

Classification of Dialects

- We all speak a dialect (variety of a language).
- Dialects can be classified in three ways:
 - Geographical region in which they are spoken (Southern, New England, Australian, Jamaican).
 - use by particular ethnic groups/social classes (AAVE, working class)
 - prestige within a community
 - the *standard* dialect serves as a norm for mass media, education, etc.
 - all other dialects are viewed, non-pejoratively, as *nonstandard*

General American English

- Also called "Network Standard English"
- Spoken by broadcasters.
- Developed by schools of broadcasting in the 1930s and 1940s.
 - Speaker's region of origin cannot be easily identified.
 - Developed so that listeners wouldn't be offended by having to listen to someone from another part of the country.

Non-Standard Dialects

- May or may not be defined geographically.
 - E.g., Appalachian English is.
 - African American English is not (it is spoken in all regions of the country).
- More often defined socially (sometimes called the "social" dialects).
- Almost always the dialect spoken by an economically disadvantaged group or a socially-devalued group.

Non-Standard Dialects

- Includes:
 - African American Vernacular English (AAVE).
 - Appalachian English (AppE).
 - Ozark English.
 - Cajun English.
 - Spanish-influenced English.
 - Gullah.

AAVE

- Note that all of the following labels refer to the same dialect group:
 - African-American Vernacular English (AAVE).
 - African-American English (AAE).
 - Black English.
 - Black English Vernacular.
 - Ebonics.
- Includes more syntactic and morphological changes than other English dialects.

Origin of Dialects

- Regional dialects of the US are thought to reflect the settlement patterns of different groups of speakers of British English (many different dialects there).
- Most social dialects are thought to develop when one group of speakers becomes isolated from the rest of the population.
 - Isolation may be physical or social.
 - E.g., AppE speakers were isolated to the mountains of Appalachia until the 1940s.

Origin of AAVE

- Developed differently; by a Pidgin-Creole process.
- Pidgin = language of first contact (two groups who speak different languages develop a code to communicate).
- Creole = expanded version of a pidgin used by subsequent generations.

Origin of AAVE

- During the slave trade, the slave ships deliberately included people from different countries before setting sail.
 - Slaves spoke different languages and could not communicate well; less likely to mutiny.
- In order to communicate, the slaves developed a pidgin language which eventually was mixed with the English of the slave holders and evolved into present day Black English.

Phonology and Dialect

- **Dialect differences are apparent in most aspects of language.**
 - Phonological and semantic differences most common.
 - Morphological and syntactic differences also seen.
- **All dialects share more features than they differ on (that's why we can usually understand each other).**
- **No one unique feature change is typical of a particular dialect.**

Other dialects and Evaluation

- Dialect differences are not a disorder.
 - **though we may provide services for someone who wishes to learn to use a different dialect (it is unclear if public funds can be used for this purpose however).**
- We need to ensure that any differences we hear are not just dialect differences.
 - **May need to ask caregivers (may even hear the changes in caregiver's speech).**

Other dialects and Evaluation

- Fortunately most dialect differences in English relate to vowels and most clinical problems in English relate to consonants.
- Some tests provide guidelines for adjusting for dialect differences (but most do not).
- Almost all published tests are designed to evaluate speakers of the standard dialects.

Other dialects and Evaluation

- Regardless of racial origin, if the speaker uses mostly a standard dialect, the published tests are probably appropriate.
 - **May want to consult parents about dialect spoken.**
- Conversational speech samples helpful because the child is more likely to use their usual dialect.
 - **For speakers of non-standard dialects, intelligibility may be an issue in conversation.**

Social Stratification of Dialect

- Research shows that grammatical and phonological features of AAE are used most often by younger, working-class speakers in urban communities and in informal speaking contexts
- The use of a greater number of linguistic features results in a “denser” AAE dialect
- The relationship between dialect density and socioeconomic level is known as social stratification

Social Stratification of Dialect

- Wolfram & Schilling-Estes (1998) distinguish two types of stratification
 - *gradient* stratification, occurring more frequently in low socioeconomic groups than high socioeconomic groups
 - *sharp* stratification, commonly occurring in low socioeconomic groups but rarely in high socioeconomic groups
- *Grammatical* features of AAE are more likely to show a pattern of sharp stratification than *phonological* features of the dialect
- Because features with sharp stratification are found only in working class speakers, a generalization can be made that working class speakers of AAE exhibit greater dialect density than middle and upper class speakers who use the dialect

Second Language Learners

- Differences among languages are evident in all aspects of phonology.
 - **phoneme inventory**
 - **allophonic rules**
 - **morphophonemic rules**
 - **phonotactics.**

Second Language Learners

- May want to inquire about skills in the first language.
 - **Ask parents or other speakers of the language about how well the child does in that language.**
 - **A problem with production in one language may carry over to another language.**
- Could apply this principle to speakers of non-standard dialects as well.

Spanish Consonant Phonemic Inventory

Stops	p b t d k g	Nasals	m n ɲ
(spirants)	β ð γ		
Fricatives	f s x	Glides	w j
Affricate	tʃ		
Liquid	l		
Flap	r		
Trill	rr		

Spanish & English Shared Sounds

Stops	[p, b, t, d, k, g]
Nasals	[m, n]
Fricatives	[f, ð, s] [h] (aspiration in some dialects)
Affricate	[tʃ]
Liquid	[l]
Glides	[w, j]
Vowels	[i, e, u, o]

Spanish & English (cont.)

Unshared Sounds

English

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Nasal	[ŋ]*
Fricatives	[θ, v, z, ʃ, ʒ]*
Affricate	[dʒ]*
Liquid	[ɹ]
Vowels	[ɪ, ε, æ, ʌ, ə, ɔ, ɑ, ɜ, ɑ̃, ɑ̃, ɔ̃]

Spanish

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Nasal	[ɲ]
Spirants	[β, γ, φ]
Flap	[r]
Trill	[r̄]
Vowels	[a]

(*in some Spanish dialects)

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Word Level Stress

Penultimate syllable of words ending in vowel, /n/, or /s/
e.g., [sopa] "soup", [komen] "they eat", [kot[es] "cars"

Final syllable of other words
e.g., [relox] "watch", [mitad] "half"

Irregular stress marked with accent
e.g., [baldes] "Valdés"