Studies in Canadian English

# Studies in Canadian English: Lexical Variation in Toronto

By

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For my wife and son

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# INTRODUCTION

The study of the Canadian English dialect has stood in the dark of research concerning General American for many years. Although both dialects are now considered as a part of a larger General North American dialect, one must realize that differences between them are found on many levels of analysis including elements of pronunciation, vocabulary and spelling. For many years these differences have been disregarded and even to this day there are those who question the very nature of the existence of Canadian English as presented in Lilles (2000) or Sutherland (2000). This work, aims to focus on identity as present in culture and language and, to a larger extent, culture and its representation in language. This representation is the notion of a *Canadianism*, described as an element of language, specific to Canada or existing within the Canadian sense. Following Chambers (1987):

> In this milieu, where linguistic diversity is not only tolerated but encouraged, any hint about standards in the sense of things imposed – whether they be language standards, standard dialect or standard accent – should be repugnant.[1]

Since Canadian history involves the inflow of diversity in culture and language, the people tend to counter any imposed suggestions of standardization.

Pringle (1985) assumes that Canadians seldom overstate the uniqueness of their language, so as to "assert the reality of a Canadian linguistic identity, which Canadians sometimes fear is not as obvious or even as real as they would like it to be"[2]. Since Canadian history involves the inflow of diversity in culture and language, the people tend to counter any imposed suggestions of standardization. This has lead to a crisis in identity, which not only affects social but linguistic aspects as well. The term *national identity* may simply be defined as those features of a national group which distinguish it from any other group and also to an individual's sense of being a part that group. The resulting key concepts to

[1] Chambers, 1987: 5
[2] Pringle, 1985: 183-184

such an understanding of identity are *uniformity* and *homogeneity*, as members of such a group share an amount of social and linguistic characteristics, including: social history, language or widely associated culture.

When examining literature concerning the concept, especially within the North American framework, one encounters the works of Russel Blaine Nye (1960, 1974), who had published two very influential books on early American culture and identity, in which he identifies four factors of identity development; the first two operating within the temporal dimension (past and future), while the latter, within the special dimension (geographical relationship and transatlantic values). Please note that the latter two function only within the North American framework. Although Nye's work focused mostly on the United States, one can easily find parallel reference to the Canadian context. The temporal framework refers to past shared ideals (mentioned as awareness of the past) and future goals set by a nation, which in the case of the United States, focus on unity and creation of the American promise. In contrast to this, Canada has always prided itself on its unity in diversity and because of this matter Canadian national unity is represented as a resistance to *continentalism*, where homogeneity within the temporal dimension seems to be a missing figure.

In such a context, one notices that the lack of the temporal factor does not prone a sense of national identity. Famous Canadian journalists, including Marshall McLuhan believed that Canada may be the only country in the world that lives without an identity, although Anthony Wilson-Smith, (1995) argues that "Canadians are convinced there is such a thing as a unique national identity - even if they are unable to agree on what constitutes it".[3] Recent social surveys have revealed that Canadians are to a large extent ignorant of the country's past, people, and geography. In 1999, a research group at the *Fraser Institute* concluded that Canadian national identity is about shared values. In the year 1995, the *The Globe and Mail®* attempted to tackle the value concept. Note the following:

> Most of us already know in our hearts. We are against the idea that people should be treated differently because of their skin colour, language, religion, or background. We are for the idea that all Canadians should be treated as full citizens. We are against the idea that any person is more purely Canadian than another, no matter how far back his or her Canadian ancestry goes. We are for the idea that everyone should have an equal chance to succeed on his or her merit. We are against ethnic nationalism, in which people of common ethnicity rule themselves-masters in their own

[3] Wilson-Smith, 1995: 8

> house. We are for civic nationalism, in which people of different backgrounds come together under the umbrella of common citizenship to form a community of equals. Ours is a modern nationalism: liberal, decent, tolerant, and colour-blind. That is what Canada represents to the millions of people who come here from other countries. That is the idea of Canada.[4]

Although Canadians have little sense of whom they are, government officials, social institutions and, in fact everyday speakers, have established diversity as Canada's unique identity. Pringle (1985) believes that rarely do Canadians acknowledge their *self*. In effect, portraying Canadian identity is not an easy task. Canadian media theorist B. W. Powe (1987) argues for an inconclusive Canadian identity, stating that "Canada has a hermetic past: its meanings are concealed…in insoluble arguments about unity and misread messages", and most importantly "in quiet resistances to the pressures to join into one supreme political system", believing that the country has a discontinuous character.[5]

