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<td>AbE/C/P</td>
<td>(Australian) Aboriginal English / Creole / Pidgin</td>
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<td>BrE</td>
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Abbreviations

StAusFE  Standard Australian Formal English
StBrE    Standard British English
StE      Standard English
StGhE    Standard Ghanaian English
StHE     St. Helena English
StIndE   Standard Indian English
StJamE   Standard Jamaican English
SurC     Suriname Creoles
TanE     Tanzanian English
TobC     Tobagonian Creole
Trad-RP  Traditional Received Pronunciation
TmC      Trinidadian Creole
T & TC   Trinidadian & mesolectal Tobagonian Creoles
TP       Tok Pisin, New Guinea Pidgin, Neomelanesian
WAfE/P   West African English/Pidgin
WelE     Welsh English
WMwE     Western and Midwestern American English
ZamE     Zambian English

More abbreviations

ESL       English as Second Language
EFL       English as Foreign Language
EIL       English as International Language
ENL       English as Native Language
L1        First Language
L2        Second Language
P/C       Pidgins and Creoles
List of features: Phonology and phonetics

Edgar W. Schneider

Please indicate whether or to what extent the following features / variants occur in the variety that you have discussed by inserting A, B or C in the leftmost column as follows:

A occurs normally / is widespread
B occurs sometimes / occasionally, with some speakers / groups, in some environments
C does not normally occur.

If you have covered more than one variety, please give your set of responses for each of them, or give a summary assessment for a group of related varieties as specified.

Elements in parentheses (..<..) are optional; “<->” suggests a direction of movement.

Please note that the variants suggested for a single item (e.g. lexical set) are meant to be relatively exhaustive but not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Phonetic realization: vowels (lexical sets)

1. KIT [i]
2. KIT raised / fronted, > [i]
3. KIT centralized, > [ə]
4. KIT with offglide, e.g. [ɪə/ɪə]
5. DRESS half-close [ɛ]
6. DRESS raised, > [i]
7. DRESS half-open [ɛ]
8. DRESS backed, > [æ/ɛ]
9. DRESS with centralizing offglide, e.g. [ɛə]
10. DRESS with rising offglide, e.g. [ɛr]
11. TRAP [æ]
12. TRAP raised, > [ɛ/ɛ]
13. TRAP lowered, > [a]
14. TRAP with offglide, e.g. [ææ/ææ/æe/æə]
15. LOT rounded, e.g. [ə]
16. LOT back unrounded, e.g. [a]
17. LOT front unrounded, e.g. [a]
18. LOT with offglide, e.g. [ɔ̄]
19. STRUT [ʌ]
20. STRUT high back, > [ʊ]
21. STRUT central [ɔ/ʊ]
22. STRUT backed, > [ɔ]
23. FOOT [ʊ]
24. FOOT tensed [u]
25. FOOT back, lower, e.g. [λ]
26. BATH half-open front [ə]
27. BATH low front [a]
28. BATH low back [a]
29. BATH long
30. BATH with offglide, e.g. [æ/æt/æt]
31. CLOTH rounded [ɔ/ʊ]
32. CLOTH back unrounded [a]
33. CLOTH front unrounded [a]
34. NURSE central [ɔ/ʊ]
35. NURSE raised / fronted / rounded, e.g. [ʊ]
36. NURSE mid front [ɛ/ɛ(r)]
37. NURSE [λ(r)] (possibly lexically conditioned, e.g. WORD)
38. NURSE backed, e.g. [ʊ/ʊ]
39. NURSE diphthongal, e.g. [ɔɪ/ɔi]
40. FLEECE [iː]
41. FLEECE with centralizing offglide, e.g. [iː]
42. FLEECE with mid/central onset and upglide, e.g. [iː/ɪ]
43. FLEECE with high onset and upglide, e.g. [iː]
44. FLEECE shortened, e.g. [iː]
45. FACE upgliding diphthong with half-close onset, e.g. [æɪ]
46. FACE upgliding diphthong with half-open or lower onset, e.g. [æɪ/æt]
47. FACE upgliding diphthong with low / backed onset, e.g. [æɪ/ʌt]
48. FACE upgliding diphthong with central onset, e.g. [ɑɪ]
49. FACE monophthong, e.g. [εː]
50. FACE ingliding diphthong, e.g. [ɪæ/ɪɛ]
51. PALM low back [ɑː]
52. PALM low front [ɑː]
53. PALM with offglide, e.g. [ɑʊ/ɒ]
57. GOAT with central onset, e.g. [ɔu/ɔu]
58. GOAT with back rounded onset, e.g. [ou/ou]
59. GOAT with low or back unrounded onset, e.g. [a(ː)u/au/ʌu/ʌu]
60. GOAT with relatively high back onset [uu]
61. GOAT ingliding, e.g. [uɔ/uɔ/ua]
62. GOAT monophthongal, e.g. [o(ː)]
63. GOOSE [uː]
64. GOOSE fronted, > [u(ː)]
65. GOOSE gliding, e.g. [uu/iu/ɔ(ː)u]
66. PRICE upgliding diphthong, e.g. [ai/ai/ai]
67. PRICE monophthong [a:] before voiced C
68. PRICE monophthong [a:] in all environments
69. PRICE with raised / central onset, e.g. [ɔi/ɔi]
70. PRICE with backed onset, e.g. [ɔ(ː)i/ɔi]
71. PRICE with mid-front offglide, e.g. [ae/ae]
72. CHOICE [ɔi]
73. CHOICE with low onset [ɔi]
74. CHOICE with central onset [ɔi/ɔi]
75. MOUTH [au/au]
76. MOUTH with raised and backed onset, e.g. [ʌu/ʌu]
77. MOUTH with raised onset [au] only before voiceless C
78. MOUTH with raised onset [au] in all environments
79. MOUTH with fronted onset, e.g. [æu/æu/æo/æo]
80. MOUTH low monophthong, e.g. [aː]
81. MOUTH mid/high back monophthong, e.g. [oː]
82. NEAR [ɔ(r)]
83. NEAR without offglide, e.g. [ir]
84. NEAR with tensed / raised onset, e.g. [iːɔ]
85. NEAR with half-closed onset [еː/о/еa]
86. NEAR with half-open onset [еː/о/еa]
87. NEAR high-front to low glide, e.g. [ia]
88. SQUARE with half-open onset [эa]
89. SQUARE with half-closed onset [эo/еa]
90. SQUARE with high front onset [iə]
91. SQUARE with relatively open onset, possibly rising [эa/эt]
92. SQUARE half-closed monophthong, [еː/о]
93. SQUARE half-open monophthong, [еː/о]
94. START low back unrounded, e.g. [a(ː)r]
95. START central, e.g. [u(ː)r]
96. START low front, e.g. [a(ː)r]
List of features: Phonology and phonetics

97. START front, raised, e.g. [ε(ːr)]
98. START with offglide, e.g. [aa/oa]
99. NORTH half-open monophthong [ɔ(ːr)]
100. NORTH half-closed monophthong [ɔ(ːr)]
101. NORTH [ɔ]
102. NORTH with offglide, e.g. [ʊa/oa]
103. FORCE half-open monophthong [ɔ(ːr)]
104. FORCE half-closed monophthong [ɔ(ːr)]
105. FORCE ingliding, e.g. [ʊa(ːr)/ʊa(ːr)/oa]
106. FORCE with upglide, e.g. [ou(r)]
107. CURE [ʊa/ur]
108. CURE with tensed / raised onset, e.g. [u(ː)a/ur]
109. CURE lowered monophthong, e.g. [ɔː/ɔː]
110. CURE with upglide, e.g. [ʊʊ(ːr)]
111. happY relatively centralized, e.g. [ɪ]
112. happY central, e.g. [ɛ/ɛ]
113. happY tensed / relatively high front, e.g. [i(ː)]
114. happY mid front, e.g. [ɛ/ɛ]
115. lettER [ɛ]
116. lettER (relatively) open, e.g. [a/ʌ]
117. horsES central [ə]
118. horsES high front [ɪ]
119. commA [ɔ]
120. commA (relatively) open, e.g. [a/ʌ]

Distribution: vowels

122. homophony of KIT and FLEECE
123. homophony of TRAP and BATH
124. homophony of Mary and merry
125. homophony of Mary, merry and marry
126. homophony of TRAP and DRESS before /l/
127. merger of KIT and DRESS before nasals (pin = pen)
128. homophony of DRESS and FACE
129. homophony of FOOT and GOOSE
130. homophony of LOT and THOUGHT
131. homophony of LOT and STRUT
132. homophony of NEAR and SQUARE
133. vowels nasalized before nasal consonants
134. vowel harmony / cross-syllable assimilation phenomena in some words
135. vowels short unless before /r/, voiced fricative, or in open syllable (SVLR)
136. comma/letter (etc.): [a/e/i/o/u], reflecting spelling

