Tributaries

On the name of the journal:

Alabama's waterways intersect its folk-ways at every level. Early settlement and cultural diffusion conformed to drainage patterns. The Coastal Plain, the Black Belt, the Foothills, and the Tennessee Valley re-main distinct traditional as well as economic regions today. The state's cultural landscape, like its physical one, features a network of "tributaries" rather than a single dominant mainstream.

—Jim Carnes, *from the Premiere Issue*

Tributaries

Journal of the Alabama Folklife Association

Thomas Nunnally
Guest Editor

Joey Brackner
Anne Kimzey
Deborah Boykin
Editors

2007/2008 Double Issue

Copyright 2008 by the Alabama Folklife Association. All Rights Reserved.
Issue No. 10 in this Series.

ISBN-13: 978-0-9772132-1-4 • ISBN-10: 0-9772132-1-8

Published for the Alabama Folklife Association
by NewSouth Books, Montgomery, Alabama,
with support from the Folklife Program of the
Alabama State Council on the Arts.

The Alabama Folklife Association
c/o The Alabama Center for Traditional Culture
410 N. Hull Street
Montgomery, AL 36104

Jim Hall
President

Duncan Blair
Treasurer

Joyce Cauthen
Executive Director

CONTENTS

Editors' Note 7

Exploring Alabama's Language Tributaries .... Thomas E. Nunnally 9

Multilingual Alabama .... Michael D. Picone 32

Southern American English
in Alabama .... Catherine Evans Davies 71

Just What Is the Southern Drawl? .... Crawford Feagin 91

South in Your Mouth? Vowels and Identity
in Huntsville, Alabama .... Rachael Allbritten 116

The Monophthongization of [aɪ] in Elba and the
Environs: A Community Study .... Anna Head Oggs 133

To [a:] or Not To [a:] on the Gulf Coast
of Alabama .... Jocelyn Doxsey 150

"They Sound Better Than We Do": Language
Attitudes in Alabama .... J. Daniel Hasty 163

Code-Switching Between African-American and
Standard English: The Rules, the Roles, and
the Rub .... Kimberly Johnson with Thomas E. Nunnally 176

College Writers as Alabama Storytellers .... Charlotte Brammer 192

Tsalagi Language Revitalization and the
Echota Cherokee .... Robin Sabino 202

Appendices .... Thomas E. Nunnally
A: The Sounds of English and Southern English 211
B: A Glossary of Select Linguistic Terms 228
C: Web Sources for Further Study 237

Notes on Contributors 243

AFA Membership and Products 249

Editors' Note

This special combined volume 10 & 11 of *Tributaries* is devoted to language in Alabama. It is hard to overstate the importance of the spoken word in culture. Some anthropologists have asserted that language *is* culture. Within a folk group, language is the primary cultural transfer mechanism and self-identifying device. This publication explores the complicated and unique ways Alabamians verbally communicate.

This effort is in collaboration with guest editor Thomas Nunnally, associate professor of English at Auburn University. Tom has a gift of making this complex subject understandable to the nonlinguist. He has enthusiastically guided his colleague contributors in developing this wide-ranging collection of articles. We could not have produced this issue without him. We have enjoyed working with Tom to present to a new readership the work of these Alabama-oriented linguists: Rachael Allbritten, a doctoral candidate in linguistics at Georgetown University; Charlotte Brammer, assistant professor of communication studies, Samford University; Catherine Evans Davies, professor of linguistics, University of Alabama; Jocelyn Doxsey, formerly a linguistics student at New York University; Crawford Feagin, recently a professor at the University of Zurich; J. Daniel Hasty, a doctoral student in linguistics and languages at Michigan State University; Kimberly Johnson, a mentor teacher and English department head at Auburn Junior High School; Anna Head Oggs, an English doctoral candidate at Auburn University; Michael Picone, professor of French and linguistics at the University of Alabama; and Robin Sabino, associate professor of English at Auburn University.

Since 1999, the Alabama Folklife Association (AFA) has published *Tributaries* annually with support from the Alabama State Council on the Arts, dedication of the AFA board, and the contributions of our writers and reviewers. You can help ensure the continuation of *Tributaries* by encouraging your friends

to join the AFA. Also, please, consider writing articles or reviews for a future issue or asking others to do so.

The Alabama Folklife Association website—Alabamafolklife.org—is the source of current news and projects of the AFA. At this site you can join the AFA and order current and past issues of *Tributaries* or other publications and products that will enhance your understanding of Alabama folk culture. The website also has Association updates such as information on the annual meeting and news about the biennial Alabama Community Scholars Institute. For your convenience, we have also included information about the Alabama Folklife Association and its documentary products at the back of the issue.

We appreciate the many suggestions by AFA members and others and wish to acknowledge the annual copyediting and design efforts of Randall Williams. Please send your suggestions, comments and contributions for future issues.

Deborah Boykin, Joey Brackner, and Anne Kimzey

Alabama Center for Traditional Culture
334-242-4076 (Deb, x-243) (Joey, x-225) (Anne, x-236)
deb.boykin@arts.alabama.gov
joey.brackner@arts.alabama.gov
anne.kimzey@arts.alabama.gov

Exploring Alabama's Language Tributaries

Thomas E. Nunnally

This issue of *Tributaries* is devoted to essays concerned with language and languages in Alabama. At the end of this essay I give an overview of the issue and introduce the various articles, but first, because linguistic research is technical at times, I thought it would be helpful to include an introduction to linguistics (the scientific study of language). Also, I provide three appendices: "Appendix A: The Sounds of English and Southern English" is an explanation of the special alphabet and principles that linguists use to describe sounds (helpful for most of the essays). For ready reference, "Appendix B: A Glossary of Select Linguistic Terms" defines special terms that occur in the essays. "Appendix C: Web Sources for Further Study" annotates and directs you to interesting web sites to explore. As for the subject matter, the journal of the Alabama Folklife Association is certainly an appropriate venue for linguistic research: nothing is closer to the folk than the language coming out of their own mouths, whether the speaker is a Black Belt farmer or a Vestavia socialite, and it is the desire of the authors to add to your understanding of this most basic folkway.

What Linguistics Is About

Linguistics has a history both short and long, and its past is interestingly related to the study of folkways. A case in point is the work of German brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. Germanic language scholar Jacob not only formulated a series of sound changes now called Grimm's Law (which produces more dyspepsia among my students than any other subject) but also worked closely with brother Wilhelm to collect and preserve the folk tales and legends of his culture (they did not, ironically, produce the famous "kiddy-lit" Brothers Grimm fairy tales). Linguistics of the past, or philology, was primarily inter-

ested in the past: classical languages, language branches, and the preservation of fading times. One outgrowth of this "backward looking" orientation in the USA was an initiative to record the vanishing language folkways before they disappeared: thus the rise of dialectology, with its passion for recording the words of older, rural speakers, and the spawning of the massive Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada, a project still underway (see Linguistic Atlas Projects, http://us.english.uga.edu/).

A 1952 study of the language of African Americans of the Alabama Black Belt illustrates such an approach to preserving relics (annotation from McMillan/Montgomery 1989, 1.140):

> **Cobbs, Hamner.** 1952. "Negro Colloquialisms in the Black Belt." *Alabama Review* 5.203–12. Some unreported folk etymologies. [South Alabama]. Characteristic archaisms, colorful vocabulary, malapropisms of rural blacks whose "vivid imaginations, together with their highly developed genius for imitation, have conspired to produce for them a rich and often baffling language." [Note: I assume the *richness* is for the speakers and the *bafflement* is for the author!]

In a project to create a bibliography of linguistic studies concerning Alabama, I found that the majority of studies might be described as "old-school linguistics," concentrating on research into place names in Alabama (culminating in Foscue 1988) and many examples of preliminary research into lexical variation, that is, where Alabamians say "red bug" and where they say "chigger," ostensibly preparing the groundwork for Linguistic Atlas mapping of the dialects of the Gulf States (however, the Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States as later reconceived and completed, took a very different approach. See Montgomery 1998).

But linguistics, born again, as it were, in the 1960s, is also a new science, constantly discovering new areas of language to study and developing new techniques of analysis. To give a few examples, how does one's particular use of a language represent social standing, grouping, and ties (sociolinguistics)? How do we put together our thoughts and share them (discourse studies)? How do our nervous systems, seemingly preprogrammed to acquire language from the airwaves around us, perform this amazing feat (psycholinguistics)? Such new

subdisciplinary concerns have largely eclipsed preservation and relic finding, though study of language change is still a major concern. However, interest in language change more likely explores how the *current* language is changing and what social forces are driving the change rather than the big, long-range sagas of how Latin gave rise to French.

Linguistics is also renewed not only by areas of inquiry but by the new people who take it up. I am especially pleased that not just the old guard but young scholars—recent or current graduate students—have contributed to this issue. But before I introduce each of the essays, I want to set up a context explaining how linguists look at language, sometimes surprisingly differently from non-linguists. Then I want to comment on the state of linguistic study of Alabama.

How Linguists and Non-Linguists Look At Language

First, most non-linguists consider a particular language, such as English, to have a basis in reality, to be a real "thing." For example, Britishers might talk about "the King's English" as "real English," and may consider all departures from it (especially by barbaric Americans) to be incorrect, corrupted, improper. But what is language? Since Noam Chomsky's pioneering approach of the 1960s, language has been understood as the unique human *ability* to create and understand utterances that have never been uttered or heard before. Linguists use the term *grammar* not in reference to a list of rules of dos and don'ts but in reference to native speakers' knowledge of the systems of their languages (its sounds, word formations, grammatical relationships, sentence constructions). A little thought shows that language, in the sense of this internalized system for creating communication, can't exist outside the neurons of its speakers. Records of what a language produces, such as texts or recordings, can and do exist independently of speakers, but not language itself, that *ability*. So the concept that there is somehow a perfect English or German or Tagalog that exists platonically is a social (and *very powerful*) construct, an idealization. It turns out that this idealized construct of a language invariably draws its features from the variety of speech and writing of the powerful and elite. This prestigious variety is nurtured and pedestalized as the norm, the standard of that language, or the Standard, and thus within the consciousness of society

the Standard becomes the "real" language.

Linguists, on the other hand, consider the name of a particular language to be a cover term for all the varieties of it. In fact, some linguists go so far as to speak not of English but of Englishes (British English, American English, Singapore English, etc.) to get at the fact of these overlapping varieties. To put it another way, Ciceronian Latin of the Golden Age, a highly refined and artificial form of Latin, was no more "real" Latin than the varieties of Latin spoken in the far-flung ends of the Empire, the varieties that still exist, though today called French, Spanish, Italian, etc.

Secondly, non-linguists, working off the concept of a "real thing," self-existent language, tend to divide everyday varieties of a particular language into *good* and *bad*. Those perceived as closely approximating the idealized language, the Standard, are *good*, while those departing to significant degrees from the perceived "real thing" language are the *bad* forms, usually called *dialects*, or accents. Someone might comment, "Shirley doesn't have a *dialect* [or accent]; she just speaks regular (or good, or proper, or correct, or standard) English." Rather than categorizing varieties of English as good or bad, however, linguists prefer to study, not condemn, the varieties of a language. Each variety, whether close to the Standard or close to unintelligible in comparison to the Standard, is a dialect. In point of fact, *everyone* speaks a dialect, and it is the dialect of the most powerful and most influential that, as we said, is taken as *the* language. Societies generally value some varieties more highly (those seen as approaching the mythical "real thing," the King's English, again) and value others less highly or even highly disdain them (those seen as most radically diverging from the "real thing").

When linguists speak of dialects, they simply mean varieties of a language associated with a particular group of speakers. Thus dialects can be regional (Southern, Northern), ethnic (African American, Chicano), socially marked (working class, upper class), even gendered ("I do hope you find this shade of ecru lovely" would *more likely* be said by a woman than a man). Obviously, they can also mix together, as a Northern, African American, middle-class woman will have formed her particular dialect, her idiolect, in relation to her relationship in all these groups. Also, linguists pay attention to the way speakers adapt their speech; that is, a speaker can draw upon several styles of her or

his dialect, often seen as ranging from informal to formal, to meet different circumstances, and "style-shift" among them. Finally, linguists have found that some people can adapt even further than just in style and actually move from one dialect to another or "code switch." Such speakers may be termed bi-dialectal just as some people with fluency in two languages are bilingual (See Johnson/Nunnally).

While differences in words (e.g., *shopping cart* versus *buggy*) and grammar (e.g., second person plural forms *you-uns* versus *youse guys* versus *y'all*, or alternate verb form usage like "he done" for "he did") certainly help identify dialects, differences in pronunciation stick out more in identification of regional dialects. Sound differences are more easily observed since every sentence is potentially full of opportunities for occurrences of sounds that vary from the hearer's way of speaking whereas every sentence will not contain particular words or grammatical forms that illustrate dialect variation. Thus, sound differences may immediately alert the listener to regional facts about the speaker. Speech sounds associated with regions and groups are so salient as to become stereotypical: Midwestern twang, Yankee accent, Southern drawl. As for grammatical variation, researchers have found that nonstandard grammar forms, with a few exceptions, are more associated with class dialects than with regional dialects (see Murray and Simon 2004; a third type of dialect, ethnic dialects such as African American English, will be discussed below). Both Northern and Southern members of the working-class are likely to say, "I seen him pen the dog up after he come in here." The Southern speaker's regional identity will be evident, however, by the way he probably says "I" and certainly by the way he says "pen," since Southerners say "pen" and "pin" alike. (That's why Southerners have to stipulate "straight pin" or "ink pen.")

Of course, with all the regional and social varieties that, in a sense, separate us, it's a good thing for society to have a standard variety, the one we are all familiar with in the press, in most nonfiction books, and in broadcasting, the one that is the basis of education and commerce. It allows people across the U.S. and the world to transmit their thoughts, hold a dialogue, and share knowledge in common format. Though, as I have said, such a standard variety does not have an actual, physical reality within any native speaker, its construct is real enough to be studied and emulated ("You should write 'neither

of the boys *is* going,' rather than 'neither of the boys *are* going'"), and anyone wishing to "move up" in life ignores the written standard at his or her peril. As a teacher of college composition for more than thirty years, assigning and evaluating a type of writing that assumes competence in the standard variety, I've certainly enforced Standard Edited American English and will continue to do so ("Those continued sentence fragments are jeopardizing your grade, Mr. Jones!").

But most of us in the profession object to using the standard as a whip or a brickbat, that is, claiming that those coming from backgrounds that did not afford them the opportunity to acquire a variety close to the standard are obviously stupid and incompetent. This language prejudice is, unfortunately, so strong as to be unquestioned. Someone who speaks a variety close to the Standard (seen as a real thing) usually feels entirely justified in looking down on those who speak differently. As an educated (some would say over-educated) Deep South Ph.D. myself, during a summer at the University of Western Michigan I became aware of linguistic bigotry toward my Southern Dialect emanating from Michigan blue-collar workers (for more on the prejudices against Southern English and other varieties, see Lippi-Green 1997).

But non-speakers of a particular devalued variety aren't the only ones to disdain it. As we'll see in the essay by Daniel Hasty, speakers of less-standard varieties, such as Southern English, often buy into what has been termed Standard Language Ideology and develop attitudes of disdain toward their own dialects, a sense of "linguistic inferiority." Even these attitudes toward language are an important area of linguistic research, as understanding them throws light on our concepts of regional and ethnic identity, power relations, and gatekeeping mechanisms that control an individual's entry into greater areas of opportunities in life.

To summarize my first two points, linguists understand that there is no such thing as, for example, English in the commonly held sense; and linguists research language varieties, not to condemn them, but to understand their various origins, structures, uses, and social meanings (and even to find better ways of teaching the Standard to nonstandard speakers). It's a fair question, however, to wonder why all people *do not* choose to use the same variety, to try to all sound alike. One reason is that none of us has just one variety of our

language but several, as mentioned above, which we mostly unconsciously trot out in relation to the group/person we are around at a given moment. We need these varieties because we present ourselves to the world with a multitude of faces, what Catherine Davies (forthcoming) calls "a fluid presentation of self." I, for example, am a Southerner and proud of it, but I sound more Southern talking to some people than to others, and there have been times (I'm thinking of a job interview at a non-Southern university) when I have tried *not* to sound overly Southern. But since we acquire our dialect(s) from the airwaves around us and not from books, I was not entirely successful, of course. (I was asked by an associate dean during my job interview, "Do you think you can teach here with a Southern accent?") I have never been in enough constant and direct communication with non-Southerners to gradually add a functional non-Southern-sounding dialect to my repertoire, y'all.

Basically, how we talk says who we are, and no matter how much attention I try to pay to my speaking self, my heritage raises its flag. Even more, if I become emotionally involved in what I am saying, I become distracted from self-monitoring my speech, and a higher level of Southern dialect features results (See the essays by Oggs and Feagin for their methods of eliciting "unmonitored speech"). But even if I could remove all traces of Southern dialect, would I *want* to? What would it cost me in terms of my sense of self to lose my linguistic projections of Southern identity? Others agree with Davies on the nature of fluidity in identity. Schiffrin states that "identity is neither categorical nor fixed: we may act more or less middle-class, more or less female, and so on, depending on what we are doing and with whom" (1996: 199, quoted in Coulmas 2005: 178). And, as Coulmas summarizes, a person's "identities are not mutually exclusive but form a complex fabric of intersecting affiliations, commitments, convictions, and emotional bonds such that each individual is a member of various overlapping groups with varying degrees of incorporation. Each individual's memberships and identities are variable, changing in intensity by context and over time" (2005: 179). It seems obvious that a single form of speech cannot give voice to the crowd within us. (For more on our modulations of our dialects, see the essays by Feagin, Doxsey, and Johnson/Nunnally.)

A final difference to explore here between linguists' and non-linguists' basic

beliefs about language concerns language change. Non-linguists, again working off the ingrained belief in a reified language, hold that THE language once had or now has a perfect form, and deviation from it is therefore decay. Language change, from this common view point, equates to language destruction and must not be tolerated. But linguists, looking at the actual history of languages (and taking English as the example here), accept the fact that from *Beowulf* to Barack Obama, there has never been one form of English and certainly never a time when English was not undergoing change. As one may paradoxically put it, language exists only in a state of change.

In the area of sound change, long-term changes in the vowel system of English explain why our vowel sounds are spelled differently from the vowels of other languages like French, German, and Spanish. We say our vowels are "a, e, i, o, u" (forgetting "y" for a moment), but speakers of those other languages would read the first three letters as something like "ah, aye, ee" instead of our "aye, ee, eye." For example, compare the sound of the letter <a> in English ***rage*** and the borrowed French word *ga****rage*** and the sound of the letter <i> in English ***lice*** and the borrowed French word *po****lice***. Before A.D. 1500 and the basic completion of a major change called the Great Vowel Shift, an English sentence like "Mouse food was made with leeks and cooked fine" would have sounded something like "Moose fode was mahd with lakes ahnd coke-ed feen." (Phonetically [mus fod wɑs mɑd wɪθ leks ɑnd kok-ɛd fin]; see Nunnally, Appendix A, for more on the International Phonetic Alphabet that allows linguists to use a standard set of symbols to represent sounds.)

Looking at grammar change instead of sound change, consider, for example, the -s verb ending for third-person singular present-tense (as in "She swim***s***"). The examples below of two varieties of English, African American Vernacular English (sentence A) and Standard American Edited English (sentence B), exhibit the absence and presence of this grammatical ending:

A. *He go to school.*

B. *He goes to school.*

Which is correct? Obviously, B, the standard English form, contains the verb to employ when using what scholars have aptly named "the language of wider communication." The verb *go* in sentence A, besides being the nonstandard form, also raises a host of negative reactions from many who believe such an

innovative form is destroying "pure English."

But turn the clock back six hundred years, and the verdict changes: in relation to the standard English of around 1400, sentence B is incorrect and sentence A is the correct one in special circumstances. The prestige English of Chaucer's day would require "He goeth to school." Sentence B with the verb form *He goes* was around, but was a nonstandard, countrified form. In the *Canterbury Tales*, in fact, Chaucer used just that -s verb ending to depict non-Londoners. The poet evidently drew a chuckle at the speech of Northern bumpkins who didn't use the refined speech of the court. As for sentence A, "He go to school," that was another correct form of the third person present tense singular called the subjunctive and meaning "May he go to school" just as "God bless you," a frozen expression from long ago that we have retained, means "May God bless you."

So we see that the standard itself has shifted as to what is acceptable. But shouldn't we step up to the challenge and draw the line to stop change? If everyone went around saying "He go to school," wouldn't the loss of third-person singular present-tense (indicative) -s be a catastrophic loss of meaning since *goes* is singular and *go* (They *go* to school) is plural?

It is difficult to take this argument seriously when we notice that in the past tense no such -s ending is ever deemed necessary in current standard English to "show the difference" between singular and plural:

He went to school, not *He wents to school.*

They went to school.

Could it be that the retention of some grammatical rules is more about power, privilege, and identity than about actual grammatical necessity?

Another problem with the attitude that language change is language decay is its inconsistency. Changes to the perceived Standard regularly slip in under most people's radar, though not within major systems such as the verb endings explored above. For example, forty years ago, language purists spewed invective over the seemingly gross impropriety of using *hopefully* in a sentence to mean "it is to be hoped" when more and more people started using *hopefully* in this way. They insisted that one must employ *hopefully* only to modify a verb and mean "in a hopeful manner." If a hiker was lost in the woods, one could write, "He looked hopefully [in a hopeful manner] for trail markers," but you

must not, they would warn, write, "Hopefully [meaning 'it is to be hoped'], he is looking for trail markers." A quick internet search of the *New York Times* editorials shows, however, that the pernicious sentence-modifying *hopefully* is a mainstay today in that august newspaper.

Even the purists, however, probably don't raise an eyebrow today over the use of *contact* as a verb ("I contacted him") though this usage was a bugbear of the early to mid twentieth century. (Ironically, my own inner grammar grumbled over the parallel innovative use of *impact* as a verb. It took about a decade before this change of noun *impact* to verb *impact* impacted my grammar to the point that I was surprised one day to hear it coming out of my own mouth.) It is human to prefer the familiar and, I believe, an important trait to help preserve and hand down culture (including language) for the survival of humanity. The important point is to perceive whether change from the familiar and comfortable is just that and only that, or is a harbinger of the end of the world.

So, if language can and does change, why don't folks just decide to speak the more prestigious varieties? Surely that would make more sense than sticking with a dialect that contributes to social and economic marginalization and distrust of, or even outright discrimination toward, its users. Here is where the interplay of social forces comes into play. Is it better to be thought well of by one's superiors but considered "uppity" by one's peers, or to speak the same as one's peers and fit in with them?

To bring these views of non-linguists and linguists into relief, we will consider for a moment the controversy surrounding African American Vernacular English, especially when this variety came to be called Ebonics.

The term "Ebonics," recently catapulted into controversy, is a relatively old term, coined in the 1970s by Afrocentrist scholars. Based on the words *ebony* (a word denoting darkness but with positive associations) and *phonics* (sounds), the term was more political than linguistic in purpose, originally put forward to stress a language unity among all diasporic Africans in the Western Hemisphere. The claim was that a layer of linguistic commonality existed at a level above the various languages spoken by those of African descent who emerged from slavery. As originally used, Ebonics had more to do with ethnicity of user than the language used. But during this same period linguists began

systemic study of African American English (AAE), especially the vernacular variety (AAVE) spoken by young African Americans in Northern inner cities. Linguistic findings demonstrated that AAVE was a dialect of English having its own logic, rules, and systems. This field of study then accelerated and hasn't stopped yet.

In contrast to the Afrocentrists, linguistic researchers analyzing the facts of AAVE recognized it as a form of English—not as a separate language, yet their research clearly showed that AAVE contained some crucial differences from standard written English. The educational effect of these differences is that native speakers of AAVE (that is, those for whom AAVE was their home language and therefore their first dialect) would face greater challenges in the study of standard written English and on tests keyed to standard English than speakers whose dialects of spoken English are closer to the standard.

Recent use of the term *Ebonics* as a synonym for AAVE is connected with the original 1996 Oakland School Board controversy. The board's point in using the term *Ebonics* was to stress that the home language of most African American school children differed from standard written English, in the board's view, enough even to allow AAVE to be called a different language from English, that is, Ebonics. The board's strategy was also a political move, since California students whose first language is not English were to be taught in their own language *as a bridge to obtaining English,* not as an end in itself. However, this "other language" argument was not linguistically informed. In the revised statement by the board (1997), Ebonics was more sensibly defined as a dialect of English. For an excellent and moving analysis of that controversy, see Baugh 2000 (for web sources, see Appendix C).

While America was stewing over Ebonics, and state legislatures were trying to outlaw the use of AAVE in pedagogy, linguists were continuing to study this important dialect of a large minority of citizens in general and of perhaps one out of four Alabamians. Walt Wolfram summarizes the state of research in regard to African American (Vernacular) English:

> No variety of English has been more closely scrutinized over the past half-century than African American English. We have learned much about its historical development and structural description, and its status as a legitimate

> variety of English is unquestioned. At the same time, it remains embedded in enduring controversy, due no doubt to the sensitivity of race and ethnicity in American society. (2007)

John Baugh poignantly explains how the level of regard for the speech of African Americans ties in with the majority's level of regard for the speakers:

> But even after slavery was abolished in the U.S., a recurrent combination of racial segregation and inferior educational opportunities prevented many African Americans from adopting speech patterns associated with Americans of European ancestry. As a result, generations of white citizens maligned or mocked speakers of AAVE, casting doubt on their intelligence and making their distinctive speaking patterns the object of racist ridicule. (2005)

But as a Southerner and a linguist, I also aver that the English varieties of my region have suffered from similar linguistic prejudice, certainly less tragic and less severely limiting, but there just the same. As an Alabamian, I reluctantly must admit that the national reputation of the state sets the tone for the national repudiation of those who speak the English of the state (see Hasty's essay).

Alabama: A Linguistic Wilderness?

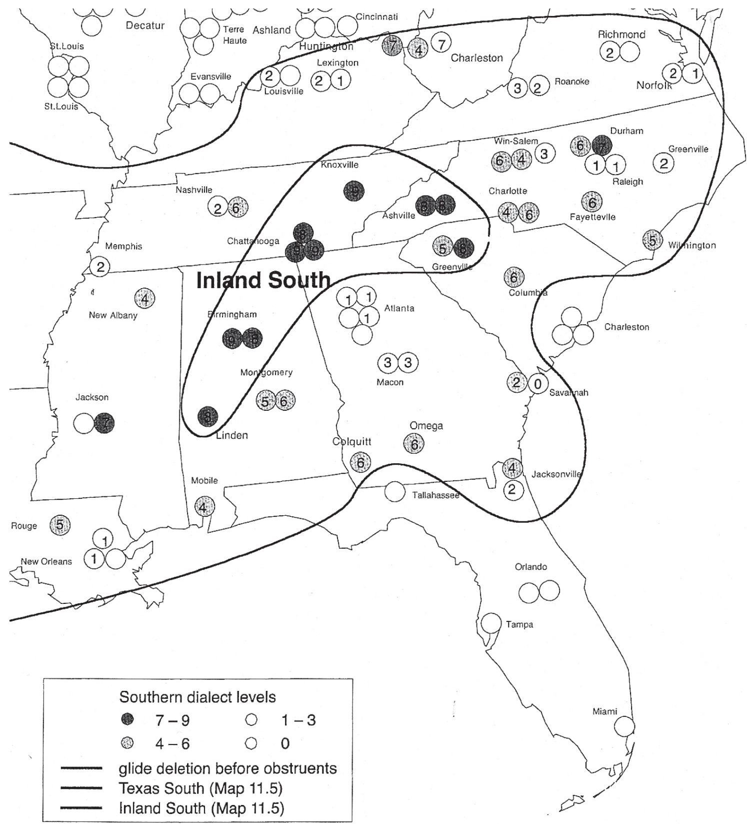
Just as AAVE has received the most study of any ethnic dialect, the Southern dialects of American English have received greater scholarly scrutiny than any other regional varieties. That level of research reflects the nature of the South as a special (though, for a while, unwilling) part of the union. One scholar calls the South the linguistic "touchstone" of the country (Preston 1997). As I said above, how we talk says who we are. In the case of the South, the secession that the Southern states could not accomplish politically or militarily, they succeeded in linguistically. This assertion is amply supported by recent research (summarized in Schneider 2003) that demonstrates a surprising fact: some of the linguistic features that most strongly identify Southern English today did not become widespread until *after* the Civil War.

