Today’s agenda

• A quick look at a case of dialectal variation in American English.
• Continuing our discussion of sociolinguistic variables in the Arab world: religion, urbanization, in particular.
• Leveling.

American English dialects disappearing?

• On July 4, 1960, the Eugene (Ore.) Register-Guard rang in Independence Day with a dire Associated Press report by one Norma Gauhn headlined “American Dialects Disappearing.”
• The problem, according to “speech experts,” was the homogenizing effect of “mass communications, compulsory education, [and] the mobility of restless Americans.” These conformist pressures have only intensified in the half-century since the AP warned “that within four generations virtually all regional U.S. speech differences will be gone.”

American English dialects disappearing?

• http://www.pbs.org/speak/ahead/change/vowelpower/vowel.html

• The Northern Cities Vowel Shift.

Northern Cities Vowel Shift

http://www.pbs.org/speak/ahead/change/vowelpower/vowel.html

Figure 13.5 The Northern Cities Shift

First, the [æ] in words like cud was raised and diphthongized to become [ə]. Then, the [ə], as in cud, Das, pop, and her, was lowered to become closer to [æ]. The [i], as in din and corn, was then lowered to become more like [ɪ]. The [ɪ], as in kid, was backed, which in turn pushed the [æ], as in cud, farther back. In parallel with the backing of [æ], [ɪ], as in kid, also moved back.

Religion and language in the Arab world

- Religion is another sociolinguistic variable in the Arab world.
  - Explain how Bahrain and Baghdad are linguistically divided along religious lines. How are the two situations different?
  - What kind of change/convergence is taking place in Bahrain? What factors have contributed/have been contributing to this change?
  - What are the indications that Christian Baghdadi Arabic may convert completely to Muslim Baghdadi Arabic?

The Arabic situation in Bahrain

- Two groups:
  - Arab, سُنّة, minority, but powerful.
  - Baharna, شيعة, majority, but less powerful.

- Until the mid 1970, both groups lives in sect-exclusive villages, or separate quarters in cities.
- Linguistically, Sunni Bahraini has its roots in Najdi Arabic. Baharna Arabic has its roots in Oman. Baharna has two sub-dialects: urban and rural.

Some differences between Sunni and Baharna (compared to MSA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MSA</th>
<th>Sunni</th>
<th>Baharna</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>q</td>
<td>g or d₃</td>
<td>k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>k or tʃ</td>
<td>tʃ</td>
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<tr>
<td>ə</td>
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<tr>
<td>d₃</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>d₃ or g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Socioeconomic changes

- Discovery of oil.
- Socioeconomic changes.
- Pearling disappeared in 1969. It used to be the biggest employer until 1935.
- In 1980, only 4% of working population worked in agriculture.
- In 1970s, Bahrain became a major exporter of aluminum.
- In the 70s and 80s, it became a center for international banking and commerce (to fill the gap left by the war in Beirut).
- State Education for all; new occupations; and mixed neighborhoods.

Christian Baghdadi Arabic

- Some are predicting that it is on its way out. Why?
  - Accommodation.
  - Immigration.

- Compare this to Karaite Jews’ Arabic.
Urbanization and language in the Arab world

- The author explains that urbanization alone cannot explain language change in the Arab world, and that "political power also has a role" (p. 112). Explain by comparing Egypt to Libya (and Oman).

Leveling

- The term leveling seems to have different meanings in the context of Arabic. What are these meanings?
  - Elimination of localized features.
  - Standardization.
  - Koineization.

Next class agenda

- Presentations on Arabic dialects from Versteegh's Chapter 10.