LNGT0101
Introduction to Linguistics

Lecture #18
Nov 16th, 2015

Announcements

- Screening of *The Linguists* this Thursday Nov 19 @ 4:30-5:30 in Axinn 219.
- Homework #4 is posted. It is due next Monday Nov 23 by 8pm via email, or in class if submitting a hard copy. One essay question on the homework requires watching the movie.

Assigned readings for Wednesday

Group 1	Jack Sidnell (725) and Susan Ervin-Tripp (185)
Group 2	Leanne Hinton (507) and John T. Clark (350)
Group 3	Marcyliena Morgan (400) and Ron Kephart (575)
Group 4	John McWhorter (400) and John R. Rickford (420)
Group 5	Charles Fillmore (800)

Paper proposal is due today

- A 250-word paper proposal is due today **Nov 16th by 8pm** via email.
- Proposal should specify the topic, aspects of linguistic interest, and list at least 3 scholarly references that are relevant to the topic.
- **Note**: References for your paper have to be scholarly works. Newspaper articles or blog entries do not qualify as 'scholarly.' Wikipedia entries are out as well.

Some possible topics (stated broadly)

- Language and thought.
- Language and culture.
- Language and gender.
- Language and identity.
- Dialectal variation.
- Language endangerment.
- Language in the social media.

Some possible topics

- Language and politics.
- Language and social justice.
- First language acquisition.
- Second language acquisition.
- Pidgins and creoles.
- Language change.
- Language evolution.

Some possible topics

- Natural language processing.
- Sentence processing (Psycholinguistics).
- Language and the brain (Neurolinguistics).
- Sign language
- Anything that has 'language' in it should be fine (subject to my approval of course).

Today's agenda

- Quick discussion of the handout on child utterances.
- Sociolinguistics: Dialectal variation and language attitudes.

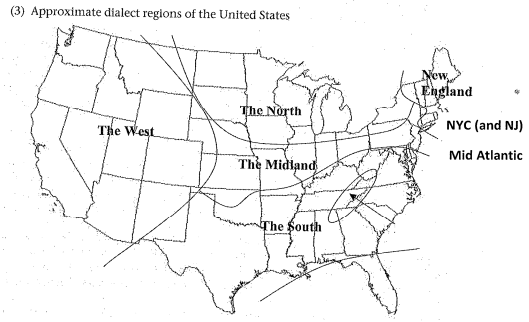
Table 11.19 Sample utterances from a child's speech over a 12-month pe

Age	*Sample utterances*
28 mos.	Play checkers. Big drum. I got horn. A bunny-rabbit walk.
30 mos.	Write a piece of paper. What that egg doing? I lost a shoe. No, I don't want to sit seat.
32 mos.	Let me get down with the boots on. Don't be afraid of horses. How tiger be so healthy and fly like kite? Joshua throw like penguin.
34 mos.	Look at that train Ursula brought. I simply don't want put in chair. Don't have paper. Do you want little bit, Cromer? I can't wear it tomorrow.
36 mos.	I going come in fourteen minutes. I going wear that to wedding. I see what happens. I have to save them now. Those are not strong mens. They are going sleep in wintertime. You dress me up like a baby elephant.
38 mos.	So it can't be cleaned? I broke my racing car. Do you know the lights went off? What happened to the bridge? Can I put my head in the mailbox so the mailman can know where I are and put me in the mailbox?

Source: Steven Pinker, *The Language Instinct* (New York: Morrow, 1994), pp. 269–270.

Please sit in your dialectal region!

(3) Approximate dialect regions of the United States



Sociolinguistics

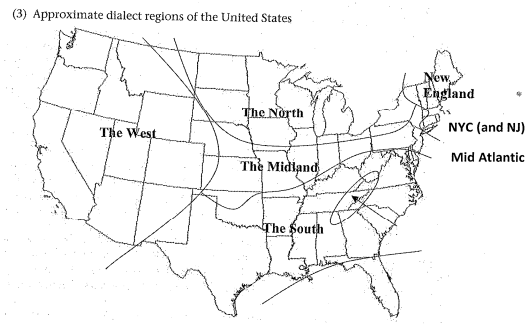
- ***Sociolinguistics*** focuses on the study of the language of the speech community and linguistic variation within that speech community.
- Sociolinguists are interested in several questions. Today, we focus on two:
  - How do speakers differ in their linguistic behavior?
  - What attitudes do speakers have regarding their own speech and others' speech, and why?

Linguistic variation

- Linguistic variation happens at several levels:
  - Phonological (***The Northern Cities Vowel Shift***)
  - Lexical (***soda*** vs. ***pop***)
  - Morphological (***dragged*** vs. ***drug***)
  - Syntactic (***I might could do it***.)

American English dialect areas

(3) Approximate dialect regions of the United States



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Do you speak American?

- Segment 2b: Dialect area/ 'Cah'

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Linguistic variation

- There are several sociological variables that affect our speech, and sociolinguists are interested in studying linguistic variation that correlates with these variables.
- What are some of the sociological variables that may correlate with linguistic variation?

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Variables affecting language use

- Region.
- Ethnicity.
- Socio-economic background.
- Education.
- Age.
- Gender.
- Register/Style
- Whether or not you know another language

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Studying language attitudes

- Sociolinguists are also interested in studying speakers' attitudes towards their own speech as well as the speech of others, and possible explanations we can rely on to make sense of the attitudes that emerge.
- One way to find out about such attitudes is to ask speakers to 'rate' dialects, as Dennis Preston did a few years ago for American English dialects.
- Before we look at his findings, I want us to do the same, in your dialectal groups.

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Activity #1

- In your groups, use the dialect map and rate the US dialects on a scale from 1 to 10 in terms of **CORRECTNESS**.
- Think about where in the country you feel people speak **the most correct** form of American English. Where do they speak **the least correct** form?
- For the purposes of this exercise CORRECT ENGLISH is defined as the variety (or varieties) of American English that sounds the most acceptable to you. You can use all the other numbers between 1 and 10, and you can repeat a score as many times as you like. (Areas can tie.)

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Activity #2

- In your groups, use the dialect map and rate the US dialects on a scale from 1 to 10 in terms of **PLEASANTNESS**.
- **PLEASANT ENGLISH** is defined as the variety of American English that sounds **the most appealing** to you. Note that *appealing* can be different from *correct.* An appealing accent may sound charming, but you may not consider it good English!
- For this reason your scores for CORRECT ENGLISH in Activity #1 and PLEASANT ENGLISH in Activity #2 may be the same, or they can be different.

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Compare with Preston's results

- Dennis Preston's study:

http://www.pbs.org/speak/speech/mapping/map.html

- How do we explain these language attitudes?

http://www.pbs.org/speak/speech/prejudice/attitudes/

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Next class agenda

- Language and ethnicity: The case of African American English.
- Read the section on AAE in Chapter 8.
- Follow the links on the class schedule page to read about the Ebonics debate.

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