For the purpose of this work, the author had decided to focus on vocabulary, which reflects unique Canadian traits. In the preface to the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, Katherine Barber describes Canadianisms as lexical items that are peculiar in meaning and use to Canada. Canadian words and senses, including flora and fauna, place names, Aboriginal vocabulary, regionalisms and socio-historical lexical items and phrases all became the elements of the study. They share not only a Canadian origin but also reference to everyday contexts. Considering Canada's macro-level ethnic and cultural diversity, the author's intentions involved launching a study of characteristically Canadian elements (in this case register) present on the micro-level among a specific community in a chosen metropolitan area. Toronto was chosen as the area of research, due to its rich multicultural background. Furthermore, it must be noted that the Toronto dialect has not yet seen the preparation of synthetic linguistic additions, with recent developments including Sali A. Tagliamonte's *Toronto Corpus*. Yet by far, the most noted research in this area encompassed the realm of phonological variation.

The conducted study involved distribution of questionnaires, which tested speakers' knowledge of Canadian register, their ability of using them in the context of everyday discourse and the identification of items. Furthermore, obtaining two years worth of texts from the Toronto Sun®, enabled the observation of Canadianisms within the written medium of a

[4] *Globe and Mail*, November 4, 1995, p. D6
[5] Powe, 1987: 68-69

media context. The resulting data formed a database labeled by the author as the LCTES (Lodz Corpus for Toronto English Study).

The first step of the research presented in this work involved determining the area in which the researcher could collect samples from the participants of the observation. In such a cosmopolitan environment as in Toronto, obtaining chance samples, prior to specifying a particular location of data collection, might result in arriving at information treated as statistically irrelevant. Considering the four nominal variables chosen by the author (age, sex, education, country of education) it is essential to focus on an area of the city not recognized as a social or ethnic district. This external social factor seems to be a key element in studies carried out in North America, taking into account its diverse urban distribution, as large cities frequently encompass neighborhoods classified according to social and racial background.

As a result, the project saw a preparation of a set of five scanning questionnaires that were distributed during face-to-face interviews in July 2004 and two scanning questionnaires (for analytical purposes, later treated as one) for interviews in November 2006. One crucial advantage of this method is that one can keep direct control over the respondents' performance, in this case clarify any uncertain elements that may arise during the observation. Furthermore, designing a questionnaire for such a medium has to fit the context of the situation in which one attempts to extract specific verbal behavior. In other words, random sampling without pre-appointed meetings requires the researcher to interest the potential respondent and not take up too much of his or her time. What is more, the questionnaire has to be kept reasonably short in order not to present the participants with too much work, as their attention and *truth* span will decrease with every question. This resulted in the division of the surveyed information into four thematic questionnaires in July 2004 and one 1 task questionnaire in November 2006.

Further research involved the analysis of newspaper material, in order to gain insight into the realm of the written medium. The author had purchased 2-years worth of texts from the archives of Toronto's popular daily – the Toronto Sun®. This included both articles as well as ads that appeared in the received editions and rounded up to an estimate of approximately 640 000 text files. Having classified the material, the project proceeded with arriving at concordance results with the aid of a concordance tool, in this case, *Wordsmith Tools version 3.0*. This permitted obtaining desired concordances, which showed a Canadian context for the selected lexical items. Following Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (2004), contemporary computer technology allows for a

much detailed and broader analysis of texts compared to traditional linguistic methodology. A corpus will ultimately permit researchers to carry out sociolinguistic observations on a much larger scale.

# CHAPTER ONE

# CANADIAN ENGLISH: A NATIONAL STANDARD

The focus of this study is Canada, though more specifically, it's largest and most multicultural city, namely Toronto, Ontario. In essence, Canada's history is intrinsically tied to the development of the United States. As the English speaking inhabitants entered the country after the War for Independence, the United Empire Loyalists thus constituted the base of English Canada. According to Northrop Frye (1988), "the pattern of Canadian history has been almost the opposite of the pattern of American History".[1] One should consequently avoid reference to Canada as British North America but rather a country that grew out of an opposing idea and in such a sense, created something *complementary* to that of the United States. Furthermore, as has been presented in Bednarek (2007a) the Canadian anti-colonialism approach, which distinguishes the country from its neighbor in the south, has fostered the development of a different cultural identity. This individual identity is not frequently realized by world speakers. Note the following extract:

> Average people remember at the very most that there is a French minority living in Canada and they always link it up with the separatist aspirations of Quebec. They also know that Canada lies in the northern part of North America so it is a colder country than its southern neighbor is.[2]

The basic similarities that one may name involve the fact that both are democratic countries, both are highly industrialized and are extremely consumer oriented. According to S.M. Lipset (1965), differences in moral and social values "stem in large part from the revolutionary origins of the United States and the counterrevolutionary history of Canada".[3] Canadians kept reserve and still prefer rather distant relations with the Americans.

