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Introduction

Actuality of the research

If we had to rely on written records alone, we would be forced to conclude that the phonology of English has remained unchanged since before the beginning of the Present-Day English (PDE) period. Our fixed spelling system hides both changes in the language over time and dialectal differences among speakers at any given point in time. Luckily for the historian of English, linguistics as a discipline came into being in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. With linguistics – and its subdisciplines of historical linguistics and dialectology – came a heightened awareness of language change and tools for describing and recording the sounds of the language. The various kinds of phonetic alphabets developed in the nineteenth century preserve sounds for the eye, and the phonograph records and tape recordings of the twentieth century preserve them for the ear as well.

Despite the regret and even resentment of many, the language continues to change; change is inevitable. Ongoing changes today are seen as dialectal differences in different geographical areas or as differences among the various groups within one geographical area. Substandard or dialectal deviations from the standard language may represent the continuation of older patterns after the standard language has changed. Such is the case, for example, with the preservation of |hw] (aspirated voiceless [w]) by some speakers in words like what, whistle, and whip. Other deviations may represent genuinely new patterns resulting from tendencies within the language or pressures from outside the language. An example would be the voicing of intervocalic, post-stress /t/ in most American English dialects in words like bitter or hottest [6; 87-89].

The novelty of the research.

The large amount of variation in the phonology of English today was true of earlier periods of the language as well; the variation of the past merely seems less obvious because we do not have living speakers all around us to remind us of it. Still, despite the myriad of allophonic differences that have arisen since EMnE in the various dialects of PDE, the basic phonemic system of most dialects of English

today was established by the beginning of the PDE period. Most of the changes since EMnE and across contemporary dialects are allophonic rather than phonemic. For instance, a glottal stop is characteristic of many dialects of contemporary English. The sound itself, or at least the pervasiveness of it, is apparently a recent phenomenon in English. Yet in no dialect is a phoneme; in most dialects, it is simply an allophone of [t] (in some dialects, it is also an allophone of other stops, particularly in final position). The system itself has neither added nor lost a phoneme [8; 53; 62].

Previous researches in this field

Early dialectal studies, and indeed some modern ones, focused heavily on lexical differences, such things as the words people use for fishing worms, a horse's feedbag, or types of plows. In today's highly urbanized society, however, many, perhaps most, people have no word at all for a horse's feedbag and, indeed, probably would not even recognize one if they saw it. In addition, mass production, nationwide distribution, and all-pervasive advertising has tended to reduce the once great variety of terms for a product to a single generic term. When I was a child, I thought that pot cheese was something people made at home and cottage cheese was something one bought in a grocery store; today, so few people make their own cheese from the curds of skim milk that words like sour-milk cheese, Dutch cheese, pot cheese, and smearcase can no longer serve as dialectal markers. Hence, in the following discussion, we will concentrate primarily on phonological features, which have proved to be more resistant to the mass media and the modem industrial society than have lexical items [50; 52; 55; 65].

The object of the research

Strictly speaking, virtually every individual's speech comprises a separate dialect of the language. On the other hand, everyone knows that valid generalizations about the speech of most people in different regions of the country can be made; we quite rightly recognize a "Southern" or a "Boston" accent as different from a "Chicago" accent. The problem lies, first, in deciding exactly how many different dialectal areas it is reasonable to posit, and, second, in drawing

boundary lines, however fuzzy, between these areas. Given the present state of dialect studies in the United States, many scholars agree on nine major areas, varying in geographical size from a few score square miles to over a million square miles. These areas are (A) Eastern New England, (B) New York City, (C) Middle Atlantic, (D) Western Pennsylvania, (E) Upper South, (F) South, (G) Inland North, (H) Northwest, and (I) Southwest.

It should be emphasized that these divisions are only gross ones: People from Portland, Maine, do not speak exactly like people from Providence, Rhode Island, nor do speakers from Portland, Oregon, sound exactly the same as those from Salt Lake City, Utah. Rather, the speech patterns within each of these areas share enough features in common and differ enough from the patterns of other areas to justify our labeling it a major dialectal region. Further, these divisions are based on clusters of features, not individual features.

The subject of the research: the four main dialect categories of American English dialects – General Northern, General Southern, Southern, and Western.

Methodological grounds of the research consisted of the works by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan I. A. Karimov, general linguistic and English conceptions (A. D. Shveizer, T. J. Taylor, J. Verschueren, and others).

Methods used in the research are: comparative-contrastive, descriptive and the method of dictionary annotation.

Material of the research: The Dialects of American English [1) A region's geographic location, 2) Social standing, 3) The process of drawing, 4) The history of origins, 5) Phonetics, 6) Vocabulary und 7) Grammar].

Approbation of the work.

The most important results of the Master's research have been published in the form of 2 articles of the author.

The Structure of the work. It consists of the Introduction, three Chapters, Conclusion, and the list of references.

CHAPTER 1

The Origins of Dialects of the American English

1.1. The main Dialect areas of US

The various Germanic tribes (Angles, Saxons, and Jutes) who invaded Britain after 437 AD brought with them their own dialects of West Germanic. These formed the basis for the emergence of later dialect areas. The submergence of the various British Celtic languages (of which Welsh is the only modern survivor) also lead to innovations in British English. The Viking invasions resulted in more Norse influence in the north than in the south, thereby contributing another layer to the existing dialects. Likewise, the Norman French invaders influenced the south more than the north, which came to be more conservative linguistically.

The Great Vowel Shift of the 1500's didn't affect northern English' dialects, which came to be called Scots English**.** Because of the long history of dialect creation in the English speaking areas of Great Britain, there are more dialects of English in Britain than in America, Canada, and Australia combined.

British colonization of other continents led to the establishment of various **colonial,** or **overseas,** dialects. These dialects developed because of the following factors:

1) the language spoken by emigrants who first established the colony was a particular variety of British English—the so-called founder's effect**;**

2) this may have mixed with some non-English language in the colony--the so-called substrate effect;

3) there may have been further mixing with other English dialects in the colony – the leveling effect of dialect mixing;

4) innovations in British English that did not occur in the more conservative overseas dialect, or conversely, innovation in the colonial dialect (for any of the three previous reasons) which did not occur in Britain.

The main dialect areas of the US can be traced to the four main migrations of English speaking people to America from the British Isles during the colonial period (1607-1775).

1. From 1629-1640 Puritan religious dissenters fleeing oppression from Charles I fled East Anglia and brought their distinctive twang (a sort of "flat sounding" nasal lengthening of vowels) to Massachusetts. The extreme conservatism and nostalgia for England helped maintain this dialect while the language of East Anglia changed (speech similar to New England can still be found in East Anglia. Today the 16 million or so descendants of the Puritans and many of their neighbors speak some form of this East Anglia derived speech.

Main features

- pronunciation of [O] in caught, bought
- low fronted [a] instead of back[A] in words such as far, father (the so-called nasal twang)
- Deletion of syllable final [r], as in far pronounced "fah", Carter pronounced "Cahtah".
- Compensatory addition of [r] after a final schwa, as in Cuber (instead of Cuba). This trait developed after the colonial period.
- some lexical particularities, such as earthworm called an angleworm, pail rather than bucket (either word is used in standard American.)

Influence on General American

- The New England dialect eventually influenced speech in many areas of the Northeast, from Main to Wisconsin, especially in the Chicago area.
- A large number of New England town, city and county names derive from East Anglia.
- Due to the influence of the Puritan Religion, Old testament first names are found in New England far more than anywhere else in the American colonies (Nathanial, Nehemiah, Joshua, etc.); New England also has a large share of Hebrew town names (Salem, Concord)
- gave us the word cuss from curse, originally a high class, [r]-less pronunciation
- gave us such words as conniption fit, scrimp, pesky, snicker.

– gave English such idioms as: sharp as a meat ax, big as all outdoors, cool as a cucumber. Since everyone was expected to know how to make Boston baked beans, today we also have the idiom to not know beans about. Also: Wouldn't touch with a ten- foot pole (river men used 10-foot poles to guide their ships).

Many idioms associated with sailing derive from the New England dialect, as one might espect: to lower the boom on someone, three sheets to the wind (meaning "drunk"), take the wind out of one's sails, and even cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey.

Unlike many other American regional dialects, New England speech was not affected significantly by any non-English language.

New York English, a% a special variety of general New England speech, developed after the British took possession of the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam in 1664, leading to the rapid conversion of Dutch speakers to English. Dutch left a strong phonetic substrate, however, which sets Brooklyn speech apart from other northern dialects.

Features shared with New England speech:

– final [r] is dropped: beer = bee-ah
– caught, bought are pronounced with [O] rather than [A]

Main features deriving from the Dutch influence:

– interdentals become t,d. For instance, them, these,

that become: dem, dese, dat (since Dutch has no interdentals)

– er => [schwa + y] thirty purple birds, thirty third street = uh in final position were =wuh
– [oi] => [er] oil, oyster (a later compensatory development)
– I want you to (do something) → I want you should (do something)

In connection with New York, it might be apropos to mention one of the ethnic-based dialects that undoubtedly contributed to the uniqueness of the city's linguistic sounds cape: the language of the European Jews who came to New York in large numbers beginning during the last century.

Most immigrant groups who came into the US after the colonial period--in the 19th and 20th centuries--did not establish permanent ethnic dialects of their own. (Instead, they conformed to whatever the local dialect was.) But one group contributed heavily to New York English. Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, most of whom spoke Yiddish, added their own additional flavor to New York phonology and vocabulary.

The Ashkenazi Jews in Central Europe spoke a dialect of German called Yiddish. The Sephardic Jews of Spain spoke Ladino, a medieval dialect of Spanish. Yiddish especially has influenced New York speech and also contributed words than Americans of all dialects may use and know:

– many words and phrases from Yiddish that have come into General American English have a special twist of humor or irony: schmaltz, chutzpah, schlemiel, schlimazel, klutz (wooden beam), kvetch, yenta, schmuck, schnoz (big noze). Yiddish has even brought about minor changes in the phonotactic rules of English: which now allow the combination sh+consonant at the beginning of a word: example: schnook (dope).

– Standard American phrases originating in the Yiddish speaking community include: Get lost, What's up, I should worry, I should live so long, I need it like a hole in the head, You don't know from nothin, Pardon the expression, Enjoy.

– Rhyming slang: Deprecation is shown by means of partial reduplications such as Joe-schmo; or Oedipus-schmedipus, so long as he loves his mother.

Modern New York influence on General American, of course, is not confined to Yiddish origins. Even people who have never traveled to New York are familiar with this accent from watching TV. Recently, New York has given American English such terms as: Yuppie (young urban professional), and bag lady.

2. Let's move on to a very different dialect. From 1642- 1675 the Royalists**,** also called Cavaliers**,** fled from the south and southwest England with their indentured servants and settled in Virginia when the English Civil War against Charles I began. They brought with them their south England drawl (a drawing out of the vowels); they also brought such phrases as *aksed* (instead of *asked),* and *ain't*

(instead of isn't). Royalists later settled the Carolinas as well. Southern English speech laid the foundation for the development of American Tidewater speech, or Coastal Southern English.

A large number of features distinguish southern dialects as a group from their cousin dialects in the American north, as well as from modern British dialects in the south of England.

– the classic Southern drawl, caused when vowels become long or diphthongal zed: house = ha:wse, eggs = ai:gz; some words even contain triphthongs: flowers. [fla:ierz]

– loss of final t, d after another consonant: an(d), tol(d)

– first syllable accented (rather than the second) in such words as: guitar, insurance, July, police, elope, etc.

– yall for you all

– bucket, not pail

Influence on General American –

Southern English has contributed and continues to contribute to General English a variety of highly colorful idioms: Mad as a rooster in an empty henhouse, Don't get cross-legged (Don't get mad.), tearing up the pea patch (on a rampage), kneewalkin' drunk, He's three bricks shy of a load, (dumb)

Other southernisms that made it into general American include

– snicker doodles; tacky, varmint, from vermin, vittles > victuals.

– spitting image of > spirit and image of

– fink, ratfink > Albert Fink, an unpleasant railroad detective after the Civil War.

What is the origin of certain features of Southern English that cannot be traced back to dialectal differences among the original immigrants from the British Isles?

The upper class southern dialects and the dialects of the coastal southern areas (where few native Americans remained) were influenced by the English spoken by West Africans. Most linguists today believe these features derive from the influence of the speech patterns of the Africans brought to the 13 colonies as

slaves between 1619 and 1808, when the slave trade was prohibited. This would include the southern drawl. Let's take a look at the ethnic dialect that has come to be known as Black English.

Black English developed in the Southern states when speakers of dozens of West African languages were abruptly forced to abandon their native tongues and learn English. Slaves from different tribes couldn't communicate with one another--in fact, masters deliberately tried to separate slaves who could speak the same language. Since the Africans had to communicate with one another, as well as with the whites, a kind of compromise language evolved on the basis of English and a mixture of the original West African languages. Such a makeshift, compromize language, used as a second language by adults, is known as a pidgin. When a pidgin becomes the native language of the next generation, it becomes a creole--a full-fledged language. The African-English creole in the American colonies evolved into today's Black English.

Black English was most influenced by the speech of the southern whites.

Features carried over from early Southern English into Black English:

– loss of final consonants, especially sonorant’s: po(or), sto(re) like aristocratic southern English.

– use of double negatives, ain’t, as in early English.

– loss of ng: somethin', nothin', etc.

Black English, in turn, gradually influenced the speech of southern whites—especially the children of the aristocratic slave owners. Given the social prejudices of the Old South, this seems paradoxical. However, remember that throughout all the slave owning areas, black nannies helped raise white children, and the children of blacks and whites played freely together before the Civil War. Since language features acquired in early childhood tend to be kept throughout life, Southern English naturally became mixed with Black English.

Let's look more closely at how Black English developed on the basis of West African Dialects. Whenever a group of adults is forced to learn a second language,

the language learned retains many features of the original native language. Thus, the English of black slaves retained many features that were African and not present in English at all. The children of the slaves learned this form of English as their native language. Thus, on the basis of language mixing, a new dialect, called a creole, was born. This process – at least in some small degree – characterizes the English of all Americans whose parents spoke English as a second language. But in the case of African Americans, due to the social separation they lived under from the very start, the differences were stronger and more lasting.

Main features carried over from West African languages.

– No use of the linking vei£ 'to be’ or generalization of one form for it.

– emphasis on aspect rather than tense: He workin1 (right now) vs. He be workin'. This is found in many West African languages.

– I done gone (from Wolof doon, the completive verb aspect particle + English 'done').

– Regularization of present tense verb conjugation: He don't, he know it.

– voiced th in initial position becomes d: dis, dey; in medial position it becomes v: brother > brovva. final voiceless th = f with = wif

A large number of West African words came into Standard American through the medium of Black English: bug (bugu = annoy), dig (degu/ understand), tote bag (tota = carry in Kikonga), hip (Wolof hepicat one who has his eyes wide open), voodoo (obosum, guardian spirit) mumbo jumbo (from name of a West African god), jazz (Bantu from Arabic jazib one who allures), banjo (mbanza), chigger (jigger/ bloodsucking mite), goober (nguba /Bantu), okra (nkruman/ Bantu), yam(njami/ Senegal), banana (Wolof). Also, the phrases: sweet talking, every which way; to bad-mouth, high-five are from Black English—seem to be either American innovations or loan translations from West African languages.

The speech of African Americans gradually became more like the speech of their southern white neighbors—a process called decreolization. (And the speech of the whites became slightly more like that of the blacks). However, in a few areas, the original African English creole was preserved more fully. There is one

dialect of Black English still spoken on the Georgia coast, called Gullah, which is still spoken there by about 20,000 people; it is thought to represents the closest thing to the original creole.

After the Civil War, Black English continued to evolve and change, especially in the creation of new vocabulary. After the 1920's millions of blacks migrated to northern cities, where various varieties of Black English continue to develop.

There is one other notable southern English dialect. The Cajun French in Louisiana also adopted English with noticeable traces of their former language.

3. From 1675-1725 the (Quakers, or Society of Friends, migrated from the north midlands of England and Wales to the Delaware valley. Their speech ways-mixed with those of later German and Swedish immigrants-gave rise to the distinctive band of dialects spoken in parts of Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

– Phonetic features include the pronunciation of a back rounded [A] in words such as *caught, saw.*

Also, the pronunciation of [E] instead of [oe] in *bad, and, sack,* etc.

– Retention of the syllable final [r] in all places.

Contributions to American English: great number of euphemisms. Speakers tried to avoid saying male or female names for animals that might have sexual connotations (*bull, cock,* etc.), and also avoided names of parts of the body: used rock instead of *stone* (Old Eng. for *testicle');* chicken breast/leg = *white meat, dark meat.*

4. From 1718-1775 English speakers left North Britain and Northern Ireland and settled in the Appalachian backcountry. These people are called the "Scots-Irish." These were mostly Anglo-Saxons refugees of the Norman Conquest who had settled within the Celtic fringe of Britain. The true Scottish and Irish people were Celts who spoke Scots-Gaelic or its close relative Irish- Gaelic and most did not adopt English until the 18th or 19th century. The immigration of true Irish and Scottish peoples, beginning in the mid-1800's, had little permanent effect on American dialect formation.

One island of early Scotch-Irish English speech was left behind and preserved

during the push west. This special, archaic variety of English is known as Appalachian English. It preserves many archaic features that date back to earlier stages in the development of English in Britain. Forms thought to be substandard today are actually the outmoded standard of yesterday. A good example is the use of double negatives such as 'not nobody.' Linguists have dubbed this variety of English as "American Old English" or "American Anglo Saxon". Other mountainous, relatively isolated areas of the American East show a similar preservation of archaic speech. Mario Pei, a popular writer on linguistics, said that "The speech of the Ozarks comes closer to Elizabethan English in many ways than the speech of modern London."

Main features –

– pronouns: hit (it), youns, (ye ones – Chaucer), (possessives) hisn hern, yorn, theirn them used as an adjective in place of their; them boys.

– Retention of preposition in the progressive aspect: I'm a talking you.

– propensity to use compound nouns: men-folk, man-child, kin folks,

– exchanging parts of speech in comparison to standard English: It pleasures me, That was mighty fetchin' of you, She prettied herself up, I'll muscle it up (lift it up), He bigged her (made her pregnant); He daddied that child.

– Many colorful idioms. Slow as Christmas (slow in coming about), slick as a peeled onion (sly), His backbone's rubbin' his belly, (very hungry).

– fixin to, pert near, afeared, beholden (indebted), took sick, upped an, mess of (lot of)

– Rhyming euphemisms: swan, swanny = swear, land sakes alive, golly, dad blamed.

– Special distance words: This here, that there, that yonder.

– bag called sack; dragonfly called mosquito hawk, green bean called a snap bean; pail called a bucket.

Some southern features from the poorer classes are shared with the dialects of the rural midwest since poor southerners help colonize the midwest. Also, some features of Appalachian English are shared with the speech of poorer southern

whites for the same reason.

– ain't, use of double negatives--older "correct" version of English, avoided by the upper classes, who chose the innovative single negatives preferred by the British upper classes.

– ng = n: somethin, nothin, (also found in Scotch-Irish dialects of middle English: Celtic languages had no ng)

The "Scots-Irish" dialect of southern English mingled with Cherokee and other Native American languages in a band running from western North Carolina to Oklahoma and East Texas, giving rise to the so-called backwoods, or highlands, southern dialect, which is more faster and high-pitched than tidewater southern and more nasal than Appalachian English. Some of the phonological features of the backwoods southern dialects undoubtedly come from Cherokee and other Native American languages. The south was the only area in the East where Native Americans mixed significantly with the whites. This occurred mostly with the poorer whites on the frontier. Substrate features include: nasality, tensing of vowels [e] instead of [E] rather than diphthongization as in Tidewater Southerr English.

Influence on General American—

– highly expressive idioms: He can tick his weight in

wildcats. Faster 'n greased lightning, can't hold a candle to, sharp as a tack, madder 'n a wet hen, tuckered out.

– Some words widely assumed to be of Appalachian origin are not: the word moonshine was coined in England, 'hooch' is of Native American origin. Words like redneck, cracker, hoosier were coined ii Northern England and brought over; originally, they were not necessarily insults. The derogatory term Hillbilly was coined only in early 1900's.

