

A Comparison of a Selected Number of Words and Terms on Norfolk Island (Australia) and Auckland (New Zealand)

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Abstract

This article describes a preliminary study of New Zealand English spoken on Norfolk Island, a territory of Australia. This English has distinctive features of both *Norfolk* and other varieties of English. Socio-historical information shows that various English dialects have come into contact with each other on Norfolk Island and the data suggests that language mixing, a form of koineization, has occurred. The linguistic consequences of such a mixture are similar to those of the mixing of regional dialects in Japan. The data also supports observations regarding the issues of language and identity.

Key words: Australian English, dialectology, ethnic dialect, New Zealand English, *Norfolk*

Introduction

Norfolk Island is an English speaking Australian territory, a small island of only 3,500 hectares, some 1,700 kms north-east of Sydney. In 1856, the descendants of the Bounty mutineers and their Polynesian wives arrived from Pitcairn Island. The latest estimates from the UN's "World Population Prospects" shows Norfolk Island had a population in the year 2019 of 2,000. There are many different ethnicities and nationalities on Norfolk Island. Roughly 30% of Norfolk Island's population is made up of Norfolk Islanders who are descended from the Pitcairn Island "Mutiny on the Bounty" community. The remainder are of Australian and New Zealand descent.

The census information above also elicited responses for the entire population on *Language used at home*. It showed two main language / dialect groups: those who used English only at home at 52.4%, and those who used the Norfolk-Pitcairn dialect at 30.5%. Tourism is also of major importance to the economy of the island. Norfolk English and *Norfolk* are spoken on the island. Norfolk English is a mixed variety of English that originates mainly from Australian and New Zealand English. The latter is a mixture of

Polynesian and English. This kind of social environment seems ideal for the use of a New Zealand English spoken on Norfolk Island (NZENI) because there are still regular contacts between Norfolk Island and ANZ (Australia and New Zealand). As such, these contacts help to maintain a Norfolk Island – ANZ variety of English throughout the year. The common means of communication known by members of these different groups is a variety of Norfolk English.

In 1925, both Norfolk Island and New Zealand hoped to establish trade in fresh produce such as lemon and bananas, but the venture was unsuccessful. During the Second World War, New Zealand servicemen were in frequent contact with the islanders. These interactions had a significant linguistic and cultural effect on the islanders' range of vocabulary. The presence of New Zealand servicemen declined when the war ended. From the 1960s however, there was an increase in the numbers of people from Australia and New Zealand who settled on the island as well as growing numbers of tourists from these two countries. Some descendants of the Pitcairn Islanders now reside in New Zealand. Many people from New Zealand still come to work in Norfolk's restaurants (MÜHLHÄUSLER 2016, p. 20). The Anglican Church in New Zealand also founded the Melanesian Mission to evangelize the peoples of Melanesia from 1867 to 1920. As such, there have also been historical and continuous contacts with other groups.

Taking into account these realities and influences, the aim of this paper is to consider the nature of a selected number of words and terms on Norfolk Island and Auckland. The research question examines the kinds of characteristics that contribute to the continued use of the word in both locations. CNN (2019) has reported that officially, Norfolk Island is part of Australia – but many people living there wish they were linked up with New Zealand instead probably because the group were unhappy with how the island was currently governed. Such an attitude may or may not reflect the use of certain terms by the islanders.

The following section summarizes the previous studies regarding the languages on Norfolk Island.

Previous Studies

No studies have ever tried to consider the nature of NZENI. Thus this section sums up the previous studies about *Norf'k*. It will also consider various perspectives concerning NZENI.

HARRISON (1984: 34) mentions 'Since in earlier times all Norfolk Islanders knew one another, each belonged to a large, dense social network. Extended families usually lived in clusters, linked by multiple ties of residence, kinship, friendship and work.' It is thought that such a background contributed to maintaining local identity and solidarity among islanders.

She continues by stating:

The mobility of Islanders has increased with regular opportunities for travel. Many now settle on the Mainland [Australia] for a time in order to find work or further

their training. Since few people are not exposed to Mainland contacts and influences, today's Islanders belong to less dense and multiplex social networks.

(HARRISON 1984: 35)

All aspects of Island life are pervaded by Mainlander values especially in working and leisure situations. In addition to these, one parent is often of non-island extraction. Those factors weaken the ethnic and linguistic characteristics of Norfolk and influence the preservation of *Norf'k*. We might be able to say that those factors influence the preservation of New Zealand English.

OKAMURA (1998) compares the identities of young and old Norfolk Islanders and concludes that many old people who speak *Norf'k* are proud of speaking *Norf'k*. OKAMURA further mentions how the isolation of *Norf'k* speakers from the dominant group actually contributes to the preservation of their language (2007). As such, this begs the question, are old people of New Zealand-descent on Norfolk Island and who speak New Zealand English proud of speaking New Zealand English? That is one of the research questions addressed in this paper.

