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## The Informant Number 3

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# THE

Number 3 -- March 1969

An interdisciplinary newsletter distributed by the Department of Linguistics at Western Michigan University for the purpose of providing information about developments in linguistics to students, staff, and friends in the field.

# INFORMANT

## Mystery Dialect

The first persons to identify the following mystery dialect of English (MDE) -- and write a 100-word composition (or dialogue) in it -- will receive a handsome prize from the Linguistics Department secretary, fourth floor, Sprau Tower. The description of the dialect below is not complete but consists of a miniature contrastive grammar based on standard Kalamazoo English. (The phonological and semantic systems have been ignored.)

### Description of MDE<sup>1</sup>:

1. It has no determination system.  
[Consequently no predeterminers, no determiners (no articles, no demonstratives, no possessives), and no post determiners.]
2. It has no BE verb.  
[Consequently no copula, no progressive aspect, and no passive (though passive meaning is possible).]
3. It has no inflections except -EN.  
[Consequently no synthetic number or case in the noun, no morphological person or number or tense or aspect in the verb (except past participle), and no inflected comparison in modifiers.]
4. It has no auxiliary system.  
[Consequently no BE, no HAVE, no DO, no modals, and no aspect.]
5. It has no derivational system for making complex words (but has compounds).  
[Consequently no adjective/adverb distinction; no derived nouns, verbs, or adjectives.]
6. It has no function words except prepositions\* and WH forms.  
[Consequently no conjunctions, no infinitive markers, no IT, no THERE, and no subordinators except WH forms.]

\*The Kalamazoo preposition to, in "motion toward," seems not to occur in MDE.

<sup>1</sup>This dialect is in constant use in the city of Kalamazoo -- both in speech and writing. It can also be heard in certain American movies and on certain American television programs.

7. It has no case distinctions in personal pronouns (but uses KAL "objective").  
[Consequently no "subjective"/"objective"/"possessive" contrast.]
8. It does have embedding -- within the limits of the above restrictions -- and permits generation of sentences of great complexity.

#### Answer to Mystery Word (Issue No. 2, January 1969)

For the second time, Peter Greenquist, the fabulous pharynx of WMUK, was the first person to claim a prize for the mystery puzzle in The Informant. Mrs. Connie Weaver of the English Department was the only other winner, but there were several pre-publication solvers: Mrs. Elaine Moyer, Linguistics Department secretary, and Mrs. Monica Snyder, Language Department secretary, worked it out during the typing stage. Mickey Tesanovich -- like Peter, a Linguistics major -- solved the mystery in a few hours, just before The Informant was circulated. Congratulations!

The mystery word, an inflected monosyllable, was FSLVNSFS -- in other words, "fricative, stop, liquid, vowel, semivowel, nasal, stop, fricative, stop." The answer is

scrounged [skrawndʒd].

You can look it up.

#### Language and Linguistics Forum

Dr. Daniel Hendriksen recently represented the Linguistics Department on a panel of WMU professors discussing "Child Language: First Language Acquisition." The event took place on Tuesday afternoon, February 18, in the Student Center and also featured Dr. Arthur Falk (Philosophy), Drs. John Michael and Frederick Gault (Psychology), and a distinguished guest, Mrs. Laura Lee (Associate Professor of Communication Disorders, Northwestern University).

The panel explored the positions of linguists (Falk on Fries, Hendriksen on Chomsky) and psychologists (Michael and Gault on Skinner) on the matter of learning: human learning vs. animal learning; verbal learning vs. non-verbal learning; child learning vs. adult learning; and language learning vs. speech learning. It seemed to be agreed that all types of learning require intelligence, exposure, and reinforcement; but Drs. Falk and Hendriksen expressed the belief that language learning requires something more than conditioning -- perhaps "innate capacity" to start with, a kind of pre-programming in the child. Mrs. Lee supported both positions.

On the evening of the same day, Mrs. Lee spoke to an overflow crowd in the Faculty Lounge on "Children's Development of Syntactic Structures." She traced the psycholinguistic development of the child from birth to school, emphasizing the merger of the thought development (concept, mind, idea) and the sound development (articulation, speech, phonetics) in symbolizing things in the environment. "Words" come first (around 12-18 months), then "phrases" (about 18-24 months), then "sentences" (around two years of age). Mrs. Lee observed the important function of "pivot" words (here/there, this/that, etc) in the child's utterances, and she suggested that the copulative verb be was learned late because of its absence in the deep structure.