5. Remember that dialects based primarily on geography are called areal dialects. One of the main researchers of areal dialect: of the United States was Hans Kurath, author of the Dialect Atlas of America He found that there are four main dialect areas in the Eastern us: New England (including New York), Middle

Atlantic. Backwoods, and Southern Tidewater: The three main dialectal divisions can further be subdivided into at least 27 sub dialects. The original eastern dialects tended to become more leveled and to merge farther west.

General American – After the Civil War the rapid and extensive move West of settlers from all dialect areas of the eastern US led to a leveling of eastern dialectal features and the creation of a more General American, or Middle American dialect. People who are said to speak "without an accent" are actually speaking with this leveled-out form of speech that developed from the mid-Atlantic stretching westward through the Ohio valley. Most features of Standard American developed from a levelled mixture of dialects mostly from the poorer clas%es along the middle Atlantic seaboard who immigrated west after the American Revolution to find a better life.

1.2. Settlement patterns and the origins of the American dialects

Extended version of the article published in *Let's Go USA 2004* Bert Vaux, Harvard University,

July 2003

Many people believe that that regional variation in the United States is disappearing, thanks to the insidiously pervasive influence of television and mainstream American culture. There is hope for those of us who relish linguistic and cultural diversity, though.

Consider for instance the preferred cover term for sweetened carbonated beverages. As can be seen in the map below, Southerners generally refer to them as *coke,* regardless of whether or not the beverages in question are actually made by the Coca Cola company; West and East coasters (including coastal Florida, which consists largely of transplanted New Yorkers) and individuals in Hawaii and the St. Louis, Milwaukee, and Green Bay spheres of influence predominantly employ *soda,* and the remainder of the country prefers *pop.*

National television ads and shows generally employ soda, presumably thanks to the concentration of media outlets in soda areas New York and California, but this has had no effect on the robust regional patterns. (The three primary terms do

appear to be undermining traditional local egressions such as tonic (Boston) and cocola (the South).)

Another deeply entrenched regionally-conditioned food product is the long sandwich made with cold cuts, whose unmarked form in the U.S. is submarine sandwich or just sub. Pennsylvanians (and New Jerseyites in the Philadelphia sphere of influence) call it a hoagie, New Yorkers call it a hero, western New Englanders call it a grinder, Mainers call it an Italian sandwich, and people in the New Orleans area call it a po' boy.

Confrontation between traditional regional terms and newer interlopers has created subtle variations in meaning in some areas. In the Boston sphere of influence, for instance, grinder is commonly relegated to hot subs, whereas sub is used for cold ones. Similarly in stores in the Northeast Kingdom (the northeastern quadrant of Vermont) grinder refers to large (12-inch) subs, whereas hoagie is used for their small (6-inch) counterpart. Many in the Philadelphia area divide up the sub domain in the same manner as Boston, but hoagie is used for the cold version and steak sandwich for the hot one.

In other cases the dialectal picture is so evenly distributed that there is no clear national standard, as with the terms for the machine out of which drinks water in schools and other public spaces.

The preferred term in the southeastern half of the U.S. is water fountain, whereas in the northwestern half it's drinking fountain. If you're in eastern Wisconsin or the Boston area, be sure to elicit bubbler from the locals.

The so-called "cot-caught merger" also bisects the country: in the West and in northern New England the words cot and caught are pronounced identically, whereas in the rest of the country each is pronounced differently.

These examples should suffice to show that regional variation is alive and well in the United States. But where did these differences come from, and how have they resisted the influence of the American media juggernaut? The second question has a relatively straightforward answer: humans are generally unaware of the properties of their language, and normally assume that they way the behave and

speak is the way everyone else does and should behave and speak. You, for example, were probably unaware before reading this that a large swathe of the U.S. pronounced cot and caught differently than you do, and doesn't share your term for water fountains. Since humans are generally unaware of the idiosyncrasies of their own speech, it is to be expected that they would typically fail to notice that what is said on TV differs from their own forms.

The other question, involving the origins of the linguistic variation we find in the U.S., can be answered in part by considering the history of settlement of the country by speakers of English [53]. The continental United States were settled by three main waves of English speakers: Walter Raleigh brought settlers primarily from the southwest of England to the form the Chesapeake Bay Colony in 1607; Puritans from East Anglia came to the Massachusetts Bay in 1620; and Scots-Irish, Northern English, and Germans came to America through Philadelphia in large numbers beginning in the 18 century. Settlers then moved horizontally westward across the country from these three hearths, giving rise to the three main dialect areas in the United States, thl South, the North, and the Midlands. The fourth area on the map, the West, contains a mixture of features imported from the other three.

The particular linguistic variables on which these dialect divisions are based can in many cases be connected to dialect differences in the areas of England from which the various settlers came. The original English-speaking settlers in New England, fur example, came from East Anglia in the southeast of England, where in the seventeenth century (and still today) r's were only pronounced before vowels, and r's were (and still are) inserted inside certain vowel sequences, as in draw[r]ing and John F. Kennedy's famous Cuba[r] and China. The New England lengthening of a in words like aunt ("ahnt") and bath ("bahth") was also imported from the British dialect of East Anglia.

Other features cannot be connected to British antecedents so transparently, but nicely demonstrate the North/South/Midlands boundary. One of my favorite examples is the large wasp like critter that is usually seen when it stops by puddles to collect mud, which it then rolls into a ball and carries off to construct a nest;

northerners call this a mud wasp, midlanders and westerners call it a mud dauber, and southerners call it a dirt dauber.

Another such example is the small freshwater lobster-like critter, which is a crayfish in the North, a crawdad in the Midlands, and a crawfish or mudbug in the South.

The North breaks into two main areas, the Northeast and the Inland North. The Northeast (and its crony, southeast coastal Florida) are roughly the home of sneakers, the rest of the country uses tennis shoes or gym shoes as the generic term for athletic shoes.

The Inland North is most famous for pop and for the so-called "Rust Belt Vowel Shift", a change in the pronunciation of most of the American vowels that produces what is perceived by most Americans as "Midwestern", even though it is also found in eastern Rust Belt cities such as Rochester, Syracuse, and Utica.

The Midlands region is home not only to mud dauber, but also to the oft-noted regionalisms warsh and the needs X-ed construction, as in the car needs warshed. The Midlands and the South together are home to catty-corner in the sense of 'diagonally across from', which in the North is normally kitty-corner. (My personal favorite expression for this concept is kitty wampus, which is used by a handful of individuals in the Upper Midwest.)

The South is home to the "pin-pen merger" (i and e are pronounced identically before m, n, and ng), preservation of the contrast in pronunciation between w and hw (as in witch and which respectively), use of y 'all to address a group of individuals, multiple modal constructions (as in I might could do that), nekkid for 'naked', and commode for 'toilet'.

The inland part of the South is called the Deep South, and features gems such as rolling for the act of covering a house and/or its front yard in toilet paper, which in the rest of country is generally called tp 'ing or toilet papering. (It's wrapping in the Houston area.)

The Northeast

No linguistic tour of the Northeast would be complete without visiting the two main linguistic spheres of influence in the area, Boston and New York City. Though locals would probably die rather than admitting it, the two actually share a large number of linguistic features, such as pronouncing can ‘is able’ differently than can ‘container’, wearing sneakers and drinking soda, having no word for the roly poly/potato bug/sow bug/doodlebug (though the critter itself is just as rampant in the Northeast as anywhere else in the country), and pronouncing route to rhyme with moot and never without.

Perhaps the most striking feature shared by these two areas is the behavior of r: it deletes when not followed by a vowel (drawer is pronounced draw), and conversely gets inserted when between certain vowels (drawing comes out as draw ring). Because these dialects don’t allow r to follow a vowel within a syllable, they end up preserving vowel contrasts that were neutralized before r in other dialects, as in the “3 Maries” (Mary, marry, and merry are each pronounced differently, whereas in most of the country all three are homophonous). Similarly mirror and nearer have the same first vowel in most of the U.S., but not in Boston and New York. Bostonians and New Yorkers pronounce words like hurry, Murray, furrow, and thorough with the vowel of hut, whereas most other Americans use the vowel in bird. And of course there’s the first vowel in words like orange and horrible, which in most of the U.S. is the same as in pore, but in Boston and New York is closer to the vowel in dog.

1. The New York City sphere of influence

Though New York shares many important features with Boston and other parts of the Northeast, it is also in many ways a linguistic island, undergoing little influence from the rest of the country and (despite the ubiquity of New York accents on TV and in movies) propagating almost none of its peculiarities to the outside world. Its lack of linguistic influence can be connected to its stigmatization: two surveys in 1950 and the 1990s found that Americans considered New York to have the worst speech in the country.

When you visit the New York City area (including neighboring parts of New Jersey and Long Island), be sure to listen for classic New Yorkisms like the deletion of h before u (e.g. huge is pronounced yuge, and Houston becomes Youston) and the rounding of a to an o-like vowel before / in words like ball and call (the same vowel also shows up in words like water, talk, and dog). New Yorkers who don't have a thick local accent may not have these particular features, but they are sure to have other shibboleths like stoop (small front porch or steps in front of a house), on line instead of in line (e.g. we stood on line outside the movie theater for three hours), hero for sub, pie for pizza, and egg cream for a special soft drink made with seltzer water, chocolate syrup, and milk. You can also tell New Yorkers by their pronunciation of Manhattan and forward: they reduce the first vowel in the former (it comes out as Mn-hattan), and delete the first r in the latter (so it sounds like foe-ward). Believe it or not, it is also common in the New York area to pronounce donkey to rhyme with monkey (which makes sense if you consider the spelling), even though they typically aren't aware that they are doing so.

New England

Moving up the coast to New England, we find that most people don't actually sound like the Pepperidge Farm man or John F. Kennedy, but they do all use cellar for basement (at least if it's unfinished), bulkhead for the external doors leading out of the cellar, and rotary for what others call a roundabout or traffic circle. New England itself is divided by the Connecticut River into two linguistically distinct areas, Eastern and Western.

2. Eastern New England: Boston

You can hear great Eastern New England speech almost anywhere in Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, or Massachusetts, especially if you stay away from more affluent areas in the bigger cities, but I'll focus here on the Boston area. (Revere, South Boston, Somerville, and Dorchester are traditionally considered to harbor especially thick local accents.) Thanks to park your car in Harvard Yard and Nomar Garciaparra many Americans are familiar with the Boston pronunciation of

-ar-, which generally comes out as something very similar to the Southern pronunciation of -ay- (Boston park sounds like Southern pike). The sequence -or- also has an interesting outcome in many words, being pronounced like the vowel in off, for instance, the Boston group LFO in their 1999 song “Summer Girls” rhymed hornet with sonnet. This rhyme also shows that Boston has the cot/caught merger, as we saw earlier; interestingly, though, they distinguish the vowels in father and bother, unlike many Americans.

In the domain of vocabulary, be sure to get a frappe (or if you’re in Rhode Island, a cabinet), a grinder, harlequin ice cream with jimmies or shots on it, and of course a tonic. (Frappes are milkshakes, harlequin is Neapolitan ice cream, and jimmies and shots are sprinkles.) You might also want to visit a package store (or packie for short) to buy some alcohol, or a spa to buy cigarettes and lottery tickets. There aren’t many spas (small independent convenience stores, equivalent to party stores in Michigan, as used in the movie True Romance) left in the area at this point, but you can still find a few that haven’t been replaced by 7-11 in Boston, Cambridge, Somerville, Allston, and Watertown.

The towns where you’ll hear the best Boston accents (and classic local terms like wicked and pissa) also feature many triple deckers, three-family houses with three front porches stacked on top of one another. These seem to be less common in Connecticut, but if you happen to pass through that area be sure to look out for tag sales (= yard sales). Connecticut is also home to the term sleepy seed for the gunk that collects in the comer of your eye after you’ve been sleeping; not all Connecticutians have this expression, but your trip will have been worthwhile if you find someone who does.

3. Western New England: Vermont

West of the Connecticut River I recommend you head up to the Northeast Kingdom in Vermont. (I especially recommend the beautiful towns around Lake Memphremagog, like Derby Line and Newport.) Here you’ll find the best Canadian features south of the border, thanks to the heavy French Canadian representation in the area, including toque (pronounced [tuke]) for ‘woolen winter

hat' (known as a toboggan in some other parts of the country); poutin (pronounced as put + sin, with the stress on sin) for french fries coated with gravy and cheese curds, and sugar pie. This is also the land of the skidoo (= snowmobile), the skidder (giant machine with jaws used to haul log^), and the camp (summer cabin, typically on a body of water). If you're wise enough to visit the Northeast Kingdom, be sure to check out how they pronounce the a and the t in the name of the local town Barton.

4. Pennsylvania

As you head out of the Northeast you should try to stop through Pennsylvania, which is unique among the fifty states in having a significant number of dialect features peculiar to it. Some of these are due to the Pennsylvania Dutch presence in the region (redd up 'clean up', gumband 'rubber band' (cf. German Gummi 'rubber'; now limited to parts of western PA), toot 'bag', rootch 'scootch up (e.g. in a bed)'); the reasons for the restriction of other terms to Pennsylvania are less clear. To this category belongs hoagie, which as we already saw is limited to PA plus the parts of New Jersey in Philadelphia's sphere of influence. Pennsylvania also shows extreme internal diversity: Philadelphia groups with the Northeastern dialects (e.g. in preferring soda), whereas Pittsburgh is tied to the Inland North (pop), the Midlands (many of my relatives there use the needs warshed construction), and the Appalachian region, of which it is the northernmost extremity.

Philadelphia (and its satellites in southern New Jersey) are perhaps best known for their pronunciation of water, which comes out as something like wood + er. This conveniently shows up in the local term water ice, which refers to something between Italian ice and a snow cone. Residents of the Philly sphere of influence are also more likely than other Americans to bag school rather than skip school or play hooky. When you make your trip to Philly to hear these choice linguistic tidbits and you run short of money, be sure to ask where the MAC machine is, not the ATM or cash machine.

You should also make a special effort to visit the opposite end of the state, anchored by the beautiful city of Pittsburgh, which (unknown to most Americans) has its own distinctive dialect. Here the aw-sound is replaced by something approaching [ah], as in dahntahn for downtown', ay similarly loses its y in certain situations, as in Pahrts for Pirates and Ahrn City for Iron City. The o in this region is very rounded in words like shot, and comes out sounding a lot like the New York vowel in ball. It is also popular to delete the th- at the beginning of unstressed words in certain collocations, such as up ’ere (for up there), like 'at, and 'n ’at (for and that, which western Pennsylvanians are fond of ending sentences with).

In terms of vocabulary Pittsburgh and environs have some real whoppers, such as yins or you ‘uns, used to address a group of two or more people: jagoff meaning ‘a jerk or loser’ (shared with Chicagoland); jumbo ‘bologna sandwich’; and slippy ‘slippery’.

These days many Pittsburgh residents don’t have the traditional dialect, but you’re sure to come across at least a few of the items just discussed. You’ll have even better luck if you visit some of the unknown small towns in western PA such as Franklin, Emlenton, and Iron City, which have satisfying variants of the Pittsburgh speech patterns and also happen to be unusually scenic.

5. Cincinnati

From Pittsburgh you’re in striking distance of Cincinnati, one of the better representatives of the Midlands dialect region. Here instead of inserting r, as we saw in Boston and New York, they insert 1: saw comes out as sawl, drawing as drawling, and so on. In the Cincinnati area one can also find drive-through liquor stores (and for some people, regular liquor stores) referred to as pony kegs. (Elsewhere in the U.S., on the other hand, pony keg usually refers to small keg.)

6. The Rust Belt: Milwaukee

Moving westward, the next interesting dialect zone is the Inland North or Rust Belt, within which I recommend Milwaukee, Wisconsin (not to be confused with Zilwaukee, Michigan). Here, in the land so eloquently etymologized by Alice Cooper in Wayne’s World, you will find – especially if you visit an area where

there hasn't been much immigration, such as West Allis— not only the classic speech features identified with the Midwest (as canonized for example in the Da Bears skit on Saturday Night Live), but also features characteristic of areas other than the Midwest (freeway, otherwise associated with the West Coast; bubbler, most familiar from the Boston area; soda, otherwise characteristic of the West and East coasts). Milwaukeeans share some features with the rest of Wisconsin: they pronounce Milwaukee as Mwaukee and Wisconsin as W-scon-sin rather than Wis-con-sin; they refer to annoying Illinoisans as FIB's or fibbers (the full form of which is too saucy to explain here), and they eat frozen custard and butter burgers. They also share some features with the Upper Midwest, notably pronouncing bag as baig and using ramp or parking ramp for 'parking garage' (the same forms surface in Minnesota and Buffalo). Milwaukee is also known for the cannibal sandwich, raw ground sirloin served on dark rye bread and covered with thin-sliced raw onions.

Milwaukee is only an hour and a half drive north of Chicago, yet it lacks many of the classic Chicagoisms, such as jagoff gaper's block (a traffic jam caused by drivers slowing down to look at an accident or other diversion on the side of the road), black cow (root beer with vanilla ice cream, known elsewhere as a root beer float), expressway, and pop. It also differs from the more northern reaches of Wisconsin with respect to many of the classic Upper Midwestern features so cleverly reproduced in the movie Fargo, such as the monophthongal e and o in words like Minnesota and hey there. You can find the occasional inhabitant of Wisconsin's northern border with Minnesota who has Upper Midwest terms like pasties, whipping shitties (driving a car in tight circles, known elsewhere as doing donuts), and hotdish (elsewhere called a casserole), and farmer matches (long wooden matches that light on any surface), but for the most part these are less commonly used than in Minnesota and the Dakotas (and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan in the case of pasties).

7. The West: the San Fernando Valley

Moving ever westward, we come next to the West Coast. Here it is more difficult to find hardcore traditional dialects, largely because the West was settled relatively recently, and by individuals from a wide variety of different locales; one is hard-pressed to find any Californian (or other Westerner) whose family has been there for more than two generations. Perhaps the best place to start is the San Fernando Valley of California, home of the Valley Girl. Many of the Valley Girl quirks immortalized in Frank Zappa's 1982 song Valley Girl and the 1995 film Clueless are now profoundly out of favor, such as gnarly, barf out, grodie (to the max), gag me with a spoon, rad, for sure, as if and bitchin ', and others are now ubiquitous throughout the U.S., such as totally, whatever, sooo X (as in "that' so like 5 years ago"), and the use of like to report indirect speech or state of mind (I was like, "no way!"). Others are still used in the area but have yet to infiltrate the rest of the country, such as flip a bitch or bust a bitch for 'make a U-tum', baunch for taint (the area between the scrotum and the anus), and bag on in the sense of 'make fun of, diss'.

And if you're interested in figuring out whether someone's from northern or southern California, I recommend seeing if they use hella or hecka to mean 'very' (e.g. that party was hella cool, characteristic of northern California), and if they refer to freeway numbers with or without "the" before them (Southern Californians refer to "the 5", "the 405", and so on, whereas northern Californians just use "5" and "405").

The South

Looping back around the country we come finally to the South, which is perhaps the most linguistically distinct and coherent area in the United States. This is not only home to obvious cases like y'all, initial stress on Thanksgiving, insurance, police, and cement, and the other features mentioned above, but also showcases feeder road (small road that runs parallel to a highway), wrapping (tp'ing), and doodlebug (the crustacean that rolls into a ball when you touch it) in the Houston area, and party barns (drive-through liquor stores) in Texas (bootlegger, brew thru, and beer barn are also common terms for this in the South). The South as a whole

differs from the rest of the country in pronouncing lawyer as law-yer, using tea to refer to cold sweet tea, and saying the devil's beating his wife when it rains while the sun is shining (elsewhere referred to as a sunshower, or by no name at all). The South is so different from the rest of the country that almost anywhere you go you will hear a range of great accents, but I especially recommend the Deep South (start with Mississippi or Alabama) and New Orleans.

8. New Orleans

Louisiana is famous for the Cajuns, a local group descended from the Acadians, French people who were exiled from Nova Scotia and settled in southern Louisiana in the 1760s. Some Cajuns still speak their own special creole, Cajun French, and this in turn has influenced the English dialect of the region, as can be seen in local expressions such as:

- by my house for 'in/at my place' (e.g. he slept by my house last night), which is claimed to be based on French terms chez mov,
- make dodo meaning 'to sleep', based on Cajun French fais do do',
- make groceries 'do grocery shopping', cf. French faire le marche;
- lagniappe, French for 'a little something extra', e.g. when your butcher gives you a pound and two ounces of hot sausage but only charges you for a pound.

