Announcements

- Any questions on HW4?
- The [a] in the German data is a back vowel.
- Thanks for the paper proposals. Topics sound quite interesting. Looking forward to reading the actual papers (well sort of 😊).
- Screening tomorrow. Read the last question on HW4.

Summary and transition

- Speakers vary in their use of language.
- One factor that leads to variation is region.
- Regional varieties of a language are what is typically referred to as dialects.
- Dialectal variation can be phonological, morphological, syntactic, or lexical.

Summary and transition

- Language attitudes towards a particular dialect are subjective, and typically reflect people’s judgment of the speakers of that dialect, and not of the dialect itself.
- Linguistically, all dialects are legitimate rule-governed speech varieties. Socio-politically, however, some dialects may be perceived as ‘less correct’ or ‘substandard.’
Preston’s results

- Dennis Preston’s study:
  http://www.pbs.org/speak/speech/mapping/map.html

Indiana respondents’ correctness map

Michigan respondents’ correctness map

South respondents’ correctness map

Indiana respondents’ pleasantness map

Michigan respondents’ pleasantness map
South respondents’ pleasantness map

Making sense of language attitudes

- How do we explain these language attitudes?

Linguistic profiling

- Ethnic dialects can also be perceived negatively.
- Linguistic profiling.
- Watch this ad.

Ethnic dialects and linguistic profiling

- Two points from the ad:
  1. There can be a relation between speech and ethnicity.
  2. As we have seen with regional dialects, there are attitudes (mostly negative) towards ethnic dialects and they can have social consequences.
- We discuss this today with reference to African American English (AAE).

African American English

- Its history
- Its linguistic features
- Negative attitudes towards AAE
- Ways to address the stigmatization issue

History of African American English

- A creole-based theory (pidgin, creole, decreolization). Evidence: similar features with West African languages (loss of interdental [θ] and [ð]; ‘be’ deletion; Gullah).
- An L2-based theory. Evidence: similarities with Southern English, e.g., in monophthongization (‘right, time, like’).
- A unified theory.
AAE today

• Today, AAE is spoken by a large number of African Americans as well as speakers from other ethnicities. Also, not all African Americans speak AAE.

AAE today

• AAE has been described as ‘incorrect,’ ‘slang,’ or ‘lazy’ speech.
• But as with other language attitudes, this is a fallacy.
• In your groups, discuss the readings on AAE in the aftermath of the 1996 Oakland School Board’s decision to acknowledge AAE as a valid speech variety.

Assigned readings

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>Jack Sidnell (725) and Susan Ervin-Tripp (185)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>Leanne Hinton (507) and John T. Clark (350)</td>
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<td>Group 3</td>
<td>Marcyliena Morgan (400) and Ron Kephart (575)</td>
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<td>Group 4</td>
<td>John McWhorter (400) and John R. Rickford (420)</td>
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<td>Group 5</td>
<td>Charles Fillmore (800)</td>
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Attitudes towards AAE

• AAE has been stigmatized allegedly for two reasons:
  - First, because it’s a ‘dialect’ or ‘slang,’ not a language.
  - Second, because it is ‘incorrect,’ ‘improper,’ or ‘deficient’ English.
• Both claims are linguistically false. Let’s discuss how.

Attitudes towards AAE

• The ‘dialectal’ objection to AAE is false for two reasons:
  - First, because everyone speaks a ‘dialect.’
  - Second, because there is no clear ‘linguistic’ definition of what Standard American English (SAE) is.

Do English professors know what SAE is?

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
<th>Acceptability (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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| Everyone volunteered but they all failed to appear (agreement error) | 0  | 25 | 62 | 13 | 19 | 81 | 0
| Jane Austen now feels that it is necessary to partially clarify Frank Churchill's relationship to Jane. (split infinitive) | 0  | 16 | 74 | 10 | 17 | 72 | 11
| Considering how little satisfaction she obtained from it, it was just a waste. (slang partiple) | 12 | 47 | 35 | 6  | 35 | 59 | 6
But most importantly, ...  

AAE is rule-governed.

AAE Phonology: r-deletion

- r-deletion is pretty common in AAE, so that the following words are homophonous:
  - guard-god
  - sore-saw
- But not 'great-gate'. Why?

AAE Phonology: l-deletion

- Some speakers also drop their [l] so that the following words are homophonous:
  - toll-toe
  - all-awe
  - help-hep

AAE Phonology: Consonant Cluster simplification

- In SAE ‘best kind,’ but not in ‘best arm.’
- In AAE, word-final consonant cluster simplification is more common, typically when both consonants share the same voicing feature:
  - test → [tɛs]
  - hand → [hɛn]
- The simplification can also take place even if the next word starts with a vowel:
  - messed up → [mɛs ʌp]

AAE Phonology: Consonant Cluster simplification

- So, when an AAE speaker says
  - I ‘pass’ the test yesterday
they are not making a mistake in tense morphology. They’re simply simplifying the consonant cluster.
  - passed [pæst] → [pəs]
- Evidence: “hated” is pronounced [heɪtæd] and does not become [heɪt].

AAE Phonology: Interdental [θ] and [ð]

- Word-initially, [θ] and [ð] become stops [t] and [d]:
  - think [tɪŋk]  Predict: thin
  - this [dɪs]  Predict: the man
- Word medially and word-finally, [θ] is replaced by [f], and [ð] is replaced by [v]:
  - mouth [maʊf]  Predict: bath
  - brother [brʌðə]  Predict: mother
AAE Morphosyntax

• Double (or multiple) negatives:
  You don’ know nothin’.
  I don’ never have no lunch.
• Use of stressed “bin” as an auxiliary:
  She bin married.
  I bin known him.

AAE Morphosyntax

• Absence of possessive -s:
  John hat; Byron car
• Absence of third person singular -s:
  she talk; he sing
• Absence of plural -s after quantifiers:
  three dog; some cat

Copula deletion and habitual ‘be’

• Copula “be” deletion:
  He nice.
  You crazy.
• Habitual “be”:
  The coffee be cold. (= always)
  He be tired out. (habitually)

AAE is just another English variety

• So, AAE differs from SAE in systematic ways, and
  in the same manner that any other dialect of
  English differs from SAE.
• In fact, AAE can enrich other dialects as well. In
  an article on Ebonics, the New York Times cited
  Richard Nixon’s use of ‘right on!’ ‘Rip-off,’ ‘chill
  out,’ and ‘dis’ are other popular borrowings.
• Claims about the ‘deficiency,’ ‘incompleteness,’
  and ‘illogicality’ of AAE are totally non-scientific
  and have no linguistic basis whatsoever.

Solutions?

• Jeopardy with a new twist: Watch Section 3
  from DVD ‘Do you Speak American? Out
  West.’

Next class agenda

• Language and gender. Read Cameron’s article,
  which is hyperlinked on the course website.
• Read the section on ‘Genderlects’ in Chapter
  7, pp. 297-301.
• Read Chapter 8, pp. 350-361. Some sections
  we already talked about earlier, so should be
  an easy read.