Phonetic realization and distribution: consonants

137. P/T/K-: weak or no aspiration of word-initial stops
138. -T-: lenisation / flapping / voicing of intervocalic /t/ (writer = rider)
139. -T: realization of word-final or intervocalic /t/ as glottal stop
140. K-: palatalization of velar stop word-initially: e.g. kj-/gj-in can’t /
garden
141. B-: word-initial bw- for b-: e.g. bw- in boy
142. S/-F-: voiceless initial fricatives voiced: [z/-v-]
143. TH-: realization of word-initial voiced TH as stop, e.g. dis, ‘this’
144. TH-: realization of word-initial voiceless TH as stop, e.g. ting, ‘thing’
145. TH-: realization of word-initial voiced TH as affricate [dð]
146. TH-: realization of word-initial voiceless TH as affricate [θ]
147. WH-: velar fricative onset retained, i.e. which is not homophonous
   with witch
148. CH: voiceless velar fricative [χ/χ] exists
149. h-deletion (word-initial), e.g., ‘eart’ heart
150. h-insertion (word-initial), e.g. have ‘axe’
151. L-: palatal (clear) variant in syllable onsets
152. L-: velar variant in syllable onsets
153. –L: palatal variant in syllable codas
154. “jod”-dropping: no /j/ after alveolars before /u:/, e.g. in news, tune
155. deletion of word-initial /h/ in /hj/- clusters, e.g. in human, huge
156. labialization of word-central voiced -TH-, e.g. [-v-] in brother
157. labialization of word-final / word-central voiceless –TH, e.g. [-f] in
   mouth, nothing
158. intervocalic /-v-/ > [b], e.g. in river
159. W: substitution of labiodental fricative /v/ for semi-vowel /w/
160. word-final consonant cluster deletion, monomorphic
161. word-final consonant cluster deletion, bimorphic
162. deletion of word-final single consonants
163. simplification of word-initial consonant clusters, e.g. in splash, square
164. non-rhotic (no postvocalic –r)
165. rhotic (postvocalic –r realized)
166. phonetic realization of /r/ as velar retroflex constriction
167. phonetic realization of /r/ as alveolar flap
168. phonetic realization of /r/ as apical trill
169. /r/ uvular
170. intrusive –r–, e.g. idea-r-is
171. post-vocalic –l vocalized
172. neutralization / confusion of liquids /l/ and /r/ in some words
173. realization of velar nasals with stop: -NG > [-ŋ]
174. velarization of some word-final nasals, e.g. /-ŋ/ in down

Prosodic features and intonation

175. deletion of word-initial unstressed syllables, e.g. 'bout, 'cept
176. stress not infrequently shifted from first to later syllable, e.g. indi-cate, holiday
177. (relatively) syllable-timed rather than stress-timed
178. HRT (High-Rising Terminal) contour: rise at end of statement
179. tone distinctions exist
List of features: Morphology and Syntax
Bernd Kortmann

The features in the catalogue are numbered from 1 to 76 (for easy reference in later parts of the chapter) and provided with the short definitions and illustrations. They include all usual suspects known from survey articles on grammatical properties of (individual groups of) non-standard varieties of English, with a slight bias towards features observed in L1 varieties. The 76 features fall into 11 groups corresponding to the following broad areas of morphosyntax: pronouns, noun phrase, tense and aspect, modal verbs, verb morphology, adverbs, negation, agreement, relativization, complementation, discourse organization and word order.

Pronouns, pronoun exchange, pronominal gender

1. *them* instead of demonstrative *those* (e.g. *in them days, one of them things*)
2. *me* instead of possessive *my* (e.g. *He’s me brother, I’ve lost me bike*)
3. special forms or phrases for the second person plural pronoun (e.g. *youse, y’all, aay’, yufela, you ... together, all of you, you ones/’uns, you guys, you people*)
4. regularized reflexives-paradigm (e.g. *hissself, theirselves/theirself*)
5. object pronoun forms serving as base for reflexives (e.g. *meself*)
6. lack of number distinction in reflexives (e.g. plural *-self*)
7. *she/her* used for inanimate referents (e.g. *She was burning good [about a house]*)
8. generic *he/his* for all genders (e.g. *My car, he’s broken*)
9. *myself/meself* in a non-reflexive function (e.g. *my/me husband and myself*)
10. *me* instead of *I* in coordinate subjects (e.g. *Me and my brother/My brother and me were late for school*)
11. non-standard use of *us* (e.g. *Us George was a nice one, We like us town, Show us ‘me’ them boots, Us kids used to pinch the sweets like hell, Us’ll do it*)
12. non-coordinated subject pronoun forms in object function (e.g. *You did get he out of bed in the middle of the night*)
13. non-coordinated object pronoun forms in subject function (e.g. *Us say ‘er’s dry*)
Noun phrase
14. absence of plural marking after measure nouns (e.g. four pound, five year)
15. group plurals (e.g. That President has two Secretary of States)
16. group genitives (e.g. The man I met’s girlfriend is a real beauty)
17. irregular use of articles (e.g. Take them to market, I had nice garden, about a three fields, I had the toothache)
18. postnominal for-phrases to express possession (e.g. The house for me)
19. double comparatives and superlatives (e.g. That is so much more easier to follow)
20. regularized comparison strategies (e.g. in He is the regularest kind a guy I know, in one of the most pretty sunsets)

Verb phrase: Tense & aspect
21. wider range of uses of the Progressive (e.g. I’m liking this, What are you wanting?)
22. habitual be (e.g. He be sick)
23. habitual do (e.g. He does catch fish pretty)
24. non-standard habitual markers other than be and do
25. levelling of difference between Present Perfect and Simple Past (e.g. Were you ever in London?, Some of us have been to New York years ago)
26. be as perfect auxiliary (e.g. They’re not left school yet)
27. do as a tense and aspect marker (e.g. This man what do own this)
28. completive/perfect done (e.g. He done go fishing, You don ate what I has sent you?)
29. past tense/anterior marker been (e.g. I been cut the bread)
30. loosening of sequence of tense rule (e.g. I noticed the van I came in)
31. would in if-clauses (e.g. If I’d be you, …)
32. was sat/stood with progressive meaning (e.g. when you’re stood ‘are standing’ there you can see the flames)
33. after-Perfect (e.g. She’s after selling the boat)

Verb phrase: Modal verbs
34. double modals (e.g. I tell you what we might should do)
35. epistemic mustn’t (‘can’t, it is concluded that… not’; e.g. This mustn’t be true)
Verb phrase: Verb morphology

36. levelling of preterite and past participle verb forms: regularization of irregular verb paradigms (e.g. catch-catching-catched)
37. levelling of preterite and past participle verb forms: unmarked forms (frequent with e.g. give and run)
38. levelling of preterite and past partiple verb forms: past form replacing the participle (e.g. He had went)
39. levelling of preterite and past participle verb forms: participle replacing the past form (e.g. He gone to Mary)
40. zero past tense forms of regular verbs (e.g. I walk for I walked)
41. a-prefixing on ing-forms (e.g. They wasn’t a-doin ’nothin’ wrong)

Adverbs

42. adverbs (other than degree modifiers) have same form as adjectives (e.g. Come quick!)
43. degree modifier adverbs lack -ly (e.g. That’s real good)

Negation

44. multiple negation / negative concord (e.g. He won’t do no harm)
45. ain’t as the negated form of be (e.g. They’re all in there, ain’t they?)
46. ain’t as the negated form of have (e.g. I ain’t had a look at them yet)
47. ain’t as generic negator before a main verb (e.g. Something I ain’t know about)
48. invariant don’t for all persons in the present tense (e.g. He don’t like me)
49. never as preverbal past tense negator (e.g. He never came [= he didn’t come])
50. no as preverbal negator (e.g. me no it brekfas)
51. was–weren’t split (e.g. The boys was interested, but Mary weren’t)
52. invariant non-concord tags, (e.g. innit/’nt it/isn’t in They had them in their hair, innit?)
Agreement

53. invariant present tense forms due to zero marking for the third person singular (e.g. So he show up and say, What's up?)
54. invariant present tense forms due to generalization of third person -s to all persons (e.g. I sees the house)
55. existential/presentational there's, there is, there was with plural subjects (e.g. There's two men waiting in the hall)
56. variant forms of dummy subjects in existential clauses (e.g. they, it, or zero for there)
57. deletion of be (e.g. She ___ smart)
58. deletion of auxiliary have (e.g. I ___ eaten my lunch)
59. was/were generalization (e.g. You were hungry but he were thirsty, or: You was hungry but he was thirsty)
60. Northern Subject Rule (e.g. I sing [vs. *I sings], Birds sings, I sing and dances)

Relativization

61. relative particle what (e.g. This is the man what painted my house)
62. relative particle that or what in non-restrictive contexts (e.g. My daughter, that/what lives in London, …)
63. relative particle as (e.g. He was a chap as got a living anyhow)
64. relative particle at (e.g. This is the man at painted my house)
65. use of analytic that his/that's, what his/what's, at's, as instead of whose (e.g. The man what's wife has died)
66. gapping or zero-relativization in subject position (e.g. The man ___ lives there is a nice chap)
67. resumptive / shadow pronouns (e.g. This is the house which I painted it yesterday)

Complementation

68. say-based complementizers
69. inverted word order in indirect questions (e.g. I'm wondering what are you gonna do)
70. unsplit for to in infinitival purpose clauses (e.g. We always had gutters in the winter time for to drain the water away)
71. *as what / than what* in comparative clauses (e.g. *It's harder than what you think it is*)
72. serial verbs (e.g. *give* meaning ‘to, for’, as in *Karibuk giv mi*, ‘Give the book to me’)

**Discourse organization and word order**

73. lack of inversion / lack of auxiliaries in *wh*-questions (e.g. *What you doing?*)
74. lack of inversion in main clause *yes/no* questions (e.g. *You get the point?*)
75. *like* as a focussing device (e.g. *How did you get away with that like? Like for one round five quid, that was like three quid, like two-fifty each*)
76. *like* as a quotative particle (e.g. *And she was like “What do you mean?”*)
General introduction

Bernd Kortmann and Edgar W. Schneider

This book, together with its three companion volumes on other world regions, derives from the Handbook of Varieties of English, edited by Kortmann, Schneider et al. (2004). To make the material compiled in the Handbook more easily accessible and affordable, especially to student pockets, it has been decided to regroup the articles in such a way that all descriptive papers on any of the seven major anglophone world regions distinguished there are put together in a set of four paperback volumes, and accompanied by the CD-ROM which covers data and sources from all around the world. In this brief introduction we are briefly revisiting and summarizing the major design features of the Handbook and its contributions, i.e. information which, by implication, also characterizes the articles in the present volume.

The all-important design feature of the Handbook and of these offspring paperbacks is its focus on structure and on the solid description and documentation of data. The volumes, together with the CD-ROM, provide comprehensive up-to-date accounts of the salient phonological and grammatical properties of the varieties of English around the world. Reliable structural information in a somewhat standardized format and presented in an accessible way is a necessary prerequisite for any kind of study of language varieties, independent of the theoretical framework used for analysis. It is especially important for comparative studies of the phonological and morphosyntactic patterns across varieties of English, and the inclusion of this kind of data in typological studies (e.g. in the spirit of Kortmann 2004).