Some of the creole elements that have made their way into the local English dialect may be of African rather than French origin, such as whereya stay (at)? meaning 'where do you live?', and gumbo, referring to a traditional southern soup-like dish, made with a rich roux (flour and butter) and usually including either sea food or sausage. The word gumbo is used in Gullah (an English-based creole spoken on the Sea Islands off the Carolina coast) to mean 'okra', and appears to have descended from a West African word meaning 'okra'.

The New Orleans dialect of English also includes words drawn from other sources, such as yat (a typical neighborhood New Orleanian), neutral ground (the grassy or cement strip in the middle of the road), po boy (basically a sub sandwich, though it can include fried oysters and other seafood and may be dressed, i.e.

include lettuce, tomatoes, pickles, and mayonnaise), hickey (a knot or bump you get on your head when you bump or injure it), and alligator pear (an avocado).

9. Hawaii

Last but not least we come to Hawaii, which in many ways is the most interesting of the fifty states linguistically. Many Americans are aware of Hawaiian, the Austronesian language spoken by the indigenous residents of the Hawaiian Islands before the arrival of colonizers from Europe and Japan, but fewer know of the English-based creole that has arisen since that time, known as Hawaiian Pidgin English, Hawaiian Creole English, or just Pidgin. This variety of English is spoken by a fairly large percentage of Hawaiians today, though they tend not to use it around haole tourists.

Pidgin combines elements of all of the languages originally spoken by settlers, including Portuguese (cf. where you stay go? meaning ‘where are you going?’, or I called you up and you weren’t there already meaning ‘I called you up and you weren’t there yet’), Hawaiian (haole, makapeapea ‘sleepy seed’, lanai ‘porch’, pau ‘finished’), Japanese (shoyu ‘soy sauce’), and even Californian/Surfer (dude, sweet, awesome, freeway). They also have some English expressions all their own, such as shave ice ‘snowcone’ and cockaroach ‘cockroach’.

The syntax (word order) of Pidgin differs significantly from that of mainland English varieties, but resembles the English creoles of the Caribbean in important ways, including deletion of the verb be in certain contexts (e.g. if you one girl, no read dis ‘if you’re a girl, don’t read this’), lack of inversion of the subject and finite verb in questions and subordinate clauses (e.g. doctah , you can pound my baby? ‘doctor, can you weigh my baby?’, or how dey came up wid dat? ‘how did they come up with that?’), null subjects (e.g. cannot! ‘I can’t!’, get shtrawberry? ‘do you have strawberry [flavor]?’), and the use of get to express existential conditions (‘there is’, ‘there are’), as in get sharks? ‘are there sharks [in there]?’.

1.3. The mix of ethnicities in the Dialect of the US

Here’s a quick rundown of the regions Delaney identified:

Eastern New England: These are the cah pahkahs, the blue collar residents from Maine to Massachusetts who drop their Rs and substitute an H. Think Jack Donaghy when he hangs out with Nancy Donovan on “30 Rock.”

Boston Urban: There are a few sub-dialects in the Hub, from the stereotypical Southie dialect (Sully and Denise on “Saturday Night Live”) to the Boston Brahmin (John Kerry). The differences are more determined by class than anything else.

Western New England: Outside eastern Massachusetts, it’s the T that gets dropped. The last Democratic president was Bill Clin-n, for example. It’s not as distinctive as the eastern accent.

Hudson Valley: Dutch settlers, Delaney says, influenced language development north of New York City. The sitting area in front of your doorstep is a stoop, and the best-sellers at Dunkin’ Donuts are crullers and olycooks.

New York City: The mix of ethnicities that built the Big Apple created their own dialect that doesn’t sound much like the rest of America. TH sounds become Ds, and words get smashed together easily. There’s no better example than Marisa Tomei and Joe Pesci in “My Cousin Vinny.”

Bonac: A small and dwindling dialect on Long Island, which was once a part of New England. Combine New York City and Eastern New England and you get the idea.

Inland Northern: Upstate New York and Vermont combine Western New England and the Midwest, and words like marry, merry and Mary are all pronounced identically. Delaney points out another doughnut difference: Here, they’re called friedcakes.

San Francisco Urban: The city by the bay has more in common with the East Coast than the West Coast, thanks to the settlers who originally made their way to the Bay Area. San Franciscans speak a mishmash of Northeastern and Midwestern English.

Upper Midwestern: Home of the Midwestern twang, influenced by a combination of Northeasterners and Southerners who migrated up the Mississippi

River, as well as the Scandinavian immigrants who settled the area. A subdialect in and around Minnesota reflects more of that Norwegian influence. Think “Drop Dead Gorgeous.”

Chicago Urban: Bill Swerski would be proud. Chicago’s distinctive dialect is influenced by what linguists call the Northern Cities Vowel Shift, when short vowels started sounding like their longer cousins. Chicago’s dialect was influenced by migrants who traveled along the Erie Canal, west from the Northeast. They root, of course, for Da Bears.

North Midland: Here’s where the European immigrants who didn’t move to New York City start playing a role. The Scotch-Irish, German and Quaker settlers from Pennsylvania to the central Midwest created what Delaney calls a “transition zone” between the north and south. Doughnuts are dunkers or fatcakes.

Pennsylvania German-English: A small but distinct dialect in the center of the Keystone State, probably spoken by Dwight Schrute’s ancestors. The grammar system is the most distinctive remnant of the region’s immigrant populations; it sounds more like German than English.

Rocky Mountain: Think Montana, Colorado and Utah. Heavy influences from frontier settlers and Native American languages.

Pacific Northwest: More influence from Native American languages. An example is the potluck, a gathering where everyone brings a dish, a derivation of the Native American “potlatch.” Muckatymuck, known elsewhere as a big shot, is another Native American term adopted by North westerners. But there’s less of an accent here than elsewhere, given the fact that the region was settled relatively recently.

Pacific Southwest: The settlers who showed up came to California for the gold, and that still shows in some of their slang – Delaney cites “pay dirt,” “pan out” and “goner” as phrases that started in California. Sub-dialects of Valley Girls and Surfer Dudes are ripe for parody, as in Cher and Travis from the timeless classic “Clueless.”

Southwestern: Mexican dialects of Spanish infuse Southwestern English, though the region is still what Delaney calls a melting pot of other dialects. Words like “patio” and “plaza” became a part of everyday English thanks to the Southwest.

South Midland: West of the Appalachians and into North Texas, speakers here sometimes put an A before a word ending in -ING, in place of words like “are.” TH is often replaced with an F. Delaney says this region retains more strains of Elizabethan English than modern British English has, including words like “ragamuffin,” “reckon” and “sorry,” meaning “inferior.”

Ozark: Southern Appalachian settlers developed their own dialect, best embodied in pop culture by the Beverly Hillbillies.

Southern Appalachian: The “g” in gerunds doesn’t survive often here. But overall, the accent is pretty similar to the South Midlands.

Virginia Piedmont: A syrupy drawl starts to develop south of Washington, where the letter R, when coming after a vowel, becomes what Delaney calls a slided sound. So “four dogs” sounds like “fo-uh dahawgs.”

Coastal Southern: Similar to the Piedmont drawl, but with more remnants of Colonial English. Something diagonally across the street is “catty-corner.”

Gullah: A Creole mix found in coastal areas of Georgia and South Carolina combines English with West African languages brought over by slaves who entered the U.S. in the 1700s and 1800s. Words like “peruse,” “yam” and “samba” all entered the country here.

Gulf Southern: Basically the Deep South minus Georgia and New Orleans. It’s a result of mixing English settlers from the southern colonies with French settlers in Louisiana, and it’s where we get words like “armoire,” “bisque” and “bayou.”

Louisiana: The French settlers who first traveled up the Mississippi River brought a whole mess of dialects. They include Cajun French, which incorporates some Spanish, and Cajun English, which makes New Orleans “Nawlins.”

1.4. What causes these distinctly different dialects?

There are a number of reasons that dialect changes throughout America.

1. The patterns of settlement when the area was first discovered and developed have a huge impact. James Lantolf points out that the regional dialect of New Orleans is largely attributable to the many different nationalities that developed the area. French, Irish, African American, Creole, Spanish and other European influences can all be heard within the Crescent City version of American English.

2. A region's geographic location also has a direct influence on the development of a local tongue. Isolated areas, such as New Orleans, develop different dialects. Where there is no contact between regions, entire words, languages and vernaculars can grow and evolve independently.

3. Social standing and education also affect the vernacular of an individual person – and that extends to a particular area as well. There is certainly a difference in the speech of the lower, middle and upper classes

Much of Pennsylvanian dialect is a reflection of the influence of English and Irish settlers. Scranton has a particularly heavy Irish influence. The pioneer settlers in Pennsylvania's anthracite region (which encompasses Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, Hazleton, and surrounding towns) were largely Irish and German Catholics who worked in the area's coal mines. Many Europeans – particularly Slavic and Italian immigrants – followed and contributed to the distinctive Coal Region culture and dialect. The English spoken by their descendants is colored by their mother tongues: The word brogue itself (to describe an Irish accent) originally meant a "stout coarse shoe worn formerly in Ireland and the Scottish Highlands," and insultingly implied that the Irish spoke English so poorly, it sounded like they had a boot in their mouths.

The impact of Italian is heard in the regional tendency to elongate words – turning Acme supermarket into "Ack-a-me. And when locals replace the ”th" sound in words with a "t" sound—"three" becoming "tree" or "cathedral" becoming "cateedral"—you're hearing the influence of Polish and other Slavic languages.

Pennsylvania's urban centers such as Pittsburgh and Philadelphia have their own vernacular. The word "yunz" – a kind of Northern "y'all," – is quintessential

Pittsburghese, whereas Philadelphians favor ”yiz" to mean the same thing, a plural of "you" that doesn't exist in standard English. These might seem like local slips of the tongue, but really they are the aspects of language that make dialects unique regionally.

We call America the 'melting pot’ because it eliminates the differences between individuals. But language – and its development – retaliates against that concept. Regional dialect separates people, to an extent. One region speaks this way, another region speaks that way; and the differences between the cultures that have influenced those regions become obvious in the language alone.

How do linguists identify dialects? What's an isogloss?

We can learn a lot about the history of a people from studying their dialects. The way Americans speak - the words and sounds of their speech - reveals the migration patterns as the United States was settled over 400 years, starting with settlers who arrived on the East Coast. These pioneers blazed trails and roads as they moved west, sometimes using existing trails created by the Indian tribes of the area or following rivers. They fanned north and south as well as west, taking their customs and language with them. Sometimes the movement of people was so big that whole communities and economies changed nearly overnight, such as the influx of people seeking gold during the gold strike in California of 1949 and northward migration of freed former slaves after 1865.

Linguists plot out dialect map into more detailed isoglosses, which are boundary lines between places or regions that differ in a particular linguistic feature. Maps of the dialects of the United States (and other countries) can also be constructed based on the ways in which particular sounds are produced.

The process of drawing a regional dialect map consists of collecting samples of the way people call certain objects, usually object used everyday or found in nature. A group of people have the same dialect if they share many of the words for things. Here is an example of an isogloss, for the regional words for "dragonfly":

Here are the four main dialect categories of American English dialects: General Northern, General Southern, Southern, and Western.

- Northern New England

Many of the Northern dialects can trace their roots to this dialect, which was spread westward by the New England settlers as they migrated west. It carries a high prestige due to Boston's early economic and cultural importance and the presence of Harvard University. A famous speaker is Katherine Hepburn. They sometimes call doughnuts cymbals, simballs, and boil cakesf [53].

- Eastern New England

This is one of the most distinctive of all the American dialects. R's are often dropped, but an extra R is added to words that end with a vowel. A is pronounced AH so that we get "Pahk the cah in Hahvahd yahd" and "Pepperidge Fahm remembuhs."

- Boston Urban

Like many big cities, Boston has its own dialects that are governed more by social factors like class and ethnicity than by geographic location. Greater Boston Area is the most widely spoken and is very similar to Eastern New England. Brahmin is spoken by the upper aristocratic class like Mr. Howell on Gilligan's Island.

- Central City Area This is what most of us think of as being the "Boston Accent." In the last few years, Saturday Night Live has featured this dialect among a group of rowdy teenagers who like to videotape themselves. Also think of Cliff on Cheers, the only character on this Boston-based show to actually speak a Boston dialect.

- Western New England

Less distinctive than Eastern, but more influential on the other Northern dialects.
Hudson Valley

- New York was originally a Dutch colony, and that language influenced this dialect's development. Some original Hudson Valley words are stoop (small porch)

and teeter-totter. They call doughnuts (which were invented by the Dutch) crullers and olycooks

- New York City

Unlike Boston and other urban dialects, New York City stands by itself and bears little resemblance to the other dialects in this region. It is also the most disliked and parodied of any American dialect (even among New Yorkers), possibly because many Americans tend dislike large cities. When an R comes after a vowel, it is often dropped. IR becomes OI, but 01 becomes IR, and TH becomes D as in "Dey sell tirlets on doity-doid street" andfugedaboudit (forget about it).
This pronunciation is particularly associated with Brooklyn but exists to some extent throughout the city. The thickness of a speaker's dialect is directly related to their social class, but these features have been fading within all classes over recent decades.

- Bonac

Named for Accabonac Creek in eastern Long Island, this dialect is rapidly dying out due to the influx of people from other areas. Back when New York City belonged to the Dutch, this area was part of New England, and Bonac shows elements of both dialects.

- Inland Northern

Combines elements of Western New England and Upper Midwestern. Marry, merry, and Mary are pronounced the same. They call doughnuts friedcakes.

- San Francisco Urban

Unlike the rest of California, which in the early twentieth century saw an influx of people from the South and other parts of the West, San Francisco continued to be settled by people from the Northeast and Northern Midwest, and elements of their dialects (North Midland, Upper Midwestern, Inland Northern) can be found. TheMission dialect, spoken by Irish Catholics in a specific part of the city, is very much like the New York City dialect.

- Upper Midwestern

Originally settled by people from New England and New York State who brought those dialects, this area was also influenced by Southerners coming up the Mississippi River as well as the speech patterns the German and Scandinavian immigrants and the Canadian English dialects from over the border. It’s sometimes referred to as a "Midwestern twang." They call jelly doughnuts bismarks.

- Minnewegian (Minnesota / Norwegian), a sub-dialect spoken in the northernmost part of this region was spoofed in the movies Fargo and Drop Dead Gorgeous.
- Chicago Urban

Influenced by the Midland and Southern dialects. Often spoken by the late John Belushi (Chicago's Second O'tycomedy theater supplied many Saturday Night Live actors). Saturday Night Live used to spoof it in the "Da Bears, Da Bulls" sketches. They call any sweet roll doughnuts.

- North Midland

Created as the people in Pennsylvania migrated westward and influenced by Scotch-lrish, German, and English Quaker settlers. This and the South Midland dialect can actually be considered a separate Midland Dialect region that serves as a transition zone between the north and south. They call doughnuts belly sinkers, doorknobs,dunkers, and fatcakes.

- Pennsylvania German-English

This was strongly influenced by Pennsylvania Dutch, a dialect of German spoken by people in this area (in this context, "Dutch" is actually a mispronunciation of the German word, "Deutsch," which means "German"). Its grammar allows sentences like "Smear your sister with jam on a slice of bread" and "Throw your father out the window his hat. ” They call doughnuts fasnacht, and they also invented dunking - from the German "dunken" (to dip).

This dialect region matches the borders of the Confederate states that seceded during the "Confederate War" and is still a culturally distinct region of the United States. Since it was largely an agricultural area, people tended to move around less than they did in the north, and as a result, the subdialects are much less uniform

than those of the General Northern regions and have much more clearly defined boundaries. Other languages that had an important influence on it are French (since the western region was originally French territory) and the African languages spoken by the people brought over as slaves.

People tend to speak slower here than in the north creating the famous southern "drawl." I is pronounced AH, and OO is pronounced YOO, as in "Ah'm dyoo home at fahv o'clock." An OW in words like loud is pronounced with a slided double sound AOO (combining the vowel sounds in "hat" and "boot"). Some local words are: boogerman, funky (bad smeling) Jump the broomstick (get married), kinfolks, mammy, muleheaded, overseer, tote, y'all.

- South Midland

This area, dominated by the Appalachian Mountains and the Ozark Mountains, was originally settled by the Pennsylvania Dutch moving south from the North Midland areas and the Scotch- Irish moving west from Virginia. A TH at the end of words or syllables is sometimes pronounced F, and the word ARE is often left out of sentences as they are in Black English.

An A is usually placed at the beginning of verb that ends with ING, and the G is dropped; an O at the end of a word becomes ER. (“They a-celebratin' his birfday by a-goin' to see 'Old Yeller' in the theatah").

A T is frequently added to words that end with an S sound. Some words are: bodacious, heap, right smart (large amount), set a spell, and smidgin. American English has retained more elements of the Elizabethan English spoken in the time of Shakespeare than modern British English has, and this region has retained the most. Some Elizabethan words that are extinct in England are: bub, cross-

purposes, fall (autumn), flapjack, greenhorn, guess (suppose), homely, homespun, jeans, loop hole, molasses, peek, ragamuffin, reckon, sorry (inferior),trash, well (healthy).

- Ozark

Made famous by the Beverly Hillbillies, this isolated area was settled by people from the southern Appalachian region and developed a particularly colorful manner of speaking.

- Southern Appalachian

It is a popular myth that there are a few remote regions here that still speak an unchanged form of Elizabethan English, but they aren't true. Linguists are still studying the specific differences with South Midland.

3. Southern

As the northern dialects were originally dominated by Boston, the southern dialects were heavily influenced by Charleston, Richmond, and Savannah. They tend to drop Rs the way New Englanders do. but they don't add extra Rs. Some words are: big daddy (grandfather), big mamma (grandmother), Confederate War (Civil War), cooter (turtle), fixing to (going to), goober (peanut), hey (hello), mouth harp (harmonica), on account of (because).

- Virginia Piedmont

When an R comes after a vowel, it becomes UH, and AW becomes the slided sound, AH-AW. Thus, four dogsbecomes fo-uh dahawgs. Some local words are: hoppergrass (grasshopper), old- fiftfd colt (illegitimate child),school breaks up (school lets out), weskit (vest).

- Coastal Southern

Very closely resembles Virginia Piedmont but has preserved more elements from the colonial era dialect than any other region of the United States outside Eastern New England. Some local words are: catty-corner(diagonal), dope (soda, Coca-Cola), fussbox (fussy person), kernal (pit), savannah (grassland), Sunday cMdfi Uegitimate child). They call doughnuts cookies.

- Gullah

Sometimes called Geechee, this creole language is spoken by some African Americans on the coastal areas and coastal islands of Georgia and South Carolina and was featured in the novel on which the musical, Porgy and Bess, was based. It combines English with several West African languages: Mende, Yoruba, Wolof,

Kongo, Twi, Vai, Temne, Ibo, Ewe, Fula, Umbundu, Hausa, Bambara, Fante, and more. The name comes either from the Gola tribe in Liberia or the Ngola tribe in Angola. The grammar and pronunciation are too complicated to go into here, but some words are: bad mouth (curse), $uba (peanut - from which we get the English word goober),gumbo (okra), juju (magic), juke (disorderly, wicked), peruse (to walk leisurely), samba (to dance), yom(sweet potato).

- Gulf Southern

This area was settled by English speakers moving west from Virginia, Georgia, and the Carolinas, as well as French speaking settlers spreading out from Louisiana, especially the Acadians (see "Cajuns" below). Some words are: armoire (wardrobe), bayou (small stream), bisque (rich soup), civit

cat (skunk), flitters (pancakes), gallery{porch), hydrant (faucet), neutral ground (median strip), pecan patty (praline).

- Louisiana

There's a lot going on down here. Many people in southern Louisiana will speak two or three of the dialects below.

