



ELL101: Intro to Linguistics

Week 11-12 Sociolinguistics

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Sociolinguistics

The study of the relation between language and society (it's a branch of sociology rather than linguistics)

- In this class, we use the term "sociolinguistics" as an umbrella term for
 - Studies of regional variation in language
 - Studies of socio-economic influence on language
 - Studies of pidgins & creoles
 - Studies of language and thought
- Each of those sub-fields is often treated as an independent field of linguistic research

Regional influence I

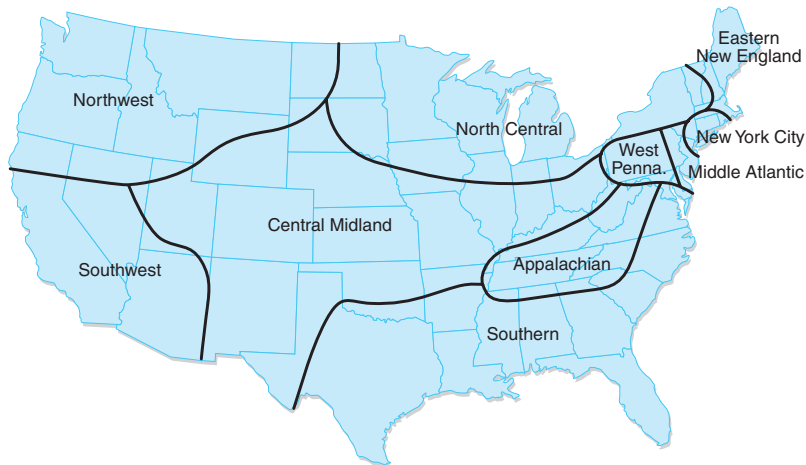
- What's the difference between dialect and language?
- English dialects or different languages?
 - Northeastern (e.g., New York City) English
 - Inland (e.g., Pennsylvania) English
 - Midland (e.g., St. Louis) English
 - Southern (e.g., Texan) English
 - Canadian English
 - British English
 - Indian English
 - Australian English

Regional influence II

- What about Scottish English and Irish English?
- Scottish English
 - *You don't know what you're talking about* (English)
 - *Ye diannaie ken whit yer havering' aboot* (Scottish English)
- Irish English
 - *How long have you been here?* (English)
 - *How long are youse here?* (Irish English)
- Or English spoken by a second language speaker of English?

Regional influence III

- Major geographic American English dialects



- Try "Where is the Speaker From?"

Regional influence IV

- One approach to the dialect study is to map the different uses of a particular word/sound in different regions
 - *soda* vs. *pop* (or *coke*)
 - *paper bag* vs *paper sack*
 - *kerosene* vs *coal oil*
 - *pail* vs. *bucket*
 - the pronunciation of *taught* ([tɔt] vs [tat])
 - the pronunciation of *roof* ([ruf] vs [ruf])
 - the pronunciation of *creek* ([krik] vs [krik])

Regional influence V

- Differences between Northern English and Midland English (from Yule (2003; p.198))

	NORTHERN	MIDLAND
'taught'	[tɒt]	[tat]
'roof'	[rʊf]	[ruf]
'creek'	[kɹɪk]	[krik]
'greasy'	[grɪsi]	[grizi]
	paper bag	paper sack
	pail	bucket
	kerosene	coal oil
	slippery	slick
	get sick	take sick

Regional influence VI

Dialectology

A study to distinguish between two different dialects of the same language and two different languages (via *mutual intelligibility*)

- The study of dialects also covers such topics as
 - What does it mean by "Standard English" or "Official language"?
 - Social prestige associated with dialects
 - Cultural influenced on dialects
 - Political influence on language
 - Socio-economic influence on language

Isogloss

Isogloss represents a boundary between different uses of one particular linguistic item

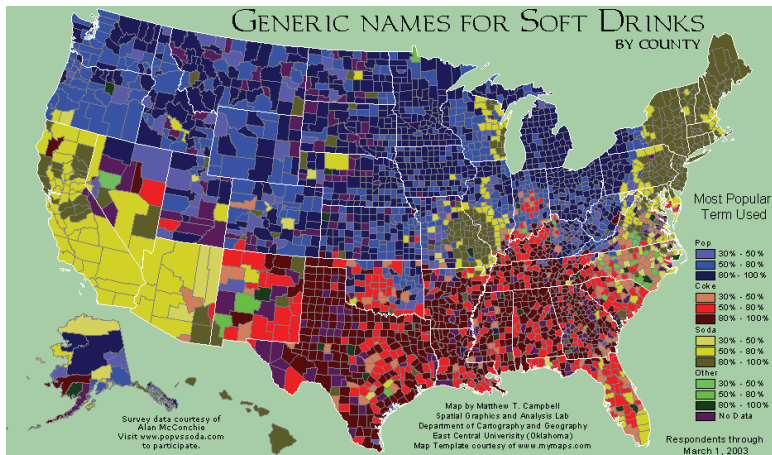
Regional influence VII

- How do you call this?