The Southern dialects of Alabama, the "Heart of Dixie," are generally well

documented, therefore, in the sense that the whole region is documented. But what of the specifics of Alabama English? My own linguistic specialty is language change in English for the last twelve centuries or so, especially the period from *Beowulf* to Shakespeare. Over the decades since graduate school, I've enlarged this historical study to include understandings of modern dialect study (dialectology) and language use by social groups (sociolinguistics). Still, I had never specifically set out to discover what was known about the languages of my own native state of Alabama. I assumed that the work had been done at a level similar to that for other states. This illusion was destroyed when *Birmingham News* reporter Thomas Spencer approached me for assistance in writing a feature article on the dialects of different politicians in Alabama (See Spencer 2006.) In helping Spencer characterize and categorize the speech of Bob Riley, Lucy Baxley, Jim Folsom, and others, I had to rely on descriptions of the South as a whole to discuss the two main Southern dialects spoken in our state, Inland Southern and Coastal Southern (See Davies's essay), and on general studies of African American Vernacular English. Though a few studies had been carried out, it appeared to me that Alabama is still a wilderness in terms of linguistic research.

To illustrate, consider the three maps below. Map 1, based on sound production alone (phonetics), divides Alabama into two dialects, one associated with the Appalachian chain and the other with the South in general. Maps 2 and 3 are not based on sounds but on differences in word usage (for example, whether one calls spider-mite larvae "red bugs" or "chiggers"). Even so, Map 2 divides the state at a considerably lower point than Map 3. Maps 2 and 3, however, agree in placing all of North Alabama in one region, rather than gouging out just a part of it as Map 1 does. Finally, Map 1 does not posit a dialect boundary running down the state borders of Alabama and Georgia that Map 3 does. What these differences mean is not that some are right and some wrong, but that insufficient data were available to form a detailed picture of the state. For example, the six dots within Alabama on Map 1 stand for six *individuals*. Alabama is being mapped based on speech samples from two Birmingham females, aged 31 and 67; a male and a female from Montgomery, one male from Mobile, and one female from little Linden.

All three maps reflect white Southern English. As for state varieties of African

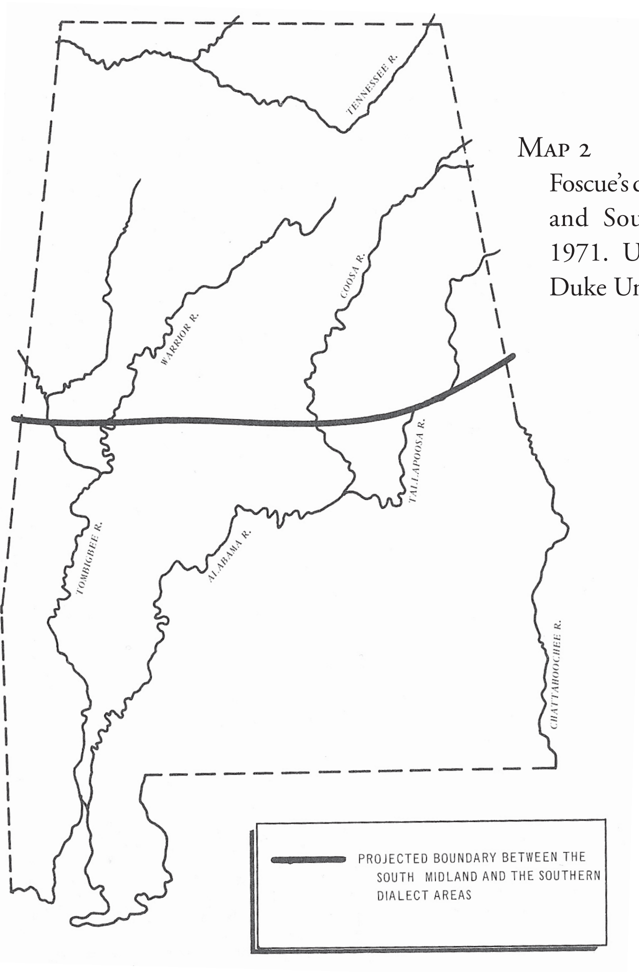


Map 1

Detail from Dialect Regions according to the *Atlas of North American English* (Labov, Ash, and Boberg 2006. Used by permission of Mouton de Gruyter Press.)

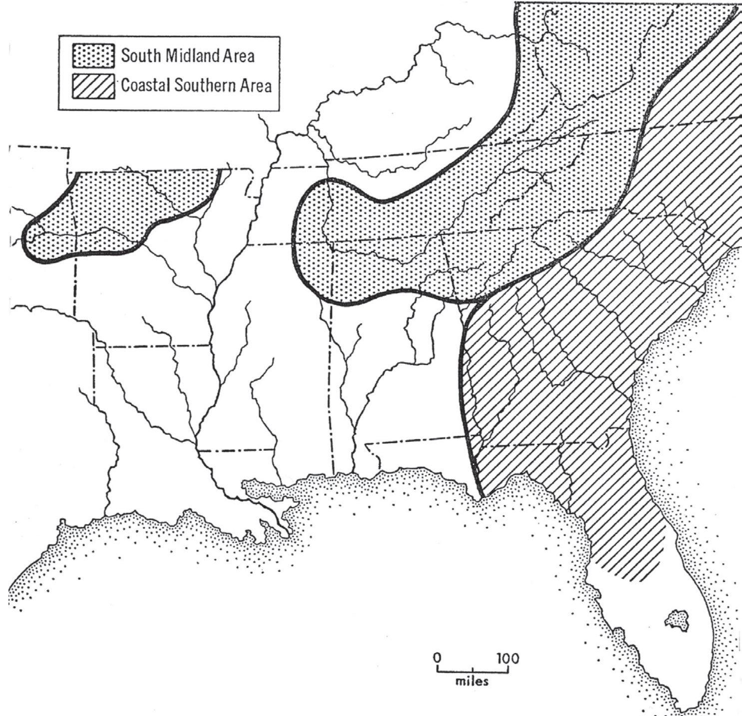
American English (AAE), no statewide study has occurred to my knowledge, in spite of Wolfram's description above of the robust study of AAE in general. Perhaps this lack is more excusable than the paucity of careful study of the majority dialects. The fall of segregation and the beginning of the slow climb toward equality, not in statute only but in deed, for Alabama's African Americans required energy expenditure in many areas, particularly in the struggle for parity in basic education and voter participation. Against such needs, linguistic investigation of Alabama's AAE(s) paled in comparison.

At least there is still plenty of work to go around. As this issue will show,



MAP 2
Foscue's dialect division of North and South Alabama (Foscue 1971. Used by permission of Duke University Press.)

pioneering work such as these essays is making headway in mapping the lay of the land, but is really just a beginning.[1] Earlier important research has also been done (see Bernstein 2006; essays by Fitts, Rich, and Schneider in Montgomery and Nunnally 1998; essays by Labov and Ash and Taylor in Bernstein, Nunnally, and Sabino 1997; and Rich and Montgomery 1993) on this inquiry.[2] But here I turn to introducing the other essays in this issue.



Map 3
Detail from Wood's map of dialect contours in the Southern states (Wood 1963. Used by permission of Duke University Press.)

Tributaries 10/11 (2007/2008): The Language Issue

The ten other essays in this issue are organized into the following content areas: two essays presenting the larger picture of language in Alabama; four studies of speech sounds centered at various Alabama locales; two essays examining attitudes toward and perceptions of dialects; and two essays returning to the larger picture.

We start with a look at non-English languages of Alabama, past and present. **Michael Picone** presents a linguistic tapestry that both sobers by tales of loss and also amazes by outlining the plethora of non-English languages formerly or currently spoken in the state. After tracing the history of various groups of non-English speakers, he focuses our attention on the inexorable change coming to language in Alabama as the demographics of the state change through immigration.

Next, **Catherine Evans Davies** is our guide in looking at characteristics of Alabama and general Southern English. One fact we discover is that the history of the settlement of Alabama is written in its R's. That is, during the last century, whether a native Alabamian called the grower of crops a far-mer or a fah-muh told the tale of origin, either regional or social. Davies ends her essay with an annotated bibliography for further study.

Above I touched on the role of sound differences between dialects. Pronunciation differences are indeed one of the most important processes studied in linguistics. Of great importance to the fabric of American life is the question of whether dialects are becoming more alike (converging) or less alike (diverging), and much has been done and published on this question. Appendix C lists some web sites for further study. Several of the essays in this issue, not surprisingly, touch on this issue and help us understand a little about the linguistic landscape of Alabama.

Appendix A: The Sounds of English and Southern English, mentioned above, will aid you in reading the next four essays.

Internationally recognized linguist **Crawford ("Corky") Feagin**, from Anniston, is one of the pioneers of sociolinguistic study of Alabama English. Her 1979 study of the speech of white Annistonians and subsequent research continue to guide researchers. Her essay on the Southern feature called "drawling" is based on data from Anniston as well, but has implications for drawling across the South. As is often the case after reading linguistic research, you may suddenly start to hear and understand the significance of a language feature that you have been around all your life but never consciously considered.

The next three articles, each by a graduate student in linguistics, look at major sounds that define the Southern dialect. **Rachael Allbritten** (Georgetown University), **Anna Head Oggs** (Auburn University), and **Jocelyn Doxsey** (New York University) are, in fact, Alabamians. Just as University of Alabama English professor James B. McMillan, founder of the University of Alabama Press and the "Dean of Southern Linguistics," brought his heritage to bear on his scholarship, so we see residents once again taking a linguistic interest in the state. And just as McMillan's scholarship solidly reflected the linguistics of his day, so their research projects, reported on here, reflect cutting edge approaches to study of language at the community level.

When the waitress at the Huddle House in Tallassee asks me if I want more "swuheet tuhee," she is demonstrating a dialect that has undergone a language change called the "Southern Vowel Shift." This well-documented major change in vowel placement is the focus of Huntsvillian Allbritten's essay. But she presents a tale of caution to those who overgeneralize the extent of language change. Her analysis of the vowel qualities of speakers from the Huntsville area offers compelling evidence that while some speakers use the shifted system of vowel sounds to various degrees, others in the same area have stuck with the less-changed system. Allbritten also presages some of the ways that Huntsville's continuing urban development and influx of "outsiders" could change the Rocket City linguistically.

Moving to the Wiregrass area, Elba native Oggs reports on her linguistic research where she has examined the prevalence of [aɪ] pronounced as [aː] (e.g., *ride* pronounced something like "rahd" rather than "rah-eed." See Davies's essay and Nunnally's Appendix A for more explanation.). Oggs's explanations of methodology are as important as the findings themselves. She demonstrates the range of social and linguistic influences that scholars must take into account to adequately understand variation of even this single pronunciation feature.

Last in this group, Doxsey explores the linguistic uniqueness of the Gulf Coast, also looking into the prevalence of the monophthongized [aɪ]. Doxsey provides evidence of important differences between the Southern Englishes of the Gulf Coast and Elba, communities less than two hundred miles apart. Using some methodology similar to Oggs's study of Elba, Doxsey also explores the effect of different levels of formality on variation. Finally, her essay gives a glimpse of the gap between speakers' *perceptions* of their own dialects and their *beliefs* about their own dialects.

The next two essays take us from measuring sounds to measuring attitudes—analyzing perceptions associated with dialects in Alabama and the actions these perceptions precipitate.

Doxsey's data touch on how an informant's attitude interacts with his perception. **James Daniel Hasty** takes us further into the study of language attitudes, how untrained people (common folk) perceive and judge speakers on the basis of their dialects (or perhaps judge dialects on the basis of their speakers). Hasty played recorded examples of texts read by individuals from the

South, North, and Midwest to college students at Auburn University, asking them to rate the speakers as to their personal attributes in areas of personal integrity, competence, and social attractiveness. Perhaps the results will not surprise you, but they may be a stinging reminder of what linguistic bigotry does to its targets' attitudes toward their own cultures.

If Hasty's college students—themselves white Southerners—judge Southern dialects so differently and so harshly from non-Southern dialects, how much greater are the tensions for people whose original dialect is African American English? To gain better socioeconomic conditions for themselves and their families, they may adopt a second, more standard dialect but at the risk of alienating themselves or their children from a rich and nurturing culture. Award-winning eighth-grade teacher **Kimberly Johnson** and I explore her modulation between two style levels of African-American English and her "white" English—practices called style shifting and code switching. Johnson helps non-speakers of AAE to enter the psyche of a professional but somewhat conflicted African American by educating readers to the perils and profit of bidialectalism. We learn of the challenges that bidialectal speakers face as they negotiate between different worlds, and their concerns over the effect this strategy has on their children.

Our last two authors return to the larger picture, **Charlotte Brammer** by looking at Alabama English in terms of its function in narrative, and **Robin Sabino** by discussing one long-silenced Alabama Native American language that refuses to stay dead.

Brammer's research explores the role of Southern English in stories written by college students. As she explains, telling stories for Alabamians and Southerners in general does more than just entertain, and to be functionally effective, story-telling requires an authentic voice from the teller. Here in Deep South Alabama the unique features of Southern dialect imbue stories with authenticity and empower them with cultural connection, between the teller and the listener, between the story line and Southern life.

Sabino, project administrator for the Tsalagi Language Revitalization Project in conjunction with the Echota (Cherokee) Tribe of Alabama and Auburn University, reports on the Echota Tribe's project to revitalize, or in the case of Alabama, resurrect their language, Tsalagi (Cherokee). Her essay includes

explanations and examples of the exciting technology that makes such a project possible. But as Picone illustrates, language shrinkage is more normal in our era than language proliferation. Language revitalization, as Fennell explains, requires great commitment:

> A shrinking language minority cannot be saved by the actions of well-wishers who do not belong to the minority in question . . . . It can be saved only by itself; and then only if its members acquire the will to stop it shrinking, acquire the institutions and financial means to take appropriate measures, and take them. (Jones and Singh 2005: 122)

Will the Echota tribe be successful? They have made a good start, but only time will tell.

Conclusion

I wish to close with two ideas. First, I join the other authors in hoping that our work will broaden horizons in considering the language of all the folk in this state, those marched out of Alabama by force long ago, those brought over the seas and to Alabama against their will, those who scratched out a living on the scrabble of north Alabama and those who luxuriated in the largess of the Black Belt, those who shrimp the coast and those who touch the stars. As I have said elsewhere, "Alabamians' linguistic differences are not local diseases that need to be cured, but exotic plants that need to be studied" (quoted in Spencer 2006). This issue, the first of its kind, is a grand inauguration of just such study.

Second, it has been a joy to work with scholars connected in different ways to the state's institutions. Considering the level of animus that develops in our state over football loyalties, it's good for a work like this to serve as a reminder to others of something the authors and editors know very well, that the teachers and scholars of Alabama are all on the same team.

Acknowledgments

I want to express my thanks to Joey Brackner, who initiated this issue of *Tributaries* devoted to language in Alabama and his patience in seeing such a

large project through to completion; to the Auburn University Department of English and department head George Crandell for providing a semester devoted to research and for providing funds for M.A. research assistant Jennifer Reid, whose bibliographic research was invaluable; to Deborah Boykin, Joey Brackner, James Daniel Hasty, Anne Kimzey, and Anna Head Oggs for editorial and substantive suggestions to improve this essay and my appendices; to all the contributors for their unfailing willingness to revise and improve their work as we worked for consistency in the issue; and to NewSouth Books editor Randall Williams for his constant tutoring, help, and patience in working with me as guest editor and his expertise in creating the final product.

Notes

1. The current ideal for linguistically oriented study of any state is the North Carolina Language and Life Project (NCLLP), under the auspices of North Carolina State University. As the NCLLP web site describes it,

> the project was established at North Carolina State University in 1993 [by Walt Wolfram] to focus on research, graduate and undergraduate education, and outreach programs related to language in the American South. The goals of the NCLLP are: 1. to gather basic research information about language varieties in order to understand the nature of language variation and change; 2. to document language varieties in North Carolina and beyond as they reflect varied cultural traditions; 3. to provide information about language differences for public and educational interests; 4. to use research material for the improvement of educational programs about language and culture (http://www.ncsu.edu/linguistics/ncllp/index.php).

The full incorporation of folklife into this project gives it a balance and public accessibility worthy of emulation by any state desiring to meld serious academic study and public outreach.

2. Much important material is available in the *Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States* or *LAGS* (Pederson et al. 1986–92), which interviewed 1,211 informants from Florida, west Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, and east Texas. Pederson designed *LAGS* to include a carefully calculated percentage of African American speakers and an "Urban Supplement," giving *LAGS* broader utility than the other Linguistic Atlas projects. This massive collection of data remains largely

untapped (see Montgomery 1998). Even so, the data will provide only a starting place after it has been fully explored.

References

Baugh, John. 2005. "Ebony + Phonics." *Do You Speak American?* www.pbs.org/speak/seatosea/americanvarieties/AAVE/ebonics/

______. 2000. *Beyond Ebonics: Linguistic Pride and Racial Prejudice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bernstein, Cynthia. 2006. "Drawing Out the /ai/: Dialect Boundaries and /ai/ Variation." In *Language Variation and Change in the American Midland: A New Look at "Heartland" English*. Eds. Thomas E. Murray and Beth Lee Simon. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 210–32.

Bernstein, Cynthia, Thomas Nunnally, and Robin Sabino, eds. 1997. *Language Variety in the South Revisited*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Coulmas, Florian. 2005. *Sociolinguistics: The Studyof Speakers' Choices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Davies, Catherine. Forthcoming. "Language and Identity in Discourse in the American South: Sociolinguistic Repertoire as Expressive Resource in the Presentation of Self." In *Talk and Identity in Narratives and Discourse.* Eds. A. De Fina, M. Bamberg, and D. Schiffrin. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Feagin, Crawford. 1979. *Variation and Change in Alabama English: A Sociolinguistic Study of the White Community*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Foscue, Virginia. 1971. *A Preliminary Survey of the Vocabulary of White Alabamians*, Publication of the American Dialect Society Number 56. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

______. 1988. *Place Names in Alabama*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Jones, Mari C., and Ishtla Singh. 2005. *Exploring Language Change*. New York: Routledge.

Labov, William, Sharon Ash, and Charles Boberg. 2006. *The Atlas of North American English: Phonetics, Phonology and Sound Change: A Multimedia Reference Tool.* New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Lippi-Green, Rosina. 1997. *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States.* New York: Routledge.

McMillan, James B., and Michael Montgomery. 1989. *Annotated Bibliography of Southern American English*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Montgomery, Michael B. 1998. "The Treasury of LAGS: Its History, Organization,

and Accomplishments." In Montgomery and Nunnally. 7–52.

Montgomery, Michael B., and Thomas Nunnally, eds. 1998. *From the Gulf States and Beyond: The Legacy of Lee Pederson and LAGS*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Murray, Thomas E., and Beth Lee Simon. 2004. "Colloquial American English: Grammatical Features." In *A Handbook of Varieties of English: A Multimedia Reference Tool*, Eds. Bernd Kortmann and Edgar W. Schneider. 221–44.

North Carolina State University. The North Carolina Language and Life Project (NCLLP). www.ncsu.edu/linguistics/ncllp/index.php.

Pederson, Lee, et al., eds. 1986–92. *Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States*. 7 vols. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Preston, Dennis. 1997. "The South: The Touchstone." In Bernstein, Nunnally, Sabino. 311–51.

Rich, John Stanley, and Michael B. Montgomery. 1993. "A Century of Scholarly Commentary on Alabama English." *SECOL Review* 17: 12–35.

Schneider, Edgar. 2003. "Shakespeare in the Coves and Hollows? Toward a History of Southern English." In *English in the Southern United States*. Eds. Stephen Nagle and Sara Sanders. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 17–35.

Spencer, Thomas. 2006. "Sounds like Alabama." *Birmingham News*. Nov. 5, 1E, 4E.

Thomas, Erik R. 2001. *An Acoustic Analysis of Vowel Variation in New World English*. Publication of the American Dialect Society Number 85. Durham: Duke University Press.

Wolfram, Walt. 2007. Quotation posted on the Linguist List page "AAE: African American English." http://linguistlist.org/topics/ebonics/.

Wood, Gordon. 1963. "Dialect Contours in the Southern States." *American Speech* 38: 243–56.

Multilingual Alabama

Michael D. Picone

Language diversity in the United States has asserted itself in recent years as a topic of public concern, and Alabama is no exception, even though compared to many other states the population of non-English speaking households in Alabama is still relatively small (3.9 percent according to the 2000 U.S. Census). In particular, the growing presence of Spanish speakers has led to the adoption of a defensive posture. In 1990, by a nine-to-one margin, Alabama voters amended the state constitution to include the following:

> Amendment 509
>
> English is the official language of the state of Alabama. The legislature shall enforce this amendment by appropriate legislation. The legislature and officials of the state of Alabama shall take all steps necessary to insure that the role of English as the common language of the state of Alabama is preserved and enhanced. The legislature shall make no law which diminishes or ignores the role of English as the common language of the state of Alabama.
>
> Any person who is a resident of or doing business in the state of Alabama shall have standing to sue the state of Alabama to enforce this amendment, and the courts of record of the state of Alabama shall have jurisdiction to hear cases brought to enforce this provision. The legislature may provide reasonable and appropriate limitations on the time and manner of suits brought under this amendment.

This amendment was interpreted by the Alabama Department of Public Safety to be in conflict with its prior practice of offering the state driver's license test in languages other than English for those not proficient in English. When

non-English testing was suspended, a class action suit against the Department of Public Safety was the result, founded on the claim that English-only testing was discriminatory and resulted in economic hardship disproportionately for populations of certain national origins, in conflict therefore with Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Eleventh U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals agreed, but the case went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court (*Sandoval v. Alexander*, April 24, 2001) where the prior decision was overturned. The Court's 5-4 decision, however, did not put the matter to rest, because the discriminatory aspect of the complaint was not addressed by the Court, which ruled that the plaintiff, a private party, lacked the grounds to sue the state, since the purported discrimination was an unintentional effect and therefore did not meet the criteria relevant to Title VI. While the U.S. Supreme Court's decision seemed to represent a victory for the state, it did nothing to offset the idea that the challenged practice was in fact discriminatory, intentional or not, and multilingual driver's license testing was reinstated in Alabama. This resulted in yet another legal challenge—this time on the part of ProEnglish, a group of English-only advocates, claiming that multilingual testing violates Amendment 509—which made its way to the Alabama Supreme Court in June 2007. On October 19, the Alabama Supreme Court handed down a 5-4 decision that allows for the continuation of multilingual testing. The majority opinion stated that the plaintiff failed to present sufficient evidence that the administration of the driver's license examination in multiple languages diminishes the status of English as Alabama's common language. This issue is not likely to go away, however; state senator Scott Beason is already revisiting the matter and wants to introduce legislation stipulating that English alone be used for administering the driver's license exam.

Given the strong English-only sentiment demonstrated by the crushing margin of victory for Amendment 509 and the still-small size of any potentially countervailing non-English electorate, there was little to dissuade Alabama's senior U.S. Senator, Richard C. Shelby, from introducing the Language of Government Act (1995) in an attempt—unsuccessful so far—to designate English as the sole language of the federal government as well. An excerpt citing the justification for the proposed legislation follows:

> [. . . I]n order to preserve unity in diversity, and to prevent division along linguistic lines, the United States should maintain a language common to all people; [. . .] the purpose of this Act is to help immigrants better assimilate and take full advantage of economic and occupational opportunities in the United States; [. . .] by learning the English language, immigrants will be empowered with the language skills and literacy necessary to become responsible citizens and productive workers in the United States.

The purpose of this essay is not to take a particular stance regarding English as an official language. Strong arguments can seemingly be marshaled on both sides of this debate. Indeed, some of those arguments can be exemplified from the pages of Alabama's history, as demonstrated below. Nevertheless, an Anglo-centric bias in the selective recounting of the cultural and linguistic history of our nation and our state arguably deprives us of a more objective benchmark for assessing the present nature of linguistic diversity. This is especially true for Alabama, which was a theater of immense rivalry between three great European powers in constant interaction with each other as well as with indigenous peoples and with peoples of African descent. This sociopolitical and ethnic diversity was accompanied by an enormous amount of language diversity. The story of that linguistic diversity, though fascinating in all of its aspects, is not well known and is rarely told. This essay offers a précis of some of the salient chapters of the earlier phases of Alabama's sociolinguistic history, with brief additional commentary on modern developments. The emphasis is on languages other than English; the other contributions to this issue treat historical and contemporary profiles of English in Alabama.

Alabama's First Languages

The story begins long before any European ever set foot on Southeastern shores, but the most ancient voices—arguably the most interesting—are unfortunately muted. The stone spear points and scrapers found throughout the territory that is now Alabama are tangible evidence of the hunting practices of its earliest nomadic inhabitants, the Paleo-Indians (10,000–7,000 B.C.), but even the faintest echoes of the tongues spoken by those early residents are impossible to ascertain. With the demise of the megafauna and the introduc-

tion of the atlatl, a hunter-and-gatherer profile emerged (7,000–1,000 B.C.): the Archaic Indians lived in semi-permanent camps and subsisted on small game, fish, nuts, berries, and roots. This was followed by the Woodland period (1,000 B.C.–850 A.D.), when cultivation of the soil began, leading to a more dependable food supply for a more sedentary existence and leaving time for other endeavors such as pottery-making, stone-carving, and the elaboration of socio-religious ritual. It can be certain that these unfolding changes in social organization exerted pressures on language and had profound impact on the circumstances of its use and, quite probably, on its form. This would have been true not only in the area of vocabulary and the likely grammaticalization of new features, but also in the type and structure of discourse, to provide the appropriate linguistic infrastructure as societies became more hierarchical and more culturally and politically complex.

Indeed, one of the largest and most complex societies north of Mexico emerged in Alabama during the Mississippian Period (850–1500 A.D.), well prior to first contact with Europeans. A constellation of villages and secondary hubs had as their primary hub a palisade-protected town of about three thousand residents surrounding twenty artificial mounds—supporting temples, council houses and elite homes—on the bluffs overlooking the Black Warrior River, about sixteen miles south of present-day Tuscaloosa (Walthall 1980: 211–227). Similar configurations existed elsewhere in Alabama (especially along the Middle Tennessee Valley in northern Alabama), in the Southeast, and along the Lower Mississippi, but none were quite so large. While it can be certain that language played a role in the organization and maintenance of these small empires, there is no precise knowledge of the forms and functions of the languages involved.

Nevertheless, a Proto-Muskogean language, with its branches differently hypothesized by different researchers (for a summary see Galloway 1995: 316–320), has been reasonably posited, extrapolating backward from the diversity of Muskogean languages predominating later in the Southeast. And if Emanuel Drechsel (1996, 1997) is correct in his speculations, a prevalent aspect of linguistic usage dating back to the Mississippian Period is preserved in the form of Mobilian Jargon, a trade language whose last speakers survived into the middle of the twentieth century. Though some scholars see Mobil-

ian Jargon as the outgrowth of trade relations established after the arrival of Europeans (Crawford 1978), Drechsel counters that only the presence of a lingua franca such as Mobilian Jargon could have accounted for the development of extensive trade and the concomitant widespread diffusion of cultural traits, leading to the subsequent sociocultural uniformity among all the various tribes encountered in the Southeast, despite the linguistic diversity reported by the first Europeans. For Drechsel, Mobilian Jargon underpins the entire pre-Columbian Mississippian Complex (1997: 350).

In an essay devoted to language in Alabama, a lingua franca that came to be known as "Mobilian Jargon" would seem to denote a geographical connection to the region and is of obvious interest. How that name was acquired is part of the larger story of language contact stemming from European exploration and colonization, which will be the subject of the next section. First, however, a brief inventory of the region's languages at the time of European arrival will complete this sketch of the indigenous languages of Alabama.

The populous Cherokee nation extended its domain to the Appalachian foothills of northeastern Alabama. Indeed, the most famous Cherokee, Sequoyah (d. 1843), would invent his celebrated Cherokee syllabary (see Figure 1) while residing in Willstown, now Fort Payne, Alabama, in 1821. Sequoyah's achievement is all the more remarkable given that he was illiterate in English, such that written English served only as an inspiration and not as a direct model for his system of symbols to codify Cherokee. This also helps explain his decision to use syllabic representation rather than individual sound segments, as found in English and all other European languages. In his system, eighty-six symbols capture all the possible syllables of Cherokee. After the removal of the majority of the Cherokee from their homeland, including Sequoyah, tribe members remaining in the East and those who had been removed were able to communicate with each other in writing by virtue of Sequoyah's syllabary. The first person who learned to read and write in Cherokee, other than Sequoyah himself, was his daughter Ahyokah who, at six years of age, astonished other Cherokee—and won over many skeptics who had thought that Cherokee could not be put to writing—with her demonstrations of literacy in the Cherokee language.