  - Cajun French (the Cajuns were originally French settlers in Acadia, Canada • now called Nova Scotia - who were kicked out when the British took over; in 1765, they arrived iruNew Orleans which was still French territory) carries the highest prestige of the French dialects here and has preserved a number of elements from the older French of the 1600s. It has also borrowed some words from the Spanish who once controlled this area. There are many local variations of it, but they would all be mutually understandable with each other as well as - with some effort - the standard French in France.
  - Cajun English borrows vocabulary and grammar from French and gives us the famous pronunciations “un-YON" (onion) and “I ga-RON-tee” as well as the phrase "Letde good times role!", but movies about cajuns usually get the rest wrong. A famous authentic speaker is humorist Justin Wilson, who had a cooking show on PBS. with his catch phrase, "How

y'all are? I'm glad for you to see me." New Orleans is pronounced with one syllable: "Nawlns

- Yat (from the greeting, "Where y'at") is another dialect of English spoken in New

  Orleans that is informally, and some would say pejoratively. It resembles the New York City (particularly Brooklyn) dialect (more info). Provincial French was the upper class dialect of the pre-Cajun French settlers and closely resembles Standard French but isn't widely spoken anymore since this group no longer exists as a separate social class.

- Louisiana French Creole blends French with the languages of the West Africans who were brought here as slaves. It is quite different from both the Louisiana and standard dialects of French but is very similar to the other creoles that developed between African and French on various Caribbean Islands. Married couples may speak Creole to each other, Cajun French with other people, and English to their children.

4. Western

Compared with the Eastern United States, the Western regions were settled too recently for very distinctive dialects to have time to develop or to be studied in detail. Many words originally came from Spanish, cowboy jargon, and even some from the languages of the Native Americans: adobe, beer bust, belly up, boneyard, bronco, buckaroo, bunkhouse, cahoots, corral, greenhorn, hightail, hoosegow, lasso, mustang, maverick, roundup, wingding.

Rocky Mountain

Originally developed from the North Midland and Northern dialects, but was then influenced by the Mormon settlers in Utah and English coal miners who settled in Wyoming. Some words that came from this dialect arekick off (to die), cache (hiding place), and bushed (tired). They also call jelly doughnuts bismarks.

Pacific Northwest

Influenced by settlers from the Midwest and New England as well as immigrants from England, Germany, Scandinavia, and Canada. Much earlier, a pidgin called

Chinook Jargon was developed between the languages of the Native American tribes of this area. It would later also be used and influenced by the European settlers who wished to communicate with them. A few words from Chinook Jargon like high muckamuck (important person) are still used in this dialect today. (Note that, in this case, the word "jargon" has a different meaning from the one discussed above)

Alaska (not shown in map above)

Developed out of the Northern, Midland, and Western dialects. Also influenced by the native languages of the Alutes, Innuit, and Chinook Jargon. Some words that originated here are: bush (remote area), cabin fever, mush{to travel by dog sled), parka, stateside.

Pacific Southwest

The first English speakers arrived here from New York, Ohio, Missouri, New England, and other parts of the Northeast and Midwest in the 1840s, bringing the Northern and North Midland dialects with them. Words originally used by the gold miners of this period are still used today: pay dirt (valuable discovery), pan out (to succeed), and goner (doomed person).

The early twentieth century saw an influx of people from the South and other parts of the West. The people here are particularly fond of creating new slang and expressions, and, since Hollywood is located here, these quickly get spread to the rest of the country and the world. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, an extreme exaggeration of this dialect that came to be known as ' Valley Girl" or "Surfer Dude" was popular among teenagers and much parodied in the media with phrases like "gas me with a spoon" and "barf me back to the stone age." Sean Penn in Fast Times at Ridgemont High and Whoopie Goldberg in her one-woman show are two famous examples.

Southwestern

By the time this area became part of the United States, there had already been as many as ten generations of Spanish speaking people living here, so the Ailexican dialect of Spanish had an important influence on this area that became a melting

pot for dialects from all over the USA. Some local words are: caballero, cantina, frijoles, madre, mesa, nana, padre, patio, plaza, ramada, tortilla.

Hawaii (not shown on map, above)

The original language of the Native Hawaiians is part of the Polyr>esian family. English speakers arrived in 1778, but many other settlers also came from China, Portugal, Japan, Korea, Spain, and the Philippines to influence the modern dialect. Hawaiian Creole developed from a pidgin English spoken on the sugar plantations with workers from Hawaii and many other countries. Some words are: look-see, no can, number one (the best),plenty (very). It isn't widely spoken anymore. We'll take a closer look at Hawaii Creole English (pidgin) coming up.

Short Exclusions of the Chapter 1

Main features:

1) retention of [r] in all places

2) pronunciation of [ae] in many words. Cf.

British 'class' 'aunt'. Gives American English a flat sound to British ears.

3) vocab – stringbean (snapbean in the

South), earthworm (angleworm), creek (not brook)

Origins – Derived from the speech of settlers moving west of the original 13 colonies into the Ohio valley and beyond. These people were of Scotch-Irish origin rather than upper class English, which explains the differences between Middle American and New England. The post-vocalic [r], which dropped out in the speech of the upper British classes, was retained in the English of the Scotch Irish and other originally Celtic speaking peoples of Britain. Competition between immigrants from Germany and the lower classes of the British isles in the push westward tended to level many of the differences peculiar to one or another smaller group of people. (The Pennsylvania Dutch are actually "Deutsch", in other words Germans.) The Middle American dialect area contributed the most to speech in western states and forms the basis of the speech usually considered as standard American today. There were, however, certain features that remained isolated and unique to one or another of the Middle American dialect group. This was

especially true on the mid-Atlantic seaboard. Maryland adds [r] after [a] before another cons: [Warshington].

Now, this western, "leveled" English is itself showing signs of dialect genesis. The history of American English and of English is far from over.

What does the future hold for American dialects? Will they evolve into separate languages? Due to the levelling influence of mass communication and travel, probably not. In fact, dialectal divergence in the US seems to be slowing down. John Steinbeck, in his 1962 novel, Travels with Charley, in which he describes how he traveled by camper all over the US with a French poodle named Charley, expressed fear that American dialects would disappear because of the influence of mass communication. Most dialectologists, however, believe that dialects are here to stay, since they are acquired from parents at an early age. Thus the well established regional dialects of American English are not disappearing. In fact, the western, "leveled" English is itself showing signs of dialect genesis. So the history of American English and of English is far from over.

Chapter 2

Phonetics and Phonology of American Dialects

2.1 Phonology

Appalachian Dialect

Research suggests that the Appalachian dialect is one of the most distinctive and divergent dialects within the United States.

An intrusive R occurs in some words such as wash, leading to the pronunciation /wɔɻʃ/.

An -er sound is often used for long "o" at the end of a word. For example, hollow – "a small, sheltered valley" – is pronounced /ˈhalər/, homophonous with holler. Other examples are "potato" (pronounced "tader"), "tomato" (pronounced "mader"), and "tobacco" (pronounced "backer").

The "z" sound in certain contractions is replaced by a d or glottal stop. For example, /sn't andwasn't are often pronounced idn't and wadn’t. The contraction "wasn't" is pronounced with a glottal stop in place of "s" and with the "t" dropped(wu'n). The word "wouldn't" is pronounced the same way.

H retention occurs at the beginning of certain words. It, in particular, is pronounced hit at the beginning of a sentence and also when emphasized. The word "ain't" is pronounced hain't.

Participles and gerunds such as doing and mining end in /in/ instead of /ɪŋ/. While this occurs to some extent in all dialects of American English, it possibly occurs with greater frequency in Southern Appalachia.

Word final a is sometimes pronounced /i/, as in okra (/'o k^{h}ri:/).

Intervocalic s in greasy is pronounced /z/, as in other Southern American and some British speech. A related matter: The noun "grease" is pronounced with an "s," but this consonant turns into a "z" in the verb.

People who live in the Appalachian dialect area or elsewhere in the South pronounce the word Appalachia with a short "a" sound (as in "latch") in the third syllable, /ˈæpəˈlætʃə/ or /æpəˈlætʃiə/, while those who live outside of the

Appalachian dialect area or at its outer edges tend to pronounce it with a long "a" sound (as in "lay"), / æpə 'leɪʃə/.

Fieldwork conducted in the 1930s shows the region split evenly on thehorse-hoarse merger: some speakers maintained the contrast (as did speakers in Upstate New York at the time), while others had lost the contrast (as in the Philadelphia accent). Today, however, the merger is complete in the region (and indeed in most of North American English).

The Mary-marry-merry merger is complete, although the accents of nearby New Jersey and southeastern Pennsylvania still maintain a two- or three-way distinction here.

The cot-caught merger is in transition in Northeast Pennsylvania English. The merger is found to the west, in Pittsburgh English and the Central Pennsylvania accent, but not to the north, east and south of the Wyoming Valley.

Northeast Pennsylvania English undergoes the Northern cities vowel shift, but not to the same extent as, say, Buffalo English. The vowel /æ/ shows considerable raising and diphthongization before nasal consonants, so thatban is pronounced approximately [bæd], but before oral consonants, there is only moderate raising, and the vowel remains more open than /æ/, so that bad is pronounced approximately [bæd]. Northeast Pennsylvania English has non-phonemic æ-tensing of the continuous variety, which means that /æ/ is raised more before /n/than before /d/ and more before /d/ than before /g/. The vowel /a/ is considerably fronted, so a word like hot is pronounced [hät]. Finally, the vowels /ɛ/ as in bet and /ʌ/ as in but are retracted (articulated further back in the mouth) in comparison to the pronunciation in more conservative accents like General American.

The transitional nature of Northeast Pennsylvania English between the North and the Midland is shown clearly by the pronunciation of the diphthongs /aɪ/ (as in pine) and /aʊ/ (as in town). In the North, the nucleus of /aʊ/ is considerably further back than that of/aɪ/, so that town is pronounced [toʊn]. In the Midland (and indeed most of the rest of the United States), it is the nucleus of /aɪ/ that is further back, so that pine is [poɪn]. But in northeastern Pennsylvania, the nuclei of the two

diphthongs are pronounced in nearly the same position, as an open central vowel, so that pine is [päin] and town is [täʊn].

Background Dialect [African American Vernacular English (AAVE)]

AAVE and standard English pronunciation are sometimes quite different. People frequently attach significance to such differences in pronunciation or accent and as such the study of phonology (the systematic a patterning of sounds in language) is an important part of sociolinguistics. It should be noted that phonology has nothing to do with spelling. The way something is spelt is often not a good indication of the way it "should be", or much less is, pronounced.

Consonants

Clusters at the ends of words:

When two consonants appear at the end of a word (for instance the st in test), they are often reduced: the final t is deleted. This happens, to some extent, in every variety of English including standard ones. In AAVE the consonant cluster is reduced variably (i.e. it does not happen every time) and systematically.

Sociolinguists have shown that the frequency of reduction can be expressed by a rule which takes account of a number of interacting facts. Crucially, the frequency of reduction depends on the environment in which the sound occurs. The following two factors, among others, have been found to affect the frequency of reduction in consonant clusters

If the next word starts with a consonant, it is more likely to reduce than if the next word starts with a vowel. For example, reduction is more likely to occur in west side (becomingwes side) than in west end.

A final t or d is more likely to be deleted if it is not part of the past tense -ed than if it is. (The past tense -ed suffix is pronounced as t or d or Id in English depending on the preceding sound.) For example, reduction is more likely to occur in John ran fast (becoming John ran fas) than in John passed the teacher in his car.

The th sounds:

The written symbol th can represent two different sounds in English: both an "unvoiced" sound as in thought, thin and think, and a "voiced" sound as in the, they

and that. In AAVE the pronunciation of this sound depends on where in a word it is found.

At the beginning of a word, the voiced sound (e.g. in that) is regularly pronounced as d so 'the', 'they' and 'that' are pronounced as de, dey and dat. AAVE shares this feature with many other nonstandard dialects, including those of the East Coast of United States and Canada. Less common in AAVE is the pronunciation of the unvoiced sound as t. Thus 'thin' can become tin but rarely does. This however is a very common feature of Caribbean creoles in which 'think' is regularly pronounced as tink, etc. When the th sound is followed by r, it is possible in AAVE to pronounce the th as f as in froat for 'throat'.

Within a word, the unvoiced sound as in nothing, author or ether is often pronounced as f. Thus AAVE speakers will sometimes say nufn 'nothing' and ahfuh 'author'. The voiced sound, within a word, may be pronounced v. So 'brother' becomes bruvah, etc.

At the end of a word, th is often pronounced f in AAVE. For instance 'Ruth' is pronounced Ruf; 'south' is pronounced souf. When the preceding sound is a nasal (e.g. norm) theth is often pronounced as t as in tent for 'tenth'; mont for 'month'.

The sounds I and r:

When they do not occur at the beginning of a word I and r often undergo a process known as "vocalization" and are pronounced as uh. This is most apparent in a postvocalic position (after a vowel). For instance 'steal', 'sister', 'nickel' become steauh, sistuh, nickuh. In some varieties of AAVE (e.g. in the Southern US), r is not pronounced after the vowels o and u. The words door and doe, four and foe, and sure and show can be pronounced alike. Vowels

Nasalized vowels:

When a nasal (n or m) follows a vowel, AAVE speakers sometimes delete the nasal consonant and nasalize the vowel. This nasalization is written with a tilde (~) above the vowel. So 'man' becomes ma.

Nasals consonants and front vowels:

In many varieties of English, including standard varieties, the vowels i in pin and e in pen sound different in all words. In AAVE, these sounds are merged before a nasal (like nor m). So in AAVE pin and pen are pronounced with the same vowel. Most Southern US varieties of English merge these vowels too, so this is only a distinctive feature of AAVE in the northern United States.

Diphthongs:

Some vowels like those in night and my or about and cow are called "diphthongs". This means that when the vowel is pronounced, the tongue starts at one place in the mouth and moves as the vowel is being pronounced. In AAVE the vowel in 'night' or in 'my' is often not a diphthong. So when pronouncing the words with this diphthong, AAVE speakers (and speakers of Southern varieties as well) do not move the tongue to the front top position. So 'my' is pronounced ma as in he's over at ma sister's house.

Stress:

AAVE s from some other varieties in the placement of stress in a word. So, where words like police, hotel and July are pronounced with stress on the last syllable in standard English, in AAVE they may have stress placed on the first syllable so that you get po-lice, ho-tel and Ju-ly.

Pittsburgh Dialect

Examples: cot and caught are pronounced [k^{h}ɔt~k^{h}ɒt]; Don and dawn are pronounced [dɔn~dɒn], Further explanation: Speakers who use the [ɔ~ɒ] instead of the [ɒ] sound round their lips and/or produce the vowel further towards the back of their mouths.

Geographic distribution: While the merger of these low back vowels is widespread in the United States, the phoneme that results from this merger is typically the more fronted and unrounded [ɒ]. In southwestern Pennsylvania, speakers display the less common realization of [ɔ~ɒ]. Rounded realizations of the merged vowel around [ɒ] are also common in Canada and Northern New England extreme fronting of/oʊ/

Examples: go is pronounced [gɜʊ]

Further explanation: The diphthong loul is produced further towards the front of the mouth than in some other varieties.

Geographic distribution: The fronting of/oʊ/ can be found throughout the South and the Midland, however, it distinguishes Pittsburgh from nearby Erie.

fronting of /u:/

Further explanation: The vowel /u:/ is produced further to the front of the mouth.

Geographic distribution: The fronting of /u:/ can now be found throughout much of the country including the South, the Midland, and the West.

/aʊ/ monophthongization

Examples: house is pronounced [ha:s]; out is pronounced [a:t]; found is pronounced [fa:nd]; downtown is pronounced [da:nt^{h}a:n].

Further explanation: The diphthong /aʊ/ becomes the monophthong /a/ in some environments including before nasals (e.g., downtown), liquids(e.q., fowl, hour)

and obstruents (e.g., house, out, cloudy). Monophthongization does not occur, however, in the word finally (e.g., how, now), where the diphthong remains [au]. The /a/ sound is often depicted orthographically as “ah.” The colon after the /a/ indicates that the vowel is lengthened. Geographic distribution: One of the few features, if not the only one, restricted near-exclusively to southwestern Pennsylvania in North America, although it can be found in other accents of the world such as Cockney and South African English.

Origins: May be the result of contact from Slavic languages during the early twentieth century.

/ɑj/ monophthongizationl

Examples: tile is pronounced [t^{h}a:l]; pile is pronounced [p^{h}a:l]; tire is pronounced [tha:ɹ]; iron is pronounced [ɑ:ɪn].

Further explanation: Before /ʌ/ and /ɹ/, the diphthong /ɑj/ (also transcribed as /ɑi/ or /ɑɪ/) is monophthongized to /ɑ:/. The /ɑ:/ is often depicted orthographically as “ah.” The colon after the /ɑ/ indicates that the vowel is lengthened.

Geographic distribution: Southwestern Pennsylvania and elsewhere, including the southern states (see above citations).

Epenthetic.

Example: wash is pronounced ['wɔɹʃ].

Further explanation: Occurs after vowels in a small number of words.

Geographic distribution: Southwestern Pennsylvania and elsewhere (see above citations). /i/~/ɪ/ and /u/~/ʊ/ tense-lax mergers.

Examples: steel and still are pronounced [‘stil]; pool, pole, and pull are pronounced [‘p^{h}ɬ].

Further explanation: Before the liquids /l/ and /r/, the tense vowels /i/ and /u/ are laxed to /ɪ/ and /ʊ/, respectively. In standard American English, /i/ is the sound in beet, /ɪ/ the sound in bit, /u/ the sound in food, and /ʊ/ the sound in good. Finally, in contrast to the /i/~/ɪ/ merger, the /u/~/ʊ/merger appears to be more advanced. On the /i/~/ɪ/ merger, the stereotype of this merger is based only on a close approximation of some forms, and does not represent the underlying norms of the dialect.

Geographic distribution: The /i/~/ɪ/ merger is found in southwestern Pennsylvania as well as parts of the southern United States, including Alabama, Texas and the west. On the other hand, the luhlul is consistently found only in southwestern Pennsylvania..

/i/~/ɪ/ merger in eagle

Geographic distribution: Southwestern Pennsylvania (see above citations).

/I/ vocalization

Examples: well is pronounced something like [‘wɛw]; milk something

like ['miwk] or ['mɛwk]; role something like [‘ɹow]; and color something like[‘k^{h}ʌwəɪ].

Further explanation: When it occurs after vowels, /l/ is vocalized, or "labialized", sometimes sounding like a /w/, or a cross between a vowel and a velarized (or "dark") /l/.

Geographic distribution: Southwestern Pennsylvania and elsewhere, including many African American varieties

/o/~/u/ and /ʊ/ merger.

Examples: Polish is pronounced [‘pʰʊliʃ] or [pʰʊwʃ]; cold is pronounced ['kʰʊld] or ['kʰʊwd].

Further explanation: As the examples suggest, this merger only occurs when /o/ precedes /I/ (and possibly /r/).

/ʌ/ lowering into //ɑ~/ɔ/ → /ɔ/ merger.

Example: The words mall and maul are both pronounced /'mɔːl/ due to the /ɑ/~/ɔ/ → /ɔ/ merger, and the word mull is almost homophonous with these two, rather than sounding like the usual /mʌl/.

Further explanation: While the /ɑ/ sound may sometimes sound approximately like an /a/ or /ɔ/, a listener could easily distinguish between the two words by noting the length of the vowel, the longest lowered /ʌ/ they encountered was shorter than the shortest /ɑ/~/ɔ/ they encountered. So, to speakers and listeners, the sounds are distinct. Actually, they explained that the longest lowered /ʌ/ they encountered was shorter than the shortest monophthongal /aʊ/ they encountered, but that's okay.

Geographic distribution: Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Southern Dialect

The dialects of American English commonly known collectively in the United States as Southern are spoken throughout the Southern United States, from the southern extremities of Ohio. Maryland, and Delaware, as well as most of West Virginia and Kentucky to the Gulf Coast, and from the Atlantic coast to most of Texas and Oklahoma, and the far eastern section of New Mexico. The Southern dialects make up the largest accent group in the United States. Southern American English can be divided into several regional dialects and sub – dialects. African American Vernacular English (AAVE) has common points with the Southern dialects due to the strong historical ties of African Americans to the region.

OVERVIEW OF SOUTHERN DIALECTS

The dialects collectively known as Southern American English stretch across the south-eastern and south-central United States, but exclude the southernmost areas of Florida and the extreme western and south-western parts of Texas as well as the

Rio Grande Valley (Laredo to Brownsville). This linguistic region includes Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi. North Carolina, South Carolina. Louisiana, and Arkansas, as well as most of Texas, Virginia, Kentucky, Oklahoma, West Virginia, and northern and central Florida. Southern American English dialects can also be found in extreme southern parts of Missouri, Maryland. Delaware, and Illinois.

