

Dictionary of Prince Edward Island English, by T.K. Pratt, Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 1988, cloth, xxxii, 192 pages, \$30.00 CDN, ISBN 0-8020-5781-0.

The reader's first impressions of this book are favorable ones. The P.E.I. plaid dustcover invites one to turn the pages, which do not crack on the spine of the book and which are elegantly printed on acid-free paper. Clearly, this well-crafted Canadian book is built to last.

T.K. Pratt has devoted around twenty pages including two maps to prepare the reader for the use of the Dictionary of Prince Edward Island English (hereafter DPEIE), and has divided them into: the Scope of the Dictionary, four pages; the Making of the Dictionary, eight pages; Guide to the Dictionary, five pages; Dictionaries Consulted, Abbreviations, and Pronunciation Key, around four pages.

The dictionary's scope, according to Pratt, may be grasped by simply reading through the entries. It is a record of non-standard words as used, or once used, on Prince Edward Island (xi). The editor then leads his reader carefully through the distinctions between standard and non-standard language with an example of the non-standard words that may be considered incorrect by some speakers, for example, slippy for slippery. Next a working definition of dialect is spun out of the concepts of standard and non-standard language (xii).

Eight categories of words are not found in DPEIE: proper nouns, foreign words, special occasion words, slang and transitory words, non-standard words which are too well known, multi-word expressions and folk sayings, technical, scientific or learned words, and words strictly confined to an occupation and understood only by the practitioners (xii). As well, borderline candidates for DPEIE have been rejected when they are found without a special label in four other authoritative dictionaries of English, the Gage Canadian Dictionary being the most rigorously used for this test. These constraints were occasionally relaxed by the editor where it seemed appropriate, and where he found 'words with so little evidence accompanying them that their authenticity could reasonably be doubted' (xiii) he rejected them unless they had one written attestation or two oral ones (xiii).

DPEIE is not a dictionary of 'Islandisms,' it is intended to join other fine dialect dictionaries showing 'the links from dialect to dialect, and from dialect to standard, filling in the continuum for their respective catchment areas, and advancing our knowledge about the language as a whole' (xiv).

In the section entitled The Making of the Dictionary, Pratt demonstrates his knowledge of the techniques of dialectological research. Using a classical nineteenth century methodology, the postal surveys of George Wenker in 1876, Pratt establishes an observer class of informants which he abbreviates as 'O' in the entries. Three postal surveys followed, the first ('P1' in 1979) using senior citizens as informants and containing non-standard words, folk sayings items and a multiple choice section on standard words. P2, the second postal survey, was conducted in 1983-84 and was tied into previous fieldwork. Again senior citizens were the informants. Seventy-two fieldwork-elicited words were examined here. The third postal survey, done in 1986, was used to clarify the eligibility of seventy-four words; the less than half which survived were labelled 'R' for Rare Words Survey (xvi).

The editor has used the research techniques of rural dialectology and sociolinguistics to put together his two fieldwork surveys. Sex, age, class, and locality were deemed important. Equal numbers of men and women were studied, with half the informants aged sixty and over, the other half ranging from eighteen to fifty-nine. This was similar to the methodology underlying Dictionary of American Regional English, and to quote Pratt: 'Nevertheless it must be remembered that all generalizations in DPEIE stemming from the surveys reported on here are based on a deliberately biased sample.' (xvii). That is to say, fifty percent of the informants for DPEIE are men and women aged sixty or over. Social class was divided into 'working class' and 'middle class' and did not yield any great discoveries; rather, the most important source of variation in DPEIE turned out to be locality. Many differences were noted between rural and urban speakers, and Pratt established strict criteria for sampling, ending up with a sample of about 100 informants.

Fieldworkers were usually university students, with questionnaires containing words from the postal surveys organized into standard interest groups: weather, nature, food, etc. The two-hour interviews conducted involved both direct and indirect questions. No tape recorders were used; notes were made by fieldworkers and expanded later. Surveys I and II, conducted between 1981 and 1982, supplied 442 words. A 'Common Word Survey' (C) gave information about the choice of standard as opposed to local dialect words. This was done between 1980 to 1982, and gave information about a word's popularity compared to others. Special Lexicons

(S) explored the vocabulary of significant Prince Edward Island rural occupations. Precedent for this fieldwork came from the Dictionary of Newfoundland English.