Cherokee Alphabet.

Ꭰ a	Ꭱ e	Ꭲ i	Ꭳ o	Ꭴ u	Ꭵ v
Ꭶ ga Ꭷ ka	Ꭸ ge	Ꭹ gi	Ꭺ go	Ꭻ gu	Ꭼ gv
Ꭽ ha	Ꭾ he	Ꭿ hi	Ꮀ ho	Ꮁ hu	Ꮂ hv
Ꮃ la	Ꮄ le	Ꮅ li	Ꮆ lo	Ꮇ lu	Ꮈ lv
Ꮉ ma	Ꮊ me	Ꮋ mi	Ꮌ mo	Ꮍ mu	
Ꮎ na Ꮏ hna Ꮐ nah	Ꮑ ne	Ꮒ ni	Ꮓ no	Ꮔ nu	Ꮕ nv
Ꮖ qua	Ꮗ que	Ꮘ qui	Ꮙ quo	Ꮚ quu	Ꮛ quv
Ꮜ sa Ꮝ s	Ꮞ se	Ꮟ si	Ꮠ so	Ꮡ su	Ꮢ sv
Ꮣ da Ꮤ ta	Ꮥ de Ꮦ te	Ꮧ di Ꮨ ti	Ꮩ do	Ꮪ du	Ꮫ dv
Ꮬ dla Ꮭ tla	Ꮮ tle	Ꮯ tli	Ꮰ tlo	Ꮱ tlu	Ꮲ tlv
Ꮳ tsa	Ꮴ tse	Ꮵ tsi	Ꮶ tso	Ꮷ tsu	Ꮸ tsv
Ꮹ wa	Ꮺ we	Ꮻ wi	Ꮼ wo	Ꮽ wu	Ꮾ wv
Ꮿ ya	Ᏸ ye	Ᏹ yi	Ᏺ yo	Ᏻ yu	Ᏼ yv

Sounds Represented by Vowels

a, as a in father, or short as a in rival
e, as a in hate, or short as e in met
i, as i in pique, or short as i in pit
o, as o in note, approaching aw in law
u, as oo in fool, or short as u in pull
v, as u in but, nasalized

Consonant Sounds

g nearly as in English, but approaching to k. d nearly as in English but approaching to t. h k l m n q s t w y as in English. Syllables beginning with g except Ꭶ (ga) have sometimes the power of k. Ꭺ (go), Ꮪ (du), Ꮫ (dv) are sometimes sounded to, tu, tv and syllables written with tl except Ꮭ (tla) sometimes vary to dl.

Figure 1

Cherokee syllabary (Holmes and Smith 1977: 2, used by permission of University of Oklahoma Press).

In 1838, of approximately 22,000 Cherokee in the Southeast, all but about a thousand were removed to present-day Oklahoma (many did not survive the Trail of Tears), and the Cherokee language (or *Tsalagi*), a member of the Iroquoian family, underwent dramatic decline in Alabama. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 270 individuals reportedly speak Cherokee at home in Alabama (the same census lists 1,415 Cherokee speakers in North Carolina). Nevertheless, a linguistic revival effort is now underway among the reconstituted Echota Cherokee Tribe of Alabama (see Sabino). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there remain about 7,280 speakers of Cherokee in Oklahoma.

With the exception of Cherokee and the possible exception of Tawasa, which was reclassified as a Timucuan language (compare Swanton 1911: 9 and Munro 2004) and which was spoken near the Gulf of Mexico along the banks of the Chattahoochee River on Alabama's eastern border, virtually all the other indigenous languages of Alabama either belong to the Muskogean family or fall into the undocumented category (Munro 2004, Hardy and Scancarelli 2005). Historically, most speakers of these languages relocated to other parts of the Southeast and to Texas and Oklahoma, either voluntarily during the colonial period (notably, some groups migrated west to be closer to their French allies as colonization began to center on the Lower Mississippi) or involuntarily due to flight from enemies or to forced removal during the 1830s.

CREEK (OR MUSKOGEE): Among the Lower Creeks near the Gulf, the Poarch Band of Creek Indians escaped removal to Oklahoma in 1836, gained federal recognition in 1984, and now reside in southwestern Alabama, constituting a small remnant of the former Creek Confederacy which once encompassed most of Alabama and Georgia, as well as part of eastern Tennessee, at the beginning of the eighteenth century. There are no known fluent speakers of Creek remaining among the Poarch Band (according to Paredes 1992: 121; however, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, 145 individuals reportedly speak Muskogee at home in Alabama). However, in 1814, many Upper Creeks from the vicinity of the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers relocated to Florida, where Creek or Muskogee (traditionally *Mvskoke*, ʋ = [ə]) is still spoken. This migration gave rise to the Seminole tribe in Florida, and hence the language is sometimes referred to as Seminole as well. Some Seminole were subsequently removed to

Oklahoma (1835–42), such that Seminole speakers reside there also. In Florida today, a third of the tribe speaks Seminole, out of a total Seminole population of approximately 1,600. The forcible removal from Alabama and Georgia to Oklahoma in the 1830s resulted in the relocation of approximately twenty thousand Creeks, with a few thousand succumbing to cholera during the process. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are approximately 4,145 Muskogee speakers in Oklahoma. Creek formerly served as a lingua franca within the sprawling Creek Confederacy, which included non-Creek tribes (see below). A lithograph of Paddy Carr, a Creek interpreter, appears on the back cover of this issue. He was born in 1807, at Fort Mitchell, Alabama, and bears the name given to him by his Irish father, Erin Carr. His mother was a Creek woman. Due in part to the lack of white women in frontier settings, marriages and cohabitations between white men and Indian women were common in areas of English settlement (Sequoyah's father was also a white man) and, even earlier, in areas of French settlement (see below). The lithograph is based on a portrait made in Washington, D.C., in 1826, when Paddy Carr served as interpreter for a delegation of Creeks (McKenney and Hall 1854). It should be noted that protocol sometimes demanded the presence of an interpreter, even when Indians knew English or French, as the case may be, so that Indians would not dishonor themselves by being forced to speak a different language when acting in an official capacity to represent the tribe. Also present at the 1826 meeting in Washington was Yoholo Micco (see Figure 2), principal chief of the Creek villages between Tallassee and Oakfuskee, along the Tallapoosa River. Despite his faithful service to the United States Army against Indians allied with the British during the Creek Wars, Yoholo Micco (whose name means "royal chief") was removed from his homeland along with his people. He died during the removal.

Hitchiti, Mikasuki: In what is now southeastern Alabama, the Hitchiti became associated with the Lower Creeks of the Creek Confederacy, but their language was distinct from Creek. The language is now extinct, but about five hundred speakers of Mikasuki, very closely related to and mutually intelligible with Hitchiti, now reside in southern Florida, where the spelling Miccosukee is usually preferred as a tribal name and where the language itself is referred to

FIGURE 2
Yoholo Micco, Upper Creek chief, 1826. (W. S. Hoole Special Collections Library, University of Alabama)

as *Ilaponki* (Kersey 1992). Two-thirds of the Florida Seminole are also speakers of Mikasuki.

ALABAMA, KOASATI: Originally living in association with the Upper Creeks of the Creek Confederacy, the Alabama (in the earliest records, usually rendered Alibamou or Alibamon) were located in the center and the Koasati in the northeast of what is today the state of Alabama. They migrated westward to

Louisiana and Texas, where the two tribes maintained close links and where their descendants now have tribal lands and still speak both languages. These languages can still be heard spoken by about hundred speakers of Alabama among the Alabama-Coushatta in Livingston, Texas, and by about four hundred speakers of Koasati (Coushatta is the tribal preference for spelling) among tribesmen divided between Elton, Louisiana, and Livingston, Texas (see Kniffen, Gregory & Stokes 1987: 122–136).

Choctaw, Chickasaw: Usually thought of as two distinct languages, Choctaw and Chickasaw are closely related, though their speakers were habitually at odds. In addition to most of the middle of present-day Louisiana and the southern half of present-day Mississippi, the Choctaw formerly occupied part of what is presently western Alabama. A powerful rival to the Creek Confederacy to the east, the Choctaw pulled many bordering tribes into their sphere of influence, including many tribes in the vicinity of the Mobile Bay and the Lower Alabama River, such as the Pascagoula, Tohomé, Naniaba, and Mabila (or Mobilien), most of whom, according to early accounts, appear to have been speakers of Muskogean languages as well. The rival Chickasaw had dominion over what is now northern Mississippi and a small part of northwestern Alabama. Many Choctaw migrated westward to be closer to their French allies. Those who ended up in Louisiana escaped removal to Oklahoma in the 1830s, though some migrated to Oklahoma later. In 1831, out of approximately twenty thousand Choctaw in Mississippi and Alabama, all but six thousand were removed to Oklahoma. Choctaw is still spoken in Mississippi (about 5,420 speakers, according to the 2000 U.S. Census), where tribal lands were eventually reestablished in the vicinity of Philadelphia, and in Louisiana among the small Jena Band of Choctaw (Kniffen, Gregory & Stokes 1987), and in Oklahoma, where approximately 3,375 speakers remain, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. The MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians in Alabama (the name is derived from MObile and WAshington counties, in the area where most of the members reside), now numbering about 3,500, is composed of the descendants of a remnant who did not comply with the 1830s removal (Cormier, et al., 2006). Though no fluent speakers of Choctaw remain among the MOWA, a language revitalization program has resulted

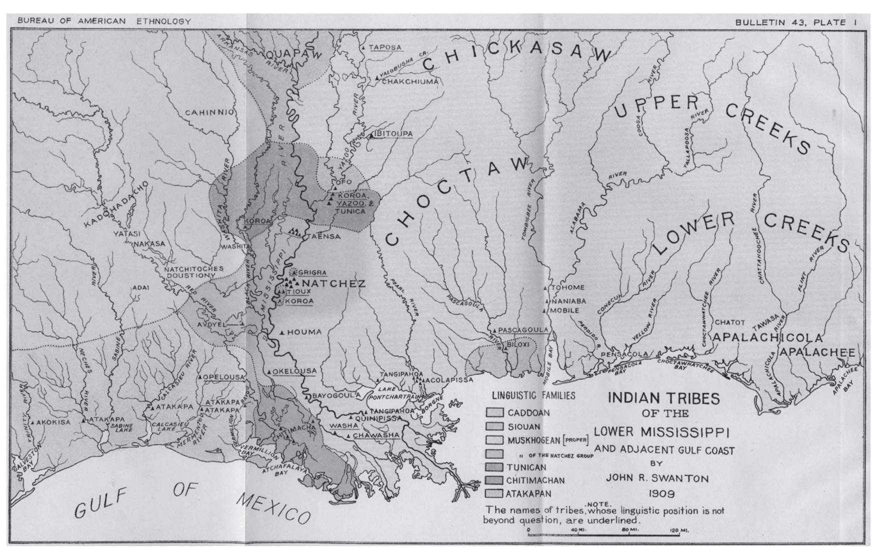


FIGURE 3

American Indian tribes and their linguistic families at the beginning of the eighteenth century (U.S. Government Printing Office).

in conversational ability for approximately 360 individuals so far (according to the MOWA web site at www.mowachoctaw.org). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, sixty-five individuals speak Choctaw at home in Alabama. The Chickasaw were also removed to Oklahoma in the 1830s, where approximately six hundred speakers remain today.

The map drawn by Swanton in 1909 (Figure 3) depicts Indian populations at the beginning of the eighteenth century, when European colonization began in earnest (Swanton 1911).

Early Language Contact with the Europeans

The pre-Columbian Mississippian Complex referred to above, whether or not its main communication network was dependent on the early presence of Mobilian Jargon, was already well past its apex when the first Europeans, the Spanish, arrived in the Southeast in the sixteenth century. (There is an unproven claim that a pre-Columbian incursion of Welshmen took place via Mobile Bay in 1170; see Montgomery 1993 for a critique.) In 1540 the Spaniard Hernando

de Soto encountered independent chiefdoms comprised of palisaded villages and temple mounds. These chiefdoms were sometimes loosely confederated, as in the cases of the Creek and the Choctaw (Galloway 1995), but there was no overarching political unity comparable to the Mississippian Complex. The independent chiefdoms were characterized by considerable linguistic diversity. When de Soto set out across the Southeast, including Alabama, his initial interpreter was Juan Ortiz, who was able to communicate with some Florida Indians (presumably Timucuan or Calusa speakers, who predominated in northern and southern Florida respectively) by virtue of being a survivor of the prior expedition into Florida by Pánfilo de Narváez in 1528. As de Soto moved across the region, other Indian interpreters were pressed into service in sequential fashion, each added interpreter being able to communicate with a neighboring tribe, such that, in some cases, as many as fourteen interpreters were needed, with Juan Ortiz last in line, to successfully transmit a message (Crawford 1978: 16–17). But de Soto's intentions were unfriendly and provoked resistance—Chief Tuscaloosa's ill-fated encounter with de Soto at the Battle of Mauvilla providing salient evidence—and the Spaniard's linguistic contact with indigenous peoples was therefore transient. Though de Soto's expeditionary contract stipulated that he establish coastal settlements, he apparently made no attempt to do so, preferring instead to conduct a generally hostile search for plunder, as he had done previously in Peru, successfully, in the company of Pizarro. But a three-year period of wandering in the Southeast proved vain and was capped by his death near the Mississippi River in 1542. His surviving soldiers abandoned the expedition and made their way to Mexico (a province of New Spain). Other than occasional raids by Caribbean-based or Atlantic shore-based slavers who would make momentary forays to capture Indians and would then retreat, there would be no further opportunity for linguistic contact between indigenous peoples in Alabama and Europeans until the very end of the seventeenth century, at which time that contact would become permanent and, eventually, pervasive.

In 1682, with New France (that is, Canada) as his point of departure, Frenchman René-Robert Cavelier de La Salle was the first European to travel the length of the Mississippi to its opening at the Gulf of Mexico. For France he claimed the entire Mississippi Valley and all its tributaries, naming the

territory *la Louisiane*, in honor of the reigning Louis XIV. Most of what is presently Alabama became a part of that territory. In 1699, the best location for a harbor and fort having already been taken by the Spanish a few months prior at Pensacola, the French sought the next-best site to protect their claim to the Mississippi Valley. A short stint at Fort Maurepas in the vicinity of the Biloxi Indians (near present-day Biloxi, Mississippi) was superseded by the first serious attempt at colonization and settlement on the Gulf Coast by any European power. This took place just upriver from Baie de la Mobile (Mobile Bay), where Fort Louis de la Mobile was erected in 1702 (Higginbotham 1977). In 1711, the fort was moved southward to a point directly on the bay (see Figure 4). The name Mobile was incorporated in deference to the closest Indian group upriver, the Mabila tribe (sometimes *Mauvilla*, in French *Mobilien*, in English *Mobilian*). Because the French became acquainted with and used the regional trade jargon in association with this nearby tribe, the pidgin was referred to as *le mobilien* (Mobilian Jargon). Use of the pidgin, however, was not confined to interaction with the Mabila. Indeed, the heterogeneity of the Indian population in the greater region around Fort Louis as well as within the early settlement itself (wherein the Indians were slaves, for the most part), makes obvious the utility of a common pidgin. The French missionary to the Taensa Indians, Jean François Dumont de Montigny, declared the utility of Mobilian Jargon in the following terms: "When one knows it, one can travel through all this province without needing an interpreter" (from his *Mémoires historiques sur la Louisiane*, cited in translation by Usner 1992: 258).

Fort Louis was more than a military outpost. Surrounding lands were distributed to an initial cohort of colonists who included craftsmen and their French wives, and also slaves, mostly Indian but also African. Three priests were present as well; they are the authors of the earliest records extant for the Louisiana Territory, in French, now housed at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Mobile. These records give a fascinating glimpse of colonial life and the ethnic diversity characterizing the settlement effort from its inception, and they allow us to draw inferences about linguistic realities. From the *registre de baptêmes* we learn that the first recorded baptism in the Louisiana Territory occurred in 1704:

Figure 4

Detail of map by L'Isle de Guillaume, published in 1730, showing Fort Louis on Mobile Bay (1711), the nearby Mobilien village, Alibamous villages, and other Indian villages and sites including Vieu F. de Bilocci ('old fort at Biloxi,' 1699) and Vieu Fort ('old Fort Louis,' 1702) (Warner Map Collection, W. S. Hoole Special Collections Library, University of Alabama)

> Le sixieme du mois de Septembre mil sept cent quatre a Eté baptisé un petit anfant femelle apalache par moy miss. apost. sousigné
>
> davion

> [Translation:] The sixteenth of September, 1704, was baptized a young Apalachee girl, by me the undersigned, apostolic missionary,
>
> Davion

Unlike many subsequent entries, there is no indication that this young Indian girl was ill and on her deathbed, or that she was a slave. Her Apalachee tribal affiliation is appropriate to the vicinity just east of Mobile Bay (today's Florida panhandle), where the French and nearby Spanish were vying for influence among the tribes comprising the lower territory of the Creek Confederacy. The English on the Atlantic coast were also competitors for the allegiance of the Creek tribes further upriver. In the first few years, records show that other Creek-affiliated Indians, both lower and upper, were baptized, including some Chatot tribal members (all free) bearing Hispanic names, indicting an obvious prior contact of some duration with the Spanish to the east—indeed, the colonist André Pénicaut described their language as "a mixture of Spanish and Alabama" (Higginbotham 1977: 194). The fact that in some cases the same Indians were having contact with both the Spanish and the French underlines again the probable utility of Mobilian Jargon. The Apalachee and Chatot figured among the Lower Creeks; their languages, members of the Muskogean family, are now extinct. The early records also attest to the baptism of Alibamou-speaking Indians (mentioned above) affiliated with the Upper Creeks.

Interestingly, however, Indians from more distant tribal affiliations and language families were also present at Fort Louis. These were all listed as slaves, which was typical of the prevalent configuration: Indian slaves captured (or bought from another tribe) who originated in some distant location, rather than nearby, were preferred because their enslavement was much less likely to lead to disharmonious relations with the local population. Furthermore, the practice of enslaving rival tribespeople was current before the arrival of Europeans. Hence, the same practice at Fort Louis fit with the prevailing regional convention. At Fort Louis, for example, Taensa slaves, whose language was

a member of the Natchesan family, were baptized, and so were Chitimacha slaves, whose language was the main member of the small Chitimachan family, and also at least one Natchitoches Indian slave was baptized, whose language belonged to the Caddoan family. The Taensa were located along the Mississippi River in what is today northern Louisiana, and the Chitimacha and Natchitoches were located west of the Mississippi. Given that the French at Fort Louis continued to have contact with Biloxi Indians directly to the west (whose language belonged to the Siouan family), as well as with the Choctaw Confederacy to the northwest and with the Chickasaw further north (both their languages belonging in the western branch of the Muskogean family), as evidenced as well by the baptismal records, it is clear that a tremendous early linguistic diversity prevailed. That diversity may have been even greater than what can be discerned from the records: most of the other entries concerning baptized Indians gave no indication of a tribal affiliation, but simply listed the baptized as *sauvage* or *sauvagesse*.

In this environment, high value was placed on the acquisition of indigenous languages, and some Europeans in the colony who were not willing or able to make any such investment were derided, as evidenced by correspondence between the Jesuit Father Jacques Gravier and Le Moyne de Bienville, governor of the colony beginning in 1706:

> Monsieur Huvé knows not a single word in the savage tongue, although he has been here several years. He has [. . .] served for some time in the village of the Apalachee [. . .] but he knows nothing of their language, and he hears confessions, baptizes, marries and administers communion and extreme unction, without understanding the savages at all. (Letter from Père Gravier, dated Feb. 23, 1708; cited in translation by Higginbotham 1977: 255)

By way of contrast, carpenter and chronicler André Pénicaut was of great value to the settlement partly because, having spent many years among the Biloxi and other nearby Indians, he had by his own account "learned their languages tolerably well [. . .] especially Mobilian [Jargon], the principal one, which is understood in all the nations" (McWilliams 1953: 81). Indeed, it was fairly common for young French boys to be placed among neighboring Indian

tribes as a token of trust for cementing alliances and for the purpose of acquiring linguistic skills along with intimate knowledge of Indian lifeways.

European Languages in the Colonial and Ante-Bellum Periods

The baptismal records also contain tantalizing hints about the linguistic profile of the Europeans during the initial undertaking at Fort Louis. It is often assumed, somewhat anachronistically, that colonists from France (and from New France) must have been speakers of French. However, there is an ongoing debate about the actual linguistic profiles of the early French colonists in the New World. One camp of scholars (e.g., Barbaud 1984) maintains that the earliest colonists to Canada (at the beginning of the seventeenth century) brought with them regional romance varieties (i.e., patois) that were not mutually intelligible, leading inevitably and necessarily to the relatively rapid development of lingua franca in the form of the common brands of French which subsequently emerged in Québec and in Acadia. In the opposing camp, scholars maintain that strongly divergent patois in the motherland simply no longer existed (e.g., Asselin and McLaughlin 1981) or, if they did exist, that the early colonists also spoke some brand of widespread "popular French" before embarking for the New World (e.g., Poirier 1994). Though it is certainly possible to infer too much from a signature, on the face of it, the fact that forty-two different signatures of attesting witnesses (thirty *parrains* "godfathers" and twelve *marraines* "godmothers") appear on the first 108 birth records (1704–1710) would lead one to believe that a certain level of literacy prevailed among a significant portion of the founding population of French inhabitants at Fort Louis (the total population stood at about 250). Any level of literacy would seem to lend credence to the proposition that popular French did have currency among those inhabitants, whether or not they also spoke any patois. Furthermore, even if the theory that patois were still prevalent in Canada at the moment of its initial colonization is accurate, since the colonization of *la Louisiane* began exactly a century later, the Canadian officers and soldiers present would likely already be speakers of the popular Canadian French that would have subsequently emerged.

In the earliest years then, even if spoken with a variety of accents, it is likely that French was a linguistic common denominator among the colonists at Fort

Louis de la Mobile, whether or not patois speakers were also among them, to the probable exclusion of any other major European language, except for some limited use of Spanish (particularly by colonist Châteaugué, see Higginbotham 1977: 194). It is less clear that this would remain the case in *la Louisiane*, however, in the next phase of colonization (see below). Regarding Spanish, first of all it should be noted that, in a pattern that would be repeated on the western frontier of *la Louisiane* in the vicinity of the Cane River (in present-day northwestern Louisiana near the Texas border), relations with Spanish rivals on the eastern frontier, though officially hostile (and occasionally overtly so), were generally cordial. Indeed, the French at Fort Louis de la Mobile and the Spanish at Fuerte de San Carlos located at nearby Pensacola Bay were often mutually dependent for trade and for protection against the English and their Indian allies. In 1710, for example, the baptismal records indicate that the commandant of the Spanish fort was the godfather of the newborn son of a French merchant at Fort Louis. In subsequent years, when hostility did break out, sovereignty over the area between Mobile Bay and Pensacola Bay would sometimes pass back and forth between the French and the Spanish. Later, according to the Treaty of Paris in 1763, the area was ceded by the French to the British, only to be retaken in 1780 by the Spanish, who would retain control until the Mobile Bay area was seized by the United States in 1814 (Thomason 2001). Documentary evidence shows that Spanish was used by administrators and by some residents of the Mobile area at least up until the 1860s. For example the legal notes and papers of the Mobilian judge John Test (1771–1849), housed at the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Montgomery, include correspondence and documents in both French and Spanish, though the majority are in English. A highly interesting eyewitness testimony can be gleaned from the remarks of a British journalist visiting the South on assignment for the London *Times*. His observations about his visit to Mobile in the spring of 1861 include: "After dinner we walked through the city [. . .]. The market was well worthy of a visit—something like St. John's at Liverpool on a Saturday night, crowded with Negroes, mulattoes, quadroons, mestizos of all sort, Spanish, Italian, and French, speaking their own tongues, or a quaint lingua franca [. . .]" (Russell 1863: 275). Clearly, based on this testimony, French and Spanish were commonly heard on the streets of Mobile

at the time of the Civil War. The reference to a "quaint lingua franca" may be an allusion to the continued use of Mobilian Jargon, to plantation creole (see below), or to some other unidentified pidgin. The reference to the Italian language marks the beginning of an extended history of Italian immigration to Alabama, which would become prominent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see below).

To back up, however, to complete the account of the French colonization of the area and the concomitant linguistic implications, it must be noted that the prospect of voluntary relocation and resettlement in *la Louisiane* proved a hard sell in France, causing the Compagnie générale d'Occident, the entity to which a royal franchise was granted in 1717 for the development of the colony, to resort to other measures. A significant number of colonists speaking Germanic dialects were recruited from central Europe (today's Germany and Switzerland). Jails and brothels in some French cities were emptied of their unskilled and uneducated occupants who were then sent to the Louisiana territory (their regional origins and linguistic profiles are not easily determined; among their ranks, the early novelist l'abbé Prevost placed the fictionalized femme fatale Manon Lescaut). The importation of African slaves increased significantly. All told, between 1717 and 1721, la Compagnie générale d'Occident brought seven thousand Europeans and two thousand African slaves to *la Louisiane* (Usner 1992: 31–33). By 1731, an additional five thousand African slaves were imported.

The class, ethnic, and linguistic disparity of the resulting mix of Europeans, Africans, and Indians could not have readily led to social cohesion in the expanding colony, and it can be asserted with some degree of certainty that linguistic diversity was the norm, even as the status of French progressively solidified (Picone and Valdman 2005). However, during this second phase of the colonization, the center of gravity for the colony as the gateway to the lower Mississippi shifted rapidly from la Mobile to la Nouvelle Orléans, founded in 1718 by la Compagnie. In 1723, la Nouvelle Orléans became the new seat of administration for the colony, and though la Mobile was not abandoned, its status waned. Mobile later became more prominent as a port and center of development under British, Spanish, and American administrations (as mentioned above), but the use of French there, followed by Spanish, suffered

inevitable decline as English asserted itself as the new linguistic norm.

A probable exception to the semi-chaotic linguistic conditions described above merits mention because it involves a particular location in Alabama. The Upper Creek tribes were mostly allied with the British, but a breakdown in relations opened the door for the Alabama (Alibamou) Indians to form a trade alliance with the French. The Alabama approved the building of a fort by the French to show solidarity, to afford protection, and to generate competition for British traders, in an effort to rectify the previous trade abuses. In 1717, Fort Toulouse was erected at the juncture of the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers (Thomas 1989), near present-day Wetumpka. Some years later, a French sergeant from Poitiers (in west central France), Jean-Louis Fonteneau (born 1686), was assigned to the fort. He had arrived in Mobile in 1720 and had married a local French widow. Together they reportedly had a dozen children, including many sons who became soldiers and who constituted the core personnel manning the fort. The Fonteneau sons married the daughters of other soldiers at the fort, and the Fonteneau daughters also married soldiers *in situ*, leading to the formation of a rather tight-knit community—virtually an extended family—at Fort Toulouse. In this context, it is likely that French (and/or some common patois such as Poitevin from west central France) would become the linguistic norm. For external purposes, Lingua Franca Creek and Mobilian Jargon would have certainly been important in dealings with surrounding Indians, all the more so given that the fort was never attacked and became more of a trading post than a site for military engagement. In 1763, when the British took control of the area, in accordance with the Treaty of Paris, there was an exodus of the Fonteneau clan to what would become the state of Louisiana (Jean-Louis, the patriarch, remains buried at Fort Toulouse, where he died in 1755). Usually rendered with a slightly different orthography, the Fontenot name in Louisiana is now one of the most widespread. Though it is generally associated with Cajun ethnicity, the Fontenot family line, as just shown, did not in fact originate as part of the 1765–85 Acadian migration to Louisiana but came instead from France via a forty-year sojourn in Alabama. The ethnic term *Cajun*, which is a derivation of the earlier term *Acadian*, is sometimes misapplied to the MOWA Choctaw community described above. Though there are many individual French-speakers from Louisiana living in Alabama, such

as the former long-time mayor of Tuscaloosa, Al DuPont, there are no known Cajun communities in the state. However the popularity of Cajun music led to the formation of at least two “back-door Cajun” music groups in Alabama whose repertoires include French songs: the Birmingham-based Steel City Ramblers and Nuit Blanche (For an overview of French in Louisiana, including Cajun, see Picone 1997).