MÜHLHÄUSLER observes that:

Younger speakers ... [are] overwhelmingly keen to see *Norf'k* revived. The views of the students are even more favorable. Of the 104 3-6 year students who, in 2010, were given a questionnaire by their *Norf'k* teacher Mrs. Suzanne Evans.

Significantly, the children demonstrated a very positive attitude towards the language.... (www.norfolkschoice.com/distinctivenessofnorfolkislander 2015-2016)

As such, we can say that for New Zealand English to survive on the island, the views of the younger generation are important. Is it truly the case that the children demonstrate a very positive attitude towards NZENI? Is the New Zealand English used for face-to-face communication by all generations and is the situation sustainable?

YANG & SONG (2019) studied lexical features of New Zealand English. They surveyed three aspects: Maori vocabulary and compound words in New Zealand English, changes in lexical meaning in New Zealand English, acronyms in New Zealand English and unique slang and idioms in New Zealand English respectively. The language policy of New Zealand is different from that of Norfolk Island. This accelerates the frequency of Maori words on Norfolk Island. For instance, New Zealand Government has stated that 'All New Zealanders should have the opportunity to support and to learn 'te reo Māori' and to use it in the home, in education and in the community.' (Statement)

This would indicate the use of indigenous languages is encouraged and promoted on the main islands of New Zealand. On the other hand, it would appear that the implementation of such language policies for the promotion of the Maori language on Norfolk Island is not as active. It is quite low than we had expected as shown later in this paper.

All the questions above relate to the maintenance of New Zealand English spoken on Norfolk Island. In this paper the author takes advantage of Japanese dialectology. The

following section shows the methodology and sample for this paper.

Methodology and Sample

The author presented previous studies about *Norfolk* and other varieties of English spoken on Norfolk Island. He also presents the methodology used in this paper. This study is based on the speech patterns of 15 residents of Norfolk Island. All the informants were long-term residents of the island. Three were New Zealand born while the rest were not. In all, five were selected because they were over the age of 50 and 10 were selected because they were under the age of 50. Within each group, the latter were four males and six females, and the former were five females.

The questionnaires which the author distributed included some New Zealand English words cited in CRYSTAL (1988: 240-241). The surveys were conducted in August 2024.

Some New Zealand English words can be seen and heard on the island even today. These include some archaic and obsolete words. This observation begs a question. What kind of words and terms exist on the island even today? And which age-group and/or ethnic groups help to maintain these words and terms? In other words, the question relates to understanding what factors contribute to the decline of traditional New Zealand English words and terms. Here are the 13 English words and terms which do occur, with examples:

Table 1. A list of New Zealand English words and terms.

	NZ English	Meaning
1	bach	holiday cottage
2	bowser	petrol station
3	fantail	type of bird
4	gully	valley
5	lancewood	type of tree
6	section	housing plot
7	tramping	hiking
8	waxeye	type of bird
9	hongi	way of greeting
10	haka	war dance
11	kiwi	flightless NZ bird
12	pakeha	a European
13	whare	small house

Cited from CRYSTAL (1988: 240-241) and TOYOTA (1989: 375)

The reason why the paper's author selected these 13 words and terms are as follows: (1) these are words and terms that are related to everyday life in NZ; (2) by choosing noun phrases, the author can analyze each word and term more clearly. (3) due to the political disagreement between Norfolk Island and Australia, some Norfolk Islanders are trying to

approach New Zealand government in order to keep their self-govern of the island. The author saw it on YouTube a few years ago. This situation might influence the use of New Zealand English vocabularies for Norfolk Islanders (9 to 13).

Again the research question is what kind of semantic domains are particularly maintained in NZENI? It can be observed, for example, that words like *bach* and *tramping* are found predominantly in the domains of tourism and hospitality. *Bach* means ‘a simple dwelling; specifically a holiday house’ (LONGMAN 1984: 104). New Zealand soldiers lived on Norfolk Island during the Second World War. It is understood that the New Zealand Garrison personnel based on Norfolk during WWII frequently visited a house at the top of Grassy Rd on the island.

The largest group of people who are not Pitcairn Islanders came from Australia and New Zealand. However it is likely that many of the above words are now becoming obsolete on Norfolk Island. Tourism is the major industry on Norfolk and many New Zealanders on the island are engaged in tourist-based activities. In addition to that, due to the fact that the number of tourists from New Zealand who visit Norfolk Island is increasing year by year, we can expect the word *bach* might still be heard on Norfolk Island even today. The same is true of *tramping* which means ‘journey on foot, walk’ (COD 1982: 137). The word *tramping* is a term used in New Zealand to describe a day or multi-day walk in nature.’ (<https://jakesnatureblog.com/2018/05/11/>)

5 of the 13 words shown in the above list relate to Maori culture. *Whare* means ‘Maori hut or house’ (COD 1982: 1224). *Pakeha* means ‘someone who is not a Maori; especially a New Zealander of European descent’ (LONGMAN 1984: 1056). *Hongi* means ‘a Maori greeting, expressed by touching or rubbing noses’ (MD 1982: 460).