Regional influence VIII

- The pop-soda map by Matthew Campbell and Prof. Greg Plumb of East Central University in Oklahoma



Regional influence IX

- How do you call this?



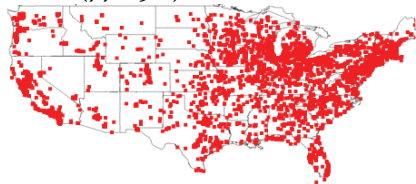
Regional influence X

- From *Dialect Survey* by Dr. Bert Vaux
<http://www4.uwm.edu/FLL/linguistics/dialect/maps.html>
 - a. sub (77.15%)
 - b. grinder (2.87%)
 - c. hoagie (6.98%)
 - d. hero (5.18%)
 - e. poor boy (1.77%)
 - f. bomber (0.01%)
 - g. Italian sandwich (0.46%)
 - h. baguette (0.25%)
 - i. sarney (0.03%)
 - j. I have no word for this (0.91%)
 - k. other (4.41%)
 - (10708 respondents)

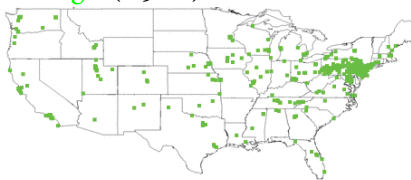
Regional influence XI

- From *Dialect Survey* by Dr. Bert Vaux

a. sub (77.15%)



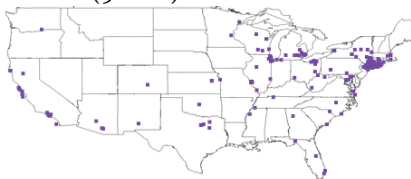
c. hoagie (6.98%)



b. grinder (2.87%)

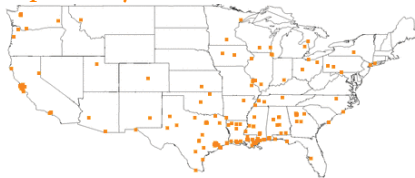


d. hero (5.18%)



Regional influence XII

e. poor boy (1.77%)



g. Italian sandwich (0.46%)



f. bomber (0.01%)



h. baguette (0.25%)



Standard Language I

- Another (possible) approach to the regional difference is to compare with a dialect with the "standard" or "official" English
- But what does it mean by "standard" or "official"?

Standard language

Standard language is a type of language found in the print media (such as national news papers and TV)

Official language

Official language is a type of language that is decided to use for the government work and education (especially at school)

- **Selection** of an official language
- **Codification** (documentation) of an official language

Standard Language II

- The notion of "standard" or "official" language is extremely controversial and a subject of intense political debates
 - The official languages in India are Hindi and English, but in many states (especially Southern states) people do not speak neither of those languages (each state has its own state official language based on their linguistic demographic).
 - The official languages in Canada are English and French, but in Quebec only one out of ten people speaks English.
 - The official language in China is Chinese, but Chinese is not a single language. The official language is a Beijing dialect of Mandarin, but in many regions people speak their own dialects of Chinese (some of which is not mutually intelligible with Mandarin speakers) in addition to Mandarin.
 - The de-fact official language in Japan is Japanese, but a large number of recent immigrants speak only Portuguese and indigenous people in the northern island speak Ainu.