Under a similar set of circumstances, another French fort was established within the boundaries of present-day Alabama. Fort Tombecbé was erected in 1735, at a point on the banks of the Tombigbee River between the territory of the Choctaw (French allies) and the Chickasaw (allied with the British). A linguistic profile similar to the one at Fort Toulouse probably characterized the interactions at Fort Tombecbé, with the difference that Mobilian Jargon would have played a more important role among surrounding tribes than Lingua Franca Creek.

Though French would rapidly wane in importance once the British took control of Alabama in 1763 (followed by the Spanish and the Americans, in the chronology already mentioned), at least one new cohort of French speakers subsequently made their way to Alabama in the earlier portion of the nineteenth century. After Napoleon’s defeat, there was a short-lived attempt at restoration of the French monarchy. Hence, the former *Bonapartistes*, as they were referred to, became *persona non grata* in France, and many went into exile. In 1818, one such group of exiles, along with French refugees from St. Domingue (now Haiti) fleeing the slave revolt there and along with other French from France (Blaufarb 2005, 2006), founded a community at the confluence of the Tombigbee and Black Warrior rivers. The correspondence of this well-educated group (some of which, the Lajonie letters, was recently discovered by French historian and author Eric Saugera; see Wolfe 2006) shows that French was certainly current in the colony, even as English was being acquired. Their attempts to raise grapes and olives at the sites they founded (first at Demopolis, then Aigleville and Arcola) met with little success, however, and virtually all 108 original French members of the settlement subsequently dispersed. But the surrounding county bears the name Marengo, commemorating one of Napoleon’s great victories, in which the prominent colonist Count Lefebvre Desnouettes had distinguished himself.

Africans and Language Issues

It was under American sovereignty in the nineteenth century that the plantation system would fully develop in Alabama (see Davies). Because the international slave trade was experiencing restriction at that time, most of the Alabama slaves of African descent did not come directly from West Africa but rather were born in the New World, either in the South or in the Caribbean. Some slaves did come directly from Africa (either as contraband or during brief periods when restrictions were relaxed), but relatively little is known about their tribal affiliations and specific languages. It can be assumed that those who shared a common language would have used it, where circumstances allowed. Among them may have been literate Arabic speakers, as attested elsewhere in the South (Diouf 1998). The best-known exception to the prevailing anonymity of origin involved the clandestine shipment of 110 slaves to Mobile in 1860 on the *Clotilda,* purportedly the last shipment of African slaves to the U.S. (Lockett 1998, Diouf 2007). This contraband shipment became known to federal authorities almost immediately and arrests were made, with the result that ensuing events unfolded in the public eye and were followed closely by the press. Hence, more is known about this last cohort of African slaves than virtually any previous group in Alabama (or anywhere in the South). They came from various tribal affiliations around the Bight of Benin. After the Civil War some were able to reunite on land that they purchased, forming a community known as "African Town" (now Africatown) north of Mobile on Magazine Point. Their native West African languages (especially Yoruba, but probably Dendi, Hausa, and Ewe as well, and possibly West African Pidgin English) remained in use and in some cases were passed on to their children (who were simultaneously acquiring English) and to their grandchildren, such that West African languages were still spoken by a few as late as the 1950s (Diouf 2007: 190–191). A prominent member of African Town, Cudjo Lewis (originally Kossolo), a Yoruba speaker, was the last surviving member among those arriving on the *Clotilda* and, by virtue of this, the last surviving African brought to the U.S. on a slaver (Figure 5). He died in 1935, having never realized his dream of being repatriated to his native land.

There is no generally accepted evidence suggesting that African slaves or their descendents in Alabama systematically spoke an English-based creole,

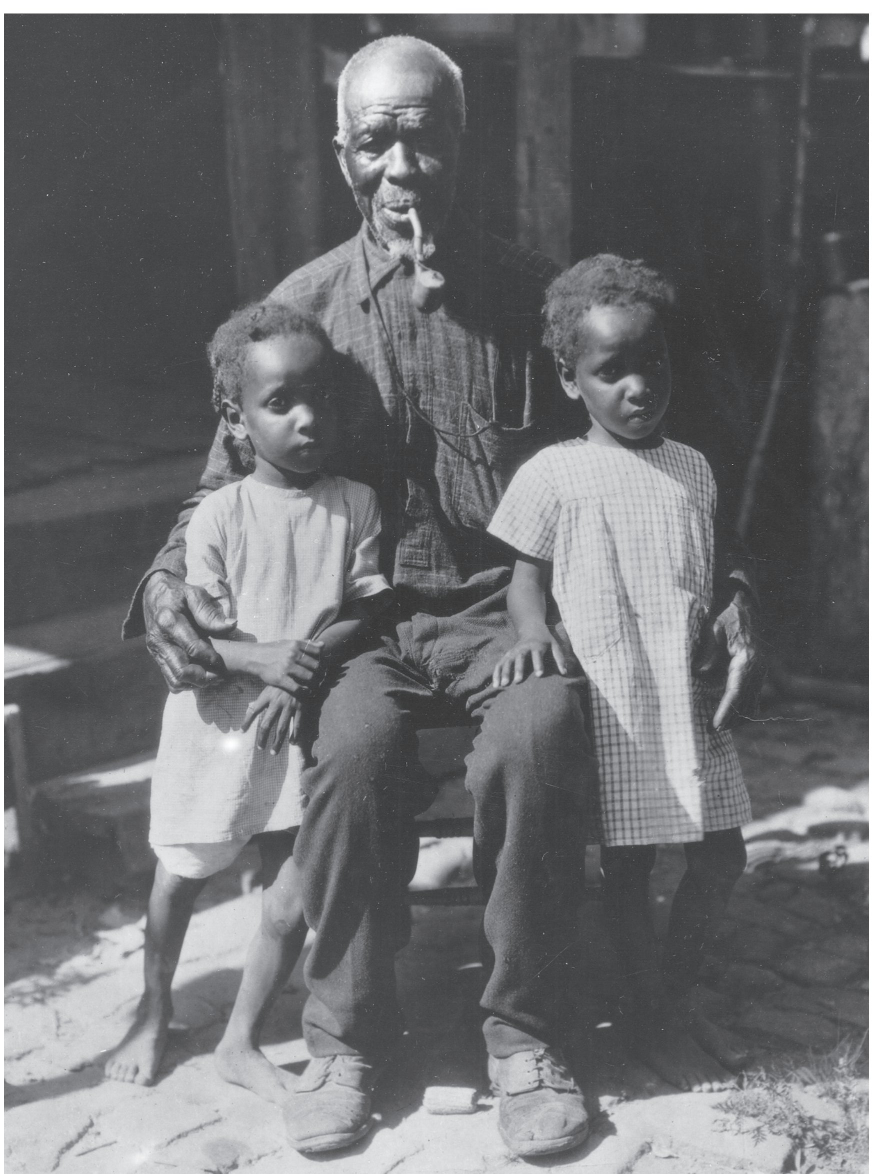


Figure 5

Cudjo Lewis and his twin great-granddaughters Mary and Martha, in African Town, circa 1927 (Erik Overbey Collection, University of South Alabama Archives)

with the possible exception of transplanted Gullah speakers (see below) on some plantations. However, a French-based creole primarily associated with the plantations of Louisiana had spillover into neighboring coastal regions, including Mobile. The plantation system developed earlier in Louisiana (especially during the Spanish administration) than in Alabama, and most of the slaves brought to Louisiana prior to American sovereignty came directly from Africa. Hence conditions were appropriate for French-based creole to manifest itself in Louisiana and contiguous sites such as Mobile, but not for English-based creole to manifest itself later in Alabama. The *Language* volume of the *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* is a useful resource for succinct commentary on all matters of language in the South. Creole formation is summarized below (Picone and LaFleur 2007). See also the entry on Gullah (Weldon 2007) for a description of an English-based creole that formed along the South Atlantic coastline; some Gullah speakers most certainly ended up in Alabama, due to westward migration accompanying the development of the plantation system.

> Theories vary as to the genesis of Louisiana Creole, as it is usually referred to by scholars. The debate surrounding the origin of creole languages is complex, but, at the risk of oversimplifying, the two poles of opposition can be posited in the following terms. Some scholars contend that creole languages were spontaneously generated on (large) plantations where slaves were linguistically heterogeneous and did not share a common tongue and that the structural parallels among creole languages are due to either linguistic universals or the interaction of a particular set of African and European languages. Others contend that most creole languages are simply daughter dialects of a pidgin associated with the slave trade, and though the lexicon can vary from one site to another due to different vocabulary replacement, their basic structure remains the same. Regardless, Louisiana Creole became the native mode of communication within the slave population of Louisiana, and very frequently it was also the first language of the slave-masters' children, who were typically raised by domestic bondservants. (Picone and LaFleur 2007: 61–62)

For the purposes of this present study, it is noteworthy that the last speakers

of an earlier nineteenth-century French-based creole were found in Alabama and were interviewed on Mon Louis Island (situated below Mobile; bearing the name of the former Monlouis plantation) in the early 1980s (Marshall 1991). Because the Mon Louis Islanders were deprived of continued contact with French, which did not persist in the Mobile area as it did in Louisiana, the creole spoken on Mon Louis Island contained features that differ from the creole spoken in Louisiana, and it is probably representative of an earlier stage of the language.

Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Immigration

As in the rest of the United States, foreign immigration played an important role in Alabama during the latter half of the nineteenth century and in the twentieth century, especially as new industries and urban centers arose. Among non-Anglophone immigrant groups, Italians and Germans in particular have been prominent in Alabama, followed by Greeks, Welsh, and Eastern Europeans, as well as Armenians, Turks, and Sephardic Jews (possibly speakers of Ladino). Space limitations preclude a detailed accounting of the contributions of the many nationalities represented and the languages they spoke. The stories of many immigrants remain obscure, moreover, due to the increasing value placed on assimilation (see Sabino). Access to public schools in the latter half of the nineteenth century (beginning in 1850 in Mobile, for example) became a critical factor leading to assimilation and language loss among the descendants of the various immigrant groups. Indeed, the urgency to assimilate became paramount in the South, first as a natural consequence of the aftermath of the Civil War during Reconstruction and then as a shared imperative characterizing the entire nation up until the end of the twentieth century. Assimilation resulted in enhanced economic opportunity, to be sure, and it was also a way of escape from the hostility directed toward immigrants. Hostility to all "outsiders" was particularly prevalent during Reconstruction, in large part due to the oppressive and impoverished conditions facing a ruined South. Nevertheless, for a period in the early twentieth century, walking down the streets of some coal towns and some districts of Birmingham, for example Ensley, one was as likely to hear Italian spoken as English.

Though the French vine and olive colony founded in 1818 in the vicin-

ity of Demopolis failed, an Austro-Italian named Serafino Brock proved that successful grape farming and winemaking were possible in Lambert (Mobile County), where he and his wife Constanza landed in 1893. Brock was attracted to Lambert's Italian agricultural colony established earlier by Mastro Valerio. Brock, who became prominent in Lambert, was born in 1864 in the Trentino region of northern Italy (part of the Austrian Empire at the time) and spoke a number of languages, including Italian (information compiled by Russell M. Magnaghi, Italian American historian at Northern Michigan University). Brock and other members of the colony most certainly spoke, as their maternal languages, the *dialetti* of their respective regions (the equivalent of the regional patois of France, but the *dialetti* have survived much longer in Italy). It appears that most of the colonists, including Brock, were from the greater Tyrol area and would have been speakers of a Rhaeto-Romance language. To the extent that they did not share a mutually intelligible dialect, Italian would have served as their lingua franca, as it continues to today in many parts of modern Italy. Cesar Bartina, another member of the Italian agricultural colony in Lambert, is pictured with his fiancée Sadie Hattenstein in Figure 6. Born in Italy in 1881, Bartina arrived at the United States in 1903. The photograph was taken sometime before 1907, when Hattenstein (b. 1889) died suddenly.

Though other Italians farmed at various locations in Alabama, far more Italians came to work as laborers, steel mill workers, miners, and small-business entrepreneurs, especially in the newly booming Birmingham vicinity. Indeed, in 1911, there were about 2,500 Italian immigrants in Jefferson County (Moroni 1913). The highest concentrations were at Bessemer (600), Ensley (500) (the Italian District in Ensley gained notoriety as the site of the Ensley Community House, a settlement house modeled after the famous Hull House of Chicago to serve the immigrant community; see Hubbs 2005), Pratt City (450), and Thomas (450). Among their ranks were many Sicilians (including Vincent and Maria Bruno, arriving in 1909, whose family went on to found the Bruno supermarket empire), but also immigrants from the Piedmont (northeastern Italy), Romagna (north central Italy), Venetia (northwestern Italy), and from elsewhere, whose respective *dialetti* would likely have been members of the following language groups: Sicilianu, Piedmontese, Emiliano-Romagnolo, and Vèneto. Given this diversity, Italian (and eventually English) likely filled the

FIGURE 6

Cesar Bartina, member of the Italian agricultural community at Lambert, and his fiancée Sadie Hattenstein, circa 1905. (W. S. Hoole Special Collections Library, University of Alabama)

role of lingua franca to facilitate many of their interactions. Another fairly large concentration of Italians, about 500 in 1911 (Moroni 1913), were attracted to the coal mines of Bibb County. These Italians came primarily from northern and north central regions of Italy: Emilia-Romagna (including Bologna), Liguria, Lombardy, Tuscany, and Modena. Once again, given the associated dialectal diversity, Italian likely served as a lingua franca, even as the speakers were acquiring English. (For a study of the linguistic interaction of immigrants and African Americans as mine co-workers in Alabama, see Harris 2003.) Of all Southern states, only Alabama has Italians ranking near the top of the list of origins for new European immigrants at this time (Bayley 2007: 75).

Cullman County and the city of Cullman are named after John Gottfried Cullmann (born in Bavaria in 1823), who founded the city in 1873 and succeeded in attracting many other German immigrants in the early years (despite serious hostility from local anti-immigrationists). In Baldwin County, circa

1904, Elberta was founded by German immigrants, as commemorated every fall and spring by the Elberta German Sausage Festival. However, the two world wars waged against Germany accentuated the pressure to assimilate and led to the suppression of German language and identity in Alabama as elsewhere. Nevertheless, a variety of noteworthy connections continue between Alabama and Germany. Alabama was the site chosen for a constellation of prisoner of war camps for Germans during World War II (the largest was at Aliceville, but there were four others: Camp Opelika, Camp Rucker, Camp Sibert, and Fort McClellan; see Cook 2006). World War II was followed by the arrival of another group of Germans, in this case destined to become new Alabamians, as German rocket scientists and others came to live and work in Huntsville at the outset of the Cold War. Instead of hostility, these German immigrants appear to have been met by local acceptance and even appreciation. Figure 7 captures a unique moment. A special swearing-in ceremony was held at Huntsville High School, on April 14, 1955, when 103 German-born scientists, technicians and their family members took oaths of American citizenship, the most notable among them being Wernher von Braun (see also Allbritten).

More recently, one can point to the arrival of many Germans in Tuscaloosa County when Mercedes-Benz opened its first North American automotive assembly plant in 1997. Today, Tuscaloosa is one of the only small cities in America where one is not surprised to hear German being spoken on a regular basis in restaurants and shops and also in the schoolyard (most of the German families send their children to the Capitol School, a private institution bordering the preserved ruins of the old state capitol building). The city also boasts a German bakery catering to the tastes of this special clientele. Soon, a new German connection of importance will be forged due to the projected 2010 opening by ThyssenKrupp AG of a $3.7 billion steel plant in Calvert, twenty-five miles north of Mobile. As was the case for French settlers during the colonial period and for Italian immigrants in the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, it must be remembered that most Germans speak regional dialects (not always mutually intelligible) and rely on Standard German for cross-communication. The story of another German immigrant—emblematic of countless other forgotten and invisible immigrants in Alabama—remains to be told: Thomas Dauser, from Schömberg in the Württemberg region of

Germany, came to Tuscaloosa sometime prior to 1882 and set up shop as a shoemaker and bookbinder. Why he came and what he experienced are secrets to be unlocked by someone willing to take the time to study his correspondence, all in German, housed at the Special Collections Library at the University of Alabama.

Entering the Twenty-First Century

The opening remarks on the state of linguistic legislation in Alabama are a testimony to the continued value placed on linguistic assimilation aimed at securing conformity to an Anglo-centric norm. As we enter the twenty-first century, however, there is public debate, which was largely missing in previous eras, about the tension between the necessity for inter-comprehension fostering social cohesion and the value of preserving cultural and linguistic diversity—and, in the case of indigenous languages, the value of preserving ancient linguistic heritage. In other words, the urgency placed on assimilation is still the dominant sentiment but is somewhat tempered compared to the recent past. In a "smaller" highly interconnected world, multilingualism has taken on new value, including commercial and strategic. However, the fast-growing Hispanic presence in Alabama, as in the rest of the nation, brings with it a set of

Figure 7
103 German-born individuals become American citizens at swearing-in ceremony, Huntsville High School, April 14, 1955 (US Army)

linguistic challenges that have given assimilation renewed prominence, resulting in legislative initiatives such as those mentioned earlier in this essay.

In Alabama, the Spanish-speaking population has increased dramatically (from 42,653 to 89,730, an increase of 110 percent between 1990 and 2000), especially in the northern part of the state, where immigrant Hispanics have been responding to the need for intensive labor in poultry plants. In Russellville, for example, more than 3,500 Hispanics (mostly from southern Mexico and Guatemala) are over a third of the population (Mohl 2002: 243); Mexican and Guatemalan cultures, and the Spanish language, are well implanted, for the time being at least—the children, many of whom were born in Alabama, are being schooled and are acquiring English. Decatur, in the north central part of the state, also has a high concentration of Hispanics. In fact, in all urban locations in the state, the Hispanic population is on the rise, and Spanish can be heard with increasing frequency (on Mexicans in Birmingham and Hoover, see Kelley 2005). Figure 8 captures the most recent—and by far the largest—celebration in Tuscaloosa of the Roman Catholic feast day dedicated to Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe ("Our Lady of Guadalupe"), when a bilingual Spanish-English mass was held at the Holy Spirit Catholic Church. As the Hispanic population increases, a growing number of Catholic churches in Alabama are joining countless other churches throughout the Americas to commemorate the reported visitation of La Virgen Morena ("the brown-skinned Virgin") to Juan Diego in Mexico in December 1531, an event which has become an important religious and cultural touchstone for Hispanic populations everywhere.

Some so-called "Hispanics" are in fact using Spanish as a lingua franca because they are maternal speakers of various Indian languages, particularly Mayan dialects from Guatemala (especially K'iche' and Huastec). And in a few cases, they are virtually monolingual speakers of an Indian language. Typically such individuals remain under the radar but are discovered when there is a medical emergency or delivery requiring hospitalization, and when the Spanish-speaking interpreter or medical staffer is brought in, it is quickly determined that the patient does not, in fact, speak Spanish.

In addition to the question of the English-only policies mentioned at the outset, Alabama Hispanics also feel threatened by federal initiatives aimed at expelling illegal immigrants, and they are flexing their muscle to show that

Figure 8

Celebrants of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe observances, Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Tuscaloosa, December 9, 2007 (*The Tuscaloosa News*)

they are a growing economic force that contributes to financial health and profitability in the state. There were well-attended protests and boycotts at various locations in the northern part of the state and in Birmingham, on May 1, 2006, timed with a national day of protest. These actions temporarily shut down some businesses and caused profits to dip in areas with high concentrations of Hispanics. This essay is concerned, of course, with language in Alabama, not with immigration policies and practices *per se.* The two are linked, however, in the following way: any brake on immigration, legal or otherwise (it is estimated that there are far more illegal than legal Hispanic immigrants in the United States), will inevitably affect the rate of maintenance of Spanish in the United States. The dynamic of Spanish language maintenance, whether one is for it or against it, is fostered partly by the constant influx of new monolingual Spanish-speakers into the existent Hispanic communities. This, coupled with the growing numbers overall and with the relatively easy access to nearby Spanish-speaking countries and to the Spanish media, sets

Spanish apart and puts it on another footing that was not available to support the maintenance of the other immigrant languages in years past. Of course, given today's extensive transportation infrastructure and electronic media, almost any immigrant language can now enjoy some of the same kind of support that Spanish does, but the big difference is the larger number and continual influx of Hispanic immigrants. Hence, barring a dramatic change in present immigration practices along with a crackdown on illegal immigration, it is likely that the Spanish language will continue to make headway in Alabama and in the rest of the nation, even though this will be offset somewhat by many younger Hispanics who will be raised in a predominantly English environment and will become semi-speakers of Spanish or lose it entirely (for an overview of trends in the South, see Bailey 2004). It is also noteworthy that Spanish instruction in Alabama is on the rise, as elsewhere in the nation, in recognition of the prominent role that Spanish will likely play in the future of the United States (as well as among trading partners abroad).

Spanish seems destined to play a special role, but there are many other languages spoken in Alabama as we enter the twenty-first century. In Alabama, as elsewhere in the United States, there has been a significant upswing over the last twenty years in immigration from Eastern Europe, the Near East, the Far East, and South Asia, in addition to Latin America. Table 1 (see next page) gives the complete breakdown of populations (five years of age and older) who speak close to one hundred different languages at home in Alabama, as reported by the 2000 U.S. Census. (Language group labels have been added and do not appear in the original census tables. Note that some of the language names used in the Census are inexact and based on popular nomenclature rather than on accurate linguistic classifications. Note, too, that the number of Spanish speakers is probably artificially depressed by a large margin due to the reluctance of illegal immigrants to report to government census takers. Finally, the French Creole figure includes Haitians as well as transplants from Louisiana.)

Conclusion

The social fabric of Alabama, from the beginning of human habitation right up to the present, has always been characterized by multilingualism, even if that multilingualism has been more overtly recognizable (or less suppressed) during

some periods than others. Visible or not, as the foregoing demonstrates, there has always been a complicated interweaving of diverse linguistic threads in the region that we now think of as our state. The prevalent notion, bred through popular ignorance of our own rich history, that Alabama's linguistic past can be reduced to two phases, namely the distant presence of Indian languages followed by the advent of English, is a bleached, thread-bare version of the truth. The pattern of this thick and colorful fabric, if one can be discerned, is attributable to the warp and weft of great linguistic diversity and the need for common communication. The need for inter-comprehension among various social groups and subgroups has been illustrated repeatedly in the history of Alabama, and that need has always been addressed, whether via Mobilian Jargon, Lingua Franca Creek, Popular French, Plantation Creole, Italian, German, Spanish, or English. Simultaneously, Alabama is clearly much richer and its history more compelling because of the striking linguistic diversity and complexity that have been the region's constant hallmark. ■

Table 1. Speakers of Language Groups in Alabama, 2000

Language Grouping	Language Name	Number of Speakers
English-related	English	3,989,795
	Jamaican Creole	80
	Pidgin	25
Other Germanic	German	14, 890
	Pennsylvania Dutch	25
	Yiddish	205
	Dutch	690
	Afrikaans	95
	Swedish	220
	Danish	110
	Norwegian	90
	Icelandic	45
Celtic	Irish Gaelic	65
French-related	French	13,410
	Patois	90
	French Creole	240
	Cajun	155
Other Romance	Italian	2160
	Spanish	89,730
	Portuguese	775
	Romanian	325
Helenic	Greek	1,395
Balto-Slavic (Eastern Europe)	Russian	1,220
	Ukrainian	145
	Polish	650
	Czech	430
	Slovak	80
	Bulgarian	25
	Serbo-Croatian	155
	Croatian	95
	Serbian	35
	Lithuanian	65
	Lettish	50
Other Eastern Europe	Finnish	110
	Hungarian	185
	Albanian	40
Turkic	Turkish	420

Central Asian	Armenian	135
Indo-Iranian (Iran, North and Central India)	Farsi (= Persian)	965
	Hindi	1,535
	Bengali	390
	Panjabi	220
	Marathi	55
	Gujarathi	1,055
	Urdu	630
	Nepali	115
	Sindhi	35
	Sinhalese	85
	from India (unspecified)	330
	Romany (Gypsies)	20
Dravidian (South India)	Telugu	725
	Kannada	85
	Tamil	310
	Malayalam	150
Chinese	Cantonese	175
	Mandarin	230
	Formosan	215
	Chinese (unspecified)	4,655
Other Far Eastern	Thai	815
	Laotian	635
	Mon-Khmer, Cambodian	495
	Vietnamese	4,560
	Japanese	2,200
	Korean	4,030
Polynesian	Somoan	95
	Hawaiian	25
Other Pacific Oceana	Indonesian	190
	Malay	45
	Tagalog	1,700
	Bisayan	35
	Cebuano	30
	Chamorro	115
	Palauan	50
Semitic	Arabic	2,620
	Hebrew	410
	Amharic	135
Bantu (Africa)	Swahili	700

	Bantu (unspecified)	792
Other African (Sub-Saharan)	Mande	95
	Fulani	35
	Kru, Ibo, Yoruba	955
	African (unspecified)	65
Muskogean	Alabama	45
	Choctaw	65
	Muskogee	145
Other North American Indian	Cherokee	270
	Dakota	85
	Navaho	55
	Keres	15
	Amer. Indian (unspecified)	85
Central American Indian	Mayan languages	250
Not specified		35

Acknowledgments

Grateful acknowledgment is extended to María Johnson, Bethany Untied, and Natalie Weygand, graduate students at the University of Alabama, as well as Clark Center and Jessica Lacher-Feldman of the W. S. Hoole Special Collections Library at the University of Alabama, for their assistance in locating appropriate materials and sources for this article; to Russell M. Magnaghi, for compiling most of the information on Italians in Alabama; to Thomas Nunnally, Robin Sabino, and Michael Montgomery, for suggestions regarding form and content; and to Deborah Boykin, Joey Brackner, Anne Kimzey, and Randall Williams for help with various textual improvements.

References

Asselin, Claire, and Anne McLaughlin. 1994. "Les immigrants en Nouvelle-France au XVIIe siècle parlaient-ils français?" In *Les origines du français québécois*. Eds. Raymond Mougeon and Edouard Beniak. Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de l'Université Laval. 101–30.

Bailey, Guy. 2004. "Demography as Destiny? Population Change and the Future of Southern American English." Plenary address presented at the Language Variety in the South III colloquium, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, April

15–17. Publication in preparation. Eds. Michael D. Picone and Catherine Evans Davies.

Barbaud, Philippe. 1984. *Le choc des patois en Nouvelle-France. Essai sur l'histoire de la francisation au Canada*. Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec.

Bayley, Robert. 2007. "Recent Immigrant Languages." In Montgomery and Johnson. 72–78.

Blaufarb, Rafe. 2005. *Bonapartists in the Borderlands. French Exiles and Refugees on the Gulf Coast, 1815–1835*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

______. 2006. "Alabama's Vine and Olive Colony: Myth and Fact." *Alabama Heritage* 81: 26–34.

Cook, Ruth Beaumont. 2006. *Guests Behind the Barbed Wire: German POWs in America: A True Story of Hope and Friendship*. Birmingham: Crane Hill Publishing.

Cormier, Loretta A., Jacqueline A. Matte, Reva Lee Reed, and Cedric Cedric Sunray. 2006. "*Yakni*—The Binding Force: Nature and Culture Among the MOWA Choctaw of Alabama." *Tributaries* 9: 42–57.

Crawford, James M. 1978. *The Mobilian Trade Language*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

Diouf, Sylviane Anna. 1998. *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas.* New York: New York University Press.

______. 2007. *Dreams of Africa in Alabama: The Slave Ship Clotilda and the Story of the Last Africans Brought to America*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Drechsel, Emanual J. 1996. "An Integrated Vocabulary of Mobilian Jargon, a Native American Pidgin of the Mississippi Valley." *Anthropological Linguistics* 38: 248–354.

______. 1997. *Mobilian Jargon: Linguistic and Sociohistorical Aspects of a Native American Pidgin*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Dumont de Montigny, Jean François Benjamin. 1753. *Mémoires historiques sur la Louisiane*. Paris.