Other examples for showing strong ties with Maori culture include: *kiwi* ‘any of several flightless birds of New Zealand, constituting the genus *Apteryx*, having vestigial wings, stout legs and a long slender bill’ (MD 1982: 534). MD (1982: 432) says *haka* means ‘a Maori ceremonial posture dance with vocal accompaniment.’ Words regarding the natural environment include *gully* and *lancewood*. *Gully* means ‘a general term that is found in both New Zealand, Australia and even other varieties of English. (NINP). *Lancewood* refers to ‘a name used for trees of different species in both New Zealand and Australia’. (NINP). *Waxeye* is endemic in New Zealand and found throughout the country. *Waxeye* is a term used for birds of the *Zosterops* genus. The local Norfolk Island variety is apparently known as a Grinnels. (NINP) *Fantail* refers to a ‘type of bird of the *Rhipidura* genus. They exist in Australia, Norfolk Island and New Zealand.’ (NINP).

Other lexicons include *bowser* and *section*. *Bowser* means ‘tanker for fueling aircraft’ etc.; (Australia & NZ) petrol pump (COD 1982: 107). It should be noted that the term *bowser* exists not only in New Zealand but also in Australia. *Section* means ‘a designated plot of land, especially for a building’ (LONGMAN 1984: 1344). What is interesting here is *section* is chiefly used in New Zealand. It is not common in Australia.

Before conducting the survey on Norfolk Island, this paper will first look at the type of English currently spoken in Auckland, New Zealand.

A Survey of the English Spoken in Auckland in 2024

Auckland is New Zealand's largest and most multicultural city. The following table provides a starting point. For this micro-sociolinguistic approach, the informants were selected from local residents in Auckland. The data was carried out with a random sample of 12 speakers including five speakers born in New Zealand. All were aged 18 or over; four were male, and eight were female. The questionnaires were conducted in February 2024. (+ means for categorical use, - categorical absence and ? variable use)

Table 2. The degree to which NE is used by local residents in Auckland.

	bach	bowser	fantail	gully	lancewood	section	tramping	waxeye	hongi	haka	kiwi	pakeha	whare
10s F NZ	?	-	?	?	-	+	+	?	?	?	+	+	-
10s F NZ	?	-	+	-	-	?	+	-	?	+	+	+	+
20s F Indonesia	?	-	-	?	?	+	+	-	?	+	+	+	?
30s M Hong Kong	+	-	+	?	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	?
40s M NZ	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
40s M NZ	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
40s F S. Korea	?	-	+	-	-	?	+	-	?	?	+	+	?
40s F Japan	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	-
50s F China	+	-	+	?	-	?	?	-	-	+	+	+	?
50s F Japan	?	-	?	-	-	+	?	-	?	?	+	+	-
60s M S. Korea	?	-	?	?	?	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	?
80s F NZ	+	?	+	+	?	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

+ = categorical use / ? = variable use / - = categorical absence

These samples from local residents in Auckland make it clear that the results of study do suggest a relationship between the use of traditional New Zealand English terms and a person's birthplace.

First and foremost, from table 2, it can be seen that New Zealand and non-New Zealand born speakers differ in their use of these terms. For example, speaker *80s F NZ* uses 11 words from the list, whereas speaker *60s M S. Korea* uses six.

Next, the survey observed the results when people were grouped together by age among New Zealand born speakers. It shows that there tends to be a low frequency of usage among the teenage ('10s') speakers. Usage then remains constant within other age categories except among the people in their 80s with whom use of the terms increase significantly.

Finally, the data from non-New Zealand born speakers suggests that *tramping* is the most prevalent word and *bowser* the least prevalent word among local residents in Auckland. According to the *80s F speaker*, she used to use *bowser* 50 years ago. It is no longer in general use. The same is true of *lancewood*. The speaker above does not use it but it is common but not in everyday usage. Thus non-New Zealand born speakers show the same tendency.

With the words shown in (9), (10), (11), and (12), which are of Maori origin, these are well known to everybody irrespective of their background. It is probably because the NZ government are paying a lot of attention to indigenous cultures. *Waxeye* and *whare*, however, do not apply in this regard in that as compared with words such as *kiwi* and *hongī*. *Whare* is not frequently recognized among local people in Auckland. There are fifteen interviewees who live on Norfolk Island. There is a possibility that non-New Zealand born speakers tend to acquire those words when they stay longer.

This paper will now examine the survey of English spoken on Norfolk Island.