Of course, all of this structural information can be and has to be put in perspective by the conditions of uses of these varieties, i.e. their sociohistorical backgrounds, their current sociolinguistic settings (not infrequently in multilingual societies), and their associated political dimensions (like issues of norm-setting, language policies, and pedagogical applications). Ultimately, all of the varieties under discussion here, certainly so the ones spoken outside of England but in a sense, looking way back in time, even the English dialects themselves, are products of colonization processes, predominantly the European colonial expansion in the modern age. A number of highly interesting questions, linguistically and culturally, might be asked in this context, including the central issue of why all of this has happened, whether there is an underlying
scheme that has continued to drive and motivate the evolution of new varieties of English (Schneider 2003, 2007). These linguistic and sociohistorical background issues will be briefly addressed in the regional introductions and in some of the individual chapters, but it should be made clear that it is the issue of structural description and comparison which is at the heart of this project.

The chapters in the four paperbacks are geared towards documenting and mapping the structural variation among (spontaneously spoken) non-standard varieties of English. Standard English is of course that variety, or set of closely related varieties, which enjoys the highest social prestige. It serves as a reference system and target norm in formal situations, in the language used by people taking on a public persona (including, for example, anchorpersons in the news media), and as a model in the teaching of English worldwide. Here, however, it is treated as is commonplace in modern descriptive linguistics, i.e. as a variety on a par with all other (regional, social, ethnic, or contact) varieties of English. Clearly, in terms of its structural properties it is not inherently superior to any of the non-standard varieties. Besides, the very notion of “Standard English” itself obviously refers to an abstraction. On the written level, it is under discussion to what extent a “common core” or a putatively homogeneous variety called “International English” actually exists: there is some degree of uniformity across the major national varieties, but once one looks into details of expression and preferences, there are also considerable differences. On the spoken level, there are reference accents like, for example, Received Pronunciation for British English, but their definition also builds upon abstractions from real individuals’ performance. Thus, in the present context especially the grammar of (written) Standard English figures as no more than an implicit standard of comparison, in the sense that all chapters focus upon those phenomena in a given variety which are (more or less strikingly) different from this standard (these being perceived as not, note again, in any sense deficient or inferior to it).

The articles in this collection cover all main national standard varieties, distinctive regional, ethnic, and social varieties, major contact varieties (pидgins and creoles), as well as major varieties of English as a Second Language. The inclusion of second-language varieties and, especially, English-based pидgins and creoles may come as a surprise to some readers. Normally these varieties are addressed from different perspectives (such as, for example, language policy, language pedagogy, linguistic attitudes, language and identity (construction), substrate vs. superstrate influence), each standing in its own research tradition. Here they are primarily discussed from the point of view of their structural properties. This will make possible comparisons with structural properties of, for example, other varieties of English spoken in the same region, or second-language or contact varieties in other parts of the English-speaking world. At the
same time the availability of solid structural descriptions may open new perspectives for a fruitful interaction between the different research traditions within which second-language and contact varieties are studied. The boundaries of what is considered and accepted as “varieties of English” has thus been drawn fairly widely. In accepting English-oriented pidgins and creoles in the present context, we adopt a trend of recent research to consider them as contact varieties closely related to, possibly to be categorized as varieties of, their respective superstrate languages (e.g. Mufwene 2001). Creoles, and also some pidgins, in many regions vary along a continuum from acrolectal forms, relatively close to English and used by the higher sociolinguistic strata in formal contexts, to basilects, “deep” varieties maximally different from English. Most of our contributions focus upon the mesolects, the middle ranges which in most creole-speaking societies are used most widely.

For other varieties, too, it may be asked why or why not they have been selected for inclusion in this collection. Among the considerations that led to the present selection, the following figured most prominently: amount and quality of existing data and research documentation for the individual varieties, intensity of ongoing research activities, availability of authors, and space constraints (leading, for example, to the exclusion of strictly local accents and dialects). More information on the selection of varieties will be given in the regional introductions.

While in the *Handbook* there is one volume each for phonology and grammar (i.e. morphology and syntax), this set of paperbacks has been arranged by the major world regions relevant for the discussion of varieties of English: the British Isles; the Americas and the Caribbean; Africa, South and Southeast Asia; and the Pacific and Australasia. Each of the volumes comprises all articles on the respective regions, both on phonology and on grammar, together with the regional introductions, which include accounts of the histories, the cultural and sociolinguistic situations, and the most important data sources for the relevant locations, ethnic groups and varieties, and the regional synopses, in which the editors summarize the most striking properties of the varieties of English spoken in the respective world regions. Global synopses offering the most noteworthy findings and tendencies on phonological and morphosyntactic variation in English from a global perspective are available in the two hardcover Handbooks and in the electronic online version. In addition, there is a list of “General references”, all of them exclusively book publications, which are either globally relevant or central for the individual world regions.

What emerges from the synopses is that many of the features described for individual varieties or sets of varieties in this Handbook are not unique to these (sets of) varieties. This is true both for morphology and syntax and for phonology.
As a matter of fact, quite a number of morphosyntactic features described as salient properties of individual varieties may strike the reader as typical of other varieties, too, possibly even of the grammar of spoken English, in general. In a similar vein, it turns out that certain phonological processes (like the monophthongization of certain diphthongs, the fronting, backing or merging of some vowels, and some consonantal substitutions or suprasegmental processes) can be documented in quite a number of fairly disparate language varieties — not surprisingly, perhaps, given shared underlying principles like constraints of articulatory space or tendencies towards simplification and the reduction of contrasts.

The distributions of selected individual features, both morphosyntactic and phonological, across varieties world-wide is visualized by the interactive world maps on the accompanying CD-ROM. The lists of these features, which are also referred to in some contributions, especially the regional synopses, are appended to this introduction. On these maps, each of a set of selected features, for almost all of the varieties under discussion, is categorized as occurring regularly (marked as “A” and colour-coded in red), occasionally or only in certain specified environments (marked as “B” and represented by a yellow circle) or practically not at all (“C”, black). These innovative maps, which are accompanied by statistical distribution data on the spread of selected variants, provide the reader with an immediate visual representation of regional distribution and diffusion patterns. Further information on the nature of the multimedia material accompanying these books is available on the CD itself. It includes audio samples of free conversations (some of them transcribed), a standard reading passage, and recordings of the spoken “lexical sets” which define and illustrate vocalic variation (Wells 1982).

The chapters are descriptive survey articles providing state-of-the-art reports on major issues in current research, with a common core in order to make the collection an interesting and useful tool especially from a comparative, i.e. cross-dialectal and cross-linguistic, point of view. All chapters aim primarily at a qualitative rather than quantitative perspective, i.e. whether or not a given feature occurs is more important than its frequency. Of course, for varieties where research has focused upon documenting frequency relationships between variants of variables, some information on relevant quantitative tendencies has been provided. Depending upon the research coverage in a given world region (which varies widely from one continent to another), some contributions build upon existing sociolinguistic, dialectological, or structural research; a small number of other chapters make systematic use of available computerized corpora; and in some cases and for some regions the chapters in this compilation provide the first-ever systematic qualitative survey of the phonological and grammatical properties of English as spoken there.
For almost all varieties of English covered there are companion chapters in the phonology and morphosyntax parts of each paperback volume. In these cases it is in the phonology chapter that the reader will find a concise introductory section on the historical and cultural background as well as the current sociolinguistic situation of the relevant variety or set of varieties spoken at this location.

In order to ensure a certain degree of comparability, the authors were given a set of core issues that they were asked to address (provided something interesting can be said about them in the respective variety). For the phonology chapters, this set included the following items:

- phonological systems
- phonetic realization(s) and (phonotactic) distributions of a selection of phonemes (to be selected according to salience in the variety in question)
- specific phonological processes at work in the relevant variety
- lexical distribution
- prosodic features (stress, rhythm)
- intonation patterns
- observations/generalizations on the basis of lexical sets à la Wells (1982) and Foulkes/Docherty (1999), a standard reading passage and/or samples of free conversation.

It is worth noting that for some of the contributions, notably the chapters on pidgins and creoles, the lexical sets were not sufficient or suitable to describe the variability found. In such cases authors were encouraged to expand the set of target words, or replace one of the items. The reading passage was also adjusted or substituted by some authors, for instance because it was felt to be culturally inappropriate.

This is the corresponding set for the morphology and syntax chapters:

- tense – aspect – modality systems
- auxiliaries
- negation
- relativization
- complementation
- other subordination phenomena (notably adverbial subordination)
- agreement
- noun phrase structure
- pronominal systems
- word order (and information structure: especially focus/topicalizing constructions)
– selected salient features of the morphological paradigms of, for example, auxiliaries and pronouns

Lexical variation was not our primary concern, given that it fails to lend itself to the systematic generalization and comparability that we are interested in in this project. However, authors were offered the opportunity to comment on highly salient features of the vocabulary of any given variety (briefly and within the overall space constraints) if this was considered rewarding. The reader may find such information on distinctive properties of the respective vocabularies in the morphology and syntax chapters. Especially for a student readership, short sets of exercises and study questions have been added at the end of all chapters in the four paperback volumes.

In the interest of combining guidance for readers, efficiency, and space constraints, but also the goal of comprehensiveness, bibliographic references are systematically divided between three different types of reference lists. As was stated above, in each paperback a “General references” list can be found which compiles a relatively large number of books which, taken together, are central to the field of world-wide varieties of English – “classic” publications, collective volumes, particularly important publications, and so on. It is understood that in the individual contributions all authors may refer to titles from this list without these being repeated in their respective source lists. Each of the individual chapters ends with a list of “Selected references” comprising, on average, only 15–20 references – including the most pertinent ones on the respective variety (or closely related varieties) beyond any others possibly included in the General references list, and possibly others cited in the respective article. In other words, the Selected references do not repeat any of the titles cited in the list of General references. Thirdly, a “Comprehensive bibliography”, with further publications specifically on the phonology and morphosyntax of each of the varieties covered, for which no space limitations were imposed, is available on the CD-ROM. The idea behind this limitation of the number of references allowed to go with each article was to free the texts of too much technical apparatus and thus to increase their reader-friendliness for a target audience of non-specialists while at the same time combining basic guidance to the most important literature (in the General References list) with the possibility of providing comprehensive coverage of the writings available on any given region (in the Bibliographies on the CD-ROM). It must be noted, however, that at times this rule imposed limitations upon possible source credits allowed in the discussions, because to make the books self-contained authors were allowed to refer to titles from the General and the Select References lists only. In other words, it is possible that articles touch upon material drawn from publications...
listed in the CD-ROM bibliographies without explicit credit, although every
effort has been made to avoid this.

