

Collaborators on *The Comparative Morpho-Syntax of Appalachian English*

Our proposed project is a unique and ambitious one in that its success relies on experience and/or expertise in the following areas: theoretical linguistics, Germanic syntax, varieties of American English (including non-standard varieties), micro-parametric variation, linguistic fieldwork, and Appalachian language and culture. Each member of our four-member research team, together with two graduate students and a regional consultant, will contribute in significant ways to the overall feasibility and success of the research study.

Christina Tortora (*College of Staten Island/Graduate Center (CUNY)*) has extensive fieldwork experience. From 1994–2001, she conducted fieldwork on Borgomanerese, spoken in Borgomanero, a town in the Piedmont region of Northern Italy (from 1995-1997 this work was funded by an NSF *Grant for Improving Doctoral Dissertation Research*). Her data collection resulted in her PhD thesis, several articles, and a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship to write a comparative grammar of the dialect. She also designed and taught a field-methods course at the University of Michigan, which employed a native speaker (Agnese Salvatori) of Loianese, an Emilian dialect, and has given several lectures on field research issues.

In 2001, she began the study of Appalachian syntax with Bridget Anderson (who is a native speaker of an Appalachian variety, and who at the time was a student at the University of Michigan). Through a seed grant (\$5,000) from the City University of New York (*PSC-CUNY Grant #60052-32-33: The Syntax of Appalachian English; project period: April 1, 2002–December 31, 2003*), Tortora initiated work on this project at CUNY. She made a preliminary trip in March 2002 to the *Center for Appalachian Studies and Services* (CASS) at East Tennessee State University (ETSU, in Johnson City, Tennessee), to investigate the *Archives of Appalachia* as a potential research site. The grant supported two subsequent trips to the *Archives* (accompanied by Judy Bernstein). These three trips resulted in substantial data collection and establishment of contacts in the eastern Tennessee region of Appalachia. Since then, she has given two conference presentations on the project and an invited lecture with Judy Bernstein at CASS's *Appalachian, Scottish, and Irish Studies Summer School*; she has also published an invited article with Judy Bernstein for *Now and Then* magazine (published by CASS; the magazine promotes Appalachian culture, heritage, and interests), and has published two articles, one on dialects spoken in mountainous regions ("La variazione sintattica e i dialetti appalchiani," in G. Marcato (ed) *I dialetti e la montagna* (2003)), and another on existentials in Appalachian English, forthcoming in *American Speech* ("The Case of Appalachian Expletive *they*"). She also taught an advanced Syntax Seminar at the CUNY Graduate Center in Fall 2004 on English dialect syntax.

Tortora's experience doing fieldwork and her experience doing research in the Appalachian region (together with her contacts) will provide the basis for training a CUNY Graduate Center graduate student to do fieldwork under this grant.

Judy Bernstein (*William Paterson University*) held (in 2003–2004) a fellowship with the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS; *A Systematic Study of the Syntax of Appalachian English*), and during that time resided in Johnson City, TN, conducting research at ETSU and fieldwork in eastern Tennessee. Her tenure as an ACLS

fellow was preceded by two joint trips with Tortora in 2002–2003 to ETSU and the *Archives*, and a subsequent trip in preparation for this project (supported by Career Development funds from William Paterson University).

In 2002, Bernstein (with Tortora) was invited to teach at the Appalachian, Scottish, and Irish Studies (ASIS) summer program at ETSU. She was invited to teach at ASIS again in summer 2004. Her tenure as an ACLS fellow has enabled her to make numerous contacts with promising informants. She has also developed a working relationship with Billy Ward II, a native speaker of the variety of English spoken in his region of eastern Tennessee and an Appalachian Studies major at ETSU. Billy Ward II was recently hired to work in the *Archives* at ETSU. This proposal seeks funds to employ Mr. Ward, as his work with Bernstein has shown that his expertise, knowledge, contacts, and assistance will prove invaluable to the fieldwork necessary for this project.