Results and Analysis

This section discusses in more detail “koineization” between New Zealand English and other varieties of English on Norfolk Island. Since New Zealand English and other varieties of English on Norfolk Island are very similar not only lexically but also structurally, they have many lexical and grammatical features in common with English spoken in Auckland. At the same time, vocabularies of each variety have certain exclusive features. NZENI is a mixed variety that includes *Norf'k* and other English varieties. Here, it describes the salient linguistic features of NZENI in comparison to those of the New Zealand English of Auckland. A discussion of koineization follows, and then there is a comparison of the data from Norfolk Island with that of Auckland. The paper will then finally focus on the term “*bowser*”.

Koineization

It seems reasonable to suppose that koineization may not begin if both New Zealand- and Australian-descent Norfolk Islanders on Norfolk Island are familiar with the terms. This is because they do not need to avoid a distinctive feature of their own dialect or modify or accommodate their speech in order to be similar to another dialect. This is particularly true in regards to the words *bowser*, *fantail* and *gully*.

However when it comes to such terms as *bach*, *section* and *tramping*, koineization may begin when New Zealanders and others such as Australian and Pitcairn-descent Norfolk Islanders are not familiar with the words. Thus New Zealand-descent Norfolk Islanders seem to show signs of trying to reduce linguistic differences in their use of certain words and

terms. Evidence also suggests that this might be the case with both Pitcairn and Australian-descent Norfolk Islanders. In an earlier stage of contact between groups, several marked features were reduced, and unmarked features were the common means of communication between New Zealand-descent Norfolk Islanders and others. Contact between New Zealand English and other varieties of English on Norfolk Island may lead to an increase in variability or lead to a leveling of surface differences. It may also result in the emergence of a new variety of English. As TRUDGILL (1986: 98-102) mentioned, koineization is a cover term for three component processes: mixing of features, leveling of differences, and simplification. The same is true for (9), (10), (11), (12) and (13) because all of these words are derived from the Maori language. In addition to the evidence of a mixing of features of New Zealand English and other varieties of English on Norfolk Island, the data indicates that there has been some a leveling of differences in the use of certain words and terms.

TRUDGILL (1986: 98-102) defines leveling as the ‘reduction or attrition of marked variants,’ and suggests that the most common variants have the best chance for survival. The author explored in detail the degree to which NE was used by New Zealand descent Norfolk Islanders in 2024. There are fifteen interviewees who live on Norfolk Island. The questionnaire was conducted in August 2024 on Norfolk Island. Table 3 below shows that 4 out of 15 (or 27 percent) of the features common to New Zealand English and other varieties of English have survived on Norfolk Island in that rest of the terms are available less than 50%. Thus, according to Table 3, as a result of contact between New Zealand English and other varieties of English, there was an eventual leveling of differences rather than an increase in variability. The English variety which emerges from contact between different varieties is formally less complex than any of these varieties in lexicon. This comparative lack of complexity may be evident, for example, in lexicon, in terms of decreased markedness. The evidence of possible simplification on Norfolk Island is found in Table 3.

OKAMURA (1992) explored in detail the use of Australian English words and terms and idiomatic expressions by Pitcairn-descent Norfolk Islanders. For example, it showed that the word *bigg-ie* with the diminutive particle *-ie* is not frequently used by the Pitcairn-descent Norfolk Islanders. Words and phrases such as *sheila* (daughter) and *this arvo* (this afternoon) and *smodger* show the same tendency. Idiomatic expressions such as ‘*bald as a bandicoot*’ and ‘*scarce as rocking-horse manure (shit)*’ are not known to Pitcairn-descent Norfolk Islanders. These expressions are well known in Australia, but not in other English speaking countries such as the UK and the USA. Thus the same is true of New Zealand-descent Norfolk Islanders. One of the most famous Australian English expressions ‘Good day, mate!’ is used among only three percent of Pitcairn-descent Norfolk Islanders. Due to the fact that Norfolk Island is an English speaking Australian Territory, one might expect Norfolk Islanders to use typical Australian words and expressions. However, the frequency for using such expressions is low though they often hear someone use such an expression on the island (forty percent) probably because there are a lot of Australian-descent Norfolk Islanders on the island. Additionally it is true that Norfolk Islanders are increasingly moving to Australia; whereas Pitcairn Islanders tend to move to New Zealand. Therefore new diaspora varieties may emerge in each country.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
60s F AUS	+	-	-	?	?	?	?	-	-	-	?	-	-
70s F AUS	-	?	?	?	?	+	?	-	-	?	?	-	-

As for mutual intelligibility, it was tested to some extent on Norfolk Island. Australian-descent Norfolk Islanders who have lived on Norfolk Island for more than five years could understand 24 percent of New Zealand English. Only three different words and terms (*bowser*, *fantail*, *gully*) are mutually intelligible. Also, Pitcairn-descent Norfolk Islanders that I tested on Norfolk Island had difficulty understanding these words and terms. This preliminary study supports the conclusions of OKAMURA (2007) that marked grammatical features are not useful among different migrants.

