Sociolinguistics
Sociolinguistics

Difference between dialectology and sociolinguistics?
Sociolinguistics

Difference between dialectology and sociolinguistics?

Dialectology focuses on variation across space
Variation across space
Variation across space

- Yard sale
- Garage sale
- Rummage sale
- Tag sale
Variation across space

- cr[l]k
- cr[i]k or cr[l]k
- cr[i]k
Sociolinguistics

- Considers variation across space and
Sociolinguistics

- Considers variation across space and
- Age
- Gender
- Education
- Occupation
- Religion
- Ethnicity
- Social situation
Sociolinguistics

- What kinds of variation?
  - Phonetic
  - Lexical
  - Syntactic
  - Morphological
Variation is also due to linguistic factors

- Frequency
- Surrounding words-collocates
- Phonetic context
- Semantic context
- Syntactic context
Where can you get data?

- Google? Blogs?
  - Hard to know sociolinguistic factors of writers or phonetic details
Where can you get data?

- Google? Blogs?
  - Hard to know sociolinguistic factors of writers or phonetic details
- Radio, TV, Podcasts?
  - Hard to know sociolinguistic factors
Where can you get data?

- Google? Blogs?
  - Hard to know sociolinguistic factors of writers or phonetic details
- Radio, TV, Podcasts?
  - Hard to know sociolinguistic factors
    - But
    - The Queen's English
    - Oprah
    - Say Yes to the Dress
Where can you get data?

- Dialect maps?
  - Spacial variation mainly
Where can you get data?

• Get your own
  – Interviews
  – Online surveys
  – Phone calls (Telsur)
  – Covert observations **NO!**
  – Door-to-door
Where can you get data?

- Door to door in Utah County
Where can you get data?

• Door to door in Utah County
  – Survey questions
    • In what building does a farmer keep his animals
    • Name the days of the week
    • What is the term for a sweetened carbonated beverage?
    • If you had to say there’s a difference, what’s the difference between a bag and a sack?
    • What do you say when people say thank you to you?
Dear Resident,

My name is Danny Sarver. I am a linguistics student and research assistant at BYU. This summer I am collecting data for a research project studying Utah English. You have been randomly selected to be given the opportunity to take part in this study. If you would like to do so, I will be coming around your neighborhood this week from about 10:00 AM until 4:30 PM, Mon-Wed. The interview takes 10-15 minutes to complete. You will be asked to say some words that differ across American dialects. If you would like to participate, but are unable to meet during those times or if you have any questions you may call me on my cell at (801) 309-1279.

Thanks,

Danny Sarver
Where can you get data?

- Elicitation
  - Where are the mountains in Utah?
  - Your homework replicates this
Where are the mountains in Utah?

People read a letter:

Dear Mom,

I know it's been a while since I've written. In the last letter I told you about the kitten I found that looked like it hadn't eaten for a month. Well, it's living in my apartment now. He was in pretty bad shape, and looks like he'd been beaten and was pretty frightened of people at first. I've named him Keaton and my goal is to fatten him up a bit and show him people aren't so bad.
Where are the mountains in Utah?

- It's not t-dropping
- Glottal stops for /t/ are standard in US
- It is whether glottal stop is released orally or nasally
  - [kʰɪʔˈn] versus [kʰɪʔən]
Where are the moun'tains in Utah?

• [fraɪ,ŋ]
Where are the mountains in Utah?

• [fawʔən]
Where are the mountains in Utah?

- How do you get the spectrograms?
  - Another tool-PRAAT
Where are the mountains in Utah?

- Participants
  - Males and females
  - Ages 12-77
  - 35 Utahns and 21 non-Utahns
Where are the mountains in Utah?
Where are the mountains in Utah?

- Homework assignment
Interviews - Open topic

- Deletion of -s (he say, two car) in Detroit AAVE
Figure 7.4. Percentage of [z] absence in third-person singular present tense agreement in Detroit black speech
Source: based on Wolfram (1969, p. 136)
Formal vs. informal contexts

- /r/ deletion in NYC
  - Observing conversation with friends
  - Observing conversation with others
  - Reading a passage
  - Reading words from a list
  - Reading minimal pairs (pock, park)
Socioeconomic class (SEC)
0–1 Lower class
2–4 Working class
5–8 Lower middle class
9 Upper middle class

Figure 7.2. R-pronunciation in New York City by social class and style of speech
Source: Labov (1966, p. 240)
Macro sociolinguistics

- Not focused on variation (micro) but on society and language
- How does society treat the language?
  - In US English is more prestigious than Spanish
  - In Paraguay Spanish is more prestigious than Guarani
- Language contact
  - Does it lead to change? (Balkanization)
  - Role of bilingualism, or lack thereof
Macro sociolinguistics

- Language death
  - Practical reasons
  - Government policy
  - Social prestige
- Which language is official? (Canada, Switzerland)
- Language revitalization
- Language and culture/nationality
  - Serbian and Croatian
  - Urdu and Hindi
  - Basque, Catalan, Frisian