Galloway, Patricia. 1995. *Choctaw Genesis, 1500–1700*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Hardy, Heather K., and Janine Scancarelli, eds. 2005. *Native Languages of the Southeastern United States*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Harris, Jim. 2003. *A Study of a Variant Black English Vernacular Developed by African American and White Immigrant Coal Miners in the Coal Mining Camp Towns of Central Alabama*. Doctoral dissertation. Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Higginbotham, Jay. 1977. *Old Mobile: Fort Louis de la Louisiane, 1702–1711*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Holmes, Ruth Bradley, and Betty Sharp Smith. 1977. *Beginning Cherokee*. 2nd ed. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Hubbs, Guy Ward. 2005. "A Settlement House in Ensley's Italian District." *Alabama Heritage* 75: 32–40.

Kelley, Charles. 2005. "Maintaining Mexican Identity in Birmingham." *Tributaries* 8: 49–65.

Kersey, Harry A., Jr. 1992. "Seminoles and Miccosukees: A Century in Retrospective." In *Indians of the Southeastern United States in the Late 20th Century*. Ed. J. Anthony Paredes. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. 102–19.

Kniffen, Fred B., Hiram F. Gregory, and George A. Stokes. 1987. *The Historic Indian Tribes of Louisiana from 1542 to the Present*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

Lockett, James D. 1998. "The Last Ship That Brought Slaves from Africa to America: The Landing of the 'Clotilde' at Mobile in the Autumn of 1859." *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 22: 159–63.

Marshall, Margaret M. 1991. "The Creole of Mon Louis Island, Alabama, and the Louisiana Connection." *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* 6: 73–87.

McKenney, Thomas R., and James Hall. 1854. *History of the Indian Tribes of North America with Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of the Principal Chiefs.* Philadelphia: D. Rice & A.N Hart.

McWilliams, Richebourg Gaillard, ed. and translator. 1953. *Fleur de Lys and Calumet: Being the Pénicaut Narrative of French Adventure in Louisiana*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press.

Mohl, Raymond A. 2002. "Latinization in the Heart of Dixie: Hispanics in Late-Twentieth-Century Alabama." *Alabama Review* 55: 243–74.

Montgomery, Michael. 1993. "Was Welsh the First European Language Spoken in Alabama?" *The SECOL Review* 17: 55–79.

Montgomery, Michael, and Ellen Johnson, eds. 2007. *Language. The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, Vol. 5. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Moroni, Girolamo. 1913. "Lo Stato dell'Alabama." *Bollettino dell'Emigrazioni* 1: 34–66.

Munro, Pamela. 2004. "American Indian Languages of the Southeast: An Introduction." Plenary address presented at the Language Variety in the South III colloquium, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, April 15–17. Publication in

preparation. Eds. Michael D. Picone and Catherine Evans Davies.

Paredes, J. Anthony. 1992. "Federal Recognition and the Poarch Creek Indians." In *Indians of the Southeastern United States in the Late 20th Century*. Ed. J. Anthony Paredes. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. 120–39.

Picone, Michael D. 1997. "Enclave Dialect Contraction: An External Overview of Louisiana French." *American Speech* 72: 117–53.

Picone, Michael D., and Albert Valdman. 2005. "La situation du français en Louisiane." In *Le français en Amérique du nord: Etat présent.* Eds. Albert Valdman, Julie Auger, and Deborah Piston-Hatlen. Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval. 143–65.

Picone, Michael D., and Amanda LaFleur. 2007. "French." In Montgomery and Johnson. 60–65.

Poirier, Claude. 1994. "La langue parlée en Nouvelle-France: vers une convergence des explications." In *Les origines du français québécois*. Eds. Raymond Mougeon and Edouard Beniak. Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de l'Université Laval. 237–73.

Prévost, Antoine François (l'abbé). 1731. *Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut*. Paris.

Russell, William Howard. 1863. *My Diary North and South*. Vol. 1. London: Bradbury and Evans.

Swanton, John Reed. 1911. *Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley and Adjacent Coast of the Gulf of Mexico*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Thomas, Daniel H. 1989. *Fort Toulouse: The French Outpost at the Alabamas on the Coosa*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Thomason, Michael V. R., ed. 2001. *Mobile: The New History of Alabama's First City.* Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Usner, Daniel H. 1992. *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Walthall, John A. 1980. *Prehistoric Indians of the Southeast: Archeology of Alabama and the Middle South*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Weldon, Tracy L. 2007. "Gullah." In Montgomery and Johnson. 69–72.

Wolfe, Suzanne. 2006. "Vine and Olive: The Unfolding Legacy." *Alabama Heritage* 81: 35.

Southern American English in Alabama

Catherine Evans Davies

Almost everyone in the U.S., Southerner or non-Southerner, knows that there is a Southern Dialect and can probably mention a few hallmarks. But what exactly makes the variety we call Southern American English stand out from other varieties of American English? This article, intended for a non-specialist audience, is designed to give a basic understanding of this variety, especially as it is spoken by Alabamians. As I hope to show, the range of features is much broader than just a few pronunciation differences and "funny words." The variety has a fascinating history, being forged along with the nation and shaped by each epoch of national development, and, in fact, that history has left Alabama not with one Southern American English but two sub-varieties, one for north Alabama and another for south Alabama.

Our overview of the specific characteristics of Alabama's English looks at four key elements of language (vocabulary, accent, grammar, and discourse patterns and pragmatics). Also, we'll briefly consider how non-Southerners and Southerners alike feel about this variety and conclude with an overview of dialect and social changes in progress—how is Southern American English changing?

This essay also serves broader interests. Because it prepares you for the more detailed studies of Alabama English in this issue of *Tributaries*, you will be referred to those other articles at appropriate points. To conclude this essay, I offer a brief annotated bibliography for further study and I provide information on how you can participate in ongoing linguistic research; we need to document much more of the current state of Alabama English.

Terminology

Ironically, linguists often confuse people through their use of language. Here are some key terms. **Linguistics** is the study of language as a phenomenon in itself. **Language** is a form of symbolic communication that is characteristic of human beings as a species. The term **linguist** in an everyday sense means someone who speaks more than one language, but as a technical term it means a scholar who studies language and languages. Academic linguists have traditionally analyzed language as a complex system with the following interrelated elements: the sounds of a language (**phonology**), the words or vocabulary of language and their meaning (**lexicon** and **semantics**), the grammatical and derivational endings and ordering of words (**morphology** and **syntax**, often lumped together as **grammar**), and the way people use language to accomplish their purposes (**pragmatics** and **discourse patterns**). An **individual language** (e.g., English) is a way of communicating used by a particular group; in many cases individual languages have become standardized over time with their own official grammar books and dictionaries. (Such grammar books normally do not explain all the workings of the standard language, but tell the reader what NOT to do instead, weeding out features and structures of "nonstandard" varieties of the same language.) Every individual language includes a range of **dialects** or **varieties;** these include ways of speaking associated with particular social categories (e.g., gender, ethnicity), as well as with particular geographical regions (e.g., the American Southeast, New York City). In addition, all languages include **styles** of speaking associated with different levels of formality, from the most informal spoken context (chatting with close friends) to the most formal written context. Each person has, of course, a unique way of using language (sometimes referred to as an **idiolect**), incorporating elements associated with social categories, regionality, and formality. Most people modify their way of speaking to some extent, usually in relation to the level of formality in a particular context. Relatively few people (many of whom become actors) are able to shift varieties (i.e., to sound British rather than American, to shift in and out of a Southern accent, to sound like a man rather than a woman, etc.).

A Thumbnail Geography and History Lesson

Because we can't understand where we are without understanding where

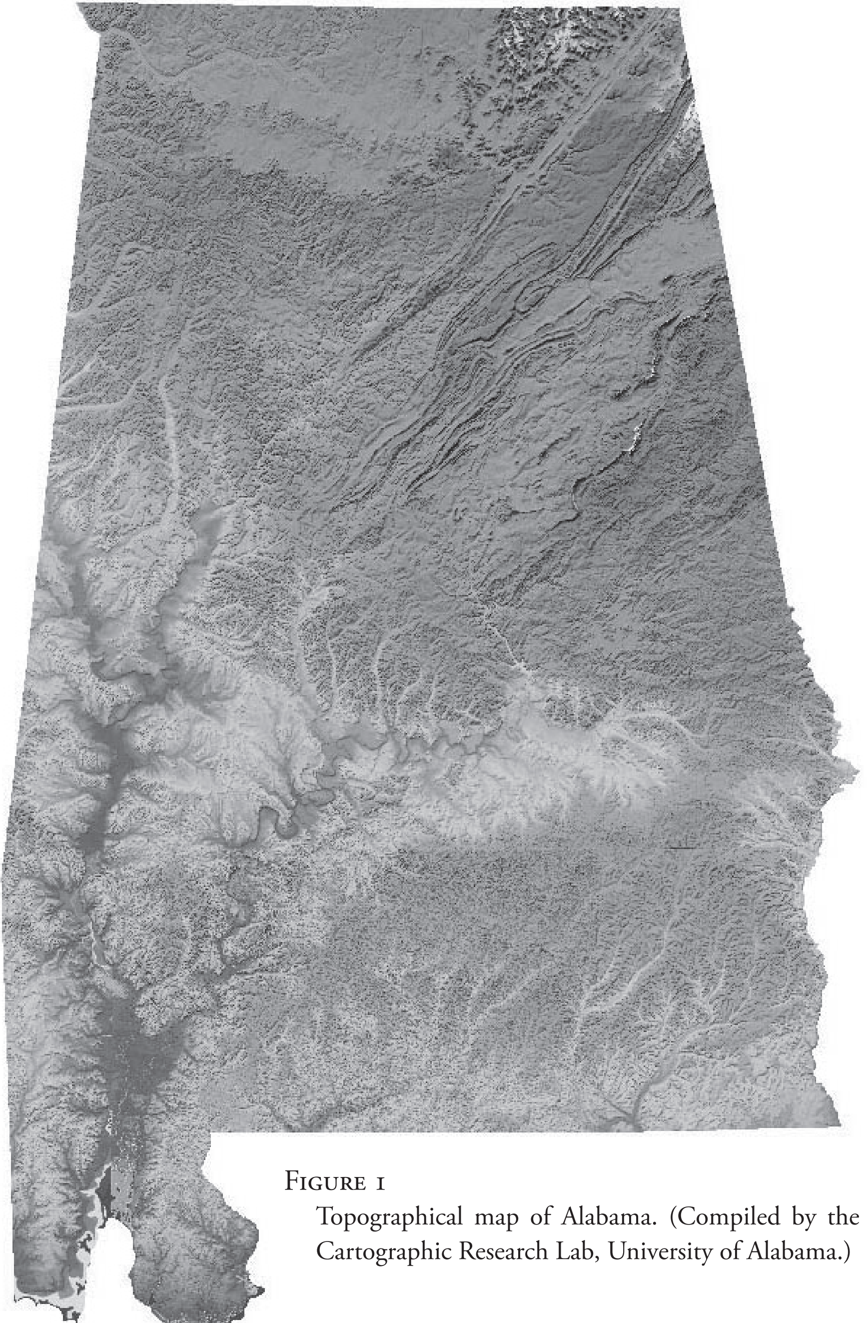


Figure 1
Topographical map of Alabama. (Compiled by the Cartographic Research Lab, University of Alabama.)

we've come from, let's begin with some historical context in terms of the early linguistic history of Alabama including how geography shaped immigration patterns in Alabama. We will link contemporary linguistic traces in Southern American English in Alabama to the earliest known languages of the indigenous people in Alabama, and to the earliest colonial empires. Then we will move forward in time to the formation of the United States to consider the linguistic effects of immigration patterns in Alabama.

Geography. Looking at the topographical map of Alabama in Figure 1, you can see that the northern half of the state is the end of the Appalachian mountain range, and the southern half of the state is generally an alluvial plain including the "black belt," famous for its dark, rich soil. An important Native American settlement was located just below Tuscaloosa on the Black Warrior River at present-day Moundville. The river system and the topography in general affected how Alabama was settled, with linguistic implications.

Indigenous People. The Native American civilization at Moundville flourished between 800–1200, representing ancestors of the present-day Choctaw. Other Native American languages spoken within Alabama were Creek and Cherokee. Even though most of the indigenous people were removed from the land, their words remain—ironically—as important place names. The name of the state itself is a Native American word: Alabama, an Upper Creek tribe known to the French in 1702 as "Alibamons." The name is derived from Choctaw *alba,* "plants," "weeds," plus *amo,* "to trim," "to gather"—that is, "those who clear the land," or "thicket clearers" (Read 1937/1984). Other examples include the names of important cities like Tuscaloosa, from the Choctaw *tashka*, "warrior," and *lusa*, "black" (Read 1937/1984). In English we usually place the adjective in front of the noun (as in "black warrior"); notice that in Choctaw the adjective follows the noun, as in many other languages in the world.

Colonial Empires in Alabama. The territory of Alabama was first claimed as part of a colonial empire by Spain, when De Soto explored the area in 1540. We find no linguistic traces of that empire, because the Spanish were looking for gold rather than attempting to establish settlements. (The Spanish names of the towns of Gordo and Chula Vista are from a much later era.) The French, on the other hand, were interested in settlement and trade when they arrived in the early 1700s. They founded a settlement on the large bay in south Alabama,

naming it for a nearby Native American tribe. Our local pronunciation of that name, Mobile, with the stress on the final syllable, represents a trace of French linguistic influence in contrast with typical English word stress patterns. I'm sure you've noticed that Americans from outside Alabama, when they first see that name, try to pronounce it with a stress on the first syllable. In 1763, at the conclusion of the French and Indian War, the territory passed to the British, where it stayed until the American Revolution.

American Settlement. Returning to the geography of Alabama, with the advent of American migration into the area, the northern and southern parts of the state were settled by different groups. The northern, more mountainous part of the state was settled mostly by Scots-Irish small farmers. They had originally migrated from Scotland to northern Ireland in the early 1600s, and then migrated further to North America beginning in the 1700s. They came typically through the port of Philadelphia, and then southwest through the Cumberland Gap into the Appalachian mountains of Tennessee and northern Alabama. The defeat of the Creeks at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in 1814 opened up this land still further to settlement by European Americans. Southern Alabama, on the other hand, was settled by people who were in a position to buy land for cotton plantations on the rich alluvial plain. Many came from Tidewater Virginia or South Carolina and imported slave labor from West Africa through the Caribbean to work the plantations. As will be discussed in more detail below under "accent," the pronunciation of the written letter "r" was different in northern and southern Alabama, based on these settlement patterns.

The presence in Alabama of a large number of African slaves—originally speakers of West African languages who encountered English as part of their servitude—has naturally led linguists to try to determine the possible impact of those native languages on the English of the slaves as part of the heritage of African American English. Another question, since groups of people tend to differentiate themselves by language, has been whether black and white Alabamians actually speak differently, and if so, how.

Interestingly, some features of African American Vernacular (informal) English that we often assume to be unique to that variety can also be found in British dialects (e.g., "habitual" BE, as in He be late = He's habitually late).

Some dialectologists assumed, for this reason, that the Africans learned English from English speakers they had contact with, namely speakers of vernacular British dialects who were the plantation overseers, etc. Other linguists, looking at evidence from Gullah (the language of slaves and ex-slaves on islands off the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia), became convinced that the native West African languages of the slaves had influenced the first English of the slaves, in the same way that virtually all adults who learn a new language carry their native language over into the second language. An example of this is the simplification of the consonant clusters that are a characteristic of English, as in the pronunciation of "past" as "pass" and "cold" as "cole." It was assumed that these patterns had then been perpetuated within the slave communities, particularly since slaves were denied opportunities for education. Current thinking favors a combination of these two influences.

In terms of the relationship between the speech of black and white Alabamians, British travelers in the South during the antebellum period commented that the white women spoke like the black slaves. If there was any truth to this, it could be understood in terms of the upper-class women having been raised by black nannies, and then kept at home, whereas the young men were sent away to be educated. Currently, the thinking is that black and white Southerners share virtually all of the features of Southern American English, with just a few features unique to either group. For example, "remote time stressed 'been' to mark a state or action that began a long time ago and is still relevant" as in "You *been* paid your dues a long time ago," may be unique to African American English. What differentiates the two groups linguistically is actually the frequency of occurrence of features and the particular combination of features.

The migration of Southern blacks to northern American cities at several points in the twentieth century brought Southern speech into other areas of the U.S. In the minds of non-Southern Americans, this has led to the association of the way African Americans speak with ethnicity, i.e., that it is "African American Vernacular English," whereas in fact it started out as a regional dialect, namely Southern American English.

Other groups have also settled in Alabama at different times during the past two centuries. Germans settled in Cullman in the nineteenth century, and

in Vance in the twentieth century in connection with the Mercedes plant. A group of French people settled in Demopolis in the nineteenth century. The Welsh came to the Birmingham area to mine coal. More recently Vietnamese fishermen settled on the Gulf, and Japanese and Koreans came to set up plants for Honda and Hyundai. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, many Spanish speakers have come to Alabama to work in the chicken processing plants, the timber industry, etc. There seems to be little in terms of linguistic influence from these groups, apart from the occasional place name, like "Abernant" (just south of Birmingham on I-20/59), a Welsh word that means "mouth of the brook" (for a more in-depth look at the linguistic history of Alabama, see Picone's essay).

Now we turn to a point-by-point overview of the features that give Southern American English its own identity: its vocabulary, accent (pronunciation), grammar, and discourse patterns. Interestingly, there is some controversy in the field of Southern dialectology concerning when the linguistic characteristics of Southern American English emerged. One scholar (Montgomery) proposes that the crucial period was the hundred years before the Civil War (i.e., approximately 1750 to 1850). Others (Bailey and Tillery) identify the post-Civil War period as the crucial period. Their point is that the Reconstruction period was significant for the development of a sense of regional identity within the United States, expressed partly through language. Fortunately, scholars do agree on the main distinguishing features of the variety, if not when exactly they arose.

Vocabulary (The Forms and Meanings of Words)

Inspired by an interest in settlement patterns in the United States, linguists ("dialectologists") tried to study the words that people used in different parts of the country. These "linguistic atlas" projects were initiated in the early part of the twentieth century. Linguists would conduct structured interviews (e.g., what do you call this item?) and plot their results on maps, showing where people used different words for the same item (like "pail" versus "bucket"). The typical interviewee for the first atlases was an older white male speaker who had lived in the same location since birth. Alabamians were interviewed for the *Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States* (LAGS) between 1968 and1983. The

director of LAGS, Lee Pederson, expanded the linguistic value of this atlas by including interviews of nearly an equal number of women, a wider range of ages, people of color, and even urban dwellers. The LAGS data from the oldest interviewees provide a snapshot of language use at an earlier era and thus allow us to track language change. For example, a person eighty years old in 1970 in Tuscaloosa would have been born in 1890 and thus would have established patterns of speaking in the late nineteenth century.

The settlement pattern for European Americans in Alabama that we discussed earlier showed a clear difference in terms of vocabulary based on this data. A former colleague of mine at Alabama, Dr. Virginia Foscue, used pre-LAGS preliminary surveys to establish the boundary that follows the edge of the Appalachian plateau (see Foscue's map in Nunnally, "Exploring"). Fifty years later there are still faint traces, as in the result when I ask middle-aged Alabama audiences how they refer to a tiny red insect that burrows into the skin and causes itching: members of the audience who grew up in north Alabama say "chigger," whereas those who grew up in south Alabama say "red bug." On the other hand, many differences found in Foscue's data seem to have faded with changes in technology and with the homogenization of culture. For example, bread that is baked with yeast is no longer called "loaf bread" (N AL) or "light bread" (S AL), but simply "bread." An invertebrate that lives in the soil and that you put on a hook for fishing is not called a "red worm" (N AL) or a "wiggler" (S AL), but simply a "worm" (unless you're a fisherman, for whom these words have taken on specialized meanings). The insect with a long straight tail and long straight double wings that hovers over water is called a "dragon fly" by almost everyone, with little trace of the earlier differentiation Foscue discovered between "snake doctor" (a name based on a folk belief that dragonflies take care of snakes) in north Alabama, and "mosquito hawk" in south Alabama.

These words were from interviews with white Alabamians. Turning now to the influence of the African slaves on the vocabulary of both black and white Alabamians, I have selected three common words that are very poignant in terms of representing the lives of the slaves—they worked hard, they brought seeds of their own familiar vegetables and grew them to eat, and they created music as a way of coping with the difficult context of their lives. *Tote* is 'perhaps

(via Black West African English) of Bantu origin; akin to Kongo *-tota*, to pick up, and Swahili *-tuta*, to pile up, carry' (*Merriam Webster*). *Okra* derives from a West African language, probably Igbo *ók ùr ù* , Cf. Akan *ŋkr umã*, or Twi *ŋkrakra* broth. A U.S. regional form is *okry* with ending remodelled (*Oxford English Dictionary*). *Banjo* is akin to Jamaican English *banja,* fiddle and is probably akin to Kimbundu and Tshiluba *mbanza*, a plucked stringed instrument (American Heritage Dictionary). Notice how all of these words have become part of the vocabulary of American English. In particular, the "tote bag" has moved the word into the usage of the upper socioeconomic levels.

Accent

When people speak of a Southern accent, they are probably referring to some of the pronunciation variations discussed below. These "phonological" (sound-system) differences between Southern English and other varieties have been widely studied and continue to be a hot topic for linguistics.

"Rhoticity" (the pronunciation of an "r" where it is written). In the classic old-style "Southern accent," that we hear in our Alabama storyteller Kathryn Tucker Windham, a written "r" is turned into a vowel except when it occurs at the beginning of a syllable or after a consonant in a syllable. In the following list of words, for example, the written "r" in (1) *red* and (2) *grow* and (3) *around* is pronounced as "r" while in (4) *far*, (5) *farm*, and (6) *ladder* it is pronounced as an "uh"-like vowel. (The name of this vowel sound is schwa, with the symbol [ə], and it is formed by the tongue in the middle of the mouth.)

A form of this accent is used to represent film versions of classic Southern characters in literature such as Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone with the Wind*, and Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. This pronunciation of written "r" is believed to come partly from the contact of the Southern plantation owner families with England after the American Revolution, as the r-less prestige accent in Britain developed. We saw a similar r-lessness in the upperclass accent of Northern American cities before World War II (e.g., Boston, New York), and it can still be heard in today's Boston accent.

At the same time that this non-rhotic ("r-less") accent was influential in the southern part of Alabama, associated with plantation culture, the Scots-Irish

in north Alabama were bringing their form of English with a strong rhoticity to that part of the state. This pronunciation of "r," which has become the typical American pronunciation, involves the following manipulations of the mouth and tongue: curl the tip of your tongue back, round your lips, and raise the back of your tongue. An even stronger form of this pronunciation, classic "pirate" pronunciation as in "ahoy, me hearrrties!" is associated with the Westcountry of England, and some dialectologists link it to the old Anglo-Saxon r pronunciation.

"Monophthongized [aɪ]" (turning a two-sounds vowel into a single-sound vowel). A pronunciation that has become a stereotype of a Southern speaker is what we call the monophthongization of [aɪ], with [aɪ] representing the sound for non-Southerners of the word "I." A non-Southerner begins this diphthong (two-part sound) with the tongue lying in the bottom of the mouth and the mouth slightly open, as when you say "ah." The tongue then moves forward and up to produce a sound like "ee," with the mouth closing a bit and the lips spreading. Thus the result is the combination of two sounds making one vowel (a diphthong). For the Southerner who "monophthongizes" this diphthong, the tongue does not glide up to the front into the "ee" sound, with the result that the pronunciation sounds like a single vowel (symbolized as /a:/ with the colon showing the lengthening of the sound), where the non-Southerner would produce a diphthong. Thus "I" sounds more like "ah." Tom Nunnally, a native Alabamian and linguist, points out (personal communication) that the Southerner actually starts to say "I" and "ah" with the mouth and tongue in slightly different positions: for "I" (the [a:] sound) the jaw is not as far open, the lips are spread a bit, and the tongue is actually a bit farther forward in the mouth than for "ah" (symbolized by [a], not [a:]). Thus Southerners easily distinguish between the words *sod* and *side* even with no tongue movement at all in *side*, as in "Put the sod [sad] on the other side [sa:d]." He also notes that it's unfortunate that our English spelling system has no accurate way to spell the [a:], aptly named the "Confederate a." English speakers have been aware of this characteristic of Southern speech for quite some time and have made negative judgments about it; Montgomery documents lessons in schools in the South in the late nineteenth century when teachers tried to make students pronounce the phrase "fine white rice" with diphthongs.

Many Alabamians seem to make negative judgments about extreme forms of this pronunciation, which is associated with North Alabama and also with a "country" accent (see Doxsey).

Merger of Pen and Pin as "Pin." Almost as noticeable to non-Southerners as the [aː] pronunciation of [aɪ] is the pronunciation of –en to sound just like –in, so that *pen* and *pin* become homophones pronounced "pin." As Nunnally explains (personal communication), "This 'pin/pen merger' affects basically all words with an 'eh' [ɛ] before the nasal consonants –m and –n, producing homophonic pairs for *ten/tin*, *hem/him*, *Ben/bin*, and similar words. Although Southerners are oblivious to the sound distinction, Northerners who come South would be puzzled when told to pick up highway 'tin' or that a dress has a new 'him.' It took a few years of attention, but I now fairly consistently address my non-Southern students named *Jen* as 'jehn' instead of, to their ears, an alcoholic drink, a card game, or a machine for removing seeds from cotton bolls *(gin)*." Because of the stereotype, both Southerners and Northerners may mistakenly believe that Southerners merge these two vowels wherever they occur, but this is not true; Southerners pronounce the vowels in "non-nasal" words (e.g., led/lid) as distinct, the same way that non-Southern Americans would.

The Southern Vowel Shift. One of the most prominent sociolinguists, William Labov, has documented the Southern Vowel Shift using data from Birmingham and elsewhere in the South (Labov and Ash 1997). The following chart, using phonetic symbols, theme words, and the common reading-book names for the sounds, shows the key shifts, as these pairs of sounds are swapping places in their vocal production:

/i/ vowel in "field" (called "long e") <-> /ɪ/ vowel in "filled" (called "short i")
/e/ vowel in "sale" (called "long a") <-> /ɛ/ vowel in "sell" (called "short e")

To clarify what this would sound like, the switch between /i/ and /ɪ/ means that the word "field" as in "They were on the field" sounds like "filled." Conversely, the word "filled" in "They filled it to the top" sounds like "field." Moving down to the next pair of vowels that are switching places, /e/ and /ɛ/, the word "sale" in "There's a sale at the mall" sounds like "sell," and the word "sell" in "I can sell it to you for less" sounds like "sale." (Several essays in this issue

add to this discussion of the Southern Vowel Shift. For a study of the inroads of this shift into the Huntsville area, see Allbritten; for the relationship of this shift to the Southern Drawl, see Feagin; and for a more detailed look at the vowel changes, see Nunnally, Appendix A.) If the idea of a vowel shift worries you, you should know that the vowel system of English has made significant movements in the past, in particular between the English of Chaucer in 1400 and the English of Shakespeare in 1600 (see Nunnally, "Exploring").

Other Alabama Sounds. I will briefly mention just two other distinctive pronunciations, both of which are dying out in the South. One is the pronunciation of words that begin with an alveolar stop (t, d, n) followed by a back vowel /u/ (the "long u" often spelled "oo") as if they had the sound of "y" at the beginning of "yard" inserted after the consonant and before the vowel. Examples are words such as *tune*, *duke* and *news* being pronounced something like teeYOON, deeYOOK, and neeYOOZ.

The other is a special case of –r in words such as *term*, *first*, *word*, and *church*. The receding Southern (and Alabama) pronunciation is not the equivalent of the Brooklyn stereotype "boid" and "thoidy-thoid," but pronounced uh-ee, not oh-ee. This pronunciation, once associated with high social class and cultured speech in the South, is still retained by some generally older African American and white Alabamians, including Lieutenant Governor Jim Folsom, Jr., who pronounces *church* as "chuh-eech" in his political ads (Nunnally, personal communication).

Grammar

In linguistic study grammar does not refer to rules of correctness in writing ("don't use *ain't*") but to the internalized system of language processes that every speaker of every language has formed in acquiring that language. Grammar is the set of "traffic rules" of a language, such internal knowledge as how words fit together to form clauses and phrases, how grammatical meanings such as "plural" are added to words, and many other processes. We will consider a few Southern American English grammatical features that set it apart from some but not all other varieties. (For more on how linguists look at language, see Nunnally, "Exploring.")

