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

  - 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 n |
| Spirants| ß ò γ |
| Fricatives | f s x |
| Affricate | tʃ |
| Liquid   | l |
| Flap     | r |
| Trill    | ɾ |

Spanish & English Shared Sounds

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

[p] produced in some dialects.
Spanish & English (cont.)

Unshared Sounds

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<td>[dʒ]*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Flap</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trill</td>
<td>[ɾ] (*in some Spanish dialects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vowels</td>
<td>[ə]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Level Stress

Penultimate syllable of words ending in vowel, /n/, or /s/

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

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