Southern dialects originated in large part from immigrants from the British Isles who moved to the South in the 17th and 18th centuries. Settlement also included large numbers of Protestants from Ulster. Ireland, and from Scotland. Upheavals such as the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl and World War ||caused mass migrations of those and other settlers throughout the United States.

A list of typical Southern vowels

Pure vowels (Monophthongs)

	Southern phoneme	Example words
/æ/	[æ ~ æ(J)ə]	ast, pal, trap
	[eə ~ æ(J)ə]	ham, lang, yeah
/ɑ:/	[ɑ]	blan, bother, father, lot, top, wasp
/ɒ/	[ɑ]	blan, bother, father, lot, top, wasp
/ ɒ /	[ɑɒ ~ ɔo]	all, dog, bought, loss, saw,taught
/ɔ:/	[ɑɒ ~ ɔo]	all, dog, bought, loss, saw,taught
/ɛ/	[ɛ ~ ɛ (J)ə] preceding a nasal consonant: [ɪ~(J)ə]	dress, met, bread
/ə/	[ə]	about, syrup, arena

/ɪ/	[ɪ ~ ɪ (J)ə]	hit, skim, tip
/iː/	[ɪi]	beam, chic, fleet
/ɨ/	[ɪ~ï~ə]	island, gamut, wasted
/ʌ/	[ɜ]	bus, flood, what
/ʊ/	[ő~y]	book, put, should
/uː/	[ʊu~eu~ő̜y]	food, glue, new
Diphthongs		
/ai/	[ä~äɜ]	bright, shine, try
/aʊ/	[æ(J)ɔ]	now, ouch, scout
/eɪ/	[ɛi]	lake, paid, rein
/ɔɪ/	[oi]	boy, choice, moist
/oʊ/	[ɜʊ~ɜő~ɜy] preceding /l/ or a hiatus: [ɔu]	goat, oh, show
R-colored vowels		
/ɑr/	rhotic Suthern dialects [ɒə̯~ɒə̯] non-rhotic Suthern dialects: [ɒː]	barn, car, park
/ɜər/	rhotic [ɐə̯~ɛ(J)ə̯] non-rhotic: [ɛ(J)ə]	bare, bear, there
/ɜr/	[ə̯~ ɒə̯]	burn, first, herd
/ər/	[ə̯]	better, martyr, doctor
/ɪər/	rhotic: [iə̯] non-rhotic: [iə]	fear, peer, tier
/ɔr/	rhotic: [o(u)ə̯] non-rhotic: [o(u)ə]	hoarse, horse, poor, score, tour, war
/ɔər/		
/ʊər/		
/jʊər/	rhotic: [juə̯~jə̯]	cure, Europe, pure

Few generalizations can be made about Southern pronunciation, popularly known in the United States as a Southern accent, as there is great variation between

the regions of the South (see the different southern American English dialects section below for more information), between older and younger people, and between people of different ethnic backgrounds.

Texan Dialect

There are many phonological processes which are characteristic for Texan Speech. However, those processes are on no account universal in Texan English and each Texan may speak only some of the characteristics displayed below or even none. In addition, other regional dialects in the United States or dialects from other countries may share some of these features. In particular, dialects from other Southern states share many phonological characteristics of the language spoken in Texas.

Phonemic distinctions: In many areas of North America phonemic distinctions rapidly disappear. Although these distinctions are also vanishing in Texas distinctions between /hw/ and /w/, /or/ and /ɔr/, and /ju:/ and /u:/ in words which sound very similar are still very common. In fact, the South is the most conservative area in the United States regarding the retention of phonemic distinctions.

In central, northern and eastern Texas this phonetic phenomenon is especially widespread.

- Absence of the wine-whine merger: Most Texans distinguish the /hw/ of whale and wail with the /w/ of whether and weather. In most dialects of English, /hw/ and /w/ are [w] in all cases.
- Absence of the horse-hoarse merger: Parts of Texas, particularly the Dallas and Lubbock areas, do not merge /or/ and /ɔr/.
- Absence of yod-dropping: Some speakers in the Dallas area distinguish dew /dju:/ and do /du:/.

Monophthongization of /aɪ/ before voiced consonants and word-final position: A vast majority of Texans monophthongize /aɪ/ to /a:/. Thus, buy is realized as[ba:], guy as [ga:], time as [ta:m], side as [sa:d], etc. While this is widespread, it is absent in Austin and southern Texas, especially Corpus Christi.

Monophthongization of lail before voiceless consonants: This is concentrated in central Texas and San Antonio. In these areas, over 50% of/ai/tokens show monophthongization to [a:] before voiceless consonants. This makes words like mite, rice, life, type, etc. sound like [ma:t], [ra:s],[la:f], and [ta:p].

The cot-caught merger: the phonemes /ɔ/ and /ɑ/ are pronounced identically as [ɑ] making cot and caught homophones. The cot-caught merger is found almost everywhere in Texas.

Texan dialects are rhotic; /r/ is pronounced in all environments.

The intrusive /r/: The intrusion of /r/ makes words like Washington sound like War-shingtoji.

The pin-pen merger: Many Texans pronounce the word pen like the word pin. Also other words like ten and tin, Wendy and windy, Ken and kin, send and sinned are pronounced the same.

The relation of /ei/ in bait to /ɛ/ in bet There are four possible relations of the /eɪ/ to /ɛ/:

1. /ɛ/ is lower and backer than /eɪ/ which is the most conservative situation.
2. /ɛ/ has moved to a fronter position but it remains lower.
3. /ɛ/ is higher but remains backer than /eɪ/.
4. /ɛ/ reversed its original relation to /eɪ/ by being higher and fronter.

It appears that the fourth situation is the most widespread in Texas. There are only the southeast of Texas and a few other places in which the fourth situation is not the most common. In parts of Amarillo, Abilene. Austin and Houston, for instance, /ɛ/ is lower and backer than /eɪ/. In a few other areas around Houston /ɛ/ is lower and fronter than /eɪ/.

The glide deletion of /oɪ/ in oil: The glide deletion of loil is much less frequent than the glide deletion of /aɪ/. It mostly appears before /I/ as in oil, toilet, spoil, etc. The only other environment in which the glide deletion of /oɪ/ occasionally comes along is before /s/ as in moisture, voice, oyster, etc. In Texas glide deletion of /oɪ/ was only noted in Odessa and in parts around Dallas. Due to the glide deletion /oɪ/ becomes /o:/.

Black English [as Dialect]

All AAVE Dialect vowels

Phonological (or pronunciation) features that may set AAVE apart from other forms of American English (particularly, General American) include:

- Word-final devoicing of /b/, /d/, and /g/, whereby, for example, cub sounds like cup.
- Reduction of certain diphthong forms to monophthongs, in particular, /aɪ/ is monophthongized to [a] except before voiceless consonants (this is also a feature of many Southern dialects). The vowel sound in boil (hil in General American) is also monophthongized, especially before /I/, making it indistinguishable from ball. Conversely, older speakers in some regions (such as the American South) may even use [oɪ] in words like coach and road that have [oʊ] in General American (i.e. [koɪtʃ], [roɪd]).
- AAVE speakers may not use the fricatives [Θ] (the th in thin) and [ð] (the th of then) that are present in standard varieties of English. The actual alternative phone used depends on the sound's position in a word.
- Word-initially, /Θ/ is normally the same as in other English dialects (so thin is [Θɪn]); in other situations, it may move forward in the mouth, going from dental (with the tongue near the top teeth) to labiodental (with the lower lip near the top teeth).
- Word-initially, /ð/ is [ð~d] (so this may be [dɪs]). In other situations, /ð/ may move forward in the mouth, much like the aformentioned behavior of /Θ/.
- Realization of final ng /ŋ/, the velar nasal, as the alveolar nasal [ŋ] in function morphemes and content morphemes with two or more syllables like -ing, e.g. tripping is pronounced as trippin. This change does not occur in one-syllable content morphemes such as sing, which is [siŋ] ahd not *[sin]. However, singing is [siŋin]. Other examples include wedding → [weɾɪn], morning → [mɔɹnin], nothing →[ʻnʌfin]. Realization of /ŋ/ as [n] in these contexts is commonly found in many other English dialects.

- A marked feature of AAVE is final consonant cluster reduction. There are several phenomena that are similar but are governed by different grammatical rules. This tendency has been used by creolists to compare AAVE to West African languages since such languages do not have final clusters.
- Final consonant clusters that are homorganic (have the same place of articulation) and share the same voicing are reduced. E.g. test is pronounced [tɛs] since /t/ and /s/are both voiceless; hand is pronounced [hæn], since /n/ and /d/ are both voiced; but pant is unchanged, as it contains both a voiced and a voiceless consonant in the cluster. Note also that it is the plosive (/t/ and /d/) in these examples that is lost rather than the fricative or nasal. Speakers may carry this declustered pronunciation when pluralizing so that the plural of test is [tɛsəs] rather than [tɛsts]. The clusters /ft/, /md/, are also affected.
- More often, word-final /sp/, /st/, and /sk/ are reduced, again with the final element being deleted rather than the former.
- For younger speakers, /skr/ also occurs in words that other varieties of English have /str/ so that, for example, street is pronounced [skrit].
- Clusters ending in /s/ or /z/ exhibit variation in whether the first or second element is deleted.
- Similarly, final consonants may be deleted (although there is a great deal of variation between speakers in this regard). Most often, /t/ and /d/ are deleted. As with other dialects of English, final /t/ and /k/ may reduce to a glottal stop. Nasal consonants may be lost while nasalization of the vowel is retained (e.g., find may be pronounced [fä:]). More rarely, /s/ and /z/ may also be deleted.
- Use of metathesised forms like aks for "ask"or graps for "grasp".
- General non-rhotic behavior, in which the rhotic consonant /r/ is typically dropped when not followed by a vowel; it may also manifest as an unstressed [ə] or the lengthening of the preceding vowel. Intervocalic /r/ may also be dropped, e.g. Geneial Ameiican stoiy ([stɔri]) can be pronounced [stɔ.i], though tins doesn't occur across morpheme boundaries. /r/ may also be deleted between a consonant and a back rounded vowel, especially in words like throw, throat, and through.

- /I/ is often vocalized in patterns similar to that of hi (though never between vowels) and, in combination with cluster simplification (see above), can make homophones of toll and toe, fault and fought, and tool and too Homonymy may be reduced by vowel lengthening and by an off-glide [r].
- Before nasal consonants (/m/, /n/, and /ŋ/), /ɛ/ and /ɪ/ are both pronounced [ɪ], making pen and pin homophones This feature is also present in other dialects.
- The distinction between /ɪ/ and /i/ before liquid consonants is frequently reduced, making feel and fill homophones. /ʊər/ and /ɔər/ also merge, making poor and pour homophones.
- In addition to these, there are a handful of multisyllabic words that differ from General American in their stress placement so that, for example, police, guitar and Detroit are pronounced with initial stress instead of ultimate stress.

2.2 Phonetics

Appalachian Dialect

Vowels are pronounced for a slightly longer period of time than those in standard forms of English (e.g., "red" is pronounced "rey-uhd"), and diphthongs can clearly be heard to have two distinct vowels. This tendency, known as the "southern drawl," is also common in Southern American English.

In the two-syllable vowel /aɪ/, the second half of the vowel syllable is often omitted, and is thus pronounced similar to [ɑ:]. In extreme instances, words such as "wire" and "fire" are pronounced so as to completely rhyme with "car."

Lax and tense vowels often neutralize before /I/, making pairs like feellfill and faillfell homophones for speakers in some areas. Some speakers may distinguish between the two sets of words by reversing the normal vowel sound, e.g., feel may sound like fill, and vice versa.

Short "i" and short "e" have the same pronunciation when appearing before "n" or "m" (e.g., "pen" and "pin" are both pronounced "pin"). Adjectives are often used to distinguish between the two (e.g., "ink pen").

Words with the vowel "O" in the middle, tend to be "drawn". For example, the o in home becomes "holm" or "huh-ohm". This drawing of the "o" is common in

southern Ohio and Pennsylvania, and may occur is regions boarding Western Appalachia.

Black English

Final consonant cluster reduction: Final consonants are omitted in clusters where both consonants have the same voicing and place of articulation; this phonological constraint has been argued to have been inherited from the West African languages which the first slaves taken to America spoke

post → pos ’

field, desk, test, hand, kind, contact, mask,

This is a rule-governed process. Clusters are not simplified if not final and if cluster is not uniformally voiced:

acceptable (vs. accep')

pant vs. *pan

If consonant cluster reduction means that AAVE is bad, then Standard English is also bad, since it contains many words with sounds that were pronounced in earlier periods of the language:

knight, knot, gnome, gnostic right, though

bomb, thumb, aplomb wrong, thing

Final consonant devoicing: Final plosives are devoiced, so that /b,d,g/ become /p,t,k/:

cab, feed, pig sound like cap, feet, pick

If this shows that AAVE is bad, then German is also bad:

Rad/Rat, Tod/tot, Bad/bat, Bund/bunt

2.3 Pronunciation

There are also numerous phonological differences between words pronounced in the dialect and their standard equivalents. This most often occurs in the form a stress-shift towards the front of a word (i.e. 'insurance', 'ambulance' as ['inʃuɻəns], [æmbjə 'Iæns]), or in the form of a change in vowel quality. A southern tendency that shifts vowel sounds known as monophthongization has distinctly separated Yat from other port city dialects. Some of the most distinct features are:

– the rounding and lowering in some cases of /a/ and /ɔ/ to [ɔ^{w}] (i.e., 'God,' 'on,' 'talk', become [gɔ^{w}d], [ɔ^{w}n], [tɔ^{w}k])
– the loss of rhoticization on syllables ending in /ɻ/ (i.e. 'heart,' fire' become [hɔ^{w}t], [fajə])
– the full rhoticization of a syllable-internal /ɔj/ (i.e. 'toilet,' becomes ['tɝ˞ɪt]). This feature is more typical in men than in women.
– the loss of frication in the interdental fricatives /Θ/ and /ð/ (i.e. 'the,' 'there,' 'strength' become [də], [dæə], [ʃtɻejnt])
– the substitution of /in/ or /ən/ (spelled -in, -en) for /iŋ/ (spelled -ing)
– the split of the historic short-a class into tense [eə] and lax [æ] versions
– the coil-curl merger of the phonemes /ɔɪ/ and /ɝ˞/, creating the diphthong [ɜɪ], before a consonant, in words such as boil, oil, and spoil, although this feature has mostly receded, except St. Bernard Parish And then there are words which can be pronounced differently, yet according to no particular pattern: 'sink' [ziŋk], 'room' [ɻʊm], 'mayonnaise' [mejnæz], 'museum' [mju'zæm], 'ask' [æks], just to name a few examples.

New Orleans is pronounced [nə'wɔ^{w}lijnz], [ne'wowlijϑnz] or with the /ɻ/ still intact. The N’awlins’ [nɔlɪnz] of the tourist industry and the common [nuwɔɻ'li:nz] are not to be heard among natives. Louisiana is pronounced as the standard [lu'wiziænə] or a slightly reduced [le'wiziænə], but never as [‘luziænə].

2.4 General phonological features of American Dialects

American Dialect [for instance Chicano English] has many features, especially in the phonology, that show the influence of Spanish. Vocabulary includes words like simon meaning "yes", firme meaning "good", flika meaning "picture", vato meaning "guy", and feria meaning "money".

CONSONANT VARIATIONS

The rhythm tends to be syllable-timed, meaning syllables take up roughly the same amount of time with roughly the same amount of stress. Standard American English is stress- timed, meaning that only stressed syllables are evenly timed. Most Romance languages (of which Spanish is a member) are syllable-timed.

/t/ and /d/ is realized as dental stops [t̪] and [d̪] rather than the standard American alveolars [t] and [d] (also found in many Romance languages, including Spanish). Dentalization is also common in European American dialect.

The devoicing of [z] in all environments: Examples: [isi] for easy and [was] for was.

The devoicing of [v] in word-final position: Examples: [lʌf] for love, [hɛf] for have, and [waɪfs] for wives.

Chicano speakers may pronounce /b/ or β̞ instead of /v/:

Examples: very [bɛɹi] or [βɛɹi], invite [im'bait] or [im'βaɪt].

Absence of dental fricatives so that think may be pronounced ['tiŋk], ['fiŋkJ or ['siŋk], Mexican and other Latin American Spanish dialects have an important feature called seseo wherein [Θ] merged with [s].

Little distinction between /j/ and /dʒ/ so that job may sound like yob and yes may sound like jes.

Little distinction of nasals in the syllable coda so that seen and seem are pronounced alike.

/tʃ/ merges with /ʃ/ so sheep and cheap are pronounced alike. An inversion may also happen, causing sheep to sound like /tʃip/ and cheap to sound like /ʃip/.

VOWEL VARIATIONS

Chicano English speakers may merge [æ] and [ə], before the [1].

/ɪŋ/ sounds like /iŋ/: sink sounds like seenk and also sing sounds like seeng.

The distinction between /ɪ/ and /i:/ before liquid consonants is frequently reduced, making feel and fill homophones.

FINAL CONSONANT DELETION

Syllable-final voiceless stops, in consonant clusters, may be pronounced as glottal stops, as unrelleased stops or, more commonly, be deleted.

Most becomes [moʊs] or [moʊsʔ]; Felt becomes [fɛl] or [fɛlʔ], Start becomes [star] or [stɑrʔ].

VOWEL STRUCTURE

Most American dialects do not distinguish the word classes NORTH and FORCE (though Southern dialects like that of Anniston. Alabama, do keep them separate). Like other American English's, the Chicano accent is a flat-BATH dialect. That is, it classes the BATH set with the TRAP set rather than with the PALM set.

Because of phonetic similarity and complementary distribution, stressed and unstressed /e/ (NURSE, LETTER) are the same phonological class. Similarly, stressed and unstressed high-front-peripheral vowels (FLEECE, HAPPY) are classified together as /i:/ (unlike in older RP (cultivated Southern British), where HAPPY ends with the vowel in KIT).

The non-high front vowels before intervocalic /r/ are presumably merged in this dialect (as in the local Anglo dialect and in Chicago, but not in Philadelphia, and various Eastern dialects). That is, Mary, merry, marry are pronounced identically. This phonological collapse has two simplifying effects. First, it eliminates a rather tenuous distinction based on syllable structure rather than segmental features: Mary and merry are elsewhere distinguished phonological ly as /me:.ri/ and /mer.i/.

Since /æ/ does not exist in Spanish, the fall of /ǀ/ cannot be attributed to Spanish influence. On the contrary, the fall of /ǀ/ seems to be a purely English sound change that happens to occur in this particular ethnic group, /u:/ is somewhat front, as in most American and many British dialects. Anglo speech in Southern California shows even greater fronting of /u:/, to such an extent that /u:/ and /ʊ/overlap with /i:/ and /ɪ/ in formant space.

Some realizations of /i:/, /e:/, /o:/ and other long vowels were transcribed as monophthongs. This may be an effect of Spanish, though other American dialects (Minnesota, and Wisconsin, for example) also show monophthongization of these vowels, which are most commonly diphthongs in English. Also, these vowels are underlyingly long monophthongs, so the general effect here is to simplify the system of phonetic implementation, as compared with the /ij, ej, ow, uw/ of many other English dialects.

– Unlike the Inland North (or Great Lakes), the cot-caught merger is present and the Northern Cities Shift is absent.
– Unlike the South, no glide deletion of.
– The Western dialect is not clearly distinct from either Canadian or Midland American English:
  - less Canadian raising of the diphthong than in Canada, but, like Canada, widespread raising of the diphthong.
  - like in Canada and much of the Midland, /o/ allophones may be either rounded or unrounded due to a lack of phonemic distinction between () and (), and these are further back than in the Great Lakes.
  - Unlike the Highland South, is conservative (little fronting) and the cot-caught merger is complete (except j in San Francisco).
– But /u/ is being fronted like in most of North America.
– A minority of speakers have the pin-pen merger.

DISCOURSE AND INTONATION

– **n'at a** "general extender (Note: Pronounced)

Example: "We bought a notebook and some pencils n’at."

Further explanation: Reduction of and that, which can mean "along with some other stuff," "the previous was just an example of more general case," or (at least in Glasgow, Scotland) something like "I know this isn’t stated as clearly as it might be, but you know what I mean." Geographic distribution: Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Origins: Possibly Scots-lrish. in the regular speech and narratives of Scottish coal miners in Glasgow, a principal area from which Scottish settlers emigrated to Northern Ireland, and from there, to the American colonies.