Mrs. Lee was brought to the campus by the Language and Linguistics Forum, which was established by an interested group of interdisciplinary faculty back in 1965. Her visit was sponsored financially by the Linguistics Department, the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the School of General Studies, the Office of Research Services, and the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology (which furnished those delicious rolls and the coffee for the afternoon meeting). Dr. William Buys (Speech) is Chairman of the Language and Linguistics Forum this year. Dr. Falk and Dr. Louise Kent (Psychology) invited Mrs. Lee and planned the program. If you have suggestions for future programs, contact Dr. Buys.

### Bowling Tournament

The Linguistics majors and minors challenged the Department faculty and staff to a bowling tournament on Saturday morning, February 15 at Wayside Lanes. Ursula Dissmann, who made the challenge, captained the student team; and Chairman Palmatier, who accepted the challenge, captained the faculty team. Each team had six bowlers:

#### The Students (and spice)

Ursula (Curve Ball) Dissmann, Captain  
Keiko (Brooklyn) Okuda  
Mickey (Smash) Tesanovich  
Mike (Little Hook) Holaday  
Vicky (Head Pin) Hopkins (wife of Kurt)  
Kurt (Back-Up) Hopkins (husband of Vicky)

#### The Faculty (and spice)

Bob (Gutter Ball) Palmatier, Captain  
Dan (Strike Ball) Hendriksen  
Dwar (Big Hook) Dwarikesh  
Elaine (Foul Line) Moyer (wife of Jack)  
Jack (Split) Moyer (husband of Elaine)  
Dave (Ten Pin) Palmatier (Son of Bob)

The rather small but enthusiastic audience also included Beverly Holaday (wife of Mike) with son Andy; Marion Palmatier (wife of you-know-who); and Sharda Dwarikesh (wife of Dwar) with daughter Kitty.

Each team bowled two games, with the students winning the first one 737 to 662 and then taking the second one 776 to 691. High "man" for the students' team was Captain Dissmann, who started off with a 177 and finished with a 144, for 321, or a 160 average. High man for the faculty team was Jack Moyer, who had the highest game of the tournament, 181, and added a 146 for a 164 average. Captain Palmatier came in third with 156 and 149, or a 153 average; and Vicky Hopkins placed fourth with 150 and 135, for a 143 average. (The Chairman has had numerous requests not to reveal individual scores.) It was the first experience on the bowling lanes for both Keiko (who practiced the night before) and Dwarikesh (who should have practiced the night before).

The bowling tournament was so much fun that the faculty would like to reverse their luck and challenge the students next time. How about March 22, same time (10:00 a.m.) and same place (Wayside Lanes, on Stadium Drive, between Western and US 131). If you like the idea, tell Ursula or Mrs. Moyer or Dr. Palmatier.

Schedules for Spring, Summer, and Fall

Spring 1969

200	CA	Linguistic Analysis	10:00 - 11:40	MTThF	Palmatier
*310	EA	Language Variation	12:20 - 2:00	MTThF	Hendriksen

Summer 1969

500	FA	Introduction to Linguistics	1:20 - 3:00	MTThF	Palmatier and Dwarikesh
510	DA	Teaching English as Foreign Language	11:20 - 1:00	MTThF	Palmatier
*530	CA	Grammatical Analysis	9:20 - 11:00	MTThF	Dwarikesh

Fall 1969

110	CA	Introduction to American English	10:00 - 11:50	WF	Hendriksen
200	FA	Linguistic Analysis	1:00 - 2:50	TTh	Hendriksen
500	LA	Introduction to Linguistics	7:00 - 8:50	MW	Palmatier
510	CA	Teaching English as Foreign Language	10:00 - 11:50	TTh	Hendriksen
*560	FA	Comparative Linguistics	1:00 - 2:50	MW	Dwarikesh
**505	CA	Basic Swahili	10:00 - 11:50	TTh	Palmatier
**505	FA	Basic Korean	1:00 - 2:50	MW	Palmatier
**505	LA	Basic Sanskrit	7:00 - 8:50	TTh	Dwarikesh
505	HA	Basic Hindi-Urdu	3:00 - 4:50	MW	Dwarikesh

\*General linguistics courses that will be taught for the first time (see below).

\*\*Critical Languages courses that will be offered for the first time (see below).

New Offerings in General Linguistics

In each of the next three terms, a new general linguistics course will be taught for the first time.

1. Dr. Hendriksen will offer Language Variation in the Spring Session. This course, which will be titled Dialectology in the 1969-70 catalog, has the following description:

Language Variation 310. An introduction to the linguistic principles and methods involved in the study of geographical, social, and stylistic variation within languages. (No prerequisite for Spring.)

Because no course in American English dialects is offered at Western, Dr. Hendriksen will pay special attention to these variations -- including the dialects of minority groups in the United States.