A publication project as huge as this one would have been impossible, indeed
impossible even to think of, without the support of a great number of people de-
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This collection truly represents an impressive product of scholarly collabora-
tion of people from all around the globe. Right until the end it has been an
exciting and wonderful experience for the editors (as well as, we would like to
think, for the authors) to bring all these scholars and their work together, and
we believe that this shows in the quality of the chapters and the material pre-
sent on the CD-ROM. We hope that, like the Handbook, it will be enjoyed,
appreciated and esteemed by its readers, and treasured as the reference work
and research tool it was designed as for anyone interested in and fascinated by
variation in English!

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1898
Introduction: varieties of English in the Americas and the Caribbean

Edgar W. Schneider

1. Introduction: One region?

Dealing with the Americas and the Caribbean jointly, in a single volume and chapter, is a decision that requires some discussion, perhaps justification. Of course, in a global geographical perspective it comes natural, focusing upon a continent that is separated from other world regions by the globe's largest oceans on both sides. History also justifies such a perspective, with roughly similar population movements having occurred at similar times. All parts of the American continent were originally populated by Native Americans. After the “discovery” of the continent by Columbus and during the period of colonial expansion the indigenous tribes were subdued and cruelly decimated by European settlers, who, in turn, forced millions of Africans to be transported to the region, with the descendants of these, plus some smaller groups of later arrivals, making up for the major population segments. Close economic connections have prevailed to the present day, and substantial migration in both directions has occurred (and provided for mutual linguistic influences). On closer examination, however, there are of course also fundamental differences to be discerned in their economic, social, demographic and cultural make-up. North American settlers were attracted by the prospect of religious freedom and economic prosperity, while for a long time the Caribbean was not deliberately settled but rather exploited mainly as the site of the mass production of cash crops, most notably sugar cane, resulting in plantation societies which rested upon the infamous institution of slavery. Hence, while the descendants of Europeans predominate in North America, those of Africans constitute the majority throughout the Caribbean. Politically and socially, the Caribbean was much more fragmented and disputed by several European colonial powers, while on the North American continent the British secured their predominance (with the exception of remaining French enclaves and, around the Gulf of Mexico, Spanish traces and neighbors). Most importantly in the present, linguistic perspective, different settlement patterns have resulted in North American varieties of English being characterized by dialect transmission (with some degree of koinéization but also innovation) as against Caribbean forms of English being shaped by processes of creolization.
2. Historical background

Disregarding Sir Walter Raleigh’s late-sixteenth century “Lost Colony” of Roanoke, permanent English settlement in North America started early in the seventeenth century, and the fact that the earliest settler groups tended to be religious dissenters predominantly from southern parts of England has resulted in the fact that the dialects of the regions where they established their bridgeheads (1607: Jamestown, Virginia; 1620: the Pilgrim Fathers landing on Plymouth Rock in Massachusetts) have retained higher degrees of similarity to southern forms of British English. Later streams of settlers, migrating from landing sites in or near Pennsylvania into the interior North, the Midlands and the Upper South in search of new lands, brought their northern English or Scottish-derived forms of English and caused these to diffuse, thus giving them a particularly strong role in the evolution of distinctly American ways of speaking. The first two centuries of British settlement (and the French and Indian War of 1756–1763) secured English as the language of the Atlantic seaboard and beyond, the area occupied by the thirteen original colonies that declared their independence in 1776. As a consequence of relatively homogeneous settler groups and long-standing stability in this eastern region along the Atlantic coast, regional dialect differences have been found to be stronger there than further to the West. The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 opened up the continent for further exploration and settlement expansion throughout the nineteenth century, invigorated by the California Gold Rush after 1848 and the construction and completion (in 1869) of the transcontinental railway. Linguistically speaking, these processes resulted in even more dialect mixing and relatively higher degrees of linguistic homogeneity. At the same time, for centuries Africans had been brought to the South forcedly as slaves. Emancipation after the Civil War, in 1865, gave them freedom but did not prevent social segregation, which to some degree has persisted to the present day – developments which have resulted in and are reflected by the emergence and evolution of African American Vernacular English and Gullah and which in some respects may be taken to have resulted in a linguistic bridge between inland varieties and the Caribbean. In Canada, the British possession of Newfoundland dates back to the 16th century, caused it to be settled by people from Ireland and southwestern England, and has left a distinctive dialect there. On the other hand, Canadian English in general is said to have been characterized by a tension between its British roots (reinforced by loyalists who opted for living in Canada after America’s independence) and the continuous linguistic and cultural pressure (or attractiveness, for that matter) exerted by its big southern neighbor. Furthermore, varieties of American English comprise accents forged by immigrant groups from a host
Introduction: varieties of English in the Americas and the Caribbean

of countries of origin, including southern and eastern Europeans, Asians, and South and Central Americans: Today, the most important of these are certainly the forms of English created by contact with Mexican Spanish.

In the Caribbean, the British entered the stage more than a century after the Spanish had established themselves; and the struggle for superiority and influence between these two and a few more European powers (most importantly, the French and the Dutch) shaped the ragged history of the region for centuries. The agents of these struggles were not primarily settlers but buccaneers, planters, and slaves, and many islands changed hands repeatedly (31 times, it is reported, in the case of Tobago). Such political turnovers and other activities resulted in high rates of cross-migration and mutual influences, also linguistically (Holm 1983). The earliest British possessions in the region were St. Kitts (1624; said to have been highly influential in the shaping and dispersal of Caribbean language forms: Baker and Bruyn 1998) and Barbados (1627). Jamaica, the largest and most important stronghold of Caribbean English (and Creole), became British in 1655. Suriname, located on the South American continent but culturally a part of the Caribbean in many ways, presents an exceptional and also linguistically extraordinary case: An English colony for only 16 years (from 1651 to 1667, when it was exchanged for New Amsterdam, which thus became New York), it has retained the English-related creole of its founder years, now called Sranan, and its maroon descendant forms of the interior to the present day, thus being the site of the most conservative and radical creoles in the region. In Trinidad, English and English-based creole replaced French creole only in the course of the nineteenth century. Finally, various historical incidents (minor settlement migrations, like from the Caymans to the Bay Islands of Honduras; logwood cutting, buccaneering and even shipwrecks in Belize and Nicaragua; economic activities, like railroad construction in Costa Rica and the building of the canal in Panama) established pockets of English creoles throughout central America.

3. Research coverage and main topics of investigations

All of these processes have resulted in a diverse range of varieties of English, which have attracted the attention of observers and scholars for centuries. Early accounts tended to be anecdotal records or short literary representations by native users or outside observers (except for sketchy dictionaries and grammars produced by missionaries, notably for Sranan, which is therefore historically uniquely well researched). Serious and systematic scholarly investigation of these varieties began with the launching of dialect geography in North America
in the late 1920s. As a consequence, regional varieties of American English (as well as some degree of social variation), based upon data from the 1930s to the 1970s, are thoroughly documented by a series of regional atlas projects, most importantly the *Linguistic Atlas of New England* (Kurath 1939–43), the *Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States*, directed first by Kurath, then by Raven McDavid, and now by William Kretzschmar (Kretzschmar 1994; see the web site with data for downloading at <us.english.uga.edu>) and the *Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States* (Pederson et al. 1986-92), along with several others (see Davis 1983 for a survey). These projects were analyzed in several studies, three of which, covering the levels of vocabulary, morphology and pronunciation, respectively, count as classics, having established the conventional division of American English into three main regions – North, Midland, and South (Kurath 1949; Atwood 1953; Kurath and McDavid 1961). Carver (1987) later challenged this division and proposed to consider the northern Midlands and southern Midlands as divisions of extended North and South regions, respectively – a recategorization which is less dramatic than it might look at first sight. Since the 1990s the second major project of investigating the regional dialects of all of the US, Labov’s Telsur survey, has been under way; it looks into phonological differences and analyses ongoing sound changes (Labov, Ash and Boberg fc.). This project has grown out of the second major discipline that has investigated variation within and varieties of American English, sociolinguistics, founded by Labov in the 1960s (Labov 1966, 1972). Employing conversational interviews and quantitative techniques of analysis, sociolinguists have investigated patterns of variation and change in many different cities and communities (Chambers 2003), including, most importantly, African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and, in recent years, dialect enclaves. The 1960s also saw the growth of creole studies as a distinct paradigm of linguistic investigation, with many of its early classics being concerned with the English-based creoles of Jamaica (Bailey 1966) and Guyana (Bickerton 1975; Rickford 1987). In addition to many important book-length studies of individual varieties (listed in the general bibliography and referred to in the individual articles of this book), many collective volumes, reflecting a variety of research activities, have been published, including Williamson and Burke (1971), Allen and Underwood (1971), Allen and Linn (1997), Preston (1993) and Schneider (1996) on North American varieties in general, Montgomery and Bailey (1986), Bernstein, Nunnally and Sabino (1997), Montgomery and Nunnally (1998) and Nagle and Sanders (2003) on Southern English, Frazer (1993) on the Midwest, as well as Carrington, Craig and Dandare (1983), Christie (1998), several volumes of the “Creole Language Library” series published by Benjamins, and, most recently, Aceto and Williams (2003) on Caribbean creoles and dialects.
Schneider (1996a), in a volume that uniquely unites dialectologists, sociolinguists and creolists, surveys ongoing research activities on North American Englishes, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Updating and supplementing these observations a little, we can observe the following major trends of ongoing research:

- computational and statistical procedures applied to dialect atlas data (Kretzschmar and Schneider 1996 and other work by Kretzschmar and, more recently, John Nerbonne);
- the study of variation and change of specific variables in select communities (for broad surveys, see Chambers 2003; Chambers, Trudgill and Schilling-Estes 2002, in particular
- investigations of enclave communities and their trajectories of change (Wolfram, Hazen and Schilling-Estes 1999 and other work by Wolfram and associates in North Carolina, and work by Cukor-Avila in Texas);
- investigations of ongoing sound changes in AmE (work by Labov and associates, most notably Labov 1994; Labov, Ash and Boberg fc.; Gordon 2001; Thomas 2001);
- investigations of ethnolinguistic differences, in particular cultural and pedagogical implications of the uses of AAVE (Mufwene et al. 1998; Rickford 1999; Lanehart 2001);
- historical investigations of regional varieties (in particular, Southern English: Nagle and Sanders 2003);

In a similar vein, it is also possible to survey the major research fashions, recurrent themes and basic concerns, in the investigation of the Caribbean English creoles. These include the following:

- the genesis of creoles (the perennial issue of universalism vs. substratization; cf. Alleyne 1980; Bickerton 1981; Muysken and Smith 1986) and the diffusion of creole forms (Huber and Parkvall 1999; Baker and Huber 2001)
- a search for historical documentation of earlier stages of Caribbean creoles (to provide improved empirical evidence for the aforementioned discussion; cf. for Jamaica D’Costa and Lalla 1989; for Guyana Rickford 1987; for Barbados Rickford and Handler 1994)
- acceptance of the fact that creoles come in different “degrees of creoleness”, i.e. that differences between “deep / radical” creoles on the one hand and
“lighter” creoles with few basilectal features, sometimes called “semi-creoles” or “creoloids”, exist and blur the very category of “creole languages” (Schneider 1990; Neumann-Holzschuh and Schneider 2000; Holm 2004), and increased emphasis on the importance of mesolects (Patrick 1999);
– consequently, the questioning of the distinctness of creoles as a language type altogether, thus regarding them as varieties of their lexifiers rather than distinct languages (Muñwene 2001; but cf. McWhorter 1998, 2000) and ultimately the recognition of language contact as the appropriate overarching topic and field of study (Thomason and Kaufman 1988; Thomason 2001; Myers-Scotton 2002; Winford 2003)
– increased emphasis on empirical documentations, primarily with respect to relatively “minor”, hitherto underinvestigated varieties (Aceto and Williams 2003; James and Youssef 2002) but also in association with typological and sociolinguistic thinking (e.g. Winford 1993; Hackert 2004).
– the emergence of an increasingly positive attitude toward creoles in public discourse, recognized as carriers of regional identities and gradually encroaching into the public domain (Shields-Brodber 1997; Mühleisen 2002).

4. Parameters of variation by language levels

The varieties of English in the Americas, like everywhere else, correlate with the parameters of region, social class, and style, and in most cases it is impossible to draw clear-cut, qualitative distinctions. Typically, select features tend to occur more frequently in certain varieties than in others; hardly ever are there any uncontroversial shibboleths to be observed (for instance, even the prototypically Southern pronoun y’all has been shown to be spreading outside of the South; Tillery, Wikle and Bailey 2000). Nevertheless, it is possible to state some broad tendencies which as such are of interest.

Broadly speaking, phonology tends to vary regionally while grammar varies socially in the first place. Pronunciation differences delimitate dialect regions of North American English most clearly and consistently, and the contributors to the pronunciation papers point out local, regional and supraregional phonological or phonetic features. Of course, accents go by social class as well, but the standard assumption for American English is that even educated speakers, from certain regions at least (most notably New England and the South), at times use regional pronunciation characteristics and thus speak “with an accent”; hence, despite the persistent belief in a homogeneous “General American” accent or notions like “network English” there is in fact no single American norm of pronunciation that corresponds to RP in England, being a
non-regional class dialect. (Kretzschmar, in this volume, defines a “Standard American English” as an accent deliberately held free of features associated with particular regions.) In contrast, the phonologies of Caribbean varieties of English are underresearched – the strong focus of the discipline upon creole genesis, reflected in the grammar of creoles, has made this a Cinderella of creole studies (Plag 2003 deliberately sets out to remedy this situation). Clearly there are both supra-regional features and tendencies and regional or local forms of pronunciation, but no systematic survey of such similarities or differences is available to date.

Unlike phonology, in North American English grammatical variation is primarily socially determined. This is perhaps less true for nonstandard morphology (like irregular nonstandard verb forms or noun plurals), where dialectological research has identified some regional correlations (Atwood 1953), and a small number of minor syntactic patterns may be pinned down to specific regions; but basically using nonstandard grammar betrays a speaker’s social class background, not his or her regional whereabouts. Many of these patterns (like multiple negation, left dislocation, or intonation-marked but uninvited questions) are not even distinctly American but constitute elements of informal English, presumably British-derived, in many countries around the globe. Quantitative distinctions from one dialect to another exist in America (i.e. some features occur more frequently in certain regions or contexts than others), but basically it is the particular configuration, the specific sub-set of such forms and patterns available in a given region or community, that identifies and distinguishes individual varieties of North American English.

This particular aspect, the uniqueness of the mixture of forms at a given location rather than a diagnostic role of any individual variant, can be stated for the Caribbean situation as well, although the creole continua found there provide for quite different, and certainly no less complex, linguistic ecologies. As is well known, creole grammars are characterized first and foremost by the use of preverbal markers for categories of tense, mood and aspect, in addition to several other “characteristically creole” features (e.g. specific copula uses, the functional conflation of pronoun forms, or serial verb constructions), while, conversely, they display very little inflectional morphology on verbs, nouns, or other word classes. Some of these forms characterize certain sub-regions (most importantly, a few forms appear to mark off the eastern as against the western Caribbean), but the most important parameter of variation here is the class and style stratification that is captured by the notion of a creole (or “post-creole”) continuum, the systematic variation between acrolectal (or near-standard), mesolectal and basilectal (“deep creole”) choices. Bickerton (1975), following de-Camp (1971), described this variation as “implicational scales”, with both lects
(distinct “grammars”) and their features arranged in such a tabular format that the presence of certain forms in certain lects predicts the presence of all other “more basilectal” forms in all other “more basilectal” lects. On the other hand, several aspects of this model have been challenged in recent years, including its monodimensionality and its diachronic implications (the assumption that creoles started out as basilects and have “decreolized”, i.e. exchanged basilectal creole forms by corresponding acrolectal English forms, in the course of time). In fact, the scholarly concentration upon the putatively pure, basilectal creole has led to the paradoxical situation that basilects are at the center of creole studies even if no one has ever documented a pure basilectal creole, while mesolects, the forms that are really in use, have only recently begun to be the objects of scrupulous investigation (Patrick 1999).

Words, finally, vary readily and mostly by region, with the range of their spread extending from the strictly local through the regional to the quasi-national domain. Variation in the lexicon is considerably more resistant to systematic investigation – which is why the contributions to this handbook project cover regional vocabulary only incidentally or not at all. Regional lexicography identifies the ranges and conditions of the uses of individual words (Kurath 1949; Carver 1987), and in the present context the main dictionaries to be consulted are the Dictionary of American Regional English for North America (Cassidy et al. 1985-) and the Dictionary of Caribbean Usage (Allsopp 1996) for the Caribbean.

5. Chapters selected for this volume

The general considerations outlined above, in particular with respect to the existence of distinct dialectal forms, have guided the selection of individual varieties for coverage in this volume. Their arrangement roughly follows geographical and historical patterns, with the US and Canada followed by the Caribbean and varieties being strung together according to their geographical proximity (moving from north to south and east to west in most instances) and their historical patterns of diffusion.

The first part covers phonological variation. For American English, Kretzschmar’s paper describes a baseline “Standard” variety, devoid of distinctly regional traces; this is followed by papers which focus upon the most distinctive regional varieties: New England (Nagy and Roberts), the staging cities of the East Coast and the urban dialects of the interior North, including the ongoing change known as the “Northern Cities Shift” (Gordon), the South (with Thomas documenting the richness of rural Southern pronunciations and
Tillery and Bailey discussing ongoing changes in the wake of urbanization, and the West and Midwest (Gordon, again). Boberg covers Canadian English, and Clarke describes the Newfoundland dialects. Ethnic varieties of AmE include AAVE (Edwards), Gullah (Weldon), Cajun Vernacular English (Dubois and Horvath), and Chicano English (Santa Ana and Bailey). In the Caribbean, the varieties represented are the Bahamas (Childs and Wolfram), Jamaica (with Devonish and Harry describing both English and Creole), smaller islands of the Eastern Caribbean (Aceto), Barbados (Blake), Trinidad and Tobago (Youssef and James), and Suriname (Smith and Haabo).

The morphosyntax part also starts with a baseline paper, covering structural phenomena which occur widely in colloquial AmE (Murray and Simon). Regionally distinctive grammatical variation in North America has been investigated in a small number of salient locations, including the Appalachians (presented in the chapter by Montgomery), enclave communities in the Southeast (discussed by Wolfram), and Newfoundland (documented by Clarke). The primary topics of grammatical research have been ethnic varieties, most notably AAVE (its urban form, discussed by Wolfram; its historical evolution, described by Kautzsch; and the extant creole form of Gullah, studied by Mufwene), but also Chicano English (see the chapter by Bayley and Santa Ana). For the Caribbean, on the other hand, regional differences from one island or region to another are obvious enough to justify such an arrangement, so there are papers on the Bahamas (Reaser and Torbert), Jamaica (Patrick), eastern islands (Aceto), Trinidad and Tobago (James and Youssef), Suriname (Winford and Migge), as well as Central America with special emphasis on Belize (Escuré). Coverage of Barbadian Creole (Bajan) and Guyanese Creole would have been desirable, but, regrettably, papers commissioned on these topics failed to materialize.