Standard Language III

- What is the "standard language" in the US?
- What is the "official language" in the US?
 - Quite a few states specify English as an official language
 - Some states specify English and another language as their official languages (e.g., Hawaii, Louisiana etc.)
 - Some other states do not specify any official language (e.g., New York)
 - English-only movement (cf. Sen. S.I. Hayakawa)
 - *Lau v. Nichols* in 1974 (in favor of using additional medium (in addition to the English language) at school)
- It is a different kind of beast from linguistic research... (More on this subject in *Intro to Bilingualism*)

Socio-economic influence I

- There is linguistic variation among the people from the same region (especially in the city area like New York City)
- The variation is based on various socio-economic factors
 - Social class (e.g., upper, middle, working class)
 - Educational background
 - Economic status
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Ethnic identity
 - Profession

Socio-economic influence II

- William Labov (1972) at Univ. of Pennsylvania interviewed salespeople in the following department stores.
 - Saks Fifth Avenue
 - Macy's
 - S. Klein
- The stimulus elicited the phrase *fourth floor* /fɔrθ flɔər/.
- post-vocalic /r/ tends to be dropped, but the rate of omission was significantly different (with respect to the variable of prestige and carefulness).

	/r/ in "fourth floore	
	CASUAL	CAREFUL
Saks Fifth Avenue (high prestige)	63%	64%
Macy's (moderate prestige)	44%	61%
S. Klein (low prestige)	8%	18%

Socio-economic influence III

- Importantly, the rate of the post-vocalic /r/ omission interact with the carefulness of speech (that is, carefulness does not affect the high-prestige speaker while it decreases the rate of omission in the other groups)
- Also, the association of the post-vocalic /r/ omission and the high-prestige group is a local phenomenon. In England (Reading), it is associated with the low-class speech. (Trudgill (1974); data from Yule (2003; p.208))

	the percentage of post-vocalic /r/	
	NEW YORK CITY	READING, UK
UPPER-MIDDLE CLASS	32%	0%
LOWER-MIDDLE CLASS	20%	28%
UPPER-WORKING CLASS	12%	44%
LOWER-WORKING CLASS	0%	49%

Socio-economic influence IV

- Other socio-economic differences in English
 - [ŋ] → [n] (e.g., *-ing*)
 - [h]-dropping (e.g., "I'm so 'ungry I could eat an 'orse")
 - Use of *ain't* (e.g., "I aint's finished yet")
 - Register and jargon (e.g., the words *plaintiff*, *witness* (as opposed to *customer* and *audience*) in the legal profession)
 - Slang

Influence of age / generation I

- Influence of age / generation
 - *dead presidents* and *benjamins* (= \$100 bill)
 - *groovy*, *hip*, and *super* (= "really good")
 - *awesome* (= "really good")
 - *rad* and *wicked* (= "really good")
 - *dope*, *kickass*, *phat* (= "really good")
 - *hunk* (= "attractive")
 - *hottie* (= "attractive")
 - *pits* (= "really bad")
 - *suck* (= "really bad")

Pidgin

A dialect developed for practical purpose among people who have a lot of contact but do not share the same language

- Hawaiian Pidgin (developed mostly in the sugarcane plantation in the early 20th century)
- Nicaraguan sign language (home sign) (developed among the deaf children in Nicaragua before the establishment of special education institutions for deaf children)

Creole

Creole emerges among the children of speakers of Pidgin

- Hawaiian Creole English (developed among the children of the Hawaiian Pidgin speakers)
- Nicaraguan sign language (developed among the deaf children who attended the special education institution for deaf children)

Pidgin and Creole III

Pidgin is characterized by

- absence of any complex grammatical morphology
- limited vocabulary
- use of functional morpheme in place of inflectional morpheme
- developed among the first-generation immigrants

Creole is characterized by

- more complex grammar than Pidgin
- richer vocabulary
- developed among the children of Pidgin speakers (as their first language)

- **African American Vernacular English (AAVE)** (also known as *Ebonics*)
 - Spoken among African American and Puerto Rican in New York
 - Full-fledge grammar with some differences from English
 - Reduced final consonant clusters
 - *left hand* → *lef han* / *iced tea* → *ice tea*
 - [θ] → [t] and [ð] → [d] (initial dental to alveolar)
 - *I think...* → *I tink* / *that* → *dat*
 - Omission of possessive 's and 3rd person singular -s
 - *John's book* → *John book* / *she loves him* → *she love him*
 - Double negative
 - *he doesn't know nothing* / *I ain't afraid of no ghosts*
 - Habitual *be*
 - *she be workin downtown now* (= is working)
 - Past habitual *bin*
 - *she bin workin there* (= was working)

Bibliography I

Yule, G. (2010). *The Study of Language*. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, 4th edition. ISBN: 9780521749220; Course: ELL101 (textbook); Price: \$29.99.

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