Other important questions need to be answered before making a decision whether NZENI is a separate variety. These questions have to do with the current state of NZENI. First, does it still exist, or is it actually extinct? And if NZENI does still exist, what are its features including phonology and syntax? A fuller study of phonological and grammatical characteristics lies outside the scope of this paper. After all the contact with other varieties of English on Norfolk Island, it would be hard to imagine that it too has undergone some changes. It seems that, considering the interest in the relationship between New Zealand English and NZENI, research into the current state of NZENI should be given high priority. This paper has left many questions unanswered; nevertheless, it has reinforced Okamura's observations that koineization has been significant on Norfolk Island.

Data from Norfolk Island and Auckland Compared

Let us compare data from Norfolk Island with that of Auckland. As for Australian-descent Norfolk Islanders, the migrants from Australia knew some words and terms from New Zealand English because these words and terms (*bowser* and *gully*) are available in Australia, too (See Table 3). There are 4 features (*bowser*, *fantail*, *gully* and *lancewood*) which are common to both Table 2 and Table 3. These words and terms are available in the dictionaries of Australia and New Zealand as shown like ANZ. However, the following features found on Norfolk Island are characteristic of NZENI but not of Australian English. In summary, the 2 common comparative features found on Norfolk Island are: *bach* and *tramping*. The three shared features which are not found in the data and which most likely do not occur in NZENI are Maori origin words. There are several lexical features which differentiate Australian English and *Norf'k* particularly in Maori origin words.

This section discusses these differences in detail and describes the corresponding features of NZENI. The term *whare* is not found in NZENI (see Table 3). The following salient features of New Zealand English are almost absent in the data: *hong*, *haka*, *kiwi*, *pakeha* and *whare* (see Table 3). They are not as productive as in New Zealand English (see Table 2). It occurs only a few times in the data. All the features of NZENI described above

are found in the questionnaires of two or more speakers. But there is also some variation among speakers which I will mention here.

First, *Speaker 60s F* from Table 3 differs from the others in two important areas: (1) the use of *lancewood* and *bowser*; and (2) the use of words which are of Maori origin. The pattern of *Speaker 60s F* is almost the same as *Speaker 80s F NZ* from Table 2. The latter answered that these two words were used 50 years ago in NZ, not used today. On the other hand, the former speaker uses them very often on Norfolk Island even today. This indicates that both *lancewood* and *bowser* have become archaic words. That 4 in 15 recognize the word *lancewood* indicates daily use of the word on Norfolk Island. The same is true of *bowser*. As far as Maori origin words are concerned, the distribution of occurrences of *Speaker 80s F NZ* from Table 2 is quite the opposite to *Speaker 60s F* from Table 3. *Speaker 60s F NZ (1)* from Table 3 knows all the Maori origin words but she does not use them at all nor has she ever heard someone say them on Norfolk Island. *Speaker 60s F NZ(2)* from Table 3 uses these Maori origin words as a categorical use on Norfolk Island. This reflects the different governmental policies towards Maori in NZ and on Norfolk Island.

Second, *Speaker 60s F AUS* is the only one who does not use *bowser* and *fantail*. Judging from the fact that she has been on Norfolk Island for 23 years, it seems strange.

In Table 3, there are four instances in which categorical use items not occur very often (9, 10, 12, 13). These are all related to Maori origin words. However, corresponding words in Table 2 denote that there are only a small number of categorical absence items. Once again this indicates that New Zealand government language policies do not influence Norfolk Island.

What is remarkable from Table 3 is that many Norfolk Islanders use *gully* better than Auckland citizens. Geographically, there is no *gully* on Norfolk Island. *Speaker 60s F NZ* says that she uses both *gully* and *waly*. The latter word derives from Norfolk dialect.

Finally, *tramping* is one of the most useful words among local people in Auckland as shown in Table 2. However, it does not generally exist on Norfolk Island except in the case of two New Zealand decent Norfolk Islanders as shown in Table 3. In some sense, we might be able to say that *tramping* denotes New Zealandness in that it is not common in other variety of English such as Australian English and British English. This is due, in other words, to *tramping* being a favorite activity for New Zealanders. This is very similar to the importance of bowing for Japanese people. Shaking hands and embracing are still very limited in Japanese everyday life despite significant cultural influences from western countries.