– **Falling intonation at the end of questions.** Example: "Are you painting your garage?" (with pitch rising in intonation up to just before the last syllable and then falling precipitously).

Further explanation: Speakers who use this intonation pattern do not do so categorically, but instead also end many questions with a rising pitch. Such

speakers typically use falling pitch for yes/no questions for which they already are quite sure of the answer. So, a speaker uttering the above example is simply confirming what they think they already know, that yes, the person they're talking to is painting his/her garage.

Geographical distribution: Most common in areas of heavy German settlement, especially southeastern Pennsylvania – hence its nickname, the "Pennsylvania Dutch question" – but also found elsewhere in Pennsylvania, including Pittsburgh Origins: German.

Short Exclusions of the Chapter 2

The following features are also associated with one or more dialects of Southern:

- The fronting of word-final to [n] in an unstressed syllable, so that singing /'sɪŋɪŋ/ becomes singin ['siŋɪn].
- The merger of [ɛ] and [ɪ] before nasal consonants, so that pen and pin are pronounced the same, but the pin-pen merger is not found in New Orleans, or Miami (which does not fall within the Southern dialect region). This sound change has spread beyond the South in recent decades and is now found in parts of the Midwest and West as well.
- Lax and tense vowels often neutralize before /l/, making pairs like feel/fill and fail/fell homophones for speakers in some areas of the South. Some speakers may distinguish between the two sets of words by reversing the normal vowel sound, e.g., feel in Southern may sound like fill, and vice versa.
- The diphthong /aɪ/ becomes monophthongized to [a:]:
    - Most speakers exhibit this feature at the ends of words and before voiced consonants but not before voiceless consonants; some in fact exhibit Canadian-stvle raising before voiceless consonants, so that ride is [ra:d] and wide is [wa:d], but right is[rəɪt] and white is [мəɪt], Some speakers throughout the South exhibit backing to [ɑ:e] in environments where monophthongization does not take place.

    - Others monophthongize /aɪ/ in all contexts, as in the stereotyped pronunciation "nahs whaht rahs" for nice white rice; these speakers are mostly found in an Appalachian area that includes eastern Tennessee, western North Carolina and Northern Alabama (the "Inland South"), as well as in Central Texas. Elsewhere in the South, this pronunciation is stigmatized as a working class feature.

– The "Southern Drawl", breaking of the short front vowels in the words "pat", "pet", and "pit": these develop a glide up from their original starting position to [j], and then in some cases back down to schwa: /æ/ → [æjə]; /ɛ/ → [ɛjə]; /ɪ/ → [ɪjə].
– The "Southern Shift", a chain shift triggered by the monophthongization of /aɪ/: the nuclei of /ɛ/ and /ɪ/ move to become higher and fronter, so that instead of [ɛjə], /ɛ/ becomes a tenser [e(j)ə] and /ɪ/ → [iə]. This process is most common in heavily stressed syllables. At the same time, the nuclei of the traditional front upgliding diphthongs are relaxed: /ǀ/ moves towards [ɪi] and leil moves towards [ɛi] or even lower and/or more retracted.
– The "Back Upglide Shift": /aʊ/ shifts towards [æə~eo] which pulls /ɔ/ into its former position [ɑɒ~oo]. Especially before /ǀ/, /ɔɪ/ often loses its glide e.g. boil /bɔɪǀ/ [bɔːɬ].
– The back vowels lul in goose and lout in goat shift considerably forward.
– The distinction between the vowels sounds of words like caught and cot or stalk and stock is mainly preserved. In much of the South, the vowel found in words like stalk and caught has developed into a diphthong [ɑɒ], although some words like allmay be pronounced with an unrounded vowel [ɑːɬ].
– The nucleus of/ɑr/ start is often rounded to [ɒr].
– /z/ becomes [d] before /n/, for example [wʌdnt] wasn't, [bidnis] bɪsiness, but hasn't is sometimes still pronounced ['hæzənt] because there already exists a word hadn't pronounced [hædnt].
– Many nouns are stressed on the first syllable that would be stressed on the second syllable in other accents. These include police, cement, Detroit,

Thanksgiving, insurance, behind, display, hotel, motel, recycle, TV, guitar, July, and umbrella.

- In some regions of the south, there is a merger of [ɔr] and [ɑr], making cord and card, for and far, form and farm etc. homophones.
- The I's in the words walk and talk are occasionally pronounced, causing the words talk and walk to be pronounced /wɑlk/ and /talk/ by some Southerners. A sample of that pronunciation can be found at http://www.utexas.edu/courses/linguistics/resources/socioling/talkmap/talk-nc.html It is also possible, however, that this is a mishearing of the unusual Southern upgliding /ɔ:/. This may sound to outsiders like /ɑ:/ followed by a vocalized /l/.
- Some older speakers have a phenomenon that resembles the trap-bath split. Where General American accents prescribe /æ/ and considerably liberal accents have /ɑ:/, Southern American English may have a new vowel diphthong /æɪ/, as in aunt/æɪnt/ and gas /gæɪs/.

Chapter 3

Lexical features, Vocabulary and Grammar of American Dialects

3.1. Sample Vocabulary Appalachian Dialect

The following is a list of words that occur in the Appalachian dialect. These words are not exclusive to the region, but tend to occur with greater frequency than in other English dialects.

- Afeared: afraid.
- Airish: cool or chilly
- Ary: any
- Bald: n. a treeless mountain summit (See Appalachian balds).
- Ball-hoot: v. to drive recklessly fast on dangerous rural or mountain roads; derived from an old logging term for rolling or skidding logs downhill.
- Blinds: n. window shades or window shutters. While blinds usually refers to window shades, in Appalachia and the greater Midland dialect, it can also refer to window shutters.
- Blinked: sour, rotten
- Brickie: brittle.
- Caps: popcorn
- Cat-head: a large biscuit.
- Chancy: doubtful.
- Chaw: chewing tobacco.
- Clean: verb modifier that is used to mean entirely completing an action. Can be used in place of 'all the way1, e.g., "He knocked it clean off the table."
- Coke: short for Coca-Cola, but applied to all flavored, carbonated sodas, regardless of brand, flavor or type. Coke is used primarily in the southern half of the dialect region, whereas the more northern- influenced pop receives more usage in Eastern Kentucky, West Virginia and most of Southwest Virginia.
- Cornpone: Skillet cornbread made without eggs.
- Counterpane: bedspread.

- Cove: a valley between two ridges.
- Discomfit: v. inconvenience.
- Directly: later, after a while, when it becomes convenient, soon, immediately (largely depending on context).
- Fireboard: Mantel.
- Fit: used in place of the word "fought".
- Fixin':
  - a serving or helping of food. Can I get a fixin' of dumplings?,
  - an event, party or social function where food is served. They're having a fixin' at church next Friday.
  - about to, They're fixin' to get hitched.
- Gaum: n. mess. gaum (gôm); also used as a transitive verb: "to gaum up" (i.e., "to mess up").
- Flannel cake: pancake.
- Haint: used in the context of "ghost" or "spirit" not the derivation of "aint"
- Holler: n. hollow, as in a valley between two hills, e.g., "...I...continue to travel between hollers and cities."
- Hull: v. shell, as in to shell beans.
- III: bad-tempered.
- Jacket: n. vest.
- Jarfly: cicada.
- Kyarn: (Carrion) Dead flesh, such as roadkill. That smells like kyarn.
- Lamp oil/coal oil: kerosene.
- Lay out: to be truant (e.g., to "lay out of school" or "lay out of work").
- Meeting: a gathering of people for religious purposes.
- Nary/Nary'ne: none
- Palings: fence posts.
- Piece: distance (e.g., "He'd have went up the road a piece to get on the main road").
- Piece: n. snack.

- Plum or plumb: completely (e.g., "Son, you're plum crazy")
- Poke: n. brown paper bag
- Poke sallet: n. a type of salad made from boiled greens (usually pokeweed). Spelled variously salat, salit, and similar variations.
- Pokestock/polkstalk: n. a single shot shotgun; historically a rifle with an unusually long barrel popular with Kentucky frontiersmen.
- Quare: Queer (totally unrelated to sexuality), strange, odd (as in, "He's shore a quare 'un").
- Reckon: suppose. I reckon you don't like soup beans.
- Right smart: good deal of (e.g., "a right smart piece" for "a long way").
- Sigogglin: not built correctly, crooked, out of balance
- Skift: dusting of snow.
- Slap: full, complete (e.g., "...a fall in the river, which went slap-right and straight down").
- Smart: hard-working, "work-brickle." Example: “She’s a smart womern – always a-cleanin and a-sewin and a-cookin fer ‘er famly.”
- Sop: gravy.
- Sprinqhouse: n. a building (usually positioned over a stream) used for refrigeration before the advent of refrigerators.
- Sugar tree: n. Sugar Maple tree.
- Swan: (also swanny) swear; declare to be true.
- Toboggan: n. A knit hat or tuque; rarely used to describe a type of sled.
- Tow sack: burlap sack.
- Whistle pig: n. groundhog.
- Yonder: a directional adverb meaning distant from both the speaker and the listener (e.g., "Look over yonder").

Background Dialect

[= African American Vernacular English (AAVE)]

AAVE does not have a vocabulary separate from other varieties of English. However AAVE speakers do use some words which are not found in other

varieties and furthermore use some English words in ways that differ from the standard dialects.

A number of words used in standard English may also have their origin in AAVE or at least in the West African languages that contributed to AAVE's development. These include;

banana (Mandingo)

yam (Mandingo)

okra (Akan)

gumbo (Western Bantu)

A discussion of AAVE vocabulary might proceed by noting that words can be seen to be composed of a form (a sound signal) and a meaning. In some cases both the form and the meaning are taken from West African sources. In other case the form is from English but the meaning appears to be derived from West African sources. Some cases are ambiguous and seem to involve what the late Fredric Cassidy called a multiple etymology (the form can be traced to more than one language - e.g. "cat" below).

West African Form + West African Meaning:

bogus 'fake/fraudulent' cf. Hausa boko, or boko-boko 'deceit, fraud'.

hep, hip 'well informed, up-to-date' cf. Wolof hepi, hi pi 'to open one's eyes, be aware of what is going on'.

English Form + West African Meaning:

cat 'a friend, a fellow, etc.' cf. Wolof -kat (a suffix denoting a person)

cool 'calm, controlled' cf. Mandingo suma 'slow' (literally 'cool')

dig 'to understand, appreciate, pay attention' cf. Wolof deg, dega 'to understand, appreciate'

bad 'really good'

In West African languages and Caribbean creoles a word meaning 'bad' is often used to mean 'good' or 'alot/intense'. For instance, in Guyanese Creole mi laik am bad, yu noomeans 'I like him alot'. Dalby mentions Mandingo (Bambara) a nyinata

jaw-ke 'She's very pretty.' (literally 'She is beautiful bad.'); cf. also Krio (a creole language spoken in West Africa) mi gud baad.

Loan Translations:

Another interesting set of vocabulary items are called loan translations or "caiques". In such cases a complex idea is expressed in some West African language by a combination of two words. In AAVE these African words appear to have been directly translated and the same concept is expressed by the combination of the equivalent English items

bad-eye 'nasty look', cf. Mandingo, nye-jugu 'hateful glance' (lit. 'bad-eye')

big-eye 'greedy1, cf. Ibo. anya uku 'covetous' (literally 'big-eye').

Any discussion of AAVE vocabulary must take note of the many recent innovations which occur in this variety and which tend to spread rapidly to other varieties of English. Most recent innovations are not enduring. These lexical items give regionally and generationally restricted varieties of AAVE their particular texture.

Pennsylvania Dialect

To the extent that northeastern Pennsylvanian speakers do pronounce pairs like Don and dawn differently, they pronounce the word on to rhyme with Don, not with dawn (i.e., they use the /o/ vowel rather than lol). In this regard, the accent patterns with the northern accents, not with the rest of Pennsylvania. With respect to the phenomenon of "positive anymore". Northeast Pennsylvania English patterns with the Midland rather than the North: sentences like "Cars are sure expensive anymore" and "It's hard to find a job anymore" are grammatical here, but not in the North.

Pittsburgh Dialect

- babushka n. headscarf

Further explanation: In Russian, Slovak, and many other Slavic languages, the word babushka (a familial/cute extension of the word baba) means "grandmother" or (endearingly) "old woman." In Pittsburgh English, the word also denotes a type of headscarf that might be worn by an old woman [41].

Geographic distribution: Predominantly used in the northeast United States, most heavily in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan.

Origins: Russian (see above citation) and other Slavic roots.

Note: It is sometimes used as a derogatory term for an elderly woman, similar to calling someone an "old hag."

- (baby) buggy n. baby carriage, or shopping cart.

Geographic distribution: mentions that speakers in a large portion of Pennsylvania use the term, but that it is very common in the Pittsburgh area[,]...[in] the adjoining counties of Ohio and on the lower Kanawha.

- the 'Burgh n. Pittsburgh.

Geographic distribution: Pittsburgh and surrounding areas.

- berm n. Edge of the road, curb. While this is more often referred to as the shoulder of the road, berm is an accepted alternative.
- carbon oil n. kerosene.

Geographic distribution: From the western edge of the Alleghenies to beyond the Ohio line (see above citation).

- chipped ham n. very thinly sliced chopped ham loaf for use on sandwiches.

Example: “Jim Miller would like to have a chipped-ham sandwich."

Geographic distribution: A trade-name specific to Pittsburgh and surrounding areas.

- city chicken n. cubes of pork loin and/or veal on a short wooden skewer which are breaded, then fried or baked.

Example: “Jim Miller is having city chicken for dinner.”

Geographic distribution: Southwestern Pennsylvania and Northern West Virginia.

Origins: Not entirely known, but rumored to have begun during the Depression Era, when people took meat scraps and fashioned a makeshift drumstick out of them.

- cruds, crudded milk, orcruddled milk n. cottage cheese [39].

Geographic distribution: claims these forms are used from the western edge of the Alleghenies to beyond the Ohio line; and they are restricted to southwestern Pennsylvania.

Origins: Scots-Irish.

- dippy adj. "anything you can dip something in – gravy, coffee, etc.".

A way of cooking something ~ "Give me 2 dippy eggs says Jim Miller" (eggs over light)

Example: “I like my eggs dippy.”

Geographic distribution: Pennsylvania (see above citation).

- grinnie n. chipmunk.

Geographic distribution: From the western edge of the Alleghenies to beyond the Ohio line (see above author).

- gumband n. rubber band.

Geographic distribution: Southwestern Pennsylvania

- hap n. comfort ; comforter, quilt.

Examples: to mean "comfort," “He’s been in poor hap since his wife died”; to mean "comforter, quilt," “It was cold last night but that hap kept me warm.”

Geographic distribution: hap is used for "comfort" in western Pennsylvania; and a "quilt" is known as a hap only in western Pennsylvania.

- hoagie n. a submarine sandwich. The term is used throughout Pennsylvania, and is thought to have originated in Philadelphia.

Geographic distribution: Used “chiefly in PA and NJ” but is “becoming more widely recognized” (see above citation or hoagie article).

- jag v. prick, stab, jab; tease.

Further explanation: The form is often followed by off to mean (as a verb) "to annoy, irritate, play tricks on; to disparage; to reject", or (as a noun) "an annoying or irritating person;" as well as around to mean "annoy, tease, or engage in a frivolous endeavor." These phrases are probably influenced by jack off and jack around, respectively. "Jus’ jaggin" is a common expression, the same as Standard "just kidding".

Geographic distribution: Chiefly Pennsylvania, especially southwestern Pennsylvania, but also portions of Appalachia.

Origins: Scots-lrish.

- jagger n. any small, sharp-pointed object or implement.

Further explanation: The word applies mainly to thorns and briars, and is used as an adjective to describe bushes with thorns or briars, as in a jagger bush (see above citation), or."I got a jagger in my finger".

Geographic distribution: Chiefly Pennsylvania.

Origins: Scots-Irish.

- jimmies n. small bits of confectionery candies, put on cakes, doughnuts, or ice cream.
- jumbo n. bologna lunch meat. The wrapper on the meat was marked "JUMBO Bologna."

Geographic distribution: Southwestern Pennsylvania.

- Kennywood's open phrase Used in situations to inform someone that their fly is open, i.e., pants zipper is down. Prevents embarrassment for that individual. Kennywood refers to the famous Kennywood Park located in West Mifflin, Pennsylvania.
- kolbusy or kolbassi n. sausage.

Further explanation: Pronounced [kolbosi] or [kowbasi]; is a variant of the more common pronunciation of kielbasa, which is pronounced [kiəlbasə] or [kılbasə].

Geographic distribution: Chiefly Pennsylvania.

Origins: The OED (2014) lists kolbasa as a variable pronunciation of kielbasa, and notes that the former pronunciation is Polish and the latter Russian.

- neb v. "to put one's 'neb' [nose] into a discourse or argument intrusively or impertinently; to pry, to nose around; hence v. phr neb out to mind one's own business"; n. busybody.

Geographic distribution: Pennsylvania,

- neb-nose or nebby-nose (also nebshit) n. the kind of person who is always poking into people's affairs.

Geographic distribution: Chiefly Pennsylvania.

- nebby adj. given to prying into the affairs of others; nosy.

Geographic distribution: Pennsylvania, especially the southwest portion of the state.

Origins: Scots-Irish (see above citations). pop n. soda.

- redd up (also ret, rid(d)) v. "also with out, to tidy up, clean up, or out (a room, house, cupboard, etc.); to clean house, tidy up; hence v bl. redding up housecleaning; tidying up".

Example: "Yinz better redd up this room."

Geographic distribution: Dressman notes that it is common to the Pittsburgh area and throughout Pennsylvania, but less so in Philadelphia. It is also scattered about New England States and in New Brunswick, though its occurrence is heaviest in Pennsylvania.

Origins: Scots-Irish. It was brought to the USA by Scots. It's almost certainly of Scandinavian/Viking origin; the Danish "rydde op" means to clean up. "Redd up" and its associated variants probably entered the English language during the Danish occupation of Britain, roughly a thousand years ago.

- slippy adj. slippery.

Example: "Be careful going down them steps because they’re real slippy."

Geographic distribution: Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Origins: Scots-Irish.

- spicket n. alternate pronunciation of spigot, specifically an outdoor faucet used to connect to a garden hose.

Example: "Go redd up at the spicket before dinner."

- the "punctual" whenever sub. conj. "at the time that".

Example: "My mother, whenever she passed away, she had pneumonia."

Further explanation: punctual descriptor refers to the use of the word for "a onetime momentary event rather than in its two common uses for a recurrent event or a conditional one" (see above citation).

Geographic distribution: In the Midlands and the South.

Origins: Scots-Irish (see above citation).

Texas Dialect

blue norther

The term blue norther refers to a weather phenomenon that often appears in the temperate zones all over the world (including Texas). It is a quickly moving autumnal cold front which drops the temperatures rapidly and brings along rain and after a period of blue skies and cold weather. The derivation of this term is unclear. Some people say that the term refers to a norther (borealis/north wind) which sweeps "out of the Panhandle under a blue-black sky" - from the heat to the blue black cold. Others suggest that blue norther denotes the color of the sky that appears after the bad weather front has passed. Yet others say that people associate blue with the cold that the front brings along. Variants of this term are blue whistler, blue darter and blue blizzard. Whereas the term blue whistler is also used in Texas the two latter terms are from out of state. Blue norther, however, is purely Texan. Since Spanish times, the effect of blue norther has been noted in Texas and this phenomenon has often been exaggerated. But contrary to the belief of many people blue norther is not unique to Texas Dialect.

dogie

calf.

fixin' to

a future-tense modal verb analogous to "about to" in much of American English.

howdy

a general greeting; a shortened form of "How do you do?"

looker

an attractive woman

maverick

stray or unbranded.

motte/mot

The term motte or mot refers to a small grove of trees in open grasslands. It was first introduced by Irish immigrants in the 1830s. They brought this term from Ireland where people used to call similar woods this way. In the United States one hears of motte only in Texas.

pole cat

a skunk

shinnery

Shinnery is a well-known term in western Texas. It denotes a shinnery oak or a sand shinnery oak. These trees grow in Texas, western Oklahoma, and eastern New Mexico. The term shinnery can also mean the area or landscape in which shinnery oaks grow.

tank

stock pond.