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[1] Frye, 1988: 212
[2] Reczyńska, 1988: 31
[3] Lipset, 1965: 74

Furthermore, multiculturalism has lead to the rise in interest of Canadian studies over the past thirty years. As Jack Chambers (2004b) writes:

> Canada is perhaps the most multilingual in the world not only in the obvious sense that countless languages are spoke there but also in the sense that those language groups tend to sustain themselves beyond the second generation.[4]

An ethnically diverse society will undoubtedly arrive at linguistic diversity. Immigrant societies have changed and will continue to change, both socially and linguistically due to the incorporation of new customs and traditions resulting from racial mixing. Both the Canadian government and the people themselves strive to achieve set standards in Canadian English, yet retaining the diverse ethnic heritage of the country. However, this gives way for doubt, as presented in Lilles (2000) who questions the very nature of the existence of Canadian English and points to an existing myth based on a weakly constructed Canadian identity having no standardization in orthography and phonology. Similarly, Sutherland (2000) sees the dialect as a network of regional characteristics, which are merely associated with certain areas of the United States.

Canadian English history generally encompasses the past 250 years, though without a doubt, the Loyalist base begins the era of dominance of English over French in Canada. Chambers (2004a) notes that "Canada's linguistic identity began differentiating from the English speaking colonies…when the thirteen colonies revolted…and Canada remained loyal".[5] From this point on, one should mark the separate development of both varieties of North American English, as the future of Canadian English would involve the constant inflow of United Empire Loyalists.

However, the struggle for cultural unity and identity present in today's Canada, as presented in Bednarek (2005), does not recognize the lack of distinctive properties between Canadian English and General North American. Furthermore, the presence of a standard orthography does not necessarily make a specific dialect unique. Following Chambers (1998b), and based on evidence presented in further chapters of this work, a degree of American forms are indeed more frequently chosen by speakers than their Canadian counterparts. Nevertheless, following Householder (1983) similar influence is observed in American *Border States*, where Canadian elements influence standard American English.

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[4] Chambers, 2003: 6
[5] Chambers, 2004a: 1

## The people of Canada

In the second half of the twentieth Century immigration was running at about one hundred and fifty thousand people annually.[6] Resultingly, it would be very difficult to name all the ethnic groups present in Canada today. Kalin and Berry (1994) refer of surveys carried out among English, French, Chinese, Italian, Scottish, Indian, Greek, Ukrainian, Spanish and Portuguese Canadians. According to Saywell, most of the inhabitants of the Maritimes are descendants of the British who have lived there for generations. The people of Quebec are of 80% French origin, while "at one time, Ontario was basically Anglo-Saxon in composition".[7] The inhabitants of the Prairies are mostly made up of British and American settler descendants and a myriad of Central European peoples".[8] Eskimo and Indian inhabitants are present in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, while the population of British Columbia mostly resembles the myriad of the Prairies.

Francophone Canadians, on the other hand, make up about 25 percent of the population. They reside mostly in Quebec; however studies have shown their presence in Ontario and New Brunswick. Yet as mentioned by Saywell (1975), nearly a fifth of the population in Canada is neither of British, nor of French origin. According to the scholar, "most of these Canadians have come from the countries of Europe...from Germany, Poland, the Ukraine and Scandinavia".[9] These people came to populate the west and develop the resources that the land offered. The second wave took place after World War II, at a time when over a million new immigrants came from the United Kingdom. Today, Canada is a mosaic of nations, which in the past one hundred and forty years have been building a nation and its culture. However, as noted by Joy (1967), "the effects of immigration are, of course, not felt equally by all parts of the country".[10] Taking into account the multiethnic and multilinguistic society of Canada one may ask a question of when a certain individual, belonging to a specific ethnic group, becomes a Canadian. In other words, when and how does one become *self*, or a member of the Canadian society?