From Table 3, we learn that *Speaker 20s F NZ* has never heard of the words *bowser* or *lancewood* before. She is from Wellsford North Island and has been on Norfolk Island for ten years. As I have mentioned in the previous section, *Speaker 80s F NZ* from Table 2 used to use these words almost 50 years ago. It is apparent that these words are dying out, at least in Auckland. The answers that *Speaker 20s F NZ* provides also supports *Speaker 80s F NZ*'s story. Once again, the fact that the two *60s F NZ* speakers from Table 3 use them very often or have heard someone use them on Norfolk Island means these terms are left on Norfolk Island.

Koineization may lead to the emergence of intermediate forms, that is, compromise forms not found in any of the contributing varieties (TRUDGILL 1986: 62-63). As with the results of the other three processes, intermediate forms may initially arise among individuals. In this case, as the result of imperfect accommodation, but later they may become socially accepted features. One possible example in the Norfolk data is *lancewood*, which is intermediate to the terms *Norfolk Pine tree* and *lancewood*. The form of sapling for *lancewood* is very similar to that of the Norfolk Pine Tree. Both trees look like umbrellas in their form. One of the informants confuses the use of *lancewood*. He says *lancewood* corresponds to a type of pine tree on Norfolk Island. The speaker's use of *lancewood* may be an example of convergence.

Speaker 4 has been on Norfolk Island for 23 years and her speech may reflect an earlier usage which has now virtually disappeared. But it may also be an example of individual imperfect accommodation in an earlier period.

Other data presented in Table 3 seems to show that some archaic words have also been left on Norfolk Island. This occurs when newcomers to Norfolk Island who were not familiar with either *lancewood* or pine tree had to quickly learn the archaic words left on the island due to their usefulness in everyday life. The main evidence is the occurrence of lexical items from Australian and Pitcairn-descent Norfolk Islanders. Also, the innovations derived from New Zealand English indicate some contact with *Norf'k* and Australian English. In addition, the variation among speakers may indicate that the koineization of both New Zealand English and the established *Norf'k* and Australian English is still going on. It is difficult to imagine that there would have been no interaction between the three English varieties. It would seem likely that this variable use of alternate forms may have characterized NZENI for many years. It is apparent that eventually leveling occurs, and one alternative becomes the socially accepted norm.

Focusing on bowser

The word *bowser* in Auckland is one of a group of now obsolete words in that the younger generation have never heard of it before. It is likely that the word has a corresponding noun in standard New Zealand English, and these words once existed simultaneously in New Zealand English. After a period of evolution, the word *bowser* was gradually eliminated, but the other word was preserved. Conversely, the word is prevalent among New Zealand descent Norfolk Islanders. This is similar to the fact that Hawaiians of Japanese descent used to use the word *hinoshi* for ironing clothes, though in Japan the word is no longer used any more. In the case of the word *bowser*, there is a possibility that Norfolk Islanders use the word regardless of ethnic origin. It is because the frequency of use of the word by Australian descent Norfolk Islanders is greatest on Norfolk Island. That is to say, the use of the word *bowser* is very common in Australia. It is likely that some forms derived from Australian English are used which are not used by other English speakers.

Let us look at some other dictionary definitions aside from section three (shown above). The Collins English Dictionary provides the following definition for *bowser*:

- n. 1 a tanker containing fuel for aircraft, military vehicles, etc.
 2 Austral and NZ obsolete a petrol pump [originally a US proprietary name, from S.F. Bowser, US inventor, who made the first one in 1885] (CED, p. 246)

Descriptions like “*Austral and NZ obsolete a petrol pump*” are confusing because the author has found in his research that the word is very common in Australia. This begs the question - is the use of *bowser* in fact obsolete in Australia or is it prevalent only in Norfolk Island as an archaic word?

The Dictionary of New Zealand English only contains the use of synecdoche for *bowser* as follows: A pump for dispensing filtered petrol from a holding tank; also by synecdoche, a petrol station. (DNZE, p. 84).

The Reed Dictionary of New Zealand Slang also explains the use of synecdoche for *bowser* as follows: Petrol pump from early C20, when manufactured by S.F. Bowser & Co. of Indiana. The petrol station was also known by the name. ANZ. (RDNZS, p. 32)

According to the OED, ‘This word is used in Australian English and New Zealand English. About 0.02 occurrences per million words in modern written English. The earliest known use of the noun *bowser* is in the 1920s.’ (<https://www.oed.com/>) This indicates that no one knows the frequency of *bowser* in modern spoken English.

From the internet resources, we can find more than three meanings for *bowser* in New Zealand.

Firstly, the meaning of *bowser* is a petrol pump as in ‘Petrol pumps, also known as bowsers, were introduced in the early 1920s.’ (<https://jp.pinterest.com/pin/big-tree-petrol-station--684547212100237760>)

Secondly, the meaning of *bowser* is a petrol station as in ‘They say that *bowser* is a word used by older generations to refer to a petrol pump, petrol station or mobile fuel-storage tanks.’ (<https://teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/22865/>)

Thirdly, the meaning is a dispenser as in ‘a dispenser attached to inverted spirit bottles in bars’ in New Zealand. (RDNZE, p. 129)

Finally, the word can be used as ‘a male nickname’ as in 1938 *NZ Observer* 1 Sept. 17 ‘Bowser’ Toogood.. was best man. (*The Dictionary of New Zealand English*, p. 84)

Saeed (1997: 181) says ‘Synecdoche is a form of reference where the part stands for the whole.’