A Southern Improvement to the Pronoun System. Just as the vowel system

of English has changed over time, so has the pronoun system. In Shakespeare's time, what we refer to as "Early Modern English" had the following pronoun system:

	Singular	Plural
First person	I/me	we/us
Second person	thou/thee	ye/you
Third person	he/him; she/her; it	they/them

The *"thou/thee"* form was the second person form used in the singular, as in contemporary French *(tu)*, Spanish *(tu)* and German *(du)*, showing intimacy. For mysterious reasons, the *"thou/thee"* form was eliminated from the standard language; many of us know it now only through texts like the King James Bible, which was translated in the early 1600s. The subject pronoun *"ye"* was also dropped, leaving just one pronoun to express the second person, *"you."* Thus in contemporary standard English we have the following pronoun system:

	Singular	Plural
First person	I/me	we/us
Second person	you	you
Third person	he/him; she/her; it	they/them

Responding to the problem of the lack of distinction between singular and plural, Southern English has produced a plural form, "y'all," which is a contraction of "you" + "all." Southerners use this form as a part of their speaking style even in relatively formal contexts, but not in formal writing. Contemporary Southern English (2000) thus provides the following pronoun system:

	Singular	Plural
First person	I/me	we/us
Second person	you	y'all
Third person	he/him; she/her; it	they/them

Double Modals for Subtlety. The contemporary standard grammar of

English allows only one "modal" verb, the "helping verbs" that indicate ability, possibility, or probability. Thus to add the idea of possibility or ability to a basic sentence such as "I go there Friday," a speaker would add one of the following verbs:

I can go there Friday.

I could go there Friday.

I may go there Friday.

I might go there Friday.

To add both possibility *and* ability to the sentence, the speaker must say, "I might be able to go there Friday."

Southern English, however, allows two modals to be stacked up for just such complex meanings. The most common are the following combinations, which typically occur in an informal speaking style:

I might could go there Friday.

I may can go there Friday.

At a recent Weight Watchers meeting in Tuscaloosa, the leader posed the following question: "What's something that you might can do to take your mind off of eating?" Again, this is a form that would not be used in formal writing, although Southern speakers may not be aware of this restriction until they encounter a teacher with a red pen.

Creative Use of Negation. Even though multiple negation is found in Shakespeare and other authors of classic works of English literature, the standardization movement that began in the eighteenth century outlawed double negation and tried to claim a mathematical basis for the ban ("two negatives make a positive"). Thus in contemporary standard English we find the following allowable patterns:

Positive sentence:

I saw it.

Negative sentence:

Early Modern English: I saw it not (now rare and archaic).

Modern English: I did not see it.

Single negation with polarity item:

I saw nothing like them/I didn't see anything like them.

Moving now outside the realm of the standard grammar books, and from

the realm of written English into the domain of informal spoken English, we find the following patterns of negation:

Double negation:

I didn't see nothin' like them. (But formal standard English allows: I saw something not unlike them.)

Triple negation:

I didn't see nothin' like them nowhere.

Pre-posed negation with "ain't":

I ain't seen nothin' like 'em nowhere.

Ain't seen nothin' like 'em nowhere.

Dreamland Barbeque:

"Ain't nothin' like 'em nowhere."

This last line is the slogan of the famous Tuscaloosa barbeque joint. As one of my Southern students commented, "Would you want to eat barbeque cooked by somebody who said 'There is nothing like them anywhere'?" This use of multiple negation is not only emphatic, increasing its power with each additional layer, but it is also expressive in other complex ways. A famous quotation by Paul "Bear" Bryant, a University of Alabama football coach of legendary importance, is rendered in writing as, "I ain't never been nothin' but a winner." The University of Alabama has an official T-shirt with this slogan printed on it.

Pragmatics and Discourse Patterns

Now we have looked at vocabulary, accent, and grammar, but how do Alabamians bring these features together to go about the daily business of communicating? To answer this question, we turn to "discourse" and "pragmatics," newer areas of research that have to do with things like politeness, indirectness, and traditional storytelling. In other words, does Southern American English differ from other regional varieties of English in its pragmatic and discourse strategies?

Use of "Ma'am" and "Sir." A distinctively Southern language trait is the use of the address terms *"Ma'am"* and *"Sir"* to show respect. Alabamians may not feel as strongly about this as citizens of another Southern state (Louisiana) who passed a law requiring children to address their teachers in this way, but

many Alabamians are raised to believe that they are not being polite if they do not use these terms. The usage is particularly prevalent in yes/no answers, which feel incomplete and impolite without a following *"Ma'am"* or *"Sir."* Such beliefs may cause problems when Alabamians interact with speakers from other areas (non-Southern Americans, Canadians, British speakers) who have ways of showing politeness without using these terms, and who may in fact object to the terms as marking hierarchy too overtly.

Indirectness. Whereas politeness is signaled overtly and directly with an address term like *Sir* that shows deference, another way that Southerners express politeness is through indirectness. Such a strategy avoids confrontation, and can be manifested in various ways. One way is to avoid getting directly to the point, talking around it to allow your interlocutor to figure out what you're getting at. Another is manifested in the grammatical system in the double modals discussed above: telling someone "You could do it this way" is somewhat tentative and not rude, but "You might could do it this way" is much more indirect and polite.

Storytelling Traditions. Research on oral storytelling in the United States outside of the South has identified a linear pattern in which the speaker is supposedly trying to make sure that the audience never feels compelled to ask, "What's the point?" In contrast, suggesting that there may be a different Southern aesthetic, our own professional storyteller Kathryn Tucker Windham proclaimed at a recent performance: "I'm a Southern storyteller; we digress." In such an aesthetic, which may be related to the idea of indirectness noted above, digression adds to the richness of the listener's experience, as the speaker feels free to provide elaboration in the absence of the imperative to move quickly to come to the point. (See Brammer, for examples of the how Southern college students use their dialect features rhetorically.)

The Paradox of Attitudes toward Southern English in Alabama

I am always struck in my classes at the University of Alabama by the range of attitudes about Southern American English, and particularly by the complex ambivalence of my Alabamian students. On the one hand, they may be fiercely proud of Southern American English as spoken in Alabama, representing region, locality, family, heritage, and tradition. At the same time they make judgments

about accents and grammar within Alabama, in particular judging negatively the extreme monophthongization of [aɪ] discussed above that is associated with north Alabama. Thus a "country" accent has less prestige than an urban accent. Some maintain their Alabama accents, while grammatically adapting both their spoken and their written language to the formal prescriptive requirements of the University. Others become "bidialectal," speaking one way at the University and then realizing that when they go home they shift into the local accent and grammar. Still others, aware of the prejudice against Southern accents in the rest of the United States—where, unfortunately, because of the history of our nation and the lack of educational opportunities in the South, the accent may still be associated with ignorance and even racism—reject Southern English very vehemently. These are the students who strive to eradicate any evidence of Southern English in their speech and writing, and whose career aspirations typically involve moving to another part of the country. (See Hasty, for a study of how students at Auburn University similarly view Southern English versus other regional U.S. dialects; and Johnson/Nunnally, for the account of how a young African American school teacher shifts her dialect according to her social and work roles.)

Linguistic Changes and Regional Identity

All language changes over time, including Southern American English, as we saw in regard to the Southern Vowel Shift above. Another change is an increase in "r-fulness" among younger speakers. Whereas the old-style Southern accent, particularly in the southern part of the state, was non-rhotic, as discussed above, it is clear that the pronunciation of r is changing in the younger generations. Interestingly, African-American Vernacular English is the dialect that seems to maintain r-lessness. It is unclear why the increase in rhoticity among Southern speakers is happening, and some suggest the influence of the mass media that brings the general American r-pronunciation into every home with radio and television. My students at the University of Alabama, both white and black, representing an elite of educated young people from within the state, are almost uniformly rhotic. This may reflect their orientation to a national rather than a regional norm with respect to this aspect of language.

Shifting Populations within the U.S. and Patterns of Immigration

A significant demographic phenomenon of the early twentieth century was the migration of African Americans from the South to northern cities, where their dialect became associated in the minds of non-Southerners with ethnicity, as noted above. Later in the twentieth century, and continuing into the twenty-first, we see the migration of African Americans back to the South. I have a colleague whose parents left Alabama for jobs in upstate New York in the mid-twentieth century, where they raised their family. Now they have retired back to the South as one of their sons has taken a professional job at a Southern university, where he will raise his family back in Alabama. He is, in fact, part of another trend, that of the movement of non-Southerners into the South as the economic center of gravity of the United States has shifted into the "Sunbelt." Whereas these non-Southerners will adapt to Southern American English in some ways, for example adopting "y'all" as an improvement over the deficient standard pronoun paradigm, they will also have an impact on Southern English, in the natural process of dialect contact that is part of language change. We can also expect to see some influence from Spanish, as the influx of Hispanic/Latino people has more than quadrupled in Alabama between 1990 and 2006, from about 25,000 to an estimated 110,000. Unlike the Spanish speakers of the early colonial empire, these speakers may stay and have an impact, even if it is not on the form of Southern American English as spoken in Alabama, but rather on the number of Alabamians who can also speak some Spanish.

Opportunities to Participate in Linguistic Research

As you can see from this survey of features and will see from the other essays in this issue, Southern American English in Alabama is a complex and dynamic phenomenon that linguists and dialectologists need to document and study. With the development of technology in the form of digital recordings, we now have the possibility of capturing wonderful data and storing it in easily accessible forms. If you are interested in contributing to this developing database and being part of our ongoing research on Southern American English in Alabama, please contact me in the English Department at the University of Alabama at cdavies@bama.ua.edu or at (205) 348-5065. ■

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the Alabama Humanities Foundation for including me in their Road Scholars program, the editors of Tributaries for their helpful suggestions, Tom Nunnally for his refinements and perfect examples from a native speaker, Corky Feagin and other colleagues (including TN) working on Southern American English for the research that has informed me, and my students at the University of Alabama for all that they have taught me.

An Annotated Bibliography:

In addition to the other essays in this issue, the following annotated works will allow you to pursue this subject further on your own.

Algeo, John, ed. 2001. *The Cambridge History of the English Language, Volume VI: English in North America.* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. An authoritative treatment with information related to Alabama as part of the American South.

Bernstein, Cynthia, Thomas Nunnally, and Robin Sabino, eds. 1997. *Language Variety in the South Revisited*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. (LAVIS II). A collection of articles by scholars in the field representing the state of the art in the 1990s.

Cassidy, Frederic G., and Joan Houston Hall, eds. 1985–. *Dictionary of American Regional English.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap. A fascinating resource which has been published through most of the alphabet but is still in process.

Feagin, Crawford. 1979. *Variation and Change in Alabama English: A Sociolinguistic Study of the White Community*. Washington: Georgetown University Press. A study of Anniston, Alabama, within a variationist sociolinguistic framework. A general reader would probably find this study too technical, but reading the introduction and conclusion would give a good sense of the findings and significance of the work.

Fischer, David Hackett. 1989. *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America.* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press. A massive attempt to look at "cultural origins" by tracing four waves of migration from the British Isles to North America in the settlement of the U.S. This volume is not recommended for linguistic information, but rather for general cultural information. It has, however, been criticized for a too-simplistic view of culture.

Flanders, Stephen A. 1998. *Atlas of American Migration*. New York: Facts on File. A useful history of migration to North America using maps as illustrations.

Foscue, Virginia. 1971. *A Preliminary Survey of the Vocabulary of White Alabamians*. Publication of the American Dialect Society Number 56. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. Results of a preliminary linguistic atlas approach to mapping the speech of Alabama, prior to the *Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States*, that details major vocabulary differences between the northern and southern parts of the state.

______. 1998. *Place Names in Alabama*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. The classic work.

Lippi-Green, Rosina. 1997. *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology and Discrimination in the United States.* New York: Routledge. A book with a definite point of view about accent as a focus of discrimination, discussing prejudice toward the Southern accent.

McMillan, James B., and Michael B. Montgomery. 1989. *Annotated Bibliography of Southern American English.* Updated and expanded ed. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Montgomery, Michael B., and Guy Bailey, eds. 1986. *Language Variety in the South: Perspectives in Black and White.* Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. (LAVIS I) A collection of articles by scholars in the field representing the state of the art in the 1980s.

Montgomery, Michael B., and Joseph S. Hall. 2004. *Dictionary of Smoky Mountain English*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press. A recent publication that applies to north Alabama as part of Appalachia.

Montgomery, Michael B., and Thomas E. Nunnally, eds. 1998. *From the Gulf States & Beyond: The Legacy of Lee Pederson and LAGS*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. A collection of articles on the *Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States*.

Nagle, Stephen J., and Sara L. Sanders, eds. 2003. *English in the Southern United States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. A recent collection of essays by important scholars in the field, oriented to the general reader.

Picone, Michael B., and Catherine Evans Davies, eds. Forthcoming. *Language Variety in the South: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. (LAVIS III) A collection of articles by scholars in the field representing the state of the art in the first decade of the 21st century.

Read, William A. 1937. *Indian Place Names in Alabama*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. Repr. 1984. The classic work.

Wolfram, Walt, and Natalie Schilling-Estes. 2006. *American English.* 2nd ed. New York: Blackwell. A popular textbook that I use in my dialectology class at the University of Alabama and that students describe as accessible and substantive.

Just What Is the Southern Drawl?

Crawford Feagin

The mystique of the Old South seems to have reached around the world. When I told some Vietnamese refugees in Washington that I was from the South, they assured me that they knew all about it. They had seen *Gone with the Wind* in Saigon! While *Gone with the Wind* represents the old aristocratic South, another aspect of the South—the white rural working class—has spread its own influence through radio, TV, and recordings. I'm talking about the country and western music industry centered in Nashville and Austin. Possibly as a result of these phenomena, many people even outside the U.S. are familiar with Southern speech, especially what is called "the Southern drawl."

Despite popular interest in the drawl, it is surprising that in the explosion of linguistic studies over the past several decades, amazingly little has been written about it. Chasing the drawl down in the literature, I could come up with only four linguists who have dealt with it at all and only one who devoted a whole article to it. That article was written more than forty years ago by James Sledd, a native of Atlanta and a linguist on the faculty of the University of Texas at Austin.

One of the first problems with studying the drawl is defining it. I'll return to a more technical and thorough definition later, but for now, we're talking about the pronunciation of a word having some or all of these characteristics: the main vowel sound in the word is held longer than usual, the vowel sound changes as it is held, and the pitch of the vowel varies greatly. For example, an extremely drawled *yes* might be written as "YAY-EE-yus," with "YAY-EE" starting on a high pitch and changing its vowel quality from "yay" to "ee" and dropping from the high to a lowered pitch on "-yus."

But an even greater problem is its tremendous variation in both form and

use. What makes the drawl so variable is that it is subject to a wide range of conditioning factors. The linguistic conditioning factors are not only segmental, that is, conditioned by the *segments* or separate units of sound in a word, but also suprasegmental (*supra*—'on top of' segments), that is, conditioned by the intonation (changes in pitch) and stress (pulses) added on top of the segments. In addition, the drawl is subject to a number of conditioning factors connected with how language use reflects the people who use it or sociolinguistic constraints. For the drawl these sociolinguistic factors can be seen in five different areas:

1. Geography: both regional variation (north versus south) as well as urban versus rural differences.
2. Demography: age, sex, social class differences.
3. Language use: the intimacy and solidarity of the interaction versus formality and distancing.
4. Topic: whether serious or light.
5. Self-identification: How "Southern" a person wants to be perceived as.

I'll begin by explaining how I go about my research; next I'll define what I mean by the drawl in greater detail by touching on the linguistic aspects of it—a bit of the technical side, so to speak. Mostly, I'll discuss the social (sociolinguistic) and psychological aspects of the drawl. Last, I'll make some guesses about the future of the Southern drawl.

Methodology

Unlike any of the previous studies of the drawl, my work has combined the methodologies of sociolinguistics, of acoustic phonetics assisted by computer analysis, and of the more traditional linguistic analysis such as looking at which vowels can be drawled and at the phonetic context that might promote or inhibit drawling (e.g., Feagin 1987, 1996, 2002). I'll explain how I went about my research at each stage.

SOCIOLINGUISTICS. In the kind of sociolinguistics I do, you have to take into consideration the location and type of community you're investigating. Then you examine a sample (group of speakers) of that community. One of the main ways to go about this is by recording interviews with a selection of

people who fit particular categories of age, sex, or social class.

The Speakers. The location of the speech I'm talking about here is Anniston, Alabama, my hometown. Anniston is not a town out of the Old South, but rather an industrial city in northeast Alabama founded in the 1870s with a current metropolitan population of about sixty thousand people. The local economy was originally based on iron and steel manufacturing and on cotton mills. Two-thirds of the people there are white, one-third black. This has been the proportion since the town was founded. In this essay I'll discuss drawling in white speech only.

To get a picture of the range of speech in the white community, I tape-recorded interviews in the late 1960s and early 1970s with urban upper-class and working-class people, both men and women over sixty at the time and teenaged boys and girls, with an equal number of informants in each category of age/sex/social class. I also interviewed older rural working-class men and women. Altogether, I taped interviews of eighty-two people including some middle-aged and middle-class people. (Later, in 1990–91, I collected more interviews of another cohort of teenagers and re-interviews with some of the previously interviewed teenagers, by then approaching mid-life.)

For this study of the pronunciation in the town, though, I am limiting myself to a detailed analysis of two people per age/sex/social-class category.

The Interviews. The interviews with those eighty-two informants were attempts at real conversation. After getting a certain amount of demographic information so that I could find out their ages, make sure they were natives of Anniston or of the nearby rural area, and have some objective basis for placing them in a particular social class, I tried to distract them from the artificiality of the interview situation by asking them rules for childhood games and questions such as "Have you ever seen a ghost?" or "Have you ever been in a situation when you thought, 'This is it!', that you might lose your life?" Other good questions were asking how they met their boyfriend or girlfriend or their husband or wife. Or I'd ask men about hunting or fishing. (The sample sentences in Table 1 imply some of my interview questions. See Oggs's essay for her similar tactic of asking citizens of Elba to recount their flood experiences.) From these sorts of questions I'd usually get about an hour's worth of talk. Often I'd get indications that the informants were relaxed when they

would laugh or get excited about the story they were telling and start talking faster and louder.

TABLE 1:
Sample Words Analyzed for ±Drawl in Sentence Contexts

	Digitized words in CAPITALS in source sentences	*± drawl*	*Clause juncture*
1.	I said, anything I promise anybody, I'll do THAT, if I can.	drawled	YES
2.	Sometimes I poured THAT out.	plain	NO
3.	. . . when she DIED.	drawled	YES
4.	. . . and she'd take forever at night to go to BED.	drawled	YES
5.	I'd go out with younger BOYS.	drawled	YES
6.	. . . and sideburns, and long HAIR,		
	just like they got now.	drawled	YES
7.	. . . but I couldn't go up and down the STEPS.	drawled	YES
8.	. . . .if you're not GOOD, Chicken George is gon' getcha!	drawled	YES
9.	[sledding account] . . . squatted down and went down the HILL.	drawled	YES
10.	. . . 'n they come and pay my BILLS for me.	plain	NO
11.	And you'd pick your fresh berries for making jellies and JAMS.	drawled	YES
12.	. . . or I didn't wanna do THIS.	drawled	YES
13.	Who you gon' do THIS to?	plain	NO

ACOUSTIC ANALYSIS. I analyzed the recordings of those eighty-two people for grammatical variation, which I reported on in my 1979 book, *Variation and Change in Alabama English.* Since then, I have reexamined the phonology (i.e., sound systems) of a subset of those people, especially looking at their vowels—first describing them, and then trying to see where change is taking place in the community.

I have now examined the pronunciation of twenty people I interviewed, two each in the ten categories I mentioned: older urban upper-class 1) men and 2) women, older urban working-class 3) men and 4) women, older rural

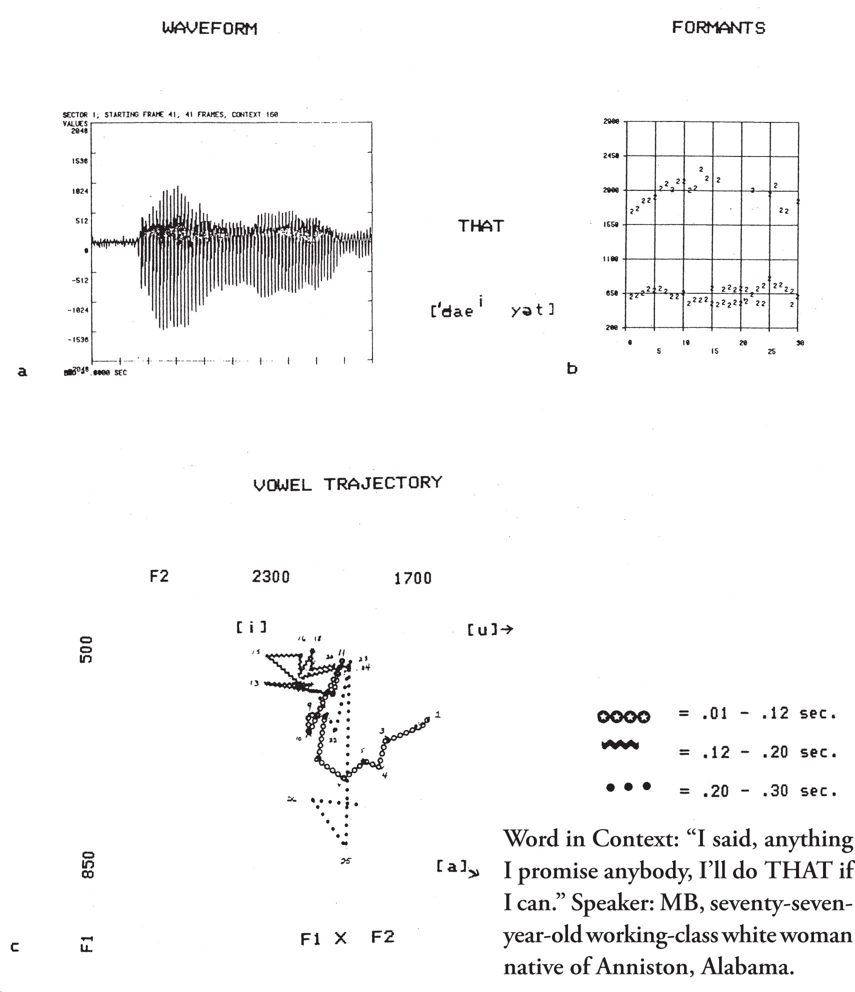


Figure 1
Analysis of Digitized Speech: Wave, Formants, Trajectory.

working-class 5) men and 6) women, teenage urban upper-class 7) boys and 8) girls, and teenage urban working-class 9) boys and 10) girls. I have analyzed the speech of these twenty people on computers at the University of Pennsylvania Linguistics Laboratory.[1]

I selected one-second stretches of speech from the taped interviews which were then recorded digitally into the computer directly from the tape record-

ing—just like digitally recorded music. I recorded into the computer about one hundred eighty words from each person. I looked for single-syllable, fully stressed words. I tried to collect at least three to five examples of each vowel, so for the sound /ay/[2], or "long i," I might take *eye, tie, buy, sight, died* (see sentence 3 in Table 1), depending on what turned up in the conversation. My methodology differs from some older research in that I use real, conversational speech from various segments of the community for acoustic analysis, rather than having one person—usually middle-class—read word lists or sentences into a microphone in an acoustics lab. Furthermore, the creation of digital recordings allowed me to listen to the segments repeatedly after I had recorded them. That is, the sound of the words or the vowels was recoverable, unlike working with earlier kinds of equipment such as spectrographs available at the time. I also listened and wrote down in phonetic transcription what I heard, a process called impressionistic phonetics. The advantage of using acoustic analysis on my material rather than depending exclusively on my own hearing is that—for most of us—impressionistic phonetics has certain limitations. We tend to screen what we hear through our expectations and through our own system of pronunciation. This particular type of combined sociolinguistic/acoustic phonetics research (now called socio-phonetics) started in the early 1970s at the University of Pennsylvania Linguistics Laboratory, using a spectrograph. Computer analysis of this sort of material started there in the late 1970s.

Once I had the one-second stretches of speech stored in the computer, I could not only listen to each word but also use equipment to analyze it for three types of information: its "waveform," its "formants" (or "resonance bands"), and its "vowel trajectory." Figure 1 (images a, b, and c) reproduces printouts of these analyses for the drawled-word *that*, pronounced as "tha-ee-yut" [ðæi ət].

Image a is the waveform on a video screen. The various shapes and shadings of the wave indicate the makeup of the sounds of the word. The wave also shows the intensity or loudness of the vowel. The taller the wave is vertically, the more intense the sound is at that point.

The second image, b in Figure 1, displays the first two formants across time (in milliseconds). Formants are "resonance bands" that the computer program can highlight. The first two formants tell us about the quality of the sound,

whether the vowel is [oooooow] as in "Nooooo!!!" or [iiiiiy] as in "Meeee!!!!!" or [uuuuuuuw] as in "Booooo!!!!" The formants reflect the shape of the vocal tract (inside of the mouth), mainly the location of the tongue. They are the two lines you can see in b. The lower one is called the first formant; the higher one is the second formant. I followed these steps for each of the 180 words I worked on for each person.

At this stage I could use the numbers from printouts of F1and F2 to create a trajectory of the vowel, as illustrated in c of Figure 1, which showed me how much and in what direction the tongue is moving measured in milliseconds. The trajectory display is placed inside the mouth as if you are looking at a cutaway of a left-side profile. It measures the tongue movement of the vowel in *that* over a .30-second interval, numbered. The circles (.01–.12 seconds), zigzag line (.12–.20 seconds), and dots (.20–.30 seconds) show the tongue's movement over time through different spaces in the mouth. As the numbers on the lines indicate, the movement starts in the mid-back of the mouth (number 1, circles), continues across to the front of the mouth (9 and 10), heads up to the high-front part of the mouth (11–18, zigzags), and then rises and plunges to the bottom of the mouth (22–26, dots). Thus, the depicted speaker's pronunciation of *that* is very complex, moving through three vowel spaces in the mouth! We will address such exaggerated "gliding" later on.

To try to understand the context of the drawl, I went back to the tape recordings and checked the whole sentence where each particular word occurred for stress, intonation, and change of tone on the word or vowel. The bottom of Figure 1 shows that the *that* appeared in the sentence, "I said, anything I promise anybody, I'll do THAT if I can," and that the sentence was spoken by an older, working-class woman.

Observation and Introspection. Since I'm a native of Anniston, I also used observation of other native speakers and introspection to help me think about and analyze the data, as well as listening carefully to tapes and checking, say, 150 tokens (or examples) per speaker of a particular phenomenon such as the vowel /æ/, as in *that*.

In my investigation of vowel quality, I did not set out to study drawling specifically, but I ran into a problem of how to deal with the extreme gliding (tongue movement that changes the sound of a vowel as in c, Figure 1) for

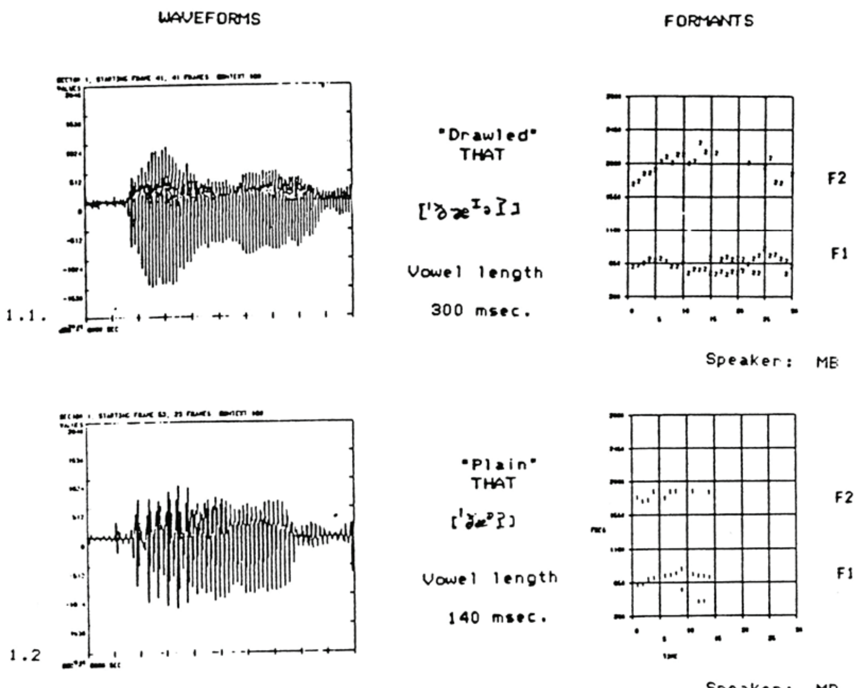


FIGURE 2

Wave, length, and formants of drawled and plain *that.*

some people on many vowels. At that point, I simply had to account for what turns out to be a uniquely Southern phenomenon: the drawl. The first step was to establish a working definition of the drawl, which in common usage sometimes seems to mean just about anything!