Y'all

a second-person plural pronoun; a shortened form of "you all"

(Over) Yonder

an adverbial used to designate a faraway place; analogous to "over there"

Western Dialect

- Unlike the Inland North (or Great Lakes), the cot-caught merger is present and the Northern Cities Shift is absent.
- Unlike the South, no glide deletion of.
- The Western dialect is not clearly distinct from either Canadian or Midland American English:
  - less Canadian raising of the diphthong than in Canada, but, like Canada, widespread raising of the diphthong.

- like in Canada and much of the Midland, /o/ allophones may be either rounded or unrounded due to a lack of phonemic distinction between () and (), and these are further back than in the Great Lakes.
- Unlike the Highland South, is conservative (little fronting) and the cot-caught merger is complete (except j in San Francisco).

- But lul is being fronted like in most of North America.
- A minority of speakers have the pin-pen merger.

Black Dialect

AAVE shares much of its lexicon with other varieties of English, particularly that of informal and Southern dialects. There are some notable differences between the two, however. It has been suggested that some of the vocabulary unique to AAVE has its origin in West African languages, but etymology is often difficult to trace and, without a trail of recorded usage, the suggestions below cannot be considered proven: in many cases, the postulated etymologies are not recognized by linguists or the Oxford English Dictionary.

- dig from Wolof dSgg or degga, meaning “to understand/appreciate”™ (It may instead come from Irish dtuia.)m‘
- yazz.
- tote
- bad-mouth, a caique from Mandinka

AAVE also has words that either are not part of most other American English dialects or have strikingly different meanings from their common usage in these other dialects. For example, there are several words in AAVE referring to white people which are not part of mainstream American English; these include gray as an adjective for whites (as in gray dude), possibly from the color of Confederate uniforms; and paddy, an extension of the slang use for "Irish".™ "Ofay." which is pejorative, is another general term for a white person: it might derive from the Ibibio word afia, which means "light-colored,”; or from the Yoruba word ofe, spoken in hopes of disappearing from danger such as that posed by European traders; or via Pig Latin from “foe". However, most dictionaries simply refer to

this word as having an unknown etymology.? Kitchen refers to the particularly curly or kinky hair at the nape of the neck, and siditty or sedditv means snobbish or bourgeois.

AAVE has also contributed various words and phrases to other varieties of English; including chill out, main squeeze, soul, funky, and threads.

3.2. General Grammar

Southern American English has unique grammatical features which do not occur in Standard English, and as settlement patterns indicate, Texas Dialect shares many of these characteristics with other states of the American South.

1. Y'all

No other grammatical feature has been more associated with Southern American English than y'all as the second person plural pronoun. As a list of phonological and grammatical features documented in Texas by Guy Bailey shows, it is also used frequently in Texan English. The term y'all first appeared in the Southern Literary

Messenger in April 1858. The term was used by an American humorist of the mid-nineteenth century, "Mozis Addums," penname of George William Bagby, describing the crowded conditions in the Washington D.C. boarding house where he was living:

> "Packin uv pork in a meet house, which you should be keerful it don't git hot at the bone, and prizin uv tobakker, which y'all's Winstun nose how to do it, givs you a parshil idee, but only parshil".

The origin of y'all is an often debated question. Some clearly see it as a contraction of you and all whereas others like Montgomery point out the primary stress on you and the secondary on all would create you'll as a contraction instead of y'all. Thus sees it as a grammaticalized form of you coming from the Scots-Irish ye aw. This leads to the next question of y'all being used as only plural or also singular. Montgomery describes y'all as having the following six properties:

1. a paradigmatic gap for plural you

2. an associative plural, including individuals associated, but not present with the singular addressee

3. an institutional plural addressed to one person representing a group

4. an unknown potential referent

5. a form used in direct address in certain contexts (e.g., partings, greetings, invitations, and vocatives) ..

6. a stylistic choice distinct in tone (e.g., in intimacy, familiarity, and informality).

Most linguists, however, agree on y'all being used as the second person plural pronoun and therefore no singular reference is possible. (Note that an associative plural y'all might be used in the context of a single person, but its reference is always strictly plural.)

2. Fixin to

(a) It's fixin to rain

(b) I was fixin to come but I got held up

It is not clear where the term comes from and when it was first used. According to dialect dictionaries, fixin to is associated with southern speech and is most often defined as being a synonym of preparing to or intending to. In sentences like (a) fixin to may mean something like "about to" or "planning to". Sentence (b) expresses more the intention of doing something, in this case the speaker intended to come. However, some linguists, regard it as being a quasimodal rather than a verbfollowed by an infinitive. As can be found in the Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States, the term is used by 57% of the population of Upper Texas and by 43% in Lower Texas. It is a term used by all social groups, whereas one has to keep in mind that it is more often used by less educated people with a lower social status than by members of the educated upper classes. Furthermore, it is more common in the speech of younger people than in that of older people.1111 Another interesting point is that the term is prevalent in rural areas rather than in urban areas]. In addition, the term functions as an indicator for being from the South. As Ching points out, the precise meaning of the term "depends much upon its inherent

linguistic meaning, which changes in shades of meaning with lexical and syntactic choice". In other words, the term is used in different situations with a variety of meanings. Nevertheless, the meaning is mostly clear to speaker and addressee when used in a particular situation and when both actors are familiar with the term fixin to.

3. Multiple modals

Standard English has a strict word order. In the case of modal auxiliaries Standard English is restricted to a single modal per verb phrase. Nevertheless, Texans have constructions which combine more than one modal auxiliary within the same verb phrase: I might could do that These constructions are used by every social class and are, as proven by the data of the Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States, predominately used in the eastern parts of Texas (Upper East Texas and Lower East Texas). There are different opinions on which class preferably uses the term. Atwood, for example, finds that educated people try to avoid multiple modals. Considering all findings of different linguists who examined multiple modals in Southern speech, it can be said that multiple modals are quite widespread and are not particularly stigmatized.

Possible Double Modals used by Texans

may could	might could	might supposed to
may can	might oughta	might've used to
may will	might can	might woulda had oughta
may should	might should	oughta could
may supposed to	might would	better can
may need to	might better	should oughta
may used to	might had better	used to could
	can might	musta coulda
	could might	would better

As the table shows, there are only possible combinations of an epistemic modal followed by deontic modals in multiple modal constructions. Deontic modals express permissibility with a range from obligated to forbidden and are mostly

used as markers of politeness in requests whereas epistemic modals refer to probabilities from certain to impossible. Multiple modals combine these two modalities.

The origin of multiple modals is controversial. Some say it is a development of Modern English, others found out that double modals already existed in Middle English and again others suggest that it derives from Scots-lrish settlers.

4. Other grammatical features

Beside the three already mentioned grammatical features, there are a few others which aren't used or are only rarely used today:

1. a-prefixing Examples:

(a) I know he wasn't a-telling the truth

(b) He come a-running out there and got shot

(c) She kept a-running

(d) She continued a-crying

The construction is called a-prefixing, because the a is seen as a prefix placed before the - ing participle form. Most often it occurs with progressive forms as it is the case in sentence (a). Other syntactic contexts in which a-prefixing occurs are as in sentence (b), with movement words such as come, go and take off or together with words of starting and continuing such as in sentence (c) and (d). Together with these words it functions as a type of adverbial complement to the verb. Phonological restrictions of a-prefixing include that only verbs accented on the initial syllable can occur in the form of a plus verb-ing. a-followin but not *a-discoverin. Moreover, it cannot occur on - ing forms functioning as nouns or adjectives. Thus, sentences like*the movie was a-charmin' are ungrammatical. A can only be a prefix of verbs or complements of verbs with -ing. As Frazer found out a-prefixing is more likely to be found in the speech of elderly people and might therefore disappear in a few years.

2. Plural verbal -s

Our father and mother sends you their blessings.

This kind of grammatical feature is most often used in Black English Vernacular but also white people in Texas use it. Bailey, Maynor and Cukor-Avila examined that 70% of the black population and 43% of the white population put an -s on the third person plural in folk speech.831 But here again the use of the third person singular marker -s in the plural is also declining in frequency.

3. Existential it

(a) It is nothing more to say.

(b) It is a friend of mine who likes to hear that kind of music.

. Standard English would prefer: There is nothing more to say and in the second example: There is a friend of mine who likes to hear that kind of music.

Accordingly in Texan English some people use existential it instead of existential there. Existential there is used to say that something exists rather than saying where it is located. The construction can be found in Middle English as in Marlowe's Edward II: “Cousin, it is no dealing with him now”.

4. liketa

I liketa died

Is a term coming from Appalachian English. It is most often seen as a synonym of almost. Accordingly, the phrase I liketa died would be I almost died in Standard English. With this meaning, liketa can be seen as a verb modifier for actions that are on the verge of happening. Furthermore, it is more often used in figurative than in a literal sense.

5. Perfective or completive done

(a) She has done left

(b) I done told you not to mess up

The past participle form of do together with a past verb form may be used to emphasize the whole action as in sentence (b) or to put emphasis on the completion of the action as in sentence (a). The form cannot only be found in Texan English, but also in other varieties of Southern American English and African American vernaculars.

Verb-Grammar

Appalachian Dialect

CONJUGATION OF THE VERB "TO BE"

The conjugation of the verb "to be" is different from that of standard English in several ways, and there is sometimes more than one form of the verb "to be" acceptable in Appalachian English. The use of the word ain't is one of the most salient features of this dialect. While "ain't" is used to some extent in most American English dialects, it is used with much greater frequency in the Appalachian dialect.

Whereas standard English makes no distinction aside from context between the singular and plural forms of the second person past tense forms of the verb "to be," using "you were" for both, Appalachian English has "you was" and "y'all were," making for a more balanced paradigm with "was" used for the singular past tense in all cases, and "were" used for the plural. Singular forms of the verb "to be" are often used with compound pronouns, as in "Them is the ones I want" and "Him and her is real good folks." "Is you?" is sometimes used instead of "Are you?" Pluralized concrete nouns used as abstract nouns call for a singular form of the verb, i.e. "Apples is good for you." "Was" is sometimes used in the third person plural, i.e. "They was there."

Black English

Negative concord and negative inversion (auxiliary with incorporated negative particle precedes subject):

Ain’t no hangman gonna put a rope around me.

Ain’t nothin went down.

‘Nothing happened.’

Can’t nobody beat em.

’Nobody can beat them.’

Didn’t nobody see it.

‘Nobody saw it.

Don’t nobody say nothin about that.

Wasn’t nobody there but me an’ him.

We have already seen that criticisms of negative concord as ‘illogical’ are unfair. (See also the Pullum article on this.)

Copula (the verb be) is used/omitted in some very non-standard ways:

(1) He workin/sick. = He is working/sick.

(2) He be workin/sick. = He is working/sick, (habitual)

(3) He been married. = He has been married for a long time.

This might be the main reason for remarks like the following:

"a language that has no right or wrong expressions ... and no discernible rules." (African American columnist William Raspberry, Washington Post article Ebonics Debate: Who will benefit?)

Copula omission in (1) is subject to rules, for instance:

-Omission not possible with non-finite be\

(4) a. You have to be cool. b. * You have to cool,

c. You will be here. d. *She will here.

– Omission not possible in past tense:

(5) I was here yesterday. *I here yesterday.

– Omission not possible with the form am:

(6) I’m here. // *1 here.

– Omission impossible if copula is moved in front of the subject:

(7) Is that right? // That right?

– Omission of copula impossible if it is sentence-final:

(8) You ain’t no leader. He is. // *He.

Copula omission corresponds closely to contracted is/are in standard English cf. (8) (vs. the fact that *He’s. is not a possible sentence). See the Pullum article for more details.

In fact, since AAVE has obligatory copula in some contexts, it might be more accurate to speak of a zero copula in (1) than of an omitted copula.

People who think that zero copulas prove that AAVE is ‘bad’, ‘lazy’, ‘ruleless’ etc. would, if they were consistent, apply the same description to other languages that have zero copulas in at least some situations.

But, needless to say, AAVE detractors are unaware of such facts.

Other Verb Forms

Appalachian Dialect

OTHER VERB FORMS

Sometimes the past participle of a strong verb such as "do" is used in place of the past tense. For example, "I done it already" instead of "I did it already" or in the case of the verb "see," "I seen" instead of "I saw." "Went" is often used instead of "gone" as the past participle of the verb "to go." She had went to Ashland. Less frequently, "gone" is used as the simple past tense. I gone down to the meeting, but wasn't nobody there."Done" is used with the past tense (or a past participle commonly used as a past tense, such as "gone") to express action just completed, as in, "I done went/gone to the store".

Some English strong verbs are occasionally conjugated as weak verbs in Appalachian English, i.e. "knowed," and "seed."

The construction "don't...no" is used with transitive verbs to indicate the negative, i.e. "He don't know no better." This is commonly referred to as the double negative, and is either negative or emphatically negative, never positive. "None" is often used in place of "any," as in "I don't have none."

Verb forms for the verb "to lay" are used instead of forms of the verb "to lie." For example, "Lay down and hush."

Participles found in present tense progressive aspect verb forms often have a vowel prefix commonly written with an "a" followed by a hyphen, and this is pronounced as a schwa sound. An example is "I'm a- goin' now."

"Might could" is sometimes used where a speaker of standard English would say, "might be able to" or "could maybe."

Measurements such as "foot" and "mile" often retain their singular form even when used in the plural sense. For example, "That stick is 3 foot long", or "We need 6 foot of drywall". "Foot" in the singular is standard in UK English.

3.3. Other Grammatical Forms

Appalachian Dialect

DOUBLE NOUNS

1 Some nouns are spoken in pairs, the first noun describing the seemingly redundant second noun, as in "hound dog", "Cadillac car", "widow woman", "toad frog", "biscuit bread", or "rifle gun".

PRONOUNS AND DEMONSTRATIVES

"Them" is sometimes used in place of "those" as a demonstrative in both nominative and oblique constructions. Examples are "Them are the pants I want" and "Give me some of them crackers." Oblique forms of the personal pronouns are used as nominative when more than one is used (cf. French moi et toi). For example, "Me and him are real good friends" instead of "He and I are really good friends." Accusative case personal pronouns are used as reflexives in situations that, in American English, do not typically demand them (e.g., "I'm gonna get me a haircut"). The -self/- selves forms are used almost exclusively as emphatics, and then often in non-standard forms (e.g.,"the preacher hisself'). Second person pronouns are often retained as subjects in imperative sentences (e.g., "You go an' get you a cookie").

Pronouns and adjectives are sometimes combined with "'un" (meaning "one"), such as "young'un" to mean "child", "big'un" to mean big one, and "you' uns" to mean "you all". Young'n' and 'big'n' also are commonplace in northern UK vernacular English.

The word element "-ever" is sometimes reversed in words such as "whatever" ("everwhat"), "whoever" ("everwho"), and "however" ("everhow"), but the usage remains the same (e.g., "Everwho did this is in big trouble").

The word right can be used with adjectives (e.g., "a right cold morning") and along with its standard use with adverbs can also be used with adverbs of manner

and time (e.g., "right loud" or "right often").1231 This is an acceptable formation in some areas of UK English.

3.4. Tense and aspect

Although AAVE does not necessarily feature the preterite marker of other English varieties (that is, the -ed of worked), it does feature an optional tense system with four past and two future tenses or (because they indicate tense in degrees) phases.

Phases/Tenses of AAVE		
Phase		Example
Past	Pre-recent	I been flown it
	Recent	I done fly it
	Pre-present	I did fly it
	Past Inceptive	I do fly it
Present		I be flying it
Future	Immediate	I'm a-fly it
	Post-immediate	I'm a-gonna fly it
	Indefinite future	I gonna fly it

As phase auxiliary verbs, been and done must occur as the first auxiliary; when they occur as the second, they carry additional aspects:

He been done work means "he finished work a long time ago".

He done been work means "until recently, he worked over a long period of time".

This latter example highlights one of the most distinguishing features of AAVE, which is the use of be to indicate that performance of the verb is of a habitual nature. In most other American English dialects, this can only be expressed unambiguously by using adverbs such as usually.

This aspect-marking form of been or BIN is stressed and semantically distinct from the unstressed form: She BIN running ('She has been running for a long time') and She been running ('She has been running'). This aspect has been given

several names, including perfect phase, remote past, and remote phase (this article uses the third). As shown above, been places action in the distant past. However, when been is used with stative verbs or gerund forms, been shows that the action began in the distant past and that it is continuing now. For instance, in response to "I like your new dress", one might hear Oh, I been had this dress, meaning that the speaker has had the dress for a long time and that it isn't new.

To see the difference between the simple past and the gerund when used with been, consider the following expressions:

I been bought her clothes means "I bought her clothes a long time ago".

I been buying her clothes means "I've been buying her clothes for a long time".

AAVE grammatical aspects		
Aspect	Example	Standard English meaning
Habitual/continuative aspect	He be working Tuesdays	He works frequently (or habitually), on Tuesdays.
Intensified continuative (habitual)	He stay working.	He is always working
Intensified continuative (not habitual)	He steady working.	He keeps on working
Perfect progressive	He been working.	He has been working
Irrealis	He finna go to work.	He is about to go to work.'

• Finna corresponds to "fixing to" in other varieties. it is also written fixina, fixna, fitna, and finta

In addition to these, come (which may or may not be an auxiliary™) may be used to indicate speaker indignation, such as in Don't come acting like you don't know what happened and you started the whole thing ('Don't try to act as if you don't know what happened, because you started the whole thing').

3.5. Grammatical Derivation

"positive" anymore adv. these days; nowadays

Example: "It seems I always wear these shoes anymore."

Further explanation: While in Standard English anymore must be used as a negative polarity item (NPI), some speakers in Pittsburgh and throughout the Midland area do not have this restriction. When not used as an NPI, anymore means something like "these days."

Geographic Distribution: the Midland.

Origins: Likely Scots-Irish.

Reversed leave ~ let usage.

Examples: "Leave him go outside"; "Let the book on the table."

Further explanation: Leave is used in some contexts in which, in standard English, let would be used; and vice versa.

Geographical distribution: Southwestern Pennsylvania and elsewhere.

Origins: Either Pennsylvania German or Scots-Irish.

need, want, or like + past participle.

Examples: "The car needs washed"; "The cat wants petted"; "Babies like cuddled".

Further explanation: More common constructions are "The grass needs cutting" or "The grass needs to be cut" or "Babies like cuddling" or "Babies like to be cuddled"; "The car needs washing" or "The car needs to be washed"; and "The cat wants petting" or "The cat wants to be petted." Geographic distribution: Found predominantly in the North Midland region, but especially in southwestern Pennsylvania. Need + past participle is the most common construction, followed by want + past participle, and then like + past participle. The forms are "implicationally related" to one another. This means the existence of one construction in a given location entails the existence (or not) of another in that location. Here’s the implicational breakdown: where we find like + past participle, we will also necessarily find want and need + past participle; where we find want + past participle, we will also find need + past participle, but we may or may not find like + past participle; where we find need + past participle, we may or may not find want + past participle and like + past participle. Put another way, the existence of the least common construction implies the necessary existence of the two more

common constructions, but the existence of the most common construction does not necessarily entail existence of the two less common constructions.

Origins: like + past participle is Scots-Irish. need + past participle is Scots-Irish want + past participle could be from Scots- Irish or German, it seems likely that this construction is Scots-Irish, like and need + past participle are Scots-lrish, the distributions of all three constructions are implicationally related, the area where they are predominantly found is most heavily influenced by Scots-lrish, and a related construction, want + directional adverb, as in "The cat wants out," is Scots-Irish.

yins, yinz, yunz, you'uns, or youns pr. Second person plural personal pronoun.

Geographic distribution: Southwestern Pennsylvania and elsewhere in Appalachia.

Further explanation: See yinz article. Yinz is a particularly salient feature of Pittsburgh speech, possibly because it has no equivalent in Standard American English, though other second-person plural pronouns, such as "v'all" in Southern American English, do exist.

Origins: Along with the yous of New Jersey and the y'all of the South, yinz is Scots- Irish.

3.6. Use of Conditional Syntax

People from Texas are said to be more polite, more easygoing, and less direct in speech than, for example, people from the northern states. Many Texans do everything to not offend someone by speaking too directly and straight forward. Therefore, in many situations they make use of conditional syntaxes as shown below:

Conditional syntax in requests:

1. “I guess you could step out and git some toothpicks and a carton of camel cigarettes, if you a mind to”.
2. “If you be good enough to take it, I believe I could stand me a taste”.

