



Today

- 'Standard' vs. 'nonstandard'
- Attitudes towards language
- Effects of social class on dialect



Standard vs. Non-standard

- **Standard dialect**
 - typically used by political leaders, upper classes, in the media
 - taught in schools
 - considered the dominant or ‘prestige’ dialect
- **Non-standard dialect**
 - any dialect not perceived as ‘standard’



Standard vs. Non-standard

- Some standard dialects of English
 - Standard American English (SAE)
 - characterized by grammatical (morphological & syntactic) features
 - Received Pronunciation (RP) (in UK)
 - characterized by phonological features

Standard vs. Non-standard

- Some **non-standard** dialects
 - African-American English (AAE)
 - Multiple negatives:
He don' know nothin'.
 - Appalachian English
 - Double modals:
I might could do that.
He useta couldn't swim.
 - a-prefix: *go a-fishin', come a-runnin'*



Overt vs. Covert prestige

- **Overt prestige:**
 - Attached to a particular dialect by the community at large that defines how people should speak to gain status in that community
- **Covert prestige:**
 - Exists among nonstandard speakers and defines how people should speak to be considered members of that particular group



Social class and dialect

William Labov

- New York City 'r'-lessness
- Studied variation in [r] pronunciation as it relates to socioeconomic class



Dept Store study - Method

- Interviewed salespeople at Saks 5th Ave., (upper), Macy's (middle), S. Klein (lower class)
 - “Excuse me, where are the _____?”
 - “Fourth floor.” (casual speech)
 - “Excuse me?”
 - “*Fourth floor.*” (careful speech with emphasis)

Dept Store study - Results

	Klein	Macy's	Saks
Casual	8%	44%	63%
Careful	18%	61%	64%

Percentage
of [r]'s
produced



Dept Store study - Conclusions

- Pronunciation of [r] increased...
 - ...w/ level of socio-economic class
 - ...w/ attention level paid to speech
- Variation most prominent among lower classes
 - Why?

Overt prestige



Hypercorrection

- The act of producing nonstandard forms by way of false analogy, often to imitate the standard dialect
 - **Phonological:** r-insertion
'Cuba(r)', 'idea(r)'
 - **Grammatical:**
'Lets keep this between you and I.'
'I don't know whom he is.'

Martha's Vineyard study


William Labov

- Martha's Vineyard, MA
 - diphthong centralization: [əɪ], [əʊ] in *why*, *wow*
 - (compare w/ standard: [aɪ], [aʊ])



Martha's Vineyard study - Results

- Native islanders centralized, tourists didn't
 - regional effect
- Students planning to go to college and return to island centralized more than students not planning to return
- Portuguese immigrant community showed high degree of centralization



Martha's Vineyard study - Conclusions

- How closely speakers identified w/ island was positively correlated w/ degree of centralization
 - seeking **covert prestige**
- Dialect is an important factor in group identity



Summary

- Standard vs. non-standard dialects
- Overt vs. covert prestige
- Dept. store study – influence of standard dialect, overt prestige
- Martha's Vineyard study – influence of non-standard dialect, covert prestige