2. Mr. Dwarikesh will offer Grammatical Analysis in the Summer Session. This course, which has a prerequisite of Introduction to Linguistics or Linguistic Analysis (or English Language), has the following description:

Grammatical Analysis 530. An examination of ancient, medieval, and modern theories of morphology and syntax, with emphasis on conflicts and correlations among current systems of grammatical analysis. Prerequisite: Ling. 500 or equivalent.

It is expected that graduate students (as well as upper-level undergraduates) and returning school teachers will find this course relevant to their needs and interests.

3. Mr. Dwarikesh will offer Comparative Linguistics in the Fall Semester. This course, which also has a prerequisite of an introductory course in linguistics (200, 500, Eng. 270), has the following description:

Comparative Linguistics 560. This course introduces the student to the branch of linguistics which deals with the similarities and differences between related languages and the methodology through which the linguist is able to make statements about correspondences and divergencies between related languages. Prerequisite: Ling. 500 or equivalent.

Students who have taken Historical Linguistics 300 are still eligible to take this course, and those who have not had 300 need not worry -- Linguistics 560 concentrates on one technique of historical study: the comparative method.

#### New Offerings in Critical Languages

A new numbering system for Critical Languages starts in the Fall Semester: 505 Basic, 506 Intermediate, 507 Advanced, 508 Reading, 509 Writing. The courses can be repeated for different languages, and the credit can be taken either in the Linguistics Department or in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages. 505 is the prerequisite for 506, 508, and 509. 506 is the prerequisite for 507.

Basic Swahili. Dr. Palmatier will supervise this course and will be aided by Mr. Joseph Muthiani, a graduate student in Sociology, who will do the actual teaching. Mr. Muthiani is a native of Kenya, in East Africa, where Swahili is spoken as a lingua franca. He has had considerable experience teaching Swahili for the Peace Corps.

Basic Korean. Dr. Palmatier will also supervise this course, aided by Miss Kun-ok Kim, a graduate student in Linguistics and Education (the M.A. program in Junior College Teaching). Miss Kim, a native of Korea, is a recent graduate of Kyung Hee University, Seoul, where she took a degree in English. She is also fluent in Japanese.

Basic Sanskrit. Mr. Dwarikesh will teach this course all by himself -- he doesn't need any help. Sanskrit is the classical language of ancient India, though it is extremely important to modern India as well, since it is the vehicle for Hindu and Buddhist philosophy and religion. Mr. Dwarikesh is recognized as one of the outstanding native teachers of Sanskrit in this country.

(Basic Hindi-Urdu. Mr. Dwarikesh will repeat Basic Hindi-Urdu in the Fall, while the Indian Seminar is abroad, so that a large enrollment will be assured for Intermediate Hindi-Urdu in the Winter Semester 1970, when the Seminar students return.)

### Plusses and Minuses

1. Enrollment in Linguistics Department courses increased from 44, in the Fall Semester, to 54 in the Winter Semester. Enrollment in Critical Languages courses jumped from 3 in the Fall to about 31 in the Winter. The total number of students served by Linguistics Department courses or Faculty in the Fall was around 175. The total in the Winter is around 135 -- with two fewer courses outside the Department.
2. The Dean's List for the Fall Semester was headed by a Linguistics major, much to our surprise. Ursula Disemann, a junior at that time, received all A's while carrying more than 20 hours. Only two other students in the University -- both freshmen -- made that achievement. The rest of the published Dean's List (over 3.5) was restricted to Kalamazoo area students, so we're not sure how many of ours are on it, but Mike Holaday and Mickey Tesanovich are there, along with several Critical Languages students: Susan Holaday, Scott Marovich, etc.
3. The Assyrian Star for November-December 1968 published an article entitled "New Linguistics Department at Western Michigan University" -- along with a photo of the Chairman (wheweee). Dr. Palmatier wrote the article in an attempt to publicize the Department and to encourage Assyrian-Americans to furnish us with material about their language. So far we have had two letters in response to the article, and the gift of one Assyrian-English Dictionary. Come to find out, Assyrian is variously called "Syriac," "Aramaic," or "Chaldean." Assyrian, anyone?
4. Conventions. Dr. Hendriksen attended the National Council of Teachers of English convention in Milwaukee at Thanksgiving time. Dr. Palmatier attended both the Modern Language Association and the Linguistic Society of American conventions in New York City between Christmas and New Year's. The entire staff attended the Michigan Conference on Applied Linguistics in Ann Arbor on January 18 (plus Jann Barasz, Linguistics major; Mrs. Connie Weaver of the English Department; and two of Mrs. Weaver's students). On March 6, Dr. Hendriksen will attend the meeting of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, in Chicago. Busy, busy.