Every selection of this kind requires decisions and categorizations, of course; I trust that the decisions made reflect the directions and intensity of ongoing research activities. This applies in the few cases where the commissioned papers for phonology and grammar do not match, for instance: Investigations of Cajun English have taught us much about the dialect’s phonology but little about its grammar; conversely, an extensive debate on the emergence of AAVE has been concerned with grammar almost exclusively; and many writings on Caribbean creoles have discussed grammatical but not primarily phonological features (hence the coverage of Belize plus Central America, focussing on grammar only). Of course, other considerations also applied, including space restrictions and the amount of existing research documentation: a survey like the present one requires a certain degree of comprehensiveness and systematicity of earlier investigations of specific varieties, which is not available in many cases. It would have been very interesting to include papers on native American or
Asian forms of English, for instance, but publications and research on these dialects have been eclectic so far; a great many facts are either unknown or assumed to be largely similar to “mainstream” forms of AmE. Space constraints and the fact that our project set out to describe “major” varieties exclude strictly local dialects, like, for example, those spoken by the Texas Seminoles in Bracketville (Hancock 1980), on small islands like the Caymans (Washabaugh 1983), or in the city of Americana, Brazil (Montgomery and Melo 1990). The same applies to Falkland Islands English (Sudbury 2001) and, of geographically uncertain association with any continent, the dialect of Tristan da Cunha—well documented and interesting in the light of dialect contact (Schreier 2002, 2003) but spoken by less than three hundred people. Finally Hawai’i, even if politically a part of the US, is discussed in the volume on the Pacific and Australasian varieties of English, in line with its geographical location.

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1. Introduction

The idea that there should be a “standard” form of a language is a relatively recent development in western culture, at least in the way that “standard” is usually understood in this usage today. People seem always to have noticed language variation, for instance the *shibboleth* story in the Bible about recognition of spies, and the uses of language variation for more comic effect by Greek and Roman dramatists. However, our modern sense of a “standard language” emerged only during the Neo-Classical period, during the seventeenth century in parts of Europe (as for the Encyclopedists in France) and during the eighteenth century in England. The first citation for the collocation *standard English* in the *Oxford English Dictionary* comes even later, from the nineteenth century.

The word *standard* possesses a set of meanings related to criteria for measurement. The original fifteenth-century literal sense of objects, such as standard weights used to compare to working scale weights to enable fair commercial transactions, still survives, but today more emphasis falls on attributive or metaphoric senses in which there is comparative measurement of qualities. In actual use in American English as demonstrated in corpus evidence, *standard(s)* most frequently refers to a general level of quality, not to a particular authoritative statement of criteria for evaluation. The attributive use of the word in the collocation *Standard English* may therefore raise the expectation for some people that there must be a perfect and exemplary state of the language, just as there are perfect exemplars for a one-ounce weight or for a measure of length such as a yardstick. The way that most people interpret the collocation, however, will be as a general level of quality. Thus *Standard English* may be taken to reflect conformance to a set of rules, but its meaning commonly gets bound up with social ideas about how one’s character and education are displayed in one’s speech.

The term “General American” is sometimes used by those who expect for there to be a perfect and exemplary state of American English (see below). However, in this essay the term “Standard American English” (StAmE) is preferred; it designates the level of quality (here of pronunciation) that is em-
ployed by educated speakers in formal settings. StAmE pronunciation differs from region to region, even from person to person, because speakers from different circumstances in and different parts of the United States commonly employ regional and social features to some extent even in formal situations.

2. Demographics and education in the development of a standard

The American attitude towards StAmE developed from two different forces, demographics and public education.

2.1. Colonial settlement

The first settlement of America occurred in the seventeenth century within the different original colonial hearth areas (see Kretzschmar 2002 for a more detailed treatment of what follows). Travel was difficult enough so that the separate colonies developed cultural differences early on, including linguistic differences. No colony was settled exclusively from any single region of England; early settlers in every colony came from a variety of areas in England, and thus brought with them various regional English speech characteristics. Kretzschmar (1996) suggests on the basis of dialect evidence that the word stock of the different colonies was largely shared, but preserved differently in each place; in similar fashion, pronunciations characteristic of different parts of England were available in every colony. Out of the pool of language characteristics available in each colony there emerged, within a few generations, the particular set of features that would form the characteristic speech of the colony. No colony sounded too much like any particular area of England because of the mixture of settlers, and for the same reason the different American colonies sounded more similar to each other than to the speech of the old country. At the end of the seventeenth century settlers began to arrive in larger numbers from non-English-speaking places in Europe and Africa, but by then English was well established in most areas of the colonies by the English founder population (for this term see Mufwene 2001), and the later arrivals needed to fit themselves into English-speaking communities. The new settlers brought their own language characteristics, and some of these later became established in the speech of the communities that they entered. Of course there were also Native Americans in the colonies before the English founders and features from their languages did and do survive, particularly place names and the names for the flora and fauna of the New World (see Marckwardt 1960 for contributions from various languages to American English, particularly the lexicon).
The first standardizing effect to be seen in the colonies, then, was the establishment of English as a common community language, out of the welter of languages spoken by the Native Americans and the different settlers. The appearance of a new American English, relatively shared between the colonies when viewed in comparison with the different British regional varieties of the time, does not come from the imposition of a standard, or from the recovery of some basic, essential variety of English from which the British dialects had diverged, but instead from the demographic conditions – mixed settlement – of the founding population that formed communities in each colony. The new American English was also not the same as the emerging standard for English in Britain (see Upton, British Isles volume), and was criticized on those grounds at the time, as for example by John Witherspoon, the first president of Princeton University (Mathews 1931). At the same time, American English and the need of new settlers to learn it became a hallmark of the American experience, part of the voluntary social movement that Crevecoeur (1782) described in “What is an American.”

Along with the formation of new political and social practices in the new American communities came a new commitment to public education. So-called “common schools” were created throughout the states, more quickly and completely in the North but also in the agrarian South. The one-room schoolhouse became an icon of American community action, and whenever the population and resources became dense enough, more elaborate “graded” schools and academies sprang up as well. Basic education in reading and writing began to have an effect on American English from the beginning.

2.2. Westward expansion and urbanization

As the United States expanded, the speech habits of the hearth colonies were carried along with the settlers. Settlement generally proceeded from east to west, and so the influence of colonial speech was carried from east to west. Kretzschmar (1996) shows that the linguistic characteristics of several eastern inland towns are most similar to the characteristics of the coastal cities directly to their east. This fact is not a result of influence of an emerging standard language, but instead a consequence of the economic dominance of the coastal cities over the hinterlands (see McDavid 1948), again a matter of demographics. The younger sons and daughters of the population that occupied the coast moved west in search of more land and opportunity, and they carried their speech with them. New immigrants also often spent time in coastal embarkation areas before they moved west to the frontier (see, e.g., the story of Andrew the Hebridean in Crevecoeur 1782), and so began to acquire American English
from established colonial models on the coast. Inland speech, however, was never exactly the same as the speech of coastal cities, because the effects of population mixture, and thus the creation of and selection from a pool of linguistic features, operated inland as it had on the coast.

Coastal cities did become wealthy, and so did develop a social hierarchy which allowed for the emergence of sociolinguistic differences. McDavid (1948) carefully separates the loss of postvocalic *r* in Charleston (which is associated with demographic factors) from nonstandard verb forms and other features that mark socially dispreferred speech. In America just as in England, increasingly during the eighteenth century the notion of a standard began to be associated with social status, so that Swift, Johnson, and other highly cultivated authors came to prefer the usage of the “best” authors over the common parlance. Such preferences became entrenched in the first prominent English grammars, like those by Lowth and Murray. The same attitude is expressed by Anne Royall, a social columnist who often wrote about—pilloried—varieties of American pronunciation that she did not find to be socially acceptable (Mathews 1931). The continuing prevalence of public education extended the influence of such grammars, including Webster’s in America, and thus social preferences in speech became teaching standards. A prime example is the influence of Webster’s “blue-backed speller”, which became one of the most successful textbooks of all time through wide use in American public schools. It thereby succeeded in the creation of particular American habits of spelling (e.g. –er instead of –re, -or instead of –our, and so forth), and a particular American habit of spelling pronunciation, i.e. of attempting to pronounce a sound for every letter in the spelling of a word. The American educational system abetted the social hierarchy in the maintenance of qualitative linguistic preferences by the creation and promulgation of rules of grammar, spelling, and other matters of linguistic propriety. The prevalence of common schools ensured that the emerging idea of a linguistic standard was widely accepted, but it is also the case that citizens with the means to obtain better educational opportunities for their children, or to allow their children to spend more time in the educational system rather than going to work at an early age, were better able to enact the standards in their own speech. Thus was created a cycle that still operates today for the establishment and maintenance of language standards in linkage to the social hierarchy.

Continuing westward settlement in the nineteenth century followed essentially the same patterns, but the connection with eastern colonial speech ways became more diffuse the further west the frontier. West of the Mississippi River, settlement is still not dense enough and is still too recent to have allowed for very extensive development of the local speech patterns characteristic of eastern areas. Continuing urbanization added more ethnic neighborhoods, but
again the essential pattern remained the same. Each of the main regional variants of American English – Northern, Midland, and Southern, as described by Kurath (1949) and Kurath and McDavid (1961) – had its own linguistic characteristics, and each region had its own socially preferred models of pronunciation prevalent among the socially prominent and more educated population.

2.3. Twentieth-century changes

The twentieth century brought different demographic movements and associated linguistic change. Initial settlement of the western part of the country by homesteading was essentially complete, and demographic change then occurred by internal migration. In the first half of the century Southerners both black and white left the untenable agricultural conditions of their region and looked for new opportunities in the North and West. In the second half of the century Northerners sometimes moved away from the Rust Belt in search of opportunities in emerging industries in the South. These population movements often created speech islands in the regions to which the migrants traveled, such as African American or Southern White neighborhoods in Northern cities.

