Local and supra-local variation in Latino English

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Regionalization of Ethnolects

- American English regionality has primarily been explored in European American dialects.

- Increasingly studies have identified regionalized variants within Latino English (Fought 1999, Ocumpaugh 2011; Roeder 2010; Wolfram, Carter & Moriello 2004).

- Rapid demographic shifts for Latino populations in the Southern US offer the opportunity to observe processes of localization among ethnolects first-hand (Carter 2013).
Test-Case

Rapid demographic shifts for Latino populations in the Southern US offer the opportunity to observe processes of localization among ethnolinguists first-hand (Carter 2013)
Questions

What are the processes by which supra-regional and regional variants become established in ethnolects?

We look at a range of variables, communities, and fluency to examine how substrate influences interact with the linguistic ecology to create localized ethnolects as well as preserve some supra-regional norms.

- What is the nature of local transmission of norms (accommodation)? Test case: CCR and Vowels

- What linguistic forms and functions stabilize as language learning informs a dynamic process of dialect formation? Test case: Past tense unmarking
Two Field Sites
Two Field Sites

Catawba County
- European American: 77%
- African American: 9%
- Latino: 9%
- Other: 5%
- Pop. 154,356

Durham, NC
- European American: 38%
- African American: 41%
- Latino: 7%
- Other: 14%
- Pop. 269,974
34 Speakers

- Latino English speakers in first analysis have been in US public schools since at least age 6
- Range in age between 9 and 22 years
- Interviews conducted in school and after-school settings
- Comparisons: Frank Porter Graham, Raleigh Project (Dodsworth and Kohn 2012), and Hickory Project (Kohn 2008, Intihar 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Catawba County</th>
<th>Durham</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European American</td>
<td>Representative examples</td>
<td>Representative examples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phonological processes across communities

Analysis 1
What does it mean to accommodate to local CCR?

- Ex: des’ for desk, kiss’ for kissed
- Documented, e.g. in
  - Tejano English (Bayley 1994)
  - LA Chicano English (Santa Ana 1996, Fought 2003)
  - Puerto Rican English (Wolfram 1974)
  - Chinese-English interlanguage (Bayley 1994)

![Graph showing factor weight across different contexts and speakers]
CCR across communities

Regression results confirm accommodation to PRVs for CCR

\[ \chi^2 = 176.1; \ p < .001 \ n = 1554 \]

- Durham Pattern: \( C > V > P \)
- Hickory Pattern: \( C > P > V \)
CCR across communities

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- Durham Pattern: \( C > V > P \)
- Hickory Pattern: \( C > P > V \)
Result #1: Community-Specific Norms

- Community-specific constraint orders for CCR are highly significant across communities indicating that the members of these new speech communities are establishing community-specific speech norms vis a vis Predominant Regional Varieties
What does it mean to accommodate to local vowel systems?

Durham, NC: African American Vowel Shift

- * Back vowels remain backed
- BAT raised in contrast to Latino English (Thomas 2001)
- BIDE glide weakening

AAVS:

“I do both but I’m focusing on R and B”

“Like if I’m going to an interview then yeah you gotta talk proper you gotta put on your business hat

Thomas 2001, Kohn 2014
What does it mean to accommodate to local vowel systems?

SVS:
“\text{I grew up with a soccer coach that would rather have fun whether you won or lost, so...}”

“I’ve been riding since I was \text{five} and every chance me and my mom get we go horse back riding. We used to go up \text{past Asheville} and ride for like four hours at a time”

Hickory, NC: Southern Vowel Shift
- Back vowel fronting in contrast to retention of backed back vowels (Thomas 2001)
- Variable, less intense BAT raising (Thomas 2001)
- BIDE glide weakening

Thomas 2001, Intihar 2015
Predictions for accommodation

Back Vowel Fronting: More common in Hickory due to accommodation to European American SVS

BAT Raising: More extreme in Durham, NC, due to the influence of the AAVS

BIDE Glide Weakening: Potentially occurring in both communities as a general Southern feature
Mixed Model Regressions

Dependent Variable

- Normalized F1/ F2
- Normalized difference between onset and glide

Lobanov-normalized ≈ 6800 vowels in favorable environments over .5 seconds

Control variables

- Preceding and following place of articulation
- Duration
- Speaker as a random variable

Social Variables

- City
- Ethnicity
BOAT

Main effects for city
\[ t = 3.98^{***} \]
And ethnicity
\[ t = -3.11^{**} \]
City correlates more strongly than ethnicity
How it sounds

Jorge (Durham) “I think there was a hole or something and he was trying to go in and my sister was poking it with a broom stick”

Emma (Hickory) “We went to Carowinds. They only let my brothers and sisters go because they were older and I wanted to go but I didn’t get to go”
**BAT**

Main effect for City
\[ t=2.27^* \]

And ethnicity
\[ t=2.79^{**} \]

Ethnicity correlates more strongly than location for BAT raising.
BIDE

- Jorge (Durham) “He’s killed like **five** snakes already”
- Emma (Hickory) “Everyone’s saying that he likes me and I’m just **shy**”

No significant community effects
Result #2: Variable-specific patterns of accommodation