In addition, three collections of audio tape-recordings of non-standard dialect speech were analyzed and were not found to be particularly helpful. Nine hundred titles were read in an attempt to find written words which would corroborate the oral ones found in the fieldwork. The editor concludes this section by the following:

This dictionary, like others of its kind, had not been finished, but merely ended. The number of words presented in the main entries is 873, while the alternate forms, many of them in their own cross-referenced entries, bring the total collection to over 1,000. Behind each word is an average of about seven sources. (xxii)

The Guide to the Dictionary is clearly written and states that there are main entries and cross references, with the main entries having potentially six sections. The first three of these are found in every case: head word, head note and definition. The second three are optional: citations, editorial note, and dictionary note (xxiii). Various labels reflecting a sociolinguistic interpretation are of interest; these are stylistic, regional, and social. Definitions, citations and editorial and dictionary note sections are clearly explained in a style of writing that brings to mind the expression: 'Guide, philosopher, and friend.'

The Dictionaries Consulted section is informative and broad in its consideration of standard, and regional English.

The Pronunciation Key appears to be based on an amalgam of standard dictionaries and is clear enough. Some readers might prefer an I.P.A. transcription as was used in the Dictionary of Newfoundland English.

The 166 pages of entries in DPEIE are in fact a delight. One cannot do justice to the creativity of such language. The first page by coincidence displays the Micmac name for P.E.I., Abegweit, and the Acadian French aboiteau. Humour is abundant: thunderjugs and flying axehandles can be compared with interest. Social history is on every page; the adverb away has great significance to the Islander. Many entries can be used by dialectologists in other regions for comparative research, for example, popple, stump fence, and scoff.

There is a pattern to the definitions of words contained in DPEIE. It was built into the questionnaire and is similar to the categories of Hans Kurath in Word Geography of the Eastern United States (174). Thus, the editor names the feel of the words as 'homey, familiar, and down to earth.' Some areas of the vocabulary express insularism, while the 'Egmont opposites' are reminiscent of black English where bad actually means good.

The editor has written an excellent conclusion to DPEIE: The Dictionary in Profile. He uses statistics to outline the plot or profile, showing how the origins of the dictionary entries mirror the settlement history of Prince Edward Island.

As noted above, one major sociolinguistic discovery of the dictionary is that the urban-rural distinction is very significant on the Island. Word use surprisingly has almost no ethnic labels attached in the head notes.

The conclusion must be that, although ethnic connections on Prince Edward Island are vital to many people, such connections are not particularly strong in vocabulary. (172)

Sexual differences show male domination in the head note labelling, 63 to 5. There is some discussion of the significance of this linguistic battle of the sexes, but no major conclusion seems to appear. Regarding age, DPEIE confirms the usual: 'older speakers are the more likely to use dialect words.' (173) It should be noted that all these discoveries and conclusions are reinforced and exemplified by scores and figures which are based on the established techniques of sociolinguistics.

The second part of the Dictionary in Profile deals with grammar and pronunciation. Intensifiers such as some and right used as adverbs, and shifting verb morphologies, e.g., drag, drug, stand out. Non-standard prepositional usage where are you at? is also documented. In general, non-standard grammar is found to be most associated with older rural men.

Pronunciation is handled in a pleasingly non-technical but linguistically informative manner. One is able to see the connections between P.E.I. pronunciation and that of other areas of the Atlantic coast. This section is a necessity for anyone who wishes to speak like an Islander, as well as for the scholar who seeks relevant features to include in his/her questionnaire.

In conclusion, this dictionary is a work of scholarship which is accessible to the general reader. If there are any criticisms to be made, they are minor ones. Probably the field work should have been tape-recorded, and the transcriptions of selected pronunciation items noted in a phonetic or phonemic alphabet. This, however, can be the next mission for young linguists inspired by this fine dictionary.

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