The greater change, however, stemmed from an essential change in the urban demographic pattern from residential neighborhoods within cities to the model of an urban core surrounded by suburbs. Suburban housing changed the essential interactions of the community, because people no longer lived with the people they worked with: in sociolinguistic terms, suburban social networks often became characterized by weak ties (i.e., the density and multiplexity of linguistic interactions decreased; see, e.g., J. Milroy (1992) for discussion of social network issues). In addition, because American suburban housing has most often been economically stratified, the social networks that did develop were more likely to be class-bound, unlike the situation in older cities where there was more mingling on a daily basis between people of different economic registers.

At the same time that suburban residential patterns were developing, improvements in transportation (highways, airlines) created a super-regional marketplace for the highly educated. While the American population has always been mobile, the most highly educated segment of the population has become nationally mobile to a much greater extent than the working and lower-middle class population, which tends to move around locally, often within the same metropolitan area or the same state. This change has led to the growth of the notion that highly educated speech should not show evidence of regional affiliation. Highly educated speakers in formal settings tend to suppress their regional features (to the extent that they have them in the first place, owing
to suburban housing patterns; see Milroy and Milroy (1999) for the idea of suppression of variation). The typical speech of national news broadcasters is symptomatic – not a cause of the change, as many suppose.

The contemporary situation for StAmE pronunciation, then, is that the most highly educated speakers in formal settings tend to suppress any linguistic features that they recognize as marked, i.e., regionally or socially identifiable. Many educated speakers therefore think that language variation in America is decreasing. On the other hand, the economically-stratified suburban residential pattern promotes the continued existence, even expansion of local varieties (cf. Labov and Ash 1997: 508), though perhaps varieties with fewer strongly marked characteristics than were maintained before in the previous era of stronger, denser ties in social networks. American English, paradoxically, in some ways has more local variation than ever before, at the same time that in other ways it has less variation than before. The linkage between demographic trends and education remains the central fact for any discussion of standards in American English: those with the resources to proceed the furthest in the educational system have the greatest commitment to and investment in the idea of linguistic standards, now expressed particularly through their suppression of marked regional and social characteristics, while those with fewer resources and less investment in the educational system generally accept the idea of formal educational standards but do not routinely enact them in their own linguistic behavior. That said, it is of course true that many educated speakers value their regional affiliations and refuse to suppress, or even take pride in the display of, their regional speech characteristics, while some speakers without a high level of educational achievement may choose to suppress their regional features.

2.4. “General American”

The term “General American” arose as a name for a presumed most common or “default” form of American English, especially to be distinguished from marked regional speech of New England or the South. “General American” has often been considered to be the relatively unmarked speech of “the Midwest”, a vague designation for anywhere in the vast midsection of the country from Ohio west to Nebraska, and from the Canadian border as far south as Missouri or Kansas. No historical justification for this term exists, and neither do present circumstances support its use. While population mixture did make the different colonial varieties of American English more similar to each other than to any form of old-world British English, and there remain some relatively common pronunciation (and other) features that continue to justify use of the term “American English” in opposition to other national terms for English varieties,
there has never been any single best or default form of American English that might form the basis for “General American”. Take for example the state of Ohio, often seen as a model for “General American”: the state is divided by Kurath’s major Northern/Midland dialect boundary, and Labov’s more recent Telsur field work yields a map in which no fewer than five boundaries criss-cross the state (Labov, Ash and Boberg 2006). Even Ohio’s educated speakers, speaking in formal settings, tend to make different pronunciation choices. For example, Cleveland speakers might routinely pronounce a common word like on as [ən], while the speakers from Columbus might routinely pronounce the word as [ɔn]. No particular notice of the difference would be taken, because these pronunciations are not marked regional or social variants; neither pronunciation needs to be suppressed in order to achieve a StAmE level of quality. Thus a term like “General American” does not represent the condition of American English with respect either to StAmE or to regional and social varieties, because it implies that there is some exemplary state of American English from which other varieties deviate.

On the contrary, StAmE can best be characterized as what is left over after speakers suppress the regional and social features that have risen to salience and become noticeable. Decisions about which features are perceived to be salient will be different in every region, even different for every speaker, depending on local speech habits and the capacity of speakers to recognize particular features out of their varied linguistic experience. Some speakers are better than others at suppression of regional features, and some listeners are more subtle than others at detection of non-local features. The result of such decisions and perceptions is a linguistic continuum for American English in which no region or social group has pride of place (except for Southern American English, which is commonly singled out as a dispreferred variety by speakers from other regions), and a relative level of quality for StAmE that varies from place to place and person to person. When speakers travel outside of their native region, aspects of their pronunciation that are perfectly standard at home can be recognized by local speakers as being out of conformance with local StAmE preferences. This is just as true when Northerners travel South as when Southerners travel North, and people recognized as outsiders because of their speech must face the social consequences.

3. StAmE pronunciation

The model for StAmE pronunciation presented here is composed of features that most highly educated speakers would not recognize as regionally or so-
cially identifiable. For application of the model to particular words, the *Oxford Dictionary of Pronunciation for Current English* (ODP; Upton, Kretzschmar and Konopka 2001) will be a useful reference. ODP features both British and American English transcriptions for comparison by readers, and offers many phonotactic (but not recognizable regionally or socially) variants. To these features may be added those characteristics that commonly occur in educated speech in different regions of the country, generally unnoticed and preferred by educated speakers within the region but often noticed and sometimes stigmatized by educated speakers from other regions. Table 1 lists general features first (“unmarked”), and some regional standard features in a second group (“marked”).

**Table 1.** Unmarked and marked vowel pronunciation (lexical sets)

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<tr>
<th>word</th>
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3.1. **StAmE phonological patterns**

Kurath and McDavid (1961) distinguished four different phonological patterns for cultivated speakers of American English in the Atlantic States: I: Upstate New York, Eastern Pennsylvania, and the South Midland; II: Metropolitan New York, the Upper South, and the Lower South; III: Eastern New England; and IV: Western Pennsylvania. All of these sets held the high and central front vowels and the high back vowels in common /i, ɪ, eɪ, æ, u, u/, with some variation in the low vowels. The same patterns exist today, with the American West generally following the pattern Kurath and McDavid described for Western Pennsylvania. Discussion of three ongoing sound changes by Labov (1981, 1991, 1994), called the Northern Cities Shift, the Southern Shift, and Western Merger (for details see the sections elsewhere in this volume that report on these regions), has focused on working and lower-middle class speakers, and so it is difficult to estimate the extent to which these changes have penetrated StAmE.

**KIT, DRESS, TRAP**

These so-called “checked” vowels are not invariant in StAmE, although they are usually represented as such. They may be realized with glides or extra length by different speakers. More prominent use of glides, sometimes with changes in vowel height as well, may be recognized as part of Labov’s Southern Shift.

**LOT, CLOTH, PALM, THOUGHT**

The low-back vowels are historically unstable in StAmE. The /aː–ɔ/ merger is said by Labov to be characteristic of the speech of the West, but instability in these vowels also characterizes Eastern New England (in which one also hears fronted pronunciations, as [aː]) and Western Pennsylvania. “Merger” may be too strong a term here; there is some evidence that words historically with /a/ retain it in some areas (so that a pronunciation with [ɔ] might be recognized as “different”), while words historically with /ɔ/ more freely show alternation within the /aː–ɔ/ range. The [ɔ] pronunciation in *palm* may be related to the American spelling pronunciation that inserts unhistorical [l], to yield [pæm, pɔlm]. *ODP* represents words of the historical /aː/ class with [aː], and words of the historical /ɔ/ class with both sounds [a, ɔ].

**STRUT, FOOT**

StAmE does not share the British tendency to raise the vowel of *strut* towards [ʊ] (this vowel is represented with [ɔ] in *ODP*). However, StAmE has a long
history of alternation of the vowel in *roof, root* (but not *foot*) as [u, u], with the short vowel more common in the North. The same is true, through with [u] in the North and [u] in the South, for *coop, Route* is another word with alternation, this time commonly between [u] and [au]. These alternations do not apply across the entire word class of [u] words, although there is some evidence that there used to be more words that showed the alternation (e.g. *gums*).

**BATH**
New England preserves the [a] pronunciation in words of the *half, glass* class, and has [a] in *aunt*. These pronunciations are sometimes heard from educated speakers in other regions of the country, possibly as a consequence of the historical importance of New England in American education.

**NURSE**
Loss of postvocalic r is receding in StAmE, even in its historical urban strongholds in Boston, New York, and the plantation South. One is most likely to hear r-less pronunciations from older educated speakers from these regions, while younger speakers commonly employ pronunciations with r. That said, it has always been true that a wide range of realizations of r after vowels has been and still is employed, even in StAmE, ranging from fully constricted [r] to different levels of constriction (so-called “r-coloring”) to compensatory lengthening of the vowel to vocalization of the r to create a diphthong. Pronunciations similar to [nɔːs], which used to qualify as StAmE in New York, Charleston, and New Orleans, are now stigmatized, as in the pronunciation of the cartoon character Bugs Bunny.

**FLEECE, FACE, GOAT, GOAL**
These long vowels differ characteristically by environment in StAmE: they are longest and most likely to be diphthongal before juncture, next most likely to be long and/or diphthongal before voiced consonants, and most likely to be realized without added length and without glides before unvoiced consonants. Thus in word sets like the following there may be graded variation in the vowel: *flee, feed, fleece* [flɪː, flɪd, flɪs]; *fay, fade, face* [feɪ, feɪd, feɪs]; *go, goad, goat* [ɡoʊ, goʊd, got]. Monophthongized variants in all environments are characteristic of educated speakers from the Upper Midwest.

**GOOSE**
This high back vowel has a relatively wide range of realizations in StAmE, from somewhat lowered pronunciations more likely in the North, such as [gʊs], to fully raised and fronted realizations in the South, such as [ɡəs]. Still, words
of the goose class are not recognized as having regular alternants like root, roof, route (for which see above, under strut, foot).

PRICE, CHOICE
Educated speakers in the South commonly pronounce these vowels with weakened glides. The pronunciations are affected by environment: /æ/ is more likely to show glide reduction before voiced consonants, as in possible graded variation in the series rye, rice, ride [raI, raI’s, raI]. /ɔ/ is more likely to show reduction before [l], as in boil, oil.