- Evidence for local accommodation is already apparent, even within these new communities. This is particularly striking for back-vowel fronting.
- Similarities across Latino groups could indicate emerging supra-regional influences for BAT lowering, as well as potentially emerging localized indexicality for the BIDE class.
- These patterns point to the emergence of both regional and supra-regional norms in Southern Latino English in which the variety interacts with, but still distinguishes itself from the PRV.
Grammatical processes
Analysis 2
The grammatical variable

- Past tense unmarking:
  - Alejo: Last year [for Christmas], they **give** me a Game Boy
  - FW: What else did you do in Washington?
  - Enrique: Uh, **look** the airplane, and…
  - FW: At the museum?
  - Enrique: Uh-huh. And, I **look** the animals. I go to… *fui a comprar cosas en una tienda* (‘I went to buy stuff in a store’)

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*E.K. Powe Elementary School*

*Home of the Soaring Eagles*

- No hay clases
- Spring break
- Se reanudan las clases
- 8 de abril
Background on tense marking in ethnolects

Which internal, usage-based, and contact factors guide the sociolinguistic process of past tense unmarking, specifically:

- its inherent meaning: **lexical aspect** (Andersen 1995)
- how often it occurs in the discourse: **frequency** (Bybee 1995)
- Existing variable norms in the speech community: **CCR**
Coding procedures for grammatical categories

1. **Verb Class**
   - Suppletive (e.g., is/was; go/went)
   - Doubly marked (e.g., leave/leave; say/said)
   - Internal vowel change, (e.g., come/came)
   - Change in final segment (e.g., have/had, bend/bent, try/tried)
   - Regular (-ed) consonant cluster verbs (e.g., talk/talked)
   - Weak syllabic (start/started)
   - Nonverbal/lexical monomorpheme ending in consonant cluster (best, friend)

2. **Phonological Environment**
   - _V (ate and...)
   - _C (ate when...)
   - _P(ause) (ate Then...)

3. **Lexical Aspect**
   - Achievement
   - Accomplishment
   - Activity
   - State
   - Nonverbal (n/a)
Lexical Aspect

- Shows effects in
  - **first language acquisition** (Brown 1973), **SLA** (Shirai & Anderson 1995), **creoles** (Bickerton 1981, Shirai and Andersen 1996), and Spanish → English community-wide **language shift** (Bayley 1999; 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>State</strong></th>
<th><strong>Activity</strong></th>
<th><strong>Accomplishment</strong></th>
<th><strong>Achievement</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Punctual</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Telic</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dynamic</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Know</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Run</strong></td>
<td><strong>run (a mile)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Arrive</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Verb Class

- Has shown a **consistent effect on tense marking** across English LL communities (Wolfram and Hatfield’s 1986; Bayley’s 1991; Adamson’s 2009; Callahan-Price 2012).
Both Hickory and Durham show highly significant effects of aspect on past tense marking.

Frequency effects with 'state' tokens since only a few token types constitute this category e.g. 'be'/copula)
Marking by Verb Class

- Striking similarity in order of constraints
- Evidence for the influence of general linguistic tendencies associated with LL in both communities
- ‘State’ tokens are overwhelmingly (almost categorically) constituted by one token type: copula.
  - Evidence for frequency effects trumping general morphological cues.
- Otherwise, verbs marked according to frequency *and* salience (i.e. doubly marked verbs more salient than verbs marked only by a replacive final consonant)
## Overall Regression Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$X^2$ (Model)</th>
<th>-2 Log Likelihood</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Pseudo (Nagelkerke) R²</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Both communities LE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. VC + Asp</td>
<td>262.4</td>
<td>262.4</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. VC + Asp + Phon</td>
<td>517.4</td>
<td>2104.4</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.31</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Gram, Phon + Soc.</td>
<td>1031.4</td>
<td>663.4</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.75</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Durham LE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. VC + Asp</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>143.6</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. VC + Asp + Phon</td>
<td>281.6</td>
<td>872.6</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.37</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Gram + Phon + Soc</td>
<td>614.6</td>
<td>177.2</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.87</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Hickory LE</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. VC + Asp</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>104.4</td>
<td>*</td>
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<td>b. VC + Asp + Phon</td>
<td>281.7</td>
<td>1174.6</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.31</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Gram + Phon + Soc</td>
<td>523.6</td>
<td>374.6</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.73</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Models c. contained control variables including: speaker, city, token, interview, school, LOR, sex, age, and gang status
Result #3: Substrate Effect

- Strong evidence of **consistent substrate and acquisition effects** across communities, both in terms of VC and aspect
  - The influence of acquisition-related factors and general linguistic tendencies shows potential to influence an emerging ethnolect
Regional and supra-regional norms

- Result 1: Latino English is contextualized by the local linguistic environment as evident by rapid accommodation even within young and emerging communities to variables such as CCR and vowel variation.
- Result 2: But these patterns occur on a variable-by-variable basis as speakers negotiate their linguistic identities within the context of an emergent linguistic ecology.
- Result 3: And, it would be a mistake to ignore the potential of shared linguistic heritages, particularly in the Southern US. Common tendencies in language learning processes have the potential to create wide-spread norms across communities above and beyond linguistic choices propagated in identity construction.
The value of studying emergent communities

- Emergent communities allow linguists to observe the processes by which new communities negotiate their linguistic repertoires in new linguistic ecosystems as well as document influences emergent from general contact and shared linguistic heritages.
Selected References