Bernstein and Tortora's contribution to *Now and Then* ("A Couple of New York Linguists in Appalachia?") appeared in spring 2004. In March 2004, Bernstein was invited (by Zanuttini) to speak at GURT. Her talk was entitled, "Methodological Issues in a Study of the Syntax of Appalachian English." She is currently completing a paper on this topic, "Elicitation of Acceptability Judgments in Appalachian English Vernacular," which she will submit to *American Speech*.

Bernstein has other fieldwork experience. In 1992, she conducted NSF-funded research on Walloon, which resulted in her PhD thesis and several publications. Her experience in the field provides the basis for training Mr. Ward in understanding the approach a project of this nature requires. In turn, Mr. Ward's status as a consultant will enhance the efficiency of the CUNY and Georgetown (see below under Zanuttini) graduate students' navigation in the field.

Marcel den Dikken (the *Graduate Center (CUNY)*) is a prominent Germanicist with numerous publications on the comparative syntax of various Germanic languages. Given the object of study, the participation of an experienced Germanicist in this project is essential (the other three collaborators' primary research experience is in Romance). One of den Dikken's most recent articles (2005, *Lingua* 115.5:691-710) in fact applies his previous published research on Topic-Comment structures to the question of 'subject contact relatives' in Appalachian varieties. Thus, his background allows us to readily relate our findings on AppE with related phenomena in other Germanic languages. This will prove indispensable to the orientation of this research project in the larger context of the question of universal grammar. It will also prove essential to the development of the intellectual background of the graduate student we wish to support at the Graduate Center.

In the realm of fieldwork, den Dikken also (co-)taught a field methods course at CUNY (with Prof. Charles Cairns) in Spring 2002, which employed a native speaker of Rotuman (Shalom Tua'toko). One significant outgrowth of his work with the native speaker is his recent book on the Noun Phrase in Rotuman. Den Dikken was also the chief organizer for the 19th *Comparative Germanic Syntax Workshop*, held at the CUNY Graduate Center June 3-5 (co-organized by Tortora). This conference featured Alison Henry (author of *Belfast English and Standard English*) as an invited speaker, who spoke about problems in the syntax of Ulster English.

Raffaella Zanuttini (*Georgetown University*), like Bernstein and Tortora, has fieldwork experience, with many seminal works on negation as an outgrowth of this (including her book on negation and clausal structure: *Negation and Clausal Structure: A Comparative Study of Romance Languages* (OUP 1997)). Her background in this area differs from that of Bernstein or Tortora, however, in that the object of study in the course of her career has been multiple closely-related (Northern Italian) dialects (as opposed to a focus on single dialects). Her perspective is thus uniquely relevant for the approach taken in this project, which is the study of a number of closely related varieties. In addition, Zanuttini is faculty in a Linguistics department that has a long tradition of scholarship in non-standard varieties of English (we consider in this regard the work of Ralph Fasold, Robert Hackenberg, and Natalie Schilling-Estes, for example). This is particularly relevant, since Linguistics at Georgetown is thus predisposed to attract (and currently has) graduate students interested in working on and doing fieldwork in non-standard varieties of English. This, combined, with Zanuttini's background both as a syntactician and a field researcher makes her an indispensable component in this research team. In fact, she already has a graduate student (Corinne Brandstetter, from Tennessee), who is working on the syntax of double modals. An added advantage of including a Georgetown student is the fact that it is only approximately a six-hour drive to the part of Appalachia we have been investigating; in other words, Georgetown is situated in a geographically advantageous location.

As part of her participation in this project, Zanuttini, who served as organizer of GURT 2004 (*Georgetown University Roundtable on Linguistics*), arranged for a special session on the syntax of non-standard varieties of English, with James McCloskey as the invited speaker. Her preparations for this session included special solicitation of abstracts on the syntax of English dialects, and the conference included a panel discussion on English dialects. This allowed the collaborators of this project to deepen their understanding of relevant work being done in this area. She also presented a talk at the gathering of the *American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)* in February 2004, within a panel organized by Stephen Anderson (Yale University), entitled "How Many Languages Are There in the World?" Her presentation discussed the notion of parameter, in particular focusing on micro-syntactic variation and the notions of language and dialect. Her research for this event is integral to the more specific research questions being addressed by this project.

To summarize, the special nature of the proposed research project motivates a research team with a diverse set of interests, talents, and areas of specialization.