MOUTH
This diphthong has a long history of pronunciation as [œu] by some educated speakers, especially those from the Midland region, and this pronunciation seems to be on the increase.

NEAR, SQUARE, START, NORTH
The loss of postvocalic r is recessive, as indicated for nurse. With these vowels, before juncture, it is common for educated speakers to insert a schwa glide before the r-coloring, such as square [skweI]. However, when the r is intervocalic, for example when a participial ending is added, then the schwa glide typically does not appear, yielding pronunciation pairs like near, nearing [nI, nIrIN].

MARRY, MERRY, MARY
While these words have become homophones for a great many StAmE speakers, some or all of them are still distinguished in some regions by educated speakers. The pronunciation with [e] for the set of words has spread from the North and North Midland regions. In the South, educated speakers still pronounce Mary with [e], and in the mid-Atlantic region educated speakers commonly pronounce words like marry, carry with [æ]. In the New York metropolitan area, educated speakers still commonly distinguish all three words.

FORCE, ORANGE
Historically the horse/hoarse pair was distinguished by pronunciations with [ɔ] and [o], respectively. Now most educated speakers no longer make the distinction, but the [o] pronunciation is still sometimes heard, primarily from older speakers. This vowel is particularly unstable before intervocalic r, so that words like orange, forest may still be heard not only with [ɔ] and [o] but also with [a].
Words like "cure" not only show the effects of varying realizations of postvocalic r, but the palatal onset for the vowel also seems to create instability and a wide range of realizations [u−u−ə]. A somewhat narrower range of realizations occurs in educated speech in similar words without the palatal, as "poor" [u−u].

The word-final sound is now commonly pronounced with [i], but older [r] may still be heard, especially from educated Southern speakers.

Vowels in unstressed final syllables vary between [i−ə], often in harmony with the preceding vowel in suffixes like −ness, −ity, −es. This yields pairs of possible pronunciations like [-nəs, -nɪs; -əri, -ɪri; -əz, -ɪz], where the [ə]-form occurs after most vowels and the [i]-form occurs after high-front vowels. That said, vowel harmony is only suggestive, not controlling, in such situations. Unstressed final −er and −a are of course distinguished by r-coloring in StAmE.

There are only a few notable StAmE consonantal practices aside from the issue of postvocalic r already covered with the vowels in the previous section. The most prominent concern /t/. Intervocalic t is most often realized as a tap or flap, frequently with voicing, so that latter/ladder are homonyms for educated Americans, as [lætə]; this pronunciation is transcribed as [lædə] in ODP, because the dictionary uses a restricted symbol set that does not include the r or s. /t/ is also frequently voiced prevocally in consonant clusters such as −kt−, −pt−, −ft−, and −rt−. /t/ is typically deleted from −nt− clusters between vowels (unless separated by stress), for example making homonyms of the words winter/winner. The palatal glide /j/ remains firmly in place in words like "cure", "music", but in other words like "Tuesday", "coupon", "neurotic" it is frequently lost. Postvocalic /l/ is vocalized more and more often by educated speakers, except before juncture, to yield pronunciations like alcohol, milk [æukɔl, mɪlk]. Educated speakers sometimes voice other consonants as well, such as [ɛks-, egz-] as variant pronunciations of the ex- prefix.
3.3. StAmE stress patterns

As clearly exemplified in the transcriptions in *ODP*, StAmE pronunciation shows a different pattern of stress from British English. StAmE pronunciation tends more to preserve secondary stress, and thus more fully-realized vowels, than British English, as in StAmE [ˈsɛkrəˌteri] versus British English [ˈsɛkrɪtrɪ]. This results in a characteristically different rhythm for StAmE pronunciation as compared to British and other world English varieties. Educated Southern speakers tend to prefer strong initial stress (and are recognized for it) in words like *insurance, police, Thanksgiving, umbrella*, while other Americans place strong stress on the second syllable of these words. It is possible that a general American tendency towards strong initial stress is responsible for vowel alternations between the use of stressed and unstressed vowel forms in the weakly-stressed initial syllables of many words, such as *electric* [oˈlɛktrɪk, iˈlɛktrɪk] or *retain* [rəˈteɪn, riˈteɪn].

4. Conclusion

Because StAmE pronunciation is characterized negatively, by the suppression of identifiable regional and social variants, instead of positively by a collection of its own features, there is less to say about StAmE than about positively-defined varieties from different regions. It is clearly the case, however, that StAmE pronunciation is not somehow a perfect or correct exemplar of American English pronunciation, from which American regional and social varieties are deviant offshoots. StAmE pronunciation is the product of demographic factors, just as American regional and social varieties are. In common usage StAmE refers not to any set of “correct” pronunciations, but to a level of quality in pronunciation that corresponds to the degree of suppression of marked regional and social features.

Exercises and study questions

1. How is the idea of a standard language related to other kinds of standards, for example in weights and measures?

2. What does it mean to say that establishment and maintenance of American language standards is linked to the social hierarchy?
3. Is the American English spoken by newscasters and other media personalities a symptom or a cause of language standards in America?

4. Has the emergence of standard American English led to the loss of local variation in American speech?

5. Among what group is the use of standard American English most common, and why?

6. Explain how standard American English can best be defined in negative terms, as the absence of other features.

7. How does pronunciation of the consonants /t/ and /l/ help to define American English among world varieties of English?

8. How does pronunciation of words like PRICE help to define standard American English, both within the US and among world varieties of English?

Selected references

Please consult the General references for titles mentioned in the text but not included in the references below. For a full bibliography see the accompanying CD-ROM.

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New England: phonology

Naomi Nagy and Julie Roberts

1. Introduction

The six states that make up New England (NE) are Vermont (VT), New Hampshire (NH), Maine (ME), Massachusetts (MA), Connecticut (CT), and Rhode Island (RI). Cases where speakers in these states exhibit differences from other American speakers and from each other will be discussed in this chapter. The major sources of phonological information regarding NE dialects are the *Linguistic Atlas of New England (LANE)* (Kurath 1939-43), and Kurath (1961), representing speech patterns from the first half of the 20th century; and Labov, Ash and Boberg (2006); Boberg (2001); Nagy, Roberts and Boberg (2000); Cassidy (1985) and Thomas (2001) describing more recent stages of the dialects.

There is a split between eastern and western NE, and a north-south split within eastern NE. Eastern New England (ENE) comprises Maine (ME), eastern Massachusetts (MA), eastern Connecticut (CT) and Rhode Island (RI). Western New England (WNE) is made up of Vermont, and western MA and CT. The lines of division are illustrated in figure 1. Two major NE shibboleths are the “dropping” of post-vocalic r (as in [ka:] car and [ba:n] barn) and the low central vowel [a] in the BATH class, words like aunt and glass (Carver 1987: 21). It is not surprising that these two features are among the most famous dialect phenomena in the region, as both are characteristic of the “Boston accent,” and Boston, as we discuss below, is the major urban center of the area. However, neither pattern is found across all of NE, nor are they all there is to the well-known dialect group. We present a brief description of the settlement of the region as a whole and give examples of past and current pronunciation patterns to illustrate both how NE differs from the rest of the country and what region-internal differences exist. The material is rather thin in some areas, due to a dearth of recent research on NE English. Nevertheless, the resulting pattern is one that reflects the richness and diversity of the region itself.
2. European settlement of New England

Our story begins with the European settlement of a region that was previously populated by a variety of indigenous peoples. There has been no systematic study of the possible influences of the indigenous languages on English, but we can see their influence in local toponyms, for example the Piscataqua River in NH, the Kennebec River in ME, Lake Memphremagog in VT, and Conta-cook, a town in Rhode Island, as well as the word Massachusetts.
European settlers in ENE came primarily from Boston, on the Massachusetts Bay, and were of English stock. This coastal area, originally home to indigenous groups, was settled by English immigrants in the early 1600’s and became one of the country’s cultural hearths. In search of better farm land, some of these original European settlers moved west from the coast and settled the Lower Connecticut River Valley in central CT. They were joined soon after by new immigrants from eastern and southern England, and later from Italy, Scotland and Ireland, among other places. Settlement spread, generally along river valleys, into NH, VT, ME, and RI (Carver 1987: 7).

WNE was settled by migration from central MA and central and western CT, including Hartford, Springfield, and New Haven, towns originally settled in the 1630s (Boberg 2001: 4). Following this movement, Eastern and Western NE remained isolated from each other until the early 18th century (Rosenberry 1962: facing 70; Kurath 1972: 42, cited in Boberg 2001: 4). Western VT was settled in the late 18th century by English-speaking migrants from western CT and MA (Kurath 1939-43: 104, cited in Boberg 2001: 5) and from NY (Rosenberry 1962: 136, cited in Boberg 2001: 5), as well as some settlers from east of the Green Mountains (NH, ME, and RI) (Kurath 1939-43: 103-4, cited in Boberg 2001: 5). WNE, in turn, was “the staging ground for the initial English-speaking settlement of the Inland North” (Boberg 2001: 9).

WNE also “received a considerable admixture of Scotch-Irish in the half century preceding the Revolution [early 18th century]” (Kurath 1928: 391, cited in Boberg 2001: 9), though they did not form a sizeable percentage of the population at any time. Also present in NE are Franco-Americans who moved south from French-speaking parts of Canada, and large Irish and Italian groups. Upper ME (north of Penobscot Bay) is quite distinct from the rest of the region, due to ties with New Brunswick, Canada (Carver 1987: 31).

Boston, the largest NE city, is still known as the hub, hearkening back to its position as the center from which settlements radiated in NE. Much of the rest of NE, however, is more rural, with many farms, forests, and undeveloped areas surrounding small towns and cities. Like many rural communities, NE is undergoing changes including increased highways, in-migration from other dialect areas, and change from small family farms to agribusiness (Frazer 1983; Labov 1994). The rural, regional dialects appear threatened with obsolescence due to the decrease in agriculture and increase in in-migration by speakers from other states. This loss evokes mixed reactions within the communities, where it may be seen as a sign of progress and increasing sophistication as well as a loss of cultural identity (Ring 1997).