A similar question is discussed by G.H. Mead (1974) in his article concerning social organization. The author believes that human beings have relatively complete control over the environments in which they

[6] Joy, 1967: 57
[7] Saywell, 1975: 8
[8] Ibid.: 9
[9] Ibid.: 10
[10] Joy, 1967: 62

existed and do so today. They undergo a form of evolution, however "not through psychological plasticity...but through the development of what has been referred to…as a universe of discourse".[11] In other words, such growth takes place through communication and taking part in common activities of a given society. An ethnically diverse society will undoubtedly arrive at linguistic diversity. Immigrant societies have changed and will continue to change, both socially and linguistically due to the incorporation of new customs and traditions resulting from racial mixing.

Pringle (1985) assumes that Canadians seldom overstate the uniqueness of their language, so as to "assert the reality of a Canadian linguistic identity, which Canadians sometimes fear is not as obvious...as they would like it to be".[12] The growing tendency of the need for a unique language system is fostered by a plethora of other *non-official* languages. It should also be stated that approximately one fifth of the Canadian population is of neither French nor British origin. In the words of Saywell "most of these Canadians have come from the countries of Europe, seeking escape from tyranny, war or poverty"[13]. Respondents to Fletcher's (1989) survey show that over 63% agree with the statement that "people who come to live in Canada should try harder to be more like other Canadians".[14]

This obviously results from the need to establish both a national culture and a standard in language. Unity resides within the Canadian people, thus the greatest treasure that Canada has is the people's intent on being Canadian. As reported by Joy (1967), the foreign-born population of Canada shows preference for English over French. Several factors have contributed to this, including the fact that French is merely spoken in one corner of the country that is Quebec and parts of the Maritimes, while English is predominantly used in almost all of Canada. As a result, the Anglophone community has been strengthened over the last 100 years, whereas the Francophones have had little success in attracting immigration.[15] Following Chambers (1987), one might observe that:

> In this milieu, where linguistic diversity is not only tolerated but encouraged, any hint about standards in the sense of things imposed –

[11] Mead, 1974: 105
[12] Pringle, 1985: 183-184
[13] Saywell, 1975: 10
[14] Kalin & Berry, 1994: 296
[15] Joy, 1967: 57-63

> whether they be language standards, standard dialect or standard accent – should be repugnant.[16]

Since Canadian history involves the inflow of diversity in culture and language, the people tend to counter any imposed suggestions of standardization.

Multiculturalism has lead to rise in the interest of Canadian studies over the past thirty years. Both the Canadian government and the people themselves strive to achieve set standards in the Canadian English tongue, yet retaining the diverse ethnic heritage of the country. Throughout the past 100 years, Canadians have been attempting to unify their beliefs and their diverse cultural heritage to create a unified sense of nationality; a process believed by many to be impossible due to the vast ethnic diversity of its people.

## The origins of Canadian English

According to Chambers (2004a) the English-speaking colonists initially came into Canada after the French were forced to cede their colonies, called Acadie (Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick) to Britain, as a result of the Treaty of Utrecht in the year 1713. The fall of New France in the year 1763 opened Canada to further English colonists. In statistical terms, note the decrease of Acadians after the cease of Louisbourg in the initial stages of the French and Indian War. As noted by Chambers (2003a), the newly arrived settlers in mainland Canada retained the same blend of dialects as those who came to the Thirteen Colonies and similar to that, which linguistically occurred in those areas, various dialects and accents were homogenized, allowing the offspring of the founding fathers to sound more like one another.[17] Therefore, the roots of Canadian English are found in British English of the middle eighteenth century.

The inflow of the first Loyalists, mainly concentrated on the Maritimes, as many were eager to flee to Britain via the Nova Scotia ports. Chambers (1993, 1997b, 2004a) argues that settlers from Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Western Vermont became the first permanent inhabitants of today's Ontario, and the initiators of future westward migration. Many of these people would also venture to Quebec, at that time renamed Lower Canada. In the words of the scholar:

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[16] Chambers, 1987: 5
[17] Chambers, 2003a: 65-75

> Canadian English, already established for 75 years, as a branch of North American English, absorbed a direct infusion of American influence that would reinforce tendencies that might otherwise have proven more vulnerable to change in the new continental balance of power.[18]

Richard Joy (1967) marks that until the Confederation, Lower and Upper Canada were one Province with an increasing numerical growth of the English-speaking population, with over a fifth of the inhabitants of today's Quebec, of British origin. The establishment of the Dominium of Canada and the separation of the Province of Canada into two, gave rise to the bilingual nature of Canada itself. Contemporary linguistic segregation does not show French being spoken outside Quebec Province proper, and certain areas of Ontario and New Brunswick; however these are treated as western and eastern extensions of French-speaking territory.[19]

Clearly indicated immigration figures form the British Isles, based on Cowan (1961), show a substantial growth of British based population in the period between 1825 and 1860, outnumbering United Empire Loyalist descended families. The first influx took place after the War of 1812, yet considerable growth is marked in the mid nineteenth century. According to Scargill (1977), by the year 1871, over two million Canadian inhabitants originated from the British Isles, with over 800 000 of Irish origin. Following Cowan, the population of Upper Canada, at that time mostly inhabited by the Loyalists and their descendants, grew form 150,000 in 1824 to approximately 450,000 in the year 1841 and in the same period, Toronto's population increased form 1,600 to almost 20,000.[20]

The Canadian Pacific Railway, as a connection between the east and west allowed for further expansion of both European and American settlers.[21] Homogeneity among urban middle-class Canadian English dialects resulted from this westward expansion, as noted by Chambers (1998a,b; 2004b), who perceives two other massive immigration peaks that occur in 1910 and 1960, marking that all four mentioned influxes have considerably shaped contemporary Canadian English. The first recorded mention of Canadian English is that made by the Reverend A. Constable Geikie in a speech delivered to the Canadian Institute in 1857, marking it as a *corrupt dialect*. An emigrant of Scottish-born parents, he talked of *proper* and *low* English, the latter being spoken by the inhabitants he met upon arrival (Chambers, 1998a; Scargill, 1977). Following Scargill

[18] Chambers, 2004a: 2
[19] Joy, 1967: 3-5
[20] Cowan, 1961: 185
[21] Scargill, 1977: 9-11

(1977), Geikie's objections clearly result from the fluid state of English brought by early eighteenth century immigrants, as many changes in pronunciation and grammar had been in progress at the time.[22]

Popular myth attributes pure Elizabethan English to Newfoundland English as Newfoundland is the oldest English-speaking colony of the New World; Irish heritage is clearly observed in Ottawa Valley Speech; one may find Scottish roots in certain counties of Nova Scotia, while Loyalist English shares traits of New England and New York State speech, as observed by Chambers (1975a) and Pringle and Padolsky (1981), although linguistically it was overcome by incoming settlers. As reported by Emeneau (1935), enclaves of the New England accent include, among others, Lunenberg in Nova Scotia and the surrounding areas. In many cases the nineteenth century British immigrant settlers, became the founders of isolated regions; as a result, many areas of Canada have their roots in British, Scottish or Irish speech patterns.[23] Chambers (1991c) indicates that there had been a peak of Scotch-Irish settlement in the years between 1851 and 1861, which resulted from an effort undertaken by British governors to counter growing American imperialism. The beginning of the twentieth century saw further British settlers, yet also a great deal of German, Dutch and Belgian immigrants.[24]

Yet the dominance of American pronunciation was not simply a result of American legacy of Upper Canada, yet by the presence of the American curriculum in schools as presented in the memoirs of Canniff (1869). In reference to Chambers (2004a), spelling and pronunciation in Upper Canada "momentarily made the educational standard all over North America".[25] However, a quick British immigrant *anti-American* wave arose. Such a conviction of British superiority lasted until the early 1950's. This *Dainty*, and its manifestation by upper class speakers, during the first half of the 20th century, became known as the phenomenon of the *Anglo-Canadian* reported in Chambers (2004a, 2004b).

Currently, a visible standard for North America is becoming visible. Note the following extract form Chambers (1999a):

> There are presently numerous changes in progress in the various Englishes of North America. Viewed separately, each change appears to be progressing in its own way, with its own social and linguistic constraints.

[22] Ibid.: 11-12
[23] Chambers, 2004b: 16-17
[24] Chambers, 1991c: 91-92
[25] Chambers, 2004a: 7

> Some of these changes involve similar linguistic elements, and they are changing in similar ways in several regions.[26]

Similarly, based on Householder (1983), crossing from the United States into Canada shows certain isogloss boundaries. However, suggestions concerning leveling of certain Canadian-American linguistic differences in favor of the American seem to be incorrect interpretations of the phenomenon. Many Canadian features have been observed spreading south, such as the appearance of *Canadian Raising* in the United States, or the irregularization of *dive* and *sneak* in the past tense, as observed by Chambers (1999a, 1997a) and Eason (1998a).

Chambers (1989) argues that the unified dialect of Canadian English is a product of the twentieth century, although certain features might have developed as early as during the existence of Upper Canada. The *Canadian Raising* phenomenon mentioned earlier, contrary to earlier suggestions as of having a direct link to the Great Vowel Shift, according to Chambers (1989) "appears to have become entrenched in the 1930's or perhaps the 1920's".[27]

History, culture and immigration have lead to the creation of the seven linguistic regions of Canada (based on the 1961 Census), with indication of mother tongue descendants, as based on Joy (1967). They include: Interior Quebec, Southern Quebec and the Ottawa Valley, Northern New Brunswick, Eastern and Northern Ontario, Southern Ontario, the Atlantic Region – The four Atlantic Provinces and the Western Provinces.[28] Initial studies of Canadian English which include a range of authorities, as A.C. Baugh (1935) had recognized it as originally British with an immense influence of the American tongue on the standard, including a high impact on pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. Baugh (1957) had later modified his position, claiming that it is simply a variety of American English.

Scargill (1975) explores the two existing theories concerning Canadian English development and agrees on the Loyalist theory, disregarding the issue as reported by Lovell (1955) treating the dialect as an extension of Northern American English. Although he agrees that researchers may be misguided in different areas by the Loyalist theory. He identifies a number of assumptions, which appear to be contrary to this existing approach, nevertheless, he admits that currently this is the only logical diachronic

[26] Chambers, 1999a: 118
[27] Chambers, 1989: 86
[28] Joy, 1967: 20-21

explanation; yet one must not deny apparent independent development as seen in the growth of vocabulary.

When conducting an analysis of the development of language in vocabulary terms, one needs to acknowledge the needs for change due to different physical surroundings. This does not only refer to flora and fauna distinctions, but also social phenomena that result from the development of new cultures and the mix of ethnic traditions. The ventures into Canada continued due to the need for large amounts of fish for European countries, and as was discovered by John Cabot, the Grand Banks, an area of the coast of Newfoundland, are full of cod. It will be no surprise that the first Canadianisms are directly connected to the fishing industry. Based on Scargill (1977), one observes that the first word that entered Canada, *baccaloa*, was neither a French nor an English lexical item, but came from the Portuguese *bacalhoa*, which meant codfish. In fact, it needs to be indicated that the development of future Canadian vocabulary begins with the fishing ventures of the early sixteenth century.

Through the analysis of language data, Scargill (1977) confirms that initial vocabulary enters via Portuguese, further through French and finally, English. The first English-based lexical item in the Canadian wordstock would be a *fishing admiral,* coined in 1718, due to the fact that the English fisherman based their administration on navy traditions. In time this was changed to *fishery officer*. Furthermore, Indian names became incorporated to the fish that appeared new to the fisherman, such as: *qualla*, *tyee* or *Chinook salmon*, obviously associated with the Chinook Indian tribes.[29] To this day one observes a deep connection with fishing culture in the Atlantic Provinces, and this is quite visible in the contemporary wordstock. Note just a few of existing Canadianisms: *fish flake*, *Squid jigger*, *bangbelly* or *Mud trout.*

By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the fishing enterprise started to migrate along with new settlers, first to the Great Lakes region and finally, to the Pacific Provinces. Following Scargill (1977) and the journals of St. John (1877) and Hearne (1795), the names for fish and fishing-related activities continued its native or pure descriptive base. As a result, Canada offers different types of trout such as: the *Aurora trout*, the *Brook trout* or the *Cut-throat trout*. Many Canadianisms were coined purely based on the physical description of the fish or the fishing oriented activity and sometimes by some noticeable association, such as the *Dolly Varden*. Another example is the name

[29] Scargill, 1977: 15-17

*splake*, which was derived in the 1950's as a contraction of *speckled* and *lake trout*.

Yet, the fishing period would lead to further development. In the words of Scargill (1977):

> It was fish that brought Europeans to Canada, and it was the result of fishing voyages into the Gulf of St. Lawrence that Canada's next natural resource was discovered: fur.[30]

The trading enterprise would require traveling through the land and it is the natives that showed the traders how to travel on lakes and rivers and also through the snowy wilderness. Thus, Canadian vocabulary was enriched by such lexical items as: *bateau, Red River boat, birchbark canoe* or *snowshoe* (Scargill, 1977: 21). By far the most important Canadianism, as reported by Innis (1956) and Scargill (1977) involves Jacque Cartier's voyage of 1534. The first recorded trade in furs led him to Chaleur Bay, where he heard the term *kanata*, which was mistaken for the name of the country, though in fact the natives used it as reference to *village* or *community*. Scargill claims that linguistic evidence points to the fact that the item at hand may be the English version of *kanuchsa*, the Iroquoian name for a resident of a *kanata*".[31]

The third important period of vocabulary development involves the appearance of the United Empire Loyalists and the resulting lifestyle based on forestry and cultivation of the land. Therefore, a large amount of forestry terms entered the language, such as: *squared timber, Quebec pine* or *white pine*. Similar to that of fishing and the fur trade, these terms not only described new types of trees never before witnessed, but also activities connected with the industry, such as *lumber camps, donkey-puncher* or *chokerman*. Furthermore, one must also focus on farming as the post-Acadian settlers were mostly based on agriculture. Chambers (1998a) claims that the indigenous plant and animal life names were kept, among them *tabcoo*, *tamarack* and *caribou.*[32]

The scholar also notes that most of the early political terms in Canada were elements that were no longer used in Britain, therefore achieving a unique Canadian character, although Orkin (1971) argues that contemporary political vocabulary is mostly British. What is more, westward migration brought further enrichment. To encourage settlement in the West, the Free Land Homestead Act was passed and the late

[30] Ibid.: 20
[31] Ibid.: 22
[32] Chambers, 1998a: 1

nineteenth century sees the increase of *homesteading*; the government passed laws guaranteeing protection of the Indians and in order to maintain security in the west and Sir John Macdonald created the *North West Mounted Police*, known today as the *Royal Canadian Mounted Police*.[33] The *Mounties*, as they are called today, wear characteristic red uniforms, hence the informal expression *redcoat* is used in reference to them, contrary to the American term for a British soldier during the War for Independence. Yet ironically, *redcoats* in the Canadian sense originated form British soldiers, as they were originally appointed with the duty.

Finally, it need also be mentioned that a large number of Canadianisms have developed as a result of the Canadian love of winter sports, especially hockey. The love for this sport has made it possible for these to enter everyday vocabulary and appear in everyday discourse. Note the following: *Dipsy-doodle*, *Dump-and-Chase*, *Stickhandle* or *Hang up ones Skates*. As shown, the initial stages saw borrowings from Indian languages and the rise of items describing nature and the way of life. Orkin (1971) argues that the development of vocabulary was largely based on the everlasting struggle between British and North American terms, including a very strong Indian influence. Many of Canadian place names have their origin through contact of explorers with the natives, such as: *Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Oshawa* or *Mississauga*. Further growth continued as a result of a continuing influx of immigration and naturally, industrial development. According to Chambers (1998a):

> …our vocabulary – like the vocabulary of every modern nation – is swelling more rapidly than ever with words technology, medicine, international politics and other sources.[34]

What is more, the integration of ethnically diverse peoples fosters such development.

H.B. Woods (1993) defines Canadian English as an *off-shoot* of contemporary General American English, assuming that the essence of CE is the linguistic duality of Standard Southern British English being treated as "correct and desirable", while North American English as "honest and homey".[35] He assumes that Canadians will have to attempt defining national identity by other means than language, due to the fact that pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax appear to be becoming more

[33] Scargill, 1977: 28-38
[34] Chambers, 1998: 2
[35] Woods, 1993: 153

American, in general terms. Woods' study in Ottawa, showed that "Canadians will more likely find a distinct identity in the way they carry out their daily activities".[36] However, many, as B. W. Powe (1987) argue that Canadian identity is inconclusive, suggesting that that "Canada has a discontinuous character".[37] Scargill (1955) initiated linguistic surveys in Canada as a way of describing Canadian English with reference to culture and identity and the interest in language variation continues with Chambers (1992) and Chambers and Heisler (1999) following Allan (1973-76).

## The standard pronunciation

When tracing the definition of a standard, Chambers (1987) puts forward 3 ways of applying the word *standard* to language, namely *language standard, standard dialect* and *standard accent*. The first defined as accepted norms for the use of language; the second the grammar and lexis of educated usage; the final focusing on pronunciation.[38] Therefore, in the following sub-chapters, the author of this work intends to present noted characteristics of the Canadian Standard, although Chambers argues that when looking at the standard dialect in Canada "…we will find that it is not much different from the Standard dialect of the United States or England…",[39] as in terms of grammar and vocabulary Canadians use identical sentence structures and basic vocabulary. Nevertheless, there are elements which differentiate the dialect from other standards, which in turn makes speech uniquely Canadian.

As reported by Bloomfield (1948), Canadian pronunciation forms bare historical relation to the speech patterns of both Northern and Midland speech in the United States. Woods (1993) presents eight, characteristically Canadian specific features, yet what is puzzling, these are mostly Briticisms. The author must no doubt have based his assumptions on the ideas proposed by Bloomfield. As a result, one could reach the conclusion that the lack of these British features will entail the lack of Canadian elements in pronunciation. Woods' ideas also signify that the General American pronunciation system and the Canadian one are coming closer each day, with the British standard diminishing.

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[36] Ibid,: 174
[37] Powe, 1987: 68-69
[38] Chambers, 1987: 1-2
[39] Ibid.: 2

The fact remains that Canadian speech remains an ill-defined system incorporating elements from both General American and Standard British. Orkin (1971) argued that not much work has been done in the field of scientific analysis into the way of how Canadians speak, and only recently have such studies come into interest (recently, in this case meaning in the 1950's and 60's, which to the contemporary reader implies the last 50 years, providing a well established background), mostly thanks to the impressive work done by the Canadian Linguistic Association in defining dominant tendencies of pronunciation.

Quite simply, it appears that there is no clear standard of pronunciation in Canada, as one may observe variation not only among a group of selected informants, but within a single person's pronunciation. Orkin calls upon the studies of W.S. Avis (1956) and his analysis of speech patterns in Ontario. Avis had prepared a set of questionnaires which were circulated at universities between the years 1949 and 1955 and concluded that a British form was used whenever the word was of limited use, while the General American one appeared to apply to words treated as more general and in common usage. These observations signify a tendency in Canada to mix the two variants.[40]

Orkin believes that there are very good historical reasons for this sharing of characteristics. According to the author:

> English speaking Canada was largely colonized from Great Britain and the United States, and Canadian pronunciation could be expected to show the influence of this mixed parentage.[41]

Eric Patridge (1951) attributes these tendencies to the educational and social backgrounds of the colonists, reminding that it was less educated men that inhabited North America, therefore the predominant pronunciation would differ form that of the upper class in England. Furthermore, it need be noticed that Canadian English is a variety of North American; therefore, one must not disregard its North American tendencies. The pro-British aspects are frequently observed amongst the upper classes, while the popular level of speech sees more reference to General American.

Media play a crucial role in popularizing pronunciation forms. The global village and the ever present American media continue to influence speech in Canada. The motion picture industry, television programs and American pop culture continue to have their way into the speech of

[40] Orkin, 1971: 113-119
[41] Ibid.: 119

Canadian speakers, especially, the young generation. Nevertheless, one can observe the official persistence of standard British in certain media corporations. Orkin (1971) provides evidence based on the conscious choice of British pronunciation in the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) in words where one has the ability of choosing between two variants, such as in the word *schedule*. This directly results from past events when the CBC issued a pamphlet entitled *Handbook for Announcers* in which the news announcer is given two pronunciation patterns of a given item with a recommended and alternative pronunciation. Orkin admits that some of the suggested patterns are simply, never used by speakers and in recent developments, the CBC has modified its position and has become more flexible, allowing any pronunciation, yet recognized by a 'reputable dictionary'.[42] In the revised edition of Partridge (1946), the author suggests that the purpose of such dealings is to popularize variants used by the upper class. Note the following extract:

> In the pronunciation and accentuation of English words the policy of the CBC is to recognize any variants that are generally current among educated people. English speech uses are not rigid, they vary from place to place and from time to time and it would be presumptuous for any one body to insist that the standards are correct…and all others incorrect.[43]

Generally, the *Americanization* of Canadian English pronunciation is constantly continuing, with the variety portraying visible inconsistencies.

According to Chambers (1993, 2004b) Canadian English may be characterized by two very specific characteristics of pronunciation. According to the author, "…one is the merger of low back vowels so that CE has only one low back vowel phoneme, where most other varieties of English have two".[44] Chambers believes this to be the most significant feature as it has been a characteristic element of pronunciation based on early records as early as the 1950s. This process is described as *Canadian Merging*. Furthermore, Clarke et al. (1995) describe a process known as the *Canadian Shift,* a phenomenon, which results in the fact that speakers tend to retract the low-front vowel /æ/ to a much more central position.

Generally, Canadian English shares *rhoticity* and alveolar flapping with American English, however research has come across the phenomenon of *r-dropping* in certain areas of Nova Scotia. Woods (1993)

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[42] Ibid.: 121-123
[43] Partridge, 1946: 13
[44] Chambers, 2004b: 17