Conditional syntax in suggestions:

1. “I wouldn’t look for’m to show up if I was you".

2. “I’d think that wiskey’d be a trifle hot”.

Conditional syntax creates a distance between the speaker’s claim and the hearer. Therefore, it serves to mitigate impositions and to express negative, deferential politeness.

Texans also often use “evidential” predicates such as think, reckon, believe, guess, have the feeling, etc.:

1. “You already said that oncet I believe”.
2. “I wouldn’t want to guess, but I have the feeling we'll know soon enough”.
3. “You reckon we ought to get help”?
4. “I don’t believe I’ve ever known one”.

Evidential predicates indicate how certain the knowledge asserted in the sentence is or how it was acquired. According to Johnstone evidential predicates nearly always hedge the assertions and allow the respondents to hedge theirs. They protect speakers from the social embarrassment that appears in case the assertion turns out to be wrong.

Texan-Dialect Phraes

- ugly as a mud fence
- plug-ugly
- dumber than dirt
- older than two trees
- tighter than bark on a tree
- dumb as a box of rocks
- crooked as a dog’s hind leg
- crooked as a barrel of snakes
- dumb as a box of hammers
- You're cute as a possum.
- You're happy as a gopher in soft dirt.
- You're tough as a boot.
- You're quick as a hiccup.
- You'll do to run the river with.

- You're big enough to hunt bear (bar) with a switch. - very big.
- He beat him like a rented mule.
- Hidden in the basement like a crazy aunt.
- Blacker than midnight under a skillet.
- Fine as frog's hair.
- Like the dogs was after him. - in a big hurry
- knee-high to a grasshopper - very young
- as all get out-very much so

Texan-Dialect Sayings

- "Never ask a man if he's from Texas. If he is, he'll tell you on his own. If he ain't, no need to embarrass him."
- "The Lord never closes one door without opening another one."
- "Evil thoughts are like chickens--they come home to roost."
- "You can always tell a Texan, but you can't tell him much."
- "I wasn't born in Texas, but I got here as fast as I could!"

Ozark English is a dialect of American English, spoken in the Ozark Mountain region of northern Arkansas and southern Missouri, that is more closely related to Appalachian English than to the North Midland and South Midland dialects of the surrounding regions. Its distinctive features include phonological idiosyncrasies (many of which it shares with Appalachian English); certain syntactic patterns, such as the use of for to, rather than to, before infinitives in some constructions; and a number of lexical peculiarities.

Negatives are formed differently from most other varieties of English:

- Use of ain't as a general negative indicator. As in other dialects, it can be used where most other dialects would use am

not, isn't, aren't, haven’t and hasn’t. However, in marked contrast to other varieties of English in the U.S., some speakers of AAVE also use ain't instead of don’t, doesn't, or didn’t (e.g., I ain't know that). Ain't had its origins in common English, but became increasingly stigmatized since the 19th century. See also amn't.

- Negative concord, popularly called "double negation", as in I didn't go nowhere, if the sentence is negative, all negatable forms are negated. This contrasts with standard written English conventions, which have traditionally prescribed that a double negative is considered incorrect to mean anything other than a positive (although this wasn't always so; see double negative).
- In a negative construction, an indefinite pronoun such as nobody or nothing can be inverted with the negative verb particle for emphasis (e.g. Don't nobody know the answer, Ain't nothing going on.)

3.7. The Grammar of American Dialects and Standard American English

While walking around on North Park's campus, you will hear multiple dialects. One of the most common is African American Vernacular English (AAVE), otherwise known as Ebonics. Many people might think this is a rather loose way of speaking but, on the contrary, this dialect has rules and regularities just as Standard American English does. Throughout this paper I will examine the grammar of a few statements that reflect the way the dialect is used.

- The usage of ain't

"It ain't my fault; I did everything the right way."

The word ain't is common among many dialects. Ain't is a contraction for " am not, " "is not, " "are not, " "has not, " "have not", but it's said to be used in the habitual speech of the less educated. In the 18th century, it was acceptable, even in England; those roots have remained a part of AAVE longer than in other dialects of English.

- The usage of dent

"Thomas an dem went to the store to buy juice."

"Give me dem cups over there."

The word dem is used in AAVE as a way of marking plurality. By placing "an dem " after a person's name, you are referring to others that are in association with that person. Another way of marking plurality with dem is by putting it before the

noun. Not only does the dem indicate that there are more cups, but it specifies which cups.

- The usage of s endings and the present-tense verb with a third person-singular subject

"It seem like the world has gone to hell in a hand basket."

"She have three kids and she is only twenty-one years old."

Unlike the Standard English rule of the s ending for a present-tense verb with a third person singular subject, AAVE does not treat the third person-singular subjects as different from verbs with other subjects. As you can see, the s that is required on seem to have a present-tense verb with a third person- singular subject has been omitted. This is also seen in the second sentence where she have is used rather than she has.

- The usage of be:

"Terra be takin' the trash out."

"People be crazy." or

"People 0 crazy."

In AAVE, there are two ways to use be: (1) invariant, which doesn't vary, and (2) conjugated or inflected, which varies in form. The invariant habitual be is most known, but least understood. This form of be describes only an event that's performed regularly, the equivalent of Standard American English continuous form. When "Terra be takin' the trash out" is contrasted with the non-habitual "Terra takin' the trash out", an event is being described but the first shows that it happens as a regularity. The conjugated or inflected be has the ability to allow the is or are to disappear, yielding a "zero copula". When using the zero copula, you are only allowed to leave out is and are, making it very restrictive. For example, you cannot delete am from "I am however this is often contracted to "I'm".

- The usage of Been and been:

"I Been knew him."

"We had been married."

There are two types of been: the stressed (Been) and unstressed (been). Been is used to say something is in existence now and will be in existence later. For example, “I Been knew him.” The Been implies that he knows the person now and will continue to know him. Whereas, “We had been married”, refers to a time that they were married but may not still be married .It’s confusing to those who do not speak the vernacular.

- Toni Morrison’s “five present tenses” of African American Vernacular English

1. Present progressive: She 0 talkin’.
2. Present habitual progressive: She be talkin’.
3. Present intensive habitual progressive: She be steady talkin’.
4. Present perfect progressive: She been talkin’.
5. Present perfect progressive with remote inception: She Been talkin’.

Standard American English

1. She is talking.
2. She is usually talking.
3. She is usually talking in an intensive, sustained manner.
4. She has been talking but isn’t now.
5. She has been talking for a while and is still talking.

Looking at the two sets of ways to say the same thing, you notice that with Standard American English you have to add adverbs and explanations, whereas with AAVE, you know what they are saying.

Short Exclutions of the Chapter 3

General American (GA), also known as Standard American English (SAE), is a major accent of American English. The accent is not restricted to the United States. Within American English, General American and accents approximating it are contrasted with Southern American English, several Northeastern accents, and other distinct regional accents and social group accents like African-American Vernacular English.

General American, like British Received Pronunciation (RP) and most standard language varieties of many other societies, has never been the accent of the entire nation. However, it has become widely spoken in many American films, TV series, national news, commercial ads, and American radio broadcasts.

The General American accent is most closely related to a generalized Midwestern accent and is spoken particularly by many newscasters. It is thought to have evolved from the English spoken by colonials in the Mid-Atlantic states, evolved and moved west. Walter Cronkite is a good example of a broadcaster using this accent. This has led the accent to sometimes be referred to as a "newscaster accent" or "television English". General American is sometimes promoted as preferable to other regional accents. In the United States, classes promising "accent reduction", "accent modification" and "accent neutralization" generally attempt to teach speech patterns similar to this accent. The well- known television journalist Linda Ellerbee, who worked hard early in her career to eliminate a Texas accent, stated, "in television you are not supposed to sound like you're from anywhere"; political comedian Stephen Colbert worked hard as a child to reduce his South Carolina accent because of the common portrayal of Southerners as stupid on American television. General American is also the accent typically taught to people learning English as a second language in the United States, as well as outside the country to anyone who wishes to learn "American English". In much of Asia and some other places ESL teachers are strongly encouraged to teach American English no matter their own origins or accents.

Regional home of general American

It is commonly believed that General American English evolved as a result of an aggregation of rural and suburban Midwestern dialects, though the English of the Upper Midwest can deviate quite dramatically from what would be considered a "regular"

American Accent. The local accent often gets more distinct the farther north one goes within the Midwest, and the more rural the area, with the Northern Midwest featuring its own dialect North Central American English. The fact that a

Midwestern dialect became the basis of what is General American English is often attributed to the mass migration of Midwestern farmers to California and the Pacific Northwest from where it spread.

The Telsur Project (of William Labov and others) examines a number of phonetic properties by which regional accents of the U.S. may be identified. The area with

Midwestern regional properties is indicated on the map:
eastern Nebraska (including Omaha and Lincoln); northwestern, southern, and central Iowa (including Des Moines and the Iowa-side Quad Cities), with an adjacent narrow strip of northern Missouri; and western Illinois (including Peoria and the Illinois-side Quad Cities. Notably, this section of Illinois does not include the Chicago area).

Since the 1960s, northeastern Ohio and much of the rest of the Inland North have been affected by the Northern Cities Vowel Shift (abbreviated "NCS").

According to Matthew J. Gordon, a sociolinguistics and American dialectology researcher:

The fact that the NCS is well established in Michigan is particularly interesting in light of the dominant beliefs about local speech. As research by Dennis Preston has shown, Michiganders believe they are “blessed” with a high degree of linguistic security; when surveyed they rate their own speech as more correct and more pleasant than that of even their fellow Mid-westerners. By contrast Indianans tend to rate the speech of their state on par with that of Illinois, Ohio, and Michigan. Indeed, it is not uncommon to find Michiganders who will claim that the speech of national broadcasters is modeled on their dialect. Even a cursory comparison of the speech of the network news anchors with that of the local news anchors in Detroit will reveal the fallacy of such claims.

Nevertheless, the Michiganders’ faith that they speak an accent less variety is just an extreme version of the general stereotype of Midwestern English.

Conclusion

Particularly important in setting standards was John Kenyon, the pronunciation editor of the second edition of Webster's New International Dictionary.

The phoneme /ʍ/ is present only in varieties that have not undergone the wine-whine merger, /ʍ/ is often analyzed as a consonant cluster of /hw/. Also, many Americans realize the phoneme /ɹ/ (often transcribed as /r/) as post alveolar, with some possible retro flexion. /t/ undergoest-glottalization to produce a glottal stop before a syllabic nasal or in absolute final position, in words like mutton and sit [ʔ]. Otherwise, intervocalic /t/ (and /d/) generally become [ɾ] through intervocalic alveolar flapping when between a stressed syllable and an unstressed one. Also, the distinction between "clear" [l] and "dark" [ɬ] is much less noticeable in General American than other English dialects, with even the "clear" variant pronounced in General American with some degree of velarization.

Vowels

General American has sixteen or seventeen vowel sounds that can be used in stressed syllables as well as two that can be used only in unstressed syllables. Most of the vowel sounds are monophthongs.

For most speakers, what are often transcribed as /e, of are realized as [ei, ou], especially in open syllables.

The vowel may be more near-open (usually [ɐ]) than open-mid, depending on the speaker. For example, speakers from Ohio realize this vowel as an open- mid central unrounded vowel ([ɜ]). It however remains a back vowel before [ɬ], and often even merges with it so that /ʌl/ becomes [ɬ].

For most speakers, what is transcribed as /æ/ is always raised and sometimes diphthongized when appearing before a nasal consonant(that is, before /m/, /n/ and, for some, /ŋ/). This may be narrowly transcribed as [æ̝], [æ̝ə] or, based on specific dialect, variously as [ɛə], [eə] or [ɪə] (see Æ -tensinz in General American).

Depending on one's analysis, people who merge the vowels of cot and caught to Id either have no phoneme /ɔ/ at all or have the [ɔ] only before /r/. Words like north and horse are usually transcribed /nɔɹθ/ and /hɔɹs/, but since all accents with

cot and caught merged to /kat/ have also undergone the horse-hoarse merger, it may be preferable to transcribe north and horse /noɹΘ/ and /hoɹs/. Thus, in these cases, the[ɔ] before /ɹ/ can be analyzed as an allophone of /o/. [ɝ] and [ɚ] are often analyzed as sequences of /ʌr, ər/, respectively, /ə/ is an indeterminate vowel that occurs only in unstressed syllables.

Among speakers who distinguish between /ɑ/ and /ɔ/, the vowel of cot (usually transcribed /ɑ/), is sometimes more of a central vowel which may vary from [ą] to [ɑ̟], while /ɔ/ is phonetically lower, closer to [ɒ]. Among cot-caught merged speakers, /ɑ/ usually remains a back vowel, [ɑ], sometimes showing lip rounding as [a^{w}] or [ɒ], and, since these speakers do not distinguish between /ɑ/ and /ɔ/, their retracted allophones for /ɑ/ may be identical to the lowered allophones of /ɔ/ among speakers who preserve the contrast.

CHARACTERISTICS

While there is no single formal definition of General American, various features are considered to be part of it, including rhotic pronunciation [RP], which maintains the coda [ɹ] in words like pearl, car, and court. General American is characterized by the merger of the vowels of words like father and bother, flapping, and the reduction of vowel contrasts before [ɹ]. General American also generally has yod-droppingafter alveolar consonants. Other phonemic mergers, including the cot-caught merger, the pin-pen merger, the Mary-marry-merry mergerand the wine-whine merger, may be found optionally at least in informal and semiformal varieties.

One phenomenon apparently unique to General American is the behavior of words that in RP have /ɒrV/ where /V/ stands for any vowel (usually /ə/ or /i̞/). These words are treated differently in different North American accents: in New York-New Jersey English, the Philadelphia dialect, and the Carolinas they are all pronounced with /-ɒr-/ and in Canadian English they are all pronounced with /-ɔr-/ (thus an American's sorry sounds like sar-ee to a Canadian). But in General American there is a split: the majority of these words have /-ɔr-/, like Canadian

English, but the last four words of the list below have /-ɑr-/, like New York-New Jersey English, for many speakers.

As a variety of North American English. Pacific Northwest English is similar to most other forms of North American speech in being a rhotic accent, which is historically a significant marker in differentiating English varieties. It is found in the range of British Columbia, Alberta, Washington, Oregon, northern California, Idaho and western Montana.

The vowels in words such as Mary, marry, and merry are merged to the open-mid front unrounded vowel [e].

Most speakers do not distinguish between the open-mid back rounded vowel [o] and open back unrounded vowel [a], characteristic of the cot-caught merger. A notable exception occurs with some speakers born before roughly the end of WWII.

Traditionally diphthongal vowels such as [ou] as in boat and [ei], as in bait, have acquired qualities much closer tomonophthongs in some speakers.

/ɛ/ can sometimes become 'short I' /ɪ/, so that elk sounds more like ilk. However, this process is more or less limited to speakers in eastern Washington and Oregon, and western Idaho, who either perceive or produce the pairs ls.nl and /in/ close to each other, resulting in a merger between pen and pin.

The Pacific Northwest also has some of the features of the Canadian and California vowel shifts, which both move vowels in roughly the opposite direction to the Northern Cities Vowel Shift of the U.S. Great Lakes.

/æ/ is lowered in the direction of [a],

/ɑ/ is backed and sometimes rounded to become [ɒ]. Thus, to a Seattleite, a speaker from Chicago— where the vowel is sometimes fronted towards [a] – may say "cot" more like "cat".

There are also conditional raising processes of open front vowels.

Before the velar nasal [ŋ], /æ/ becomes [e]. This change makes for minimal pairs such as rang and rain, both having the same vowel [e], differing from rang [ræŋ] in other varieties of English.

Among some speakers in Portland and southern Oregon, /æ/ is sometimes raised and diphthongized to [eə] or [ɪə] before the non-velar nasal consonants [m] and [n]. This feature is rarer further north, where /æ/ tends to remain the same before non-velar nasal consonants, except for occasional schwa-like qualities (co-articulation of tongue and palate), resulting in[aeϑ].

/ɛ/, and, in the northern Pacific Northwest, /æ/, become [eɪ] before the voiced velar plosive /g/: egg and leg are pronounced as ayg and layg, a feature shared by many northern Midwestern dialects and with the Utah accent. In addition, sometimes bag will be pronounced bayg.

The close central rounded vowel [ʉ] or close back unrounded vowel [ɯ] for /u/, is found in Portland, and some areas of Southern Oregon, but is generally not found further north, where the vowel remains the close back rounded [u]

Some speakers have a tendency to slightly raise /ai/ and /aw/ before voiceless obstruents. It is strongest in rural areas in British Columbia and Washington, and in older and middle-aged speakers in Vancouver and Seattle. In other areas, /ai/ is occasionally raised. This phenomenon is known as Canadian raising and is widespread and well known throughout Anglophone Canada and other parts of the northern United States.

Consonant phonology is more conservative, as with other varieties of English. The most notable divergence from standard speech is a fairly widespread pronunciation of the "str" consonant cluster as [ʃtɹ], "shtr".

Texan English phonology stereotypically is (or was) defined by the monophthongization of /aɪ/ (e.g. "price" is pronounced like /pra.s/). Since approximately 60 years a change in the pronunciation of /aɪ/ is developing. There is a tendency occurring in central Texas to use the Standard English diphthong pronunciation of /aɪ/ (e.g." price" is pronounced /praɪs/). Latest findings show a strong orientation of primarily young, urban Texans towards a more standard realization of /aɪ/, namely the diphthongization, of /aɪ/. In fact, the monophthongization of /aɪ/ has left the central Texan speech almost entirely. 89% of the "younger" speakers aged 21-30, use diphthongal realizations of /aɪ/, whereas

only 11% use monophthongal or intermediate realizations of /aɪ/. The change toward the diphthongization of/ai/ is led by young female Texans, as 92% of the 11% still using the monophthongization were males.

Another linguistic change in Texan English is an emerging rural-urban split, meaning that most stereotypically and traditionally Southern or Texan features remain strong in rural areas, whereas many of these features tend to disappear in urban areas and small cities. The urban-rural linguistic split mainly affects phonological phenomena.

1. The pen/pin merger, the loss of the off glide in /aɪ/, and upgliding diphthongs are now recessive in metropolitan areas.

2. Traditional grammatical features like y'all and fixin' to are expanding to non-natives in metropolizes (and to the Hispanic population, too).

3. New features are developing, mainly in urban areas, for example vowels in words like caught and cot are becoming merged (both sound like cot)

4. Tense/lax vowel pairs before /l/ (e.g. pool-pull, feel-fill, sale-sell) are now homophones.

A common feature of the greater Midland area is so-called "positive anymore": It is possible to use the adverb anymore with the meaning "nowadays" in sentences without negative polarity, such as Air travel is inconvenient anymore.

Many speakers, especially in the Western Pennsylvania area (see below), use the construction need + past participle, as in the car needs washed, where speakers of other dialects would say needs to be washed or needs washing.

(NORTH) MIDLAND

The North Midland region stretches from east to west across central and southern Ohio, central Indiana, central Illinois, Iowa, and northern Missouri, as well as Nebraska and northern Kansas where it begins to blend into the West. Major cities of this dialect area include Kansas City, Omaha, St. Louis, Columbus, Ohio, Cincinnati, and lndianapolis.

In addition to the fronting of the diphthongs /oʊ/ and /aʊ/, the North Midland exhibits the following distinctive features:

cot-caught merger in transition: parts of this area are currently undergoing a vowel merger of the "short o" /ɑ/ (as in cot) and 'aw' /ɔ/ (as in caught) phonemes. Many speakers show transitional forms of this so-called cot-caught merger, which is complete in approximately half of North America.

Advanced fronting of /ʌ/: among younger speakers, the "wedge" /ʌ/ (as in strut) is shifting strongly to the front.

Blinds - window shades or window shutters. While blinds usually refers to window shades, in Appalachia and the greater Midland dialect, it can also refer to window shutters.

The /æ/ phoneme (as in cat) shows most commonly a so- called "continuous" distribution: /æ/ is raised and tensed toward [eə] before nasal consonants and remains low [æ] before voiceless stop consonants, and other allophones of /æ/ occupy a continuum of varying degrees of height between those two extremes.

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