Defining the Southern Drawl: A Technical Survey

After running an informal survey of Southern drawlers, Northern non-drawlers, and linguists, as well as reviewing the literature, I found that most people generally agree that there are three especially noticeable features of the drawl: 1) the lengthening of the vowel (as measured in milliseconds), 2) glides or diphthongized vowels going in every direction, and 3) remarkable changes of pitch during the pronunciation of a single word. Of the linguists who have dealt with the drawl, Tim Habick's definition may be the most useful:

> In its most basic sense, drawling can be defined simply as a type of tempo, indicating lengthened as opposed to shortened ("clipped") syllables. In its practical realization in southern dialects, however, drawling has become a complex phonetic and phonological development characterized by a large number of features . . . . [For practical purposes, drawl syllables] can be described [acoustically] in terms of three major features which may occur singly or in combination: lengthening, [gliding], and amplitude drop. (Habick 1980: 181)

Furthermore, when linguists discuss the drawl, they seem to be referring to two different, though interconnected, phenomena: 1) the segmental gliding of diphthongized vowels in words such as *bad* [ˈbæi ˌyʊd], *ham* [ˈhæi ˌyʊm], *boy* [ˈbɑo ˌwi], *horse* [ˈhɑo ˌwəs] (the marks ˈ and ˌ indicate primary and secondary stress); and 2) the suprasegmental features of lengthening and change in pitch, as in *John* pronounced with higher pitch on the first part and a drawing out of the words: "JAH-aaan." To keep these two separate, I call the gliding or diphthongized type of drawl the "basic" drawl, while the other type—adding the extra length and changes in pitch—I call the "extended" drawl. I'll explain why further on.

These different aspects of the drawl are illustrated from my data in both waveforms and spectrograph-like displays.

LENGTH. In Figure 1 we looked at various displays of drawled *that*. Figure 2 presents the waveform and formants of the drawled *that* along with displays of an undrawled *that*. Both were pronounced by the same person in conversational speech. The lengthening associated with the drawl is clearly shown, as the drawled vowel at the top of Figure 2 is over twice as long at 300 milliseconds as the undrawled vowel at the bottom of Figure 2 at 140 milliseconds.

DROP IN AMPLITUDE. The second part of the definition I'm using is that the drawl can involve a drop in amplitude in the middle of a vowel. Look at the waveforms of drawled and undrawled *that* in Figure 2 again. While 1.2 shows very little change in height in the middle, there is a noticeable dip in the wave of 1.1, making the sound wave look like a tube of toothpaste squeezed in the middle. This is what happens when a single vowel contains rhythmic beats. This dip is what we perceive as—and has variously been described as—a triphthong, a two-syllable vowel, or a vowel on two tones, though these three

are not necessarily the same. Some more examples of vowels with two beats:

TRIPHTHONG: BOY [ˈbɑo ˌwi]
HORSE [ˈhɑo ˌwəs]

TWO TONES: EYE [ˈa ˌa]

Change In Formants (Gliding). Returning to Figure 2, look at the formant displays for drawled and undrawled *that* to note the greater changes in the formants of the drawled word. When we hear a vowel with a glide in it (a diphthong), as in *white*, with an [a] followed right away by an [i], or as in *boy* with [ɔ] followed by [i], we are hearing a change in formants. This is caused by the different resonant frequencies that come from the variations in the space in the mouth as the tongue moves from one place to another and the jaw opens more or opens less. These physical adjustments are what produce different vowel sounds.

In the drawl, there are often glides in places non-Southerners don't expect them. Moreover, Southern glides go in a different direction from glides in other varieties of English. One example is the [i]-glide in *bed* [ˈbɛi ˌyəd]. A New Yorker or Philadelphian might say [ˈbɪ əd]. Another example is the [o]-glide that the drawl produces in words like *dog* and *law*. Northerners have a different glide from Southerners here or no glide at all. So while Northerners say [dɔg] or [doəg] or [dʊəg], many Southerners say [ˈdɑ ˌog]. For *law*, Northerners and Westerners pronounce it as [lɑ] or [lɔ] or [lɔə]. Southerners who drawl might instead say [ˈlɑ ˌo]. These differences in direction of glide are very noticeable to non-Southerners—just as non-Southerners' glides (or lack of them) are to a Southerner like me.

Change In Intonation. Last, let's look at stress (the emphasis placed on a syllable) and intonation (the falling or rising pitch accompanying a sentence or a phrase). To understand these concepts, listen to yourself say the word *background*. You'll notice a strong stress on *back-* and a weaker stress on *-ground*. Also you probably pitch *back-* higher than *-ground*, for an intonation that changes from a relatively higher to a relatively lower tone. Full or secondary stress definitely contributes to drawling, as does a changing intonation. Often the changing intonation provides two tones for the drawled vowel, one for each pulse, just as in *background*:

Put it *down*! [ˈdæi ˌyown]

Come on *in*! [ˈi: ˌyʊn]

Bring it over *here*! [ˈhi ˌyə]

I thought I'd *die*! [ˈda ˌa]

Notice that in each of these examples the drawled word was a single syllable word (but with the vowel converted into a two- or three-part form by drawling), and occurred in absolute final position in the sentence. (Note in the sentences in Table 1 that every drawled word is the last word in a clause while none of the plain words is clause-final.) While it's not impossible to drawl on longer words in other parts of the sentence, the longer the word, the less likely you are to have drawling. That's why—contrary to imitations of Southern speech—you generally don't get a drawl in the word *Alabama*. It's a four-syllable word, and the stressed syllable is not in final position. Consequently, you don't get a change in intonation on that syllable. Not that it can't be done, but it's not usual.

As far as I can determine, this use of *tone* in English is unique to the American South.

The drawl can include any or all of these factors: length (or tempo), drop in amplitude (reflecting saying the vowel on two pulses), glides (change in formants, reflecting the adding of new vowel sounds), or change in intonation. These dimensions just get us started with a definition so at least we know what we are referring to when we talk about "the drawl."

INVENTORY OF DRAWLED VOWELS. Now to consider which vowels undergo this phenomenon. Apparently not all vowels are equally subject to drawling. For instance, it is those vowels that have been traditionally called "short front vowels" that are generally discussed in the literature under the topic of the drawl. I'll give some examples in their most extreme form:

"short i" in words like *hill* [hɪl] and *hymn* [hɪm] become [ˈhi ˌyəl] and [ˈhi ˌyəm];

"short e" in words like *help* [hɛlp] and *head* [hɛd] become [ˈhei ˌyəlp] and [ˈhei ˌyəd];

"short a" in words like *had* [hæd] and *ham* [hæm] become [ˈhæi ˌyəd] and [ˈhæi ˌyəm].

The "short vowels" of *could*, *but*, and *hot* don't have such glides, but instead exhibit the drawl by simply lengthening and showing a drop in amplitude

(displaying two beats) when there is a change of intonation, either going up or down. Again, extreme examples:

[ʊ] in *should, could*, as in “Do you think I *could*?” [ˈkʊ ˌʊd] (with rising intonation);

[ʌ] in *blood, flood*, as in “You shoulda seen that *blood!*” [ˈblʌ ˌʌd] (with falling intonation);

[ɑ] in *hot, not*, as in “It’s so *hot*!” [ˈhɑ ˌɑt] (with falling intonation).

The traditional “long vowels” already end in glides, called off-glides as in this list of examples:

“long e” /iy/ as in *feed;*

“long a” /ey/ as in *shade;*

“long i” /ay/ as in *wide;*

“long u” /uw/ as in *food;*

“long o” /ow/ as in *show.*

These vowels lengthen and drop amplitude with rising or falling intonation before moving on to their usual off-glides:

“I need some *shade*! [ˈše ˌeid] (falling intonation);

“It’s really *wide*!” [ˈwa ˌaid] or [ˈwa ˌa:d] (falling intonation);

“There’s no *food*?” [ˈfu ˌuud] (rising intonation).

The vowels that are generally labeled diphthongs, usually pronounced in Southern English as [æo] in *house* and [oi] in *boy,* often add an extra element between the main vowel and the glide, making a triphthong: That is, [æo], as in *house*, becomes [ˈæi ˌyo] to give drawled [ˈhaei ˌyos]; [oi], as in *boy*, becomes [ˈɑo ˌwi] for drawled [ˈbɑo ˌwi].

Finally, the “long open o” [ɔ] as in *law* and *dog* is often pronounced, as mentioned above, as a diphthong [ɑo] (“ah-oh”) by Southerners, so that the drawled form becomes two-beat [ˈɑ ˌo], as in [ˈlɑ ˌo] and [ˈdɑ ˌog].

To add to the complexity, gliding is NOT categorical. That is, sometimes it happens, then sometimes it doesn’t. Look at Table 2 where I show the results of checking at least 125 tokens (or examples) of /æ/ (the “short a” in *cat)* for ten people—six men and women who were over sixty (in 1972) and four (1972) teenagers. Notice that HH, the most frequent and extreme glider, does it only about half the time, while RK, the one with the least gliding, does it just 2 percent of the time.

TABLE 2

Percent of æ-Gliding for Ten Residents of Anniston, Alabama

			Categories of æ-Gliding				
I	*Birth year*	*Class/ gender*	*% overall*	*% front*	*% central*	*% complex*	*Instances of æ*
HH	1890	uu/f	44	27	3	14	N = 203
CS	1957	uw/f	32	12	4	16	N = 192
MB	1895	uw/f	30	19	5	6	N = 172
MJ	1911	rw/f	26	19	6	2	N = 173
BH	1956	uw/m	19	14	4	0.6	N = 145
SC	1899	uw/m	15	7	7	0.4	N = 223
HB	1906	rw/m	13	9	4	2	N = 164
BK	1953	uu/f	11	4.5	7	0.5	N = 174
HHg	1955	uu/m	8	6	1.5	1	N = 192
RK	1882	uu/m	2	2	0	0	N = 125

Key

I=Informant

Social class abbreviations
uu = urban upper class
uw = urban working class
rw = rural working class

Gliding descriptions
overall = [æi] + [æə] + [æiə]
front = [æi] (“baig” for *bag*)
central = [æə](“ha-uhv” for *have*)
complex = [æiə] (“ma- iy-un” for *man*)

Continuing with a close look at /æ/ in Table 2, I want to point out that most of the glides added to [æ] are front glides, that is, glides that go toward [i], in the front of the mouth. Only a very small portion are central or schwa glides, that go to [ə]. A subset of the front glides is made up of what I label “Complex” glides in Table 2. These are multiple glides or triphthongs that start with [æ], then move up and to the front [i], then go to a central position [ə], as in [ˈhæi ˌ yəm] for *ham*.

SEGMENTAL ENVIRONMENT. In some cases gliding is influenced by the following sound (each sound in a word is called a segment). So let’s look at those factors.

Although there is a lot of variation among the people I looked at for the

sound environments promoting glides, it is clear that *nasals* have an especially strong influence. *Fricatives* have a rather strong impact for some people (See Nunnally's Appendix A for explanations of these consonant types and for phonetic symbols in general, and see my endnote for the additional symbols I use). A few examples will illustrate what I mean:

Everybody eats ham [ˈhæ ˌyəm]. (Preceding nasal [m]);

Yes, ma'am [ˈmæ ˌyəm]. (Preceding nasal [m]);

He really made me laugh [ˈlæi ˌyəf]! (Preceding fricative [f]).

Up to here, we've dealt with the purely linguistic conditioning factors, all of which have been mentioned before in more or less detail by others, but so far as I know, never all together as in my account.

From the Technical to the Social (Sociolinguistic) Factors

What have never been addressed before at all, other than in passing, are the sociolinguistic factors involved in drawling. But to get into the sociolinguistic factors influencing the drawl, we need to divide the drawl into two categories. One type can vary across individuals, that is, some drawl and some do not drawl. The second type can be varied—deliberately—by the individual, that is, some drawl, but might or might not on a given occasion. From reexamining the data and my own speech and consulting the literature, as I have explained, it seems that what other people call "the drawl" actually refers to two distinct but overlapping categories—segmental (or gliding vowels) and suprasegmental (extra length and exaggerated intonation).

The segmental drawl, which I call the "basic drawl," is where individual short vowels are converted to diphthongs. The basic drawl of the individual is no more under the control of the speaker than his pronunciation of /æ/ or /ɪ/, but rather reflects his age, sex, social class, and locale. This is not categorical, of course. An individual's "basic drawl," or gliding, is also subject to variation, depending on the linguistic environment—following segment, the syllabic-length of the word, and the position of the word in the sentence, especially in regard to stress. That is clearly demonstrated in Table 2 for /æ/. Absolutely nobody glides 100 percent of the time; just about everybody uses the three possibilities for drawled /æ/—front glide, central glide, and multiple glide. The proportions vary, but everybody participates.

The "expanded drawl," sometimes called a "heavy" drawl or "extreme" drawl, includes triphthongs (complex glides) on the segmental level and, on the suprasegmental level, the extra lengthening which a vowel can undergo in slow tempo, the drop in amplitude, and the change in tone. These can take place individually or simultaneously. It is this expanded drawl which is under the semiconscious control of the speaker, rather like intonation, and which therefore varies according to the sociolinguistic or pragmatic situation.

This distinction between the "basic" and the "expanded" drawl will help untangle many of the confusions in accounting for the use of the drawl. Now we address the sociolinguistic factors involved in the two kinds of drawling. Here we have five areas of interest, all of which interact with each other: 1) geography, 2) demographics, 3) situation, 4) topic, and 5) self-identification. As we'll see, by the time the discussion reaches Situation and Topic, psychosocial aspects of drawling become apparent as well.

Geography. To begin with, drawling is tied to geography in the South. There is certainly regional variation in the drawl, both basic and expanded, even within the South. Speaking only of the Lower South, the Atlantic Coastal areas around Charleston and Savannah are set off from the rest of the Lower South or Deep South by having a different system of glides, which gives the impression of a more clipped speech. For instance, the pronunciation of the number *eight* has traditionally had an inglided [ɛət] ("eh-yuht") rather than the upglided [ɛit] ("eh-yeet") (O'Cain 1972; Baranowski 2007).

Similarly, Alabama reflects regional variation. Even holding class, sex, and age constant, in Alabama there is more expanded drawling and r-lessness in the old plantation areas such as Selma, Demopolis, and Montgomery than in the newer industrial areas of the Piedmont such as Anniston and Birmingham. So Anniston is not in the "heavy drawling" area.

Cutting across such regional distinctions, there is also the contrast between rural versus urban, or maybe rural and small town versus large urban areas. I suspect that for men, at least, expanded drawling is more predominant in rural and smaller urban areas than in large cities such as Birmingham and Atlanta. Young female Atlanta natives have told me that to them, men sound "country" if they drawl. Similarly, a linguist from Atlanta says that he "associates some of the more pronounced versions [of the drawl]—that is, the expanded drawl—

with females from the small-town gentry" (Sledd, personal communication 10/5/85). This characterization is supported by the report of an eighteen-year-old upper-class native of Atlanta who told me that she and her friends used to enjoy imitating their mothers—all from smaller cities and towns in Georgia and Alabama, such as Columbus, Vidalia, Mobile, and Selma.

Demographics. Let's examine the interaction of the demographic factors of age, sex, and social class.

Most people probably believe that women are the main "expanded" drawlers, but my research finds interesting correlations between age, sex, and the incidence of drawling. From my data it is clear that working-class males have the expanded drawl, though it is the younger group that drawls more, in this sense. Older upper-class men, on the other hand, don't use the expanded drawl much—certainly not in interviews—nor do their grandsons, except in special circumstances. Since it is a linguistic given that older upper-class men would have the most conservative speech in the community, perhaps the expanded drawl is a relatively new phenomenon. Older upper-class women certainly have the expanded drawl, as do younger ones. It appears that working-class teenage girls lead the pack in expanded drawling, with the boys somewhat behind them. This female working-class leadership is what most sociolinguistic research in American English and in other Western societies would lead us to expect, if this is a case of "change in progress."

Maybe I need to stop here for a minute and explain the linguistic investigation of "change in progress." This sort of research done in a single community compares the speech of older and younger people of the same sex and social class category and assumes that where the speech differs, permanent language change is going on. I'm not talking about fads in words such as slang. I'm talking about pronunciation and grammar that speakers are not conscious of, that is, the language of informal style. Everybody can cross their "T"s and dot their "I"s when they want to or think it's appropriate. But we all have a relaxed, informal style. However, the assumption is that the doctor, when he relaxes, might talk like a plumber talking formally, so the shift in style is on a continuum. What is informal for one social group might be formal for another. Also, language change can first be seen in informal style, especially in speech of the working class. For this reason, it appears that working-class girls lead

in change of pronunciation. This means that the future of the language lies in the hands of working-class girls! Conversely, older upper-class men are good examples of old-fashioned speech.

The obvious question is whether younger people, when they are significantly older, will have kept the same pronunciation that they have today, or whether they will talk like today's older people when they reach the same age. (Does aging itself somehow cause people to talk similarly, no matter when they were born?) One way to find out is to return to the locale and interview the same people fifteen years later. Then you can see whether the previous group of teenagers have reversed themselves and are now talking like older people did. Another method is to interview teenagers in the same community fifteen years later and see if the earlier changes have continued (along with the addition, one would expect, of new changes). So far, the results of various studies show that basically the original hypothesis was correct—working-class teenage girls are indeed the future of the language!

Look again at Table 2, especially at the column labeled "complex" /æ/ gliding. The data document that at least for "short a," older upper-class women and working-class teenage girls are the most extreme expanded drawlers, since they have by far the most complex glides, that is, the glides that go first to [i] then to [ə] as in [ˈfæi ˌyəst] for *fast*, or [ˈmæi ˌyən] for *man*. (The vowel trajectory in Figure 1 for /æ/ in *that* illustrates just that movement). Generalizing from the /æ/ data, the triphthongal variety seems to be more frequent among the younger working-class today than in the upper-class, though it does exist in the upper-class, particularly among older women.

Even limiting ourselves to the basic drawl, which can be seen in Table 2 in the column labeled "overall gliding" (that is, the combined scores for glides like [fæist] for *fast* or [hæəv] for *have*, as well as the few triphthongs such as [ˈfæi ˌyəst] and [ˈhæi ˌyəv]), the ordering is very much by sex. In fact, the "top four" gliders—44 percent to 26 percent—are women. Notice that the second highest score is that of the working-class girl. But look where the upper-class girl is: just above the upper-class men, below all the working class men. I'll return to that shortly. Even more interesting is the contrast between the upper-class woman, the "top glider," and the upper-class man, at the absolute bottom. For that generation, obviously gliding—or "drawling" in that basic

sense—was a marker of feminine speech, something men didn't do much. So from the evidence here it is obvious that the basic drawl with glides is more predominant in women than in men, even keeping social class in mind. This leads to a discussion of social class as a factor in itself.

Social class is also reflected in the details of the basic drawl. It appears that having a lot of glided drawling, while never stigmatized, may have become more a feature of working-class speech than of upper-class speech in Alabama, at least for people born since World War II.

Look at that first column of Table 2, where the social characteristics are noted. Right below the top glider, the older upper-class woman, you will see all the working-class informants, beginning with the teenage girl, followed by the older urban and rural women, the urban working-class boy, and the older working-class men. It is only after all the working-class informants that you find the next upper-class speaker, the teenage girl, followed by the upper-class boy—grandson of the top glider, incidentally—and finally, RK, the older upper-class man, grandfather of BK, the upper-class girl.

What this indicates is that gliding, while certainly not extinct in the upper class, is much less noticeable in the upper classes today, certainly in the younger age groups, while it appears to be gaining ground in the working class!

This trend may explain the difference in local terminology between the "drawl"-—which is good, and associated with elegant, older, upper-class ladies—and the "twang" which is the supposedly more-nasal gliding associated with the working class in the area. I think everybody has heard of the "hillbilly twang." Well, such working-class drawling may be just what you're looking at—that is, combined with heavy r's (*here* as "hee-yrr" instead of the older upper-class "hee-yuh"). Frankly, I wonder whether nasality is really as big a feature as it's thought to be in the twang, but that is a topic which deserves more research.

Return to Table 2 to see how much ten people from this same town can vary in their gliding of one vowel, /æ/, based on analysis of 125 to 223 consecutive examples of it. The striking differences you can see here I attribute to the fact that each person was in a different social category, whether age, sex, social class, or urban/rural.

So we have witnessed how age, class, and sex interact, with the older

upper-class women having the most extreme basic drawl, while the working class, especially the younger teenage urban working-class girls, have the most extreme basic and expanded drawls of their generation. These findings will come up again when I discuss the future of the drawl.

Social Situation. Possibly more important than the demographic factor is the social situation in determining expanded drawling, which possibly explains its near absence in my interviews with upper-class men and boys.

Drawling in this sense is very much a marker of intimacy and solidarity, while non-drawling reflects formality and distancing. It is for this reason that women appear to be the bearers of expanded drawling since in all classes, women use it to make visitors feel welcome, in being solicitous, and in flirting. One linguist friend refers to a typical heavy drawler as a "kittenish female" (Sledd 1966:33). Expanded drawling is also the vehicle for "gushing"—the exaggerated intonation and gliding which expresses admiration or welcoming. Adult women use this as an expression of solidarity. The expanded drawl is used especially in baby talk—to babies or to pets. It is part of the kindergarten teacher's cajoling repertoire. On the other hand, the expanded drawl is not used, or at least is reduced, when mothers or teachers correct children or when adults express disagreement.

For upper-class men, the expanded drawl is less professional, less businesslike, so it would be less likely to show up in a taped interview. For men, expanded drawling represents being "one of the boys," rather like the masculine use of nonstandard grammar or "cussin'." It is particularly noticeable when telling jokes or humorous stories, recounting hunting or fishing exploits, or arguing about football teams. It is also used by professional men to set their clients or patients at ease, especially in unequal power relationships, such as doctors dealing with children or lawyers talking to poor people. They also use the expanded drawl to cajole their wives and to talk to their horses and dogs. That is, expanded drawling is a mark of intimacy for men as well as for women, but for that reason it is less frequently observed in men by outsiders.

Topic. As mentioned above, the topic of conversation seems to influence the presence or absence of expanded drawling, though perhaps less than situation, since certain topics appear more in particular settings. However, a sobering change of subject can reduce the drawl considerably, while a lightening of the topic can bring it out.

Self-Identification. The last use of the drawl that I will discuss is in regard to self-identification. It is a fact that in the South particular people are known to be "big drawlers." These are people who employ the full range of the expanded drawl—lengthening, amplitude drop, and change in tone often combined with triphthongs. For instance, an older upper-class woman from Anniston remembers that it was said of a sorority sister at the University of Alabama in the early 1930s that "it took her five minutes to say 'Good morning.'" A young woman from Anniston told me that another woman, a friend of her mother's, "takes half an hour to say 'Hello.'" These are judgments of Southerners by Southerners, in these particular cases, of Southern women by Southern women, all natives of Anniston.

For women, expanded drawling is considered to be very feminine. Some might say it's sexy. One linguist characterizes the extreme form of the drawl as used largely by what the older generation might have called "a forward hussy" (Sledd personal communication). For that reason, women who grew up as what used to be called tomboys—today's feminists—often reject the extreme languid drawl for a modified one.

For men, expanded drawling is very masculine in the "good ol' country boy" or Huck Finn sense that was popularized by President Jimmy Carter's brother, Billy. Since for Southern men the outdoor life is considered highly masculine as contrasted with the urban life of reading books and going to art galleries, concerts, and the theater, the projection of a rural persona can be found in all social classes. Regardless of social class, the man or boy who wants to project an image of huntin' and fishin' and other similar rural pursuits will be more likely to have an expanded drawl than the one who is more bookish or urbane. This is exemplified in the difference in drawling between Billy Carter and his brother Jimmy. I'll remind you that President Carter left the South to be educated at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, spent many years away from the South as a naval officer, and became first governor of Georgia and later president of the United States. Meanwhile Billy was back in Plains, Georgia, running a fillin' station and going fishin'. President Bill Clinton provides another example of an expatriate Southerner who left Arkansas for Georgetown University and Yale Law School, then returned to Arkansas where he had to sound "local" since he had political ambitions.

A corollary of the urban/rural tension in a man's self-image in the South is that expanded drawling is perhaps more necessary for the self-identification of the truly urban, highly educated, sophisticated man living in the South than for the plain dirt farmer. However, the urban sophisticate will include expanded drawling as only one of his styles—just as he selectively uses "bad" grammar to establish intimacy or his credentials as either "one of the boys" or "insider." Another aspect of self-identification in regard to the drawl is one's identity as a Southerner. For many complex reasons, some people who leave the South jettison all vestiges of Southern speech—especially the expanded drawl—while others not only maintain it but perfect it, polish it, and exaggerate it to make their identities as Southerners clear to all.

It appears that expatriate Southern women maintain their expanded drawl more than do men in similar circumstances. This is probably because non-Southerners in the U.S. often perceive men with a "Southern accent" of any sort, much less a "Southern drawl" (which usually means the expanded drawl), as being either effeminate or buffoons—certainly as marking the person who speaks in such a peculiar way as one not to be taken seriously. Even for those not living outside the South, some people identify themselves more closely with being Southern than do others.

To some extent the issue of self-identification and regional loyalty are confounded, so it is appropriate to bring up the topic of attitudes toward Southern speech. Despite the negative evaluations by non-Southerners of Southern speech and of the South in general discussed in several papers by Dennis Preston (e.g., 1986, 1996) and despite the findings in Hasty's essay that Southerners themselves may perceive speakers of Southern English as being less educated and intelligent, many if not most white Southerners find Southern speech the sweetest, most beautiful human sound in the world. "British" may sound more posh, but only the rare white Southerner wants to "sound like a Yankee." To white Southerners, Northern speech can sound harsh, unattractive, and unfriendly. While the particular configurations of the vowel peaks in phonological space may make a strong contribution, as do the different directions of the glides in the basic drawl, it is the expanded drawl—the many triphthongs on two tones, as well as the great extremes of intonation and tempo—which is probably the main source of what is perceived as "Southern" speech.

So, now we can see why everyone refers to the drawl as being highly variable. Not only is it variable, but its variability can lie in a multitude of factors ranging from linguistic inventory and environment—segmental and suprasegmental—to geography; to sex, social class, and age; to the dimension of intimacy/formality; to topic; and to identification of self as masculine or feminine or as a Southerner, the last category being one which calls up complex strong emotions.

Change In Progress? Predictions for the Future of the Drawl

What about the future of the drawl? There is some question as to whether the drawl is increasing, just holding its own, or even dying out. In my data from Alabama it appears that women drawl more than men, at every age in every social class, rural or urban, both in the "basic" drawl and "extended" drawl. It is possible that this might indicate simply a sex difference or have to do with other stable sociolinguistic matters. However, since the teenage working-class boys and older rural men are rather free in their drawling, while it is almost absent in the older upper- and working-class urban men, it is possible that this is a change coming into Southern speech.

Although I can't yet prove it, I am convinced that the drawl is getting more extreme, partly because of on-going vowel change—unless it is a case of the drawl causing the vowel change. Current research is showing that in the South, the vowels are shifting all around, with the short front vowels taking the place of the long vowels, while the long vowels go elsewhere (Labov, et al., 1972; 2006; Feagin 2003). In this respect, Southern white speech is beginning to resemble Australian in words like *rain*, *wait*. This change, called the Southern Vowel Shift by researchers, is going on in the working and lower-middle classes all across the South, from North Carolina to Texas, and creeping slowly into the middle and upper classes (see Allbritten's essay for a study of this change in Huntsville).

These changes are taking place below the level of consciousness, since the direction of the glides helps to distinguish the vowels from each other. Consequently, this development is not stigmatized. However, the increasing distances between the beginning and the end of the vowel make for yet more extensive gliding, with greater length and more changes of tone. Look again

at Table 2. Notice that after the older upper-class woman the working-class girl is the most extreme segmental glider. This could indicate an increase in segmental gliding, which would support this hypothesis.

