Regional Dialects

Linguist 159 – American Dialects
October 14, 2014
Quick Review

- **Isogloss** = boundary between predominant linguistic features on a dialect map
What distinguishes U.S. regional dialects?

- Vowels
- /r/
- Lexical items
- Morphosyntax
American English Vowel System

FRONT
- BEET
- BIT
- BAIT
- BET

HIGH
- BET
- BUT

LOW
- BAT
- BOT

BACK
- BOOT
- BOAT
- BOUGHT
- BOOK

Alveolar Ridge
Soft Palate
Velum
Dorsum
Tip
Tongue Root
Pharynx Wall
Larynx
"Vocal Cords"
Quick Review

- Movement/Shift
- Fronting/backing
- Raising/lowering
Back vowel fronting

BEET
BIT
BAIT
BET
BAT
LOnW

HIGH

BOOT
BOOK
BOAT
BOUGHT
BUT
## Back vowel fronting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fronting</th>
<th>No Fronting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Mid-Atlantic</td>
<td>• NYC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Western PA</td>
<td>• Providence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Midlands</td>
<td>• New England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• South</td>
<td>• North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• California</td>
<td>• Canada</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quick Review

Mergers
Low-back merger

BEET
BIT
BAIT
BET
BAT
LOW

HIGH

BOOT
BOOK
BOAT
Back

FRONT

Bought
Bot

But

Front
Low-back merger
Quick Review

Chain Shift
(Partial) California Vowel Shift

Front:
- Bait
- Beet
- Bit

Back:
- Boot
- Book
- Boat

High:
- Bet
- But

Low:
- Bat
- Bot

Pharynx Wall
Larynx "Vocal Cords"
Quick Review

- Monophthongs
- Diphthongs
  - Nucleus
  - Glide
- Monophthongization
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(From Labov 2008)
The North American English Dialects

The North

Canada

The West

North Central

North

Inland North

Northeast (many)

Midlands

Texas South

South

Inland South

Florida

Charleston

The West

North Central

North

Inland North

Northeast (many)

Midlands

Texas South

South

Inland South

Florida

Charleston

The West

North Central

North

Inland North

Northeast (many)

Midlands

Texas South

South

Inland South

Florida

Charleston

The West

North Central

North

Inland North

Northeast (many)

Midlands

Texas South

South

Inland South

Florida

Charleston

The West

North Central

North

Inland North

Northeast (many)

Midlands

Texas South

South

Inland South

Florida

Charleston

The West

North Central

North

Inland North

Northeast (many)

Midlands

Texas South

South

Inland South

Florida

Charleston
The Inland North
The Inland North

(From Labov, 2008)
The North

- Marked by *conservative* features
- No /o/-fronting
- (some) low-back distinction
North Central

- Little/no participation in neighboring chain shifts
- Low-back merger
- /o/ monophthongization
The Northeast
/r/ in the Northeast

• Why are some /r/-ful and some /r/-less?
• In what environments are /r/-less areas /r/-less?
• Which areas /r/-ful? Which areas /r/-less?
Split short-a system

- **Split** conditioned by phonological environment (with some exceptions)
- “Tense” variant and “lax” variant
- NYC and Mid-Atlantic
Split short-a system

BEET
BIT
BAIT
BET
BAD
“tense”

“lax”

HIGH
SOFT PALATE
ALVEOLAR RIDGE

LOW

BACK

FRONT

BOAT
BOOT
BOOK
BOUGHT

TONGUE ROOT
PHARYNX WALL
LARYNX “VOCAL CORDS”
# Northeast

## Map

![Northeast Dialect Feature Map](image)

## Table: Northeast Dialect Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialect Feature</th>
<th>NYC</th>
<th>Mid-Atlantic</th>
<th>Western PA</th>
<th>E. New England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Split short-a</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/r/-vocalization</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back vowel fronting</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-back merger</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>/r/-insertion</td>
<td>/aw/ &amp; /ay/ raising (Philly)</td>
<td>/aw/ monopth; FEEL-FILL</td>
<td>/a/-fronting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Which word do you hear?

BED
SET
BEATING
PEN
Southern Vowel Shift

hit
kids
set
bed
Danny
beatin’
grade
Guy
wipin’
The South - Morphosyntax

- Y’all
- Double modals
- Auxiliary *done*
- Reflexive datives
The South

• Southern Vowel Shift
• /ay/-monophth.
• Back vowel fronting
• Back upglide shift
The South - Mergers

- PIN-PEN
- FEEL-FILL
- FAIL-FELL
- PULL-POOL
/ay/ monophthongization

- Before voiced obstruents (*wide, size, five*)
- Word-finally (*high, my*)
/ay/ monophthongization

- Before voiced obstruents (*wide, size, five*)
- Word-finally (*high, my*)
- Before voiceless obstruents (*night, rice, life*)
Inland South (Appalachia)

Phonology
• Intrusive /r/ (“warsh”)

Morphosyntax
• a-prefixing
• Was-leveling
The Midlands
Midlands - Phonology

- Back vowel fronting
- Some transitional SVS and southern mergers, no /ay/-monophthongization
Midlands - Morphosyntax

- Positive “anymore”
- Needs X-ed
The West

- According to ANAE, the West, Canada, and some of the Midlands = “Third Dialect”
- Most distinctive feature is low-back merger
- What’s wrong with this picture?
California Vowel Shift

BEET → BOOT
BIT → BOOK
BAIT → BOAT
BET → BUT
BAT → BOUGHT
BOT
Major Migration Patterns

1930s: ‘Dust Bowl’ migration

200,000 migrants from Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Arkansas
The Southwest

- Some CVS features
- Some SVS features
- Positive “anymore”

Hall-Lew 2004
The Pacific Northwest

- Some features of CVS
- Some features similar to North Central
  - Pre-velar BAT and BET raising (egg, bag)

Oregon: Becker et al. 2013; McLarty & Kendall 2014