Chapter 2

Dialectology & Language Variation

Nothing is permanent but change
Heraclitus
Definition - Revisited

- Dialect
  - Why hard to define?
Dialectology – Vocab/Concepts

- Phoneme
- Diachronic Change
- Dialect Atlas
- Isogloss
- Dialect boundary
  - Geographic, political
Dialectology – Vocab/Concepts

- Focal vs. relic areas
- Urban vs. rural areas
- Family Tree
- Comparative method (reconstruction)
- Linguistic variable
- William Labov
  - Indicator
  - Marker
Markers

- Don’t have any ↔ Ain’t got none
- Singing → [sɪŋɪŋ] or [sɪŋɪŋ]ing
- Singer → [sɪŋə]r or [sɪŋə]r
- Bird → [bɜrd] or [bɜrd] or [bɔid]
- You (pl.) → [jəl] or [jʊrən] or ‘you them’
Linguistic Atlas Example

http://hyde.park.uga.edu/lamsas/lingmaps.html
Isogloss Map

- Created from multiple other maps
- Indicator of dialectal tendencies
- NOT intended to capture distinct lines between groups of speakers

LEGEND
- Total Informants (62)
- Total Communities (44)
  - y’awl
    - Occurrences (23)
    - Communities (20)
  - Other Responses
    - Occurrences (54)
    - Communities (3)
  - No Response
    - Occurrences (85)
    - Communities (17)
Vocabulary

- Dialect
- Ideolect
- Sociolect
Data Collection & Analysis

- Field book/Personal journal (*not in text*)
- Coding Scheme (*not in text*)
- Questionnaires
- Sampling Techniques
  - Random – “Best”...?
  - Judgment
  - Stratified
- Variables
  - Dependant
  - Independent
  - Research Question (*not in text*)
  - Null hypothesis (*not in text*)
Problems

- Informant
- Field method
- Observer’s paradox
Application

- What linguistic variables might be fun to look at in South Carolina? How would you expect them to vary by location, social class, and/or situation?
  - 50¢
  - there
  - ???

- Is “typical South Carolinian” a valid concept?
Modern Dialectology

- Focus on urban speech
- Boundary interaction of dialects

(Section 2.4)
Phonetic Principles

- Pronunciation Variation
  - Is rule governed
  - Follows fuzzy lines
  - Tends to
    - occur between closely related sounds
    - affect *where* they are articulated
    - level (depending on *many* variables...)
Phonetic Variation in US

- Common dialect markers?
- Place them on vowel chart

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- boot
- hood
- boat // boy
- call
- part // eye
- better
- bird
Transplanted People

**Focusing**
creation of a new
dialect from select
features of a set…
Tends to favor one
or two of the
most prominent
or powerful
dialects

**Mixing**
features from
multiple dialects
(though not equally,
cf. focusing…)

**Leveling**
mixed and focused features are
typically not purely any former
language/dialect, but
compromised adaptations
Rural Dialectology Today...

- Focus on Vocabulary
  - Passive understanding
  - Idiosyncratic knowledge
  - Metaphorical/idiomatic usage
  - Mainstream → Slang
  - Older users don’t think youngsters ‘get it’

- Grammar & Phonology
  - Slower to change...
Challenges for Dialectologists

- Prosody
  - Rhythm, pitch, intonation, voice quality
  - Acquired early in childhood
- Articulatory Setting
  - Dialect (*Boiling Springs*) // Language (Cherokee)
- Discourse Style
  - Particles (*uh, yeah, y’know...*)
- Register
Out of Context...

Can you relate this to the study of language...?
For Tomorrow

Chapter 3
Through page 92