As to precisely why this change in vowels and in drawling is occurring, why the drawl would be increasing, I would point to the vast social changes in the South. I'll mention only a few, beginning with increasing social pressures for egalitarianism, as symbolized by country music, and by the image of the "good ol' country boy," or "bubba." Up until World War II, the South was an extremely hierarchical society with strong caste and class barriers which were reinforced throughout the social, political and economic system. With prosperity, mobility, education, and racial integration, life is very different in today's South with more money and power going to the middle- and working-classes. What may have been a stagnant region of the country in the past is now part of the Sun Belt with plenty of growth and all the changes that might imply. Atlanta, for instance, is unrecognizable to those who knew it in the 1950s. You could say the same for Houston and Dallas, at the other end of the South. Consequently, it should come as no surprise that speech patterns in the South are beginning to reflect this social change, including an increase across society of the more extreme version of the drawl. ■

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank William Labov for access to the University of Pennsylvania Linguistics Laboratory, and to Sharon Ash, Robin Sabino, David Graff, Tim Habick, Malcah Yaeger-Dror, C. J. Bailey, and the late James Sledd for many fruitful discussions of the drawl. I also want to thank Tom Nunnally for editorial suggestions.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the enormous contribution of my late husband, James W. Stone, also a linguist, whose support and critical mind and eye were essential to my work over the years

Notes

1. Today such analysis can be done on a personal computer using Praat speech processing software (e.g., Boersma and Weenink, 2005).
2. The tradition of linguistics that I work out of uses a different set of symbols for and methods of depicting some sounds as compared to the IPA tradition used in

the other essays and explained in Nunnally's Appendix A. Many of these alternate symbols can be converted to IPA symbols without damage to the evidence, and I have converted them whenever possible for consistency throughout the issue. However, depiction of vowel gliding is essential to understanding the Southern drawl. Most treatments of English vowels include glides for only three diphthongs: /ay/, /aw/ and /oy/. The IPA broad transcription differentiates "short" and "long" vowels by height and tenseness rather than length, so you find /ɪ/, /i/; /ɛ/, /e/; /ʊ/, /u/; and /ɔ/, /o/. Narrow transcription differentiates length by a colon, so you find [ɪ], [ɪ:], [i], [i:], etc. To make clear the sounds of Southern speech, I have used both phonemic designations (sound classes) placed between / / and phonetic transcriptions (exact sounds) placed between [ ], following traditional practice in American linguistics (See Nunnally's Appendix A for an explanation of phonemes versus phonetics). In addition, I use the American preference of /y/ for the glide-sound starting *yes* instead of the IPA symbol /j/. (This may conflict with other uses in this collection.) Symbols [ˈ] and [ˌ] denote primary and secondary stress. The following list of words and symbols depict the "long vowels" of English to show the presence of their glides. They will allow you to compare them to the IPA symbols used in other essays, if necessary:

"long e" /iy/ as in *feed;*
"long a" /ey/ as in *shade;*
"long i" /ay/ as in *wide;*
"long u" /uw/ as in *food;*
"long o" /ow/ as in *show.*

References

Baranowski, Maciej. 2007. *Phonological Variation and Change in the Dialect of Charleston, South Carolina*. Publication of the American Dialect Society Number 92. Durham: Duke University Press.

Boersma, Paul, and David Weenink. 2005. *Praat: Doing Phonetics by Computer*. Version 4.3. www.praat.org

Feagin, Crawford. 1979. *Variation and Change in Alabama English: A Sociolinguistic Study of the White Community*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.

______. 1987. "A Closer Look at the Southern Drawl: Variation Taken to Extremes." *Variation in Language: NWAVE XV at Stanford*. Eds. Keith M. Denning, Sharon Inkelas, Faye C. McNair-Knox, and John R. Rickford. Stanford, California: Department of Linguistics, Stanford University.137–50.

______. 1996. "Peaks and Glides in Southern States Short-a." *Towards a Social Science of Language: Volume I. Variation and Change in Language and Society*. Eds.

Gregory R. Guy, Crawford Feagin, Deborah Schiffrin, John Baugh. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 135–60.

______. 2002. "Entering the Community: Fieldwork." *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*. Eds. J. K. Chambers, Peter Trudgill, and Natalie Shilling-Estes. Malden, MA: Blackwell. 20–39.

______. 2003. "Vowel Shifting in the Southern States." In *English in the Southern United States*. Eds. Stephen J. Nagle and Sara L. Sanders. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 126–40.

Habick, Timothy. 1980. *Sound Change in Farmer City: A Socio-linguistic Study Based on Acoustic Data*. Doctoral dissertation University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Labov, William, Malcah Yaeger, and Richard Steiner. 1972. *A Quantitative Study of Sound Change in Progress*. 2 vols. Report on National Science Foundation contract NSF-GS-3287, University of Pennsylvania.Philadelphia: U.S. Regional Survey.

Labov, William, Charles Boberg, and Sharon Ash. 2006. *The Atlas of North American English: Phonetics, Phonology, and Sound Change*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

O'Cain, Raymond K. 1972. *A Social Dialect Survey of Charleston, South Carolina*. Doctoral dissertation University of Chicago.

Preston, Dennis R. 1986. "Five Visions of America." *Language in Society* 15: 221–40.

______. 1996. "Where the Worst English is Spoken." In *Focus on the USA*. Ed. Edgar W. Schneider. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 297–360.

Sledd, James H. 1966. "Breaking, Umlaut, and the Southern Drawl." *Language* 42: 18–41.

South in Your Mouth?
Vowels and Identity in Huntsville, Alabama

Rachael Allbritten

In a small, locally owned café, a quintessential burger joint in the northeast suburbs a few miles outside of Huntsville, Alabama, I ask a man from the community: "What kinds of things are special about the South and about this area?" "Everything," he says, with a wide grin and small laugh.

I am interviewing a local business owner who has been kind enough to talk to me about the community and about himself. I have traveled back to the community where I grew up to investigate its language and the identity of its people and to gain insight into the language and culture of the Huntsville area. Here, with the café as a jumping-off point, I find people of the area to interview and talk with. "Roger" (all names in this article are pseudonyms) sits with me in the café on his lunch break, wearing a button-down shirt tucked into his blue jeans and a cap advertising the name of his local business. He continues his answer to my question, "It's special to us that live here because this is home. I think Huntsville's a neat city. North Alabama's nice. I mean, the beauty of the mountains and the valleys and the water and everything makes it really ideal." He later tells me, "I'm a redneck because I grew up out in the country. I'm a hillbilly, I guess, too . . . and I say that with pride."

One of the reasons I conduct the interviews is my interest in studying the area's language "change in progress" (see below). I am particularly interested in a phenomenon called the "Southern Vowel Shift" (SVS) and its behavior specific to Huntsville and to suburban communities in north Alabama. I have discovered that careful research at the community level is necessary to dispel errors in the thinking of linguists and non-linguists alike. Much scholarly discussion on vowel shifts such as the SVS assumes that the speech changes are

ubiquitous. My research has shown that we should not oversimplify the SVS by assuming, as the literature commonly does, that most if not all Southerners are participating in this shift, particularly with regard to the younger speakers.

My research has also found that many non-Southerners believe that all or most Southerners speak nearly the same dialect. Somewhat surprisingly, my interviews with Southerners have shown that many also have this perception. Even if Southerners do not believe this for the whole region, many assume that the people within their state have nearly the same accent, and certainly that the people within one's community speak a common dialect. From one perspective there is good reason for this belief: language is a defining part of a people's culture, and sharing culture maintains a bond. Many Southerners feel a kindred spirit with other Southerners, and from the interviews I have gathered, Alabamians are no exception. However, subtle social factors and personal identity play an enormous role in a person's linguistic affiliation, even if it is entirely subconscious, driving linguistic differences. This essay reports on the differences in vowel shifting exhibited by my interviewees and examines the social factors that may be responsible.

What does it mean to say that vowels are "shifted"? This linguistic term refers to one of the natural processes of sound change in language. There have been many shifts in the English language over the course of its history. Fossils of sound change survive in the spelling of some words. For example, many words spelled like *sea* were at one time pronounced like *say* is today. Now they are pronounced with a vowel sound that is written with the letter *i* in many other languages (for example, *sí*, *pico*, or *mi* in Spanish). Even though the word *goose* has two of the letter *o*, it is pronounced with the sound written as the letter *u* in many languages. These particular shiftings of sounds were due to a change in English known as the Great Vowel Shift which occurred in England between approximately 1200 and 1600. It is unlikely that during the process of the sound shift the speakers realized that it was becoming more common to say *goose* less like *ghost* and more like we say the word today. I should emphasize that speakers rarely significantly change the way they pronounce vowels over their own lifetimes; the sound changes usually take place from generation to generation.

Because language is forever in a state of change, sounds will always be vulnerable to becoming gradually realized in a different way. Sound shifts are taking place in English today, three just within the United States. One, as mentioned above, is the "Southern Vowel Shift" (SVS) in the Southeastern United States. SVS causes the pronunciation of *heel* to be realized as *hill* and vice-versa. It makes the words *leg* or *head* sound sometimes like "laig" or "hay-ud," It can make the word *laid* sound like "led" or, especially, like "lied." Another phase of the SVS involves the changing pronunciation of the "long o" and "long u" vowels. Both vowels are pronounced further forward in the mouth and with the lips unrounded, so that *boat* comes out like "buh-oot" and *goose* (changing yet again!) is realized almost as the word *geese*. (*Geese*, on the other hand, remains separate from *goose* in pronunciation because it sounds more like "guhees.")

Shifts involving a group of sounds are usually caused when a single sound first changes (that is, when a population of speakers starts producing that sound in a different place and/or manner in the mouth). Because sound systems (phonology) in languages crave balance, people will start producing a second vowel differently to fill the place of the first. (See Nunnally, Appendix A, for a description of vowel production in the mouth and vowel charts.) In turn, the vacated place left by the second sound must be filled and so on, until, over several generations of speakers, the system has achieved balance again. One theory as to the particular trigger for the SVS is the pronunciation of a word like *time*, *five*, or *side* ("SAH-eed") as one drawn-out sound without movement to the "ee" sound. When *side* is pronounced without the "ee" sound in the vowel, the resulting sound is called a *monophthong* and is well known to anyone who has heard, or heard of, Southern speech (for essays specifically addressing this Southern feature, see Doxsey and Oggs). This sound is sometimes written like "sahd," though any Southerner knows intuitively that it does not sound like *sod* or *sad*; it is somewhere in-between. However, when *side* or *lied* moves out of the "space" for the "ah-ee" sound, it leaves a gap. In the case of the SVS in particular, this space is then filled by words containing an "ay" sound, like *laid*, which starts sounding like "luh-ayd," and the shifting process continues (See Nunnally, Appendix A, for a chart explaining the SVS). It should be strongly emphasized that the vowels can often be shifted more subtly than the

examples given here. Pronunciations reflecting the SVS are sometimes difficult to determine conclusively without computer-aided acoustic analysis (I address acoustic analysis further below. Also, see Appendix A and Feagin).

One way that linguists can research sound change is to have access to recordings made of speakers from the same community over a period of many years: comparing the speech on the recordings would result in a "real-time analysis." However, because recordings from eighty or more years ago are uncommon, especially recordings produced under comparable conditions, and because methods and technology change so often, a more practical solution is often that of an "apparent-time analysis." In 2000, for example, speakers born in 1920, 1950, and 1980 might all have been recorded. The assumption is that the forms of speech they had acquired by adulthood would have remained fairly consistent through the intervening years. Therefore, the researcher is "apparently" analyzing speech features from, say, 1940, 1970, and 2000. This method has been shown to be fairly reliable when comparing the speech of older speakers against that of younger speakers, and many researchers have successfully identified gradual sound change (called a "change in progress") as one moves from acoustic analyses of older speakers to those of the younger ones.

Because Huntsville has witnessed such great change over the last sixty-five years, it is a rather exciting place to conduct linguistic research. Before the 1950s, Huntsville's nickname was "The Watercress Capital of the world" (see Figure 1), an appellation now belonging to New Market, Alabama, very near the cafe where my interviews were conducted. The population of Huntsville in 1940 was 13,150. In 1950, German rocket scientists came to Huntsville's Redstone Arsenal to work in the early U.S. space program. This development had profound consequences for Huntsville, which is now known as "Rocket City" (see Figure 2) and where a large percentage of the population is employed in engineering and information services, especially for defense contractors and the U.S. space program, including NASA. The U.S. Census estimates that the 2005 population of Huntsville was 166,313 and the population of Madison County was 298,192, with a metro area population of 368,661. The Huntsville-Decatur Combined Statistical Area is now the fastest-growing area of Alabama and has a population of 510,088.[1] The participants of my study

FIGURE 1

Huntsville c. 1930, as “Watercress Capital of the World,” loads barrels for shipment to the White House. (Courtesy of Huntsville Public Library)

did not live in Huntsville proper, but instead in Madison County, northeast of, but not far from, the city limits.

Earlier I mentioned that Roger told me “with pride” that he was a redneck and hillbilly. He is clearly proud to be a Southerner and loves living in north Alabama. So why is it that I detect very little of the shifting of his vowels? To me, he sounds neither like a “redneck” nor a “hillbilly.” One part of the answer is Roger’s age: he was born in 1945. When sound change such as SVS is still being realized by the speakers, the older speakers may have been born when the change was still nascent. Since the changes are gradual, and since they generally take place generationally, a speaker born in 1945 may be less likely to have significantly shifted vowels. However, another piece of the puzzle is Roger’s affiliation to the greater South, since he does business in five different states and travels to them often. Even though he stays within the South, he has subconsciously learned to have a less locally oriented accent, or to be able to switch to one that is flexible in more situations—such as an interview by an academic (albeit a native).

I had had indications before, in my previous research on the progress of the SVS around Huntsville, that the situation with regard to the shift was perhaps not a simple one. I came across a rather more interesting pattern of the SVS than the straightforward one that I had expected. For my investigation, I have collected casual interviews (called sociolinguistic interviews) from white adults in Madison County, in the suburbs northeast of Huntsville, from 2004 to 2007. Although I have not yet added interviews with African American north Ala-

Figure 2

Huntsville 1963, as "Rocket City," receives visit from the White House as President John Kennedy discusses the space program with Wernher von Braun. (Courtesy of U.S. Army)

bamians, it would be intriguing to see if the pattern among African Americans in the Huntsville area corroborates the current view as summarized by Feagin (2003: 127–128), who points out that African Americans do not necessarily conform to local white norms of pronunciation. I selected the data for a pilot study from the pool of interviews conducted from 2004 to 2005, choosing three local residents of the northeast suburbs of Huntsville—females from three different generations born in 1934, 1953, and 1981. Choosing speakers of these different ages allowed me to conduct an apparent-time analysis looking at change in progress.

Although socioeconomic class has repeatedly been shown to have an effect on language features (e.g., Labov 1966), the composition and culture of the northeastern suburbs of Huntsville can make class distinctions unclear, so this demographic proved difficult to assign. Level of income or education may not always be an accurate indicator. The uneducated manager of a construction company may earn more money and live in a bigger house and nicer neighborhood than a college-educated schoolteacher or scientist, who may live in a mobile home. Even the college-educated schoolteacher and the college-educated scientist who have approximately the same income and education level may speak differently depending on their groups of peers, church attended, place of employment, level of training in academic circles, or specific college where the degree was obtained. Condition/appearance of dwelling may also be a general indicator of class, as a small but new, well-kept mobile home is generally not held in low regard among community members, but a run-down house with, for example, many possessions on the front lawn, is generally looked upon with much disdain by community members.

Often, a better indicator of speech patterns for this community is the rural versus urban orientation of the speaker, i.e., one's personal orientation either to the rural part of Madison County or to the City of Huntsville. In some subdivisions (housing developments) in this area, two neighbors may speak completely differently due to orientation. Hypothetically, one can imagine that one neighbor sold his farm and subsequently moved into a large suburban house, but his next-door neighbor moved from the city to the suburbs to have a bigger lot and still insists that he/she lives "in Huntsville." The former describes a speaker who is rural-oriented and the latter one who is urban-oriented.

A linguistic indicator of orientation is a language feature called deixis ("dike-sis" from a Greek word meaning "to point"), referring to the use of words in discourse that provide orientation by "pointing" outside the discourse in reference to person (*You* are a friend of *mine*), time (I went *yesterday*), or space (Put the book *over there*). Therefore, I attempted to note the spatially *deictic*—or perspective dependent—orientation of my interviewees toward Huntsville itself and the more rural area farther outside of the city limits. For example, if a speaker used the phrase "in the city" to refer to being inside the city limits of Huntsville, this would indicate a possible rural orientation. A speaker's uttering "went out to the county" when she was, in fact, outside of the city limits, would indicate a possible urban orientation.

Yet another indicator of orientation can be whether a speaker attended a county school or city school. The periphery around the city of Huntsville is considered "county," and this area feeds the five high schools in the Madison County School System, while seven high schools within the city limits are part of the Huntsville City School System. The neighborhood where I conduct my fieldwork is an area zoned for a Madison County high school.

Therefore, if I were to place the speakers in probable class categories, much demographic detail would be required. It is necessary to take many things into consideration and, even then, one often cannot be completely sure. In discussing the speakers in the study, I simply present the known demographic details, but do not posit a possible class.

THE FIRST SPEAKER under investigation, Dolly, was born in 1934 and raised in rural northeast Madison County, on a farm that had belonged to her grandmother. Her father was also from the area northeast of Huntsville, but her mother was from just north of the Tennessee-Alabama state line (approximately forty miles north of the area). Dolly owns a custodial business, where she works both within the city limits and in the northeast suburbs performing both managerial and cleaning duties. Her highest level of education completed is a high school diploma, which she received from the local county high school. Her income at the time of the interview was probably about the median for the area. Her peer group, primarily from her church, is a wide range of possible classes. She is the great-aunt of Natasha (below).

Caroline was born in 1953 on a military base outside of the South, but to Southern parents from North Carolina. She moved to Huntsville when she "was about eight years old" and was raised there, graduating from a city high school. She also holds two bachelor's degrees from the University of Alabama in Huntsville and works in Huntsville's "Research Park" for a defense contractor. She moved out of the city limits into the northeast suburbs in 1986, at the age of thirty-two, a few years before obtaining her second degree. After spending much of her young adult life far below the median income, she probably earned about twice the median at the time of the interview.

Natasha was born in 1981 on a military base in the South. Her mother is from outside the South, and her father is from the northeast suburbs of Huntsville, as are her paternal grandparents. She moved to the northeast suburbs of Huntsville in "the second grade." Dolly (above) is her great-aunt. Natasha is a military officer/nurse and her income level is either at or slightly above median. She graduated from the local county high school and holds a BSN in nursing from the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

To get an objective measurement of the speakers' vowels, I digitally recorded the speech from the interviews and measured the acoustic waves of the speakers' vowels with Praat, a computer software program developed for speech analysis (Boersma and Weenink 2007). The vowel in each utterance of a word produces its own particular pattern. This software takes hertz frequency measures of the patterns in the acoustic signals of each vowel and plots the vowel on a graph. The position of vowels on the graph approximates the places in the mouth where the vowels are produced (See Nunnally, Appendix A, for examples of a vowel-placement chart and of a Praat-type graph). With a sufficient number of a particular speaker's vowels plotted on the graph, I can then compare that speaker's production of the vowels influenced by the SVS to see if and how much they differ from unshifted vowel positions. Finally, I can compare the charts of plotted vowels for each of the different speakers to investigate how much evidence of the SVS appears in each interviewee's speech (See Feagin's essay for similar use of acoustic analysis to plot drawled syllables).

The results from these analyses and comparisons showed that the vowels of Dolly (b. 1934) were slightly shifted and that the vowels of Natasha (b. 1981), being younger than Dolly, were shifted much more. These findings were not

necessarily surprising by themselves. They seemed to indicate that the SVS is progressing slightly from Dolly's generation to Natasha's, though my results showed a much slower progression of the SVS in the suburban Huntsville area than some earlier studies have shown in other parts of the South and of Alabama (Labov, Ash, and Boberg 2006; Feagin 2003). This rate discrepancy alone is intriguing. However, in contrast to both of these speakers, the vowels of the middle-aged speaker, Caroline (b. 1953), seemed "stable" and did not show the telltale signs of the SVS. (For details, see Allbritten 2008.) From the perspective of an apparent-time analysis, this finding leaves a gap in the investigation of sound change and was, at the time, a surprising finding. While Caroline's education and work environment seemed to be the key factors affecting her speech, my own familiarity with the areas and continuing cultural study of it led me to believe that her urban or rural orientation might have a great deal of influence on her personal identity in this suburban community—and therefore her speech—and that it needed to be considered more closely.

I therefore revisited the transcriptions of the interviews with the three women to look for any indications of urban or rural identity in the content. Natasha, for example, explains in example 1 that, with regard to her high school friends, she was part of the "country crowd":

> (1) I had friends in a lot of the different groups like . . . the preppy crowd and the country crowd . . . I guess because I played ball I knew a lot of different people . . . As far as going out and stuff, probably the country people that hung out, we hung out, rode four-wheelers on the weekends and stuff like that.

I also found evidence in the interviews of deictic orientation in the speech of Dolly and Natasha. The following two sentences occur in Dolly's interview. In 2a, Dolly is referring to the tornado of 1989 (an event I ask all of my participants about), which destroyed part of the city of Huntsville but left the northeastern suburbs physically untouched.

> (2) a. . . . I was **in town** when that one hit.
> b. . . . And I remember uh, you know, we didn't get **to town** a lot. So we had movies at the schools.

Here Dolly says "in town" and "to town," revealing that, from her perspective, we were not currently "in town" while talking in the café, which is approximately seven miles outside the city limits. Like her great-aunt, Natasha also used these same phrases to refer to being in Huntsville proper. She is also referring to the tornado of 1989 in the first example.

(3) a. . . . Mom was **in town** and we didn't know anything about her, so that was pretty scary.
b. She lives close **to town** so it was easier for me to get to work.

Because of their relative perspectives shown in these examples, these two women appear to be rural-oriented. Unfortunately, I did not happen to collect any such deictic references in Caroline's interview. We can speculate that her orientation may be urban since she attended an urban high school.[2] Because I was not able to find any overtly spoken indication of urban-rural orientation in Caroline's interview, I browsed the thirteen other interviews I had collected in the area at that time.

In another interview with a young man I will call Brad, I found the following utterance:

(4) I wanna play soccer with F. and G. and all those guys. They play on a league **here in town**.

Brad's use of "here" along with "in town" reveals that, from his perspective, we are currently "in town" though we are speaking in the exact same café where Dolly and Natasha uttered examples 2 and 3. I also added an acoustic analysis of Brad's vowel system to find out to what extent it had undergone the SVS.

Brad, a white male, was born in 1978 to Southern parents. He was raised from birth in the northeastern suburbs of Huntsville. He attended the local county high school and has a bachelor's degree from Middle Tennessee State University. He works in real estate, in the occupation sometimes called "house flipping," as well as holding a second job as a bartender. Because Brad appears to be urban-orientated, I conducted the acoustic analysis of his speech to see

how it compared with all three women's, but particularly to Caroline's acoustic speech patterns.

The results showed that Brad's speech is not at all advanced with respect to the SVS, even though, as a member of the youngest demographic like Natasha, his should be the most advanced. Out of the three other speakers analyzed in this study, his (lack of) advancement of the SVS patterns most closely to that of Caroline, even though he is only three years older than Natasha and should pattern as she does if the progress of the SVS is the same for everyone in the area. Given that we have some indication that Brad is urban-oriented, this facet of his identity may be one of the key influencing factors for the general lack of SVS evidence in his vowel production.

While the Southern Shift has not progressed as clearly in Caroline's speech, her level of education, urban-orientation, and work environment should certainly be factored into analysis of the placement of her vowels in acoustic space. However, it is evident from Caroline's speech that she *does* sound like a speaker of Southern American English. What I do *not* want to suggest is that, due to Caroline's demographics, she is not as reflective of general Southern speech as, for example, Dolly and Natasha, and that this makes her a less authentic or representative Alabamian. Rather, I put forth that all speakers in this area are not necessarily comparable when it comes to a particular sound shift.

It is entirely possible that Caroline's exposure to the professional world and her need to address wider, non-local audiences has watered down some features of her Southern speech. However, through continued interviews in this area, I may also discover that Caroline is merely part of another growing trend. This possibility has already been suggested by the vowel analysis of Brad. We might also predict that a hypothetical middle-aged, rural-oriented speaker would be more comparable to Dolly and/or Natasha.

The take-away message of my research done near Huntsville is that people cannot assume that the speech of all Southerners will be undergoing the SVS. It is important to note that there are several contributing factors to realization of the SVS and that there is enormous complexity of the variables which interact to create the manner of speaking of a given member of the community. In my own observation, I hear variability in the vowels typical of the SVS even within

the speech of one speaker. For example, while relating a recent political event (a mishap in the Alabama senate involving state senator Charles Bishop), the vowels of our "hillbilly" businessman Roger were the most shifted of the entire interview. However, Roger's most-shifted vowels were still hardly shifted when compared with the extremely shifted vowels that I overheard in the speech of groups of manual laborers who frequented the café for lunch. With the latter group, there is possibly a compounding of factors, such as approval of local peers and assignment of a "salt-of-the-earth" meaning to the vowels of the SVS, which cause the group to have a far more advanced SVS: a different path from other community members. Perhaps in this community a full realization of the SVS will become increasingly associated with manual laborers, with those who have both low income and low education, and other factors that are more typically associated with a working class.

I believe the effect of the dichotomy of rural or urban orientation on speech is a byproduct of the changes taking place in this dynamic area of the southern U.S. as well. Huntsville is undergoing extreme demographic and physical change at present, developments which are very much on the minds of the "native" community members. The Huntsville area, in particular, may also lend itself to studies of the effects of urbanization (Frazer 2000) and/or globalization (Heller 2003; Meyerhoff and Niedzielski 2003) on the speech of locals, especially the children, whose peers are often the children of non-Southerners who have recently moved to the area for work. These "outsiders" bring with them very different ideas of class relationships as well and have the potential to reshape and redefine any existing class boundaries in the area.

It will be interesting to see the future of the SVS in Huntsville. The SVS could turn out to be a shibboleth identifying socioeconomic class membership if more traditional classes form in Madison County. On the other hand, we could see a more general revival of the SVS in Huntsville over the next decade. Past studies, such as those conducted in Ocracoke Island, North Carolina, (Schilling-Estes 1997; Schilling-Estes and Wolfram 1999) have shown instances in which a dialect's distinctiveness has suffered due to increased exposure to "outside" dialects or due to higher prestige in the ability to speak a "Standard" American English. After World War II, Ocracoke experienced a large upsurge in the tourist industry, exposing locals to other dialects and resulting in a

gradual decline of features unique to the island.

By contrast, these same studies show that exposure to outside dialects does not always dissipate dialectal features. Schilling-Estes also studied Smith Island, Maryland, in which the dialectal features are actually intensifying over time as islanders gain more contact with the mainland and outside dialects. As more locals move away from Smith Island, the features increasingly hold a sense of pride for those who remain and particularly for those who return with a renewed sense of being an islander (1997). Similarly, in a classic study of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, first published in 1963, William Labov showed that as more new families moved to the island over time, the "old families" of Martha's Vineyard intensified the features of their dialect. They proudly viewed themselves to be "true" locals, the authentic residents of Martha's Vineyard and the only ones who had the linguistic right to the traditional features.

All of the residents of the northeastern suburbs of Huntsville commented on the great changes that are molding the city. In particular, a phenomenon called "BRAC" is on the residents' minds. To the residents, BRAC (Base Relocation and Closure) means thousands of people are being relocated to Huntsville to work on the Redstone Arsenal Army Base, the Missile Defense Program, and NASA. In 1995, Huntsville had approximately two thousand new residents who were relocated due to BRAC. The current round of BRAC, which began in 2005, will continue until 2011 and translates to a much larger influx, *at least* five times that of ten years ago. Web sites have been created such as www.bractohuntsville.org and the Tennessee Valley BRAC committee's official site, www.tvbrac.org. Several national defense agencies are also being relocated to Huntsville from Arlington, Virginia. An article on al.com (Peck 2007) stated that Huntsville had an almost 10 percent, or 32,947, increase in population from 2000 to 2006. Just as the 1950s' arrