultural group distinctions.

<sup>8</sup> An interesting example of such switching is discussed in Gumperz, 1979a.

<sup>9</sup> Inhabitants and visitors of San Francisco know that there are two further important population groups in that city: the Irish and the Italians. Both groups however, are no longer given separate treatment by the US Census, Linguistically, Irish English can no longer be identified in San Francisco, while Italo-American English can still be heard. Italo-American English might have been included among the varieties of English in use in the SFBA; Irish English not. Linguistic *blason populaire* exists only about Italians using English, not about the Irish. Some research on Italo-American English is reported in Correa-Zoli 1970, and Simonici 1959.

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