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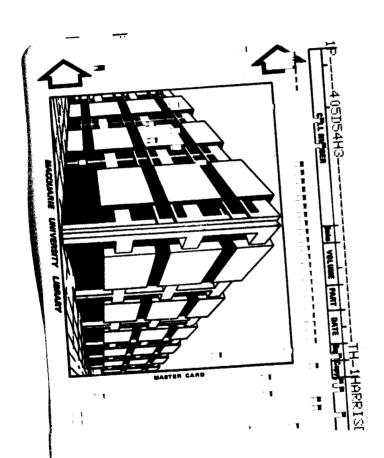
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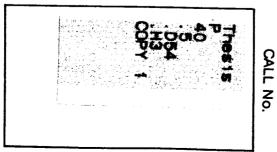
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VARIATION IN PRESENT NORFOLK ISLAND SPEECH

A STUDY OF STABILITY AND INSTABILITY IN DIGLOSSIA

Shirley Harrison

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of English and Linguistics, Macquarie University, 1984.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the behaviour of Norfolk Islanders in a particular language situation: in which the participants are Islanders, in which the purpose is understood to be informal conversation, and in which the setting is conducive to the speaker producing his/her natural vernacular.

Emphasis on dialectal speech means that for some speakers types of Broad Norfolk are the object of investigation; for others Modified Norfolk is the dialectal variety. In the speech situation under study, all Islanders may be heard to shift through partial change of code into Modified Norfolk so that various stylistic patterns occur, dependent on the interaction of dialectal and situational factors. The analysis of such dialectal and stylistic variants as Norfolk Islanders employ in informal speech is of central interest in this work.

Following on from an explanation of the social setting and analytical framework of the thesis, textual data of a number of Norfolk informants are examined; a set of propositions relating to the defining characteristics of diglossia, as enunciated by Charles Ferguson (1959), serves as reference points for the examination of each speaker's dialectal competence. Text analysis concentrates on the following principal areas of inquiry:

- (1) Identification of the formal qualities of each speaker's dialect in relation to the distinctive features of old Broad Norfolk and location of his/her dialectal norms along the Broad Norfolk to Modified Norfolk continuum.
- (2) Inquiry into the degree of informants' conformity to the kind of diglossic stability which is typically demonstrated by older Islanders: the extent to which individuals reserve the use of their Norfolk and Norfolk English codes for separate dialectal and superposed purposes.
- (3) Speakers' code-variation in the Modified Norfolk continuum is examined:

Firstly, to identify the linguistic configuration of mutated, merged and blended forms of Modified Norfolk, and

Secondly, to analyse the meaning of Modified structures: whether they signify a stylistic shift pertaining to the speaker in relation to his language situation or whether they represent habitual, unmarked variants in the dialect of the speaker concerned.

(4) Analysis of the dialect of old and young Norfolk Islanders is designed to demonstrate how maintenance and change are manifested in the present community; how their different types of code-variation relate to the dialectal-superposed norms of older diglossia; and how a range of stylistic meanings, determined by the interaction of dialectal/situational factors, is

expressed within the Modified Norfolk continuum.

Thus this study aims to provide a coherent interpretation of the uses of code-variation in a community of unstable diglossic practice so that it is possible to refer different types of variants to the basic diglossic framework.

I certify that this work has not been submitted for a higher degee to any other university or institution.

S. Harrison