Due to the multifunctionality of *bowser*, for example, people have a cup of coffee and take a rest; get sweets, cigarettes, milk, bread and pasta; purchase oil and change tires and so on today, *bowser* can mean not only a petrol pump but also a petrol station.

SLATTER *Gun in My Hand* 151 provide an apt example ‘Tobacconists selling magazines, pubs selling cigarettes, petrol bowsers selling sweets’ (DNZE, p. 84). In this sentence, the meaning of petrol bowsers indicates a petrol station, not a petrol pump or dispenser. The word itself was used at least until the 1990s.

There may be several reasons for obsolescence: (1) The degree of attention given to the word *bowser* decreased due to lifestyle changes, (2) The frequency for the word coming up a lot in conversation in daily life decreased, (3) Due to factors such as the word becoming

outdated and old-fashioned, the term is gradually being abandoned. (As for Japanese examples, see INOUE 1998, KUROSAKI & ARIMOTO 2018), (4) As far as the semantic field for the word *bowser* which is obsolete, is concerned, it denotes instruments and daily life in previous times (As for Japanese examples, see INOUE & HANZAWA 2023: 19).

It has been almost one century since the introduction of the word *bowser* to New Zealand society. The word still remains today. The residual ratio for *bowser* in Auckland is quite low (8.3%), but quite high on Norfolk Island (87%). Words like *bowser*, which reflect times past in Auckland tend to follow the path of obsolescence due to changes in the linguistic environment. Local people in Auckland associate the word *bowser* with the old days. As time goes by, it is conceivable that speakers will no longer be able to grasp the total meaning of the word *bowser* in Auckland.

To put it the other way around, *bowser* has been standardized to mean petrol pump or petrol station.

According to INOUE & HANZAWA (2023: 31), there are two processes in regard to obsolete words: rephrasing or without rephrasing. As for *bowser*, it corresponds to the former case. The fact that local people tend to think that those who use *bowser* today are old-fashioned indicates the word *bowser* should be grouped in the former. We have evidence to back up this view of obsolescence from the speaker *80s F NZ* in the previous section.

The word *bowser* was prevalent in olden times of New Zealand society. However, it was relexified and it is limited to use in particular fields. As for Japanese examples, see OOTANI (2019: 116).

There is one further factor that we must not ignore. Namely, that *bowser* was a newly coined word for using ‘station’ in English after 1920s. One can cite many examples which seem to support this: a railway station, a bus station, a fire station, a polling station, a power station, a television station, Police station, a naval station, sheep station.

It seems reasonable to suppose that people came to use the term “filling station” [petrol station] instead of using *bowser*. The word formation above is simple and as public awareness of the word *bowser* decreases, more people use the complex word above.

INOUE & HANZAWA (2019) mentioned the example of late adoption (words reflecting olden times can be acquired later) in Japanese. The author collected the following example as one of later examples for *bowser*: However, the meaning of *bowser* is quite different from that of the original one.

It all began when a father, fascinated by relics of the past, brought home an old petrol bowser to restore. One evening, while sharing a beer, his son suggested, “Hey Dad, wouldn’t it be cool if we could turn that into a fridge?” This casual idea sparked a journey that would forever transform their lives.···Their efforts culminated in a prototype that successfully combined nostalgic charm with modern functionality, turning the vintage bowser into a striking and practical fridge.···As word spread about their inventive creation, their custom bowser fridges gained popularity, celebrated for their unique blend of past and present. Today, each fridge is a testament to the spirit of Northern New Zealand··· (<https://barfridges.co.nz/pages/>

custom-browsers 2012-2023)

This sample indicates it is likely that the word *browser* might be able to acquire new meaning soon.

Conclusion

The paper's author compared the data from Norfolk Island with that of Auckland. It found that koineization may not begin when New Zealand- and Australian-descent Norfolk Islanders on Norfolk Island both are familiar with the aforementioned terms. This is because they do not need to avoid a distinctive feature of their own dialect or modify or accommodate their speech. This is particularly true in regard to the words *browser*, *fantail* and *gully*.

When it comes to such terms as *bach*, *section* and *tramping*, koineization may begin when New Zealanders and others such as Australian and Pitcairn-descent Norfolk Islanders are not familiar with the words. Thus New Zealand-descent Norfolk Islanders seem to show signs of trying to reduce linguistic differences in their use of certain words and terms. The same is true for Maori origin words.

The word *browser* in Auckland is obsolete but it is prevalent among Norfolk Islanders probably because of the influence from Australia.

It concludes that the degree of attention given to *browser* decreased due to generational changes in New Zealand. At the same time, the frequency for the word appearing a lot in conversation in daily life has decreased.

It is likely that due to factors such as the word becoming outdated and old-fashioned, the term is gradually being abandoned. It should also be noted that *browser* existed simultaneously with complex words for using 'station' in English after the 1920s.

The meaning of *browser* is still changing today both in New Zealand and Norfolk Island. The author will conduct further research with the use of magazines, newspapers and books in relevant fields regarding the word *browser*.

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- CED = *Collins English Dictionary*, 2010.
- CMD = *The Compact Macquarie Dictionary*, 1982.
- COD = *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 1982.
- DNZE = *The Dictionary of New Zealand English: a dictionary of New Zealandisms on historical principles*, 1997.
- GGJ = *Seibido's Dictionary of Linguistics*, 1988.
- TGEJ = *Taishuukan's Genius English-Japanese Dictionary*, 1988.
- LDEL = *Longman Dictionary of the English Language*, 1984.
- MD = *The Penguin Macquarie Dictionary: The International Dictionary for All Australians*, 1986.
- PMD = *The Penguin Macquarie Dictionary: The International Dictionary for All Australians*, 1986.
- RDNES = *The Reed Dictionary of New Zealand English Slang*, 2003.
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- RH = *Shogakukan Randamu Hausu Eiwa Jiten dai ni han* [Shogakukan Random House English-Japanese Dictionary 2nd edition], 1993.
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https://hrcnzresources.s3.ap-southeast2.amazonaws.com/files/8314/2388/3768/21-May-2009_15-4234_Statementonlanguagepolicy.html#Te_Reo_Maori accessed on Feb. 26, 2025
- NINP = Online on Norfolk Island National Park etc.

Appendix: A Questionnaire about the Use of English terms on Norfolk Island

Section one: Use of English terms

Please fill in this section by ticking off the most appropriate of the three choices given to fill the blank space in regards to each word or term.

(1) bach (holiday cottage)

- I often use this word in my everyday life on Norfolk Island.
- I do not use this word. However I often hear people say it here on Norfolk Island.
- I have never heard this word before.

(2) bowser (petrol station)

- I often use this word in my everyday life on Norfolk Island.
- I do not use this word. However I often hear people say it here on Norfolk Island.
- I have never heard this word before.

(3) fantail (type of bird)

- I often use this word in my everyday life on Norfolk Island.
- I do not use this word. However I often hear people say it here on Norfolk Island.
- I have never heard this word before.

(4) gully (valley)

- I often use this word in my everyday life on Norfolk Island.
- I do not use this word. However I often hear people say it here on Norfolk Island.
- I have never heard this word before.

(5) lancewood (type of tree)

- I often use this word in my everyday life on Norfolk Island.
- I do not use this word. However I often hear people say it here on Norfolk Island.
- I have never heard this word before.

(6) section (housing plot)

- I often use this word in my everyday life on Norfolk Island.
- I do not use this word. However I often hear people say it here on Norfolk Island.
- I have never heard this word before.

(7) tramping (hiking)

- I often use this word in my everyday life on Norfolk Island.
- I do not use this word. However I often hear people say it here in Norfolk Island.
- I have never heard this word before.

(8) waxeye (type of bird)

- I often use this word in my everyday life on Norfolk Island.
- I do not use this word. However I often hear people say it here on Norfolk Island.
- I have never heard this word before.

(9) hongī (way of greeting)

- I often use this word in my everyday life on Norfolk Island.

I do not use this word. However, I often hear people say it here on Norfolk Island.

I have never heard this word before.

(10) haka (war dance)

I often use this word in my everyday life on Norfolk Island.

I do not use this word. However I often hear people say it here on Norfolk Island.

I have never heard this word before.

(11) kiwi

I often use this word in my everyday life on Norfolk Island.

I do not use this word. However I often hear people say it here on Norfolk Island.

I have never heard this word before.

(12) pakeha (a European)

I often use this word in my everyday life on Norfolk Island.

I do not use this word. However I often hear people say it here on Norfolk Island.

I have never heard this word before.

(13) whare (small house)

I often use this word in my everyday life on Norfolk Island.

I do not use this word. However I often hear people say it here on Norfolk Island.

I have never heard this word before.

Section Two: Personal Information

Please provide information about yourself by ticking off the appropriate box in each item below.

1. Age:

10-19 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69 70-79 80 and above

2. Sex: Male Female

3. Place of birth

New Zealand born: Which part of New Zealand _____

Not New Zealand born: Where _____

4. Mother tongue _____

5. Other languages spoken _____

How long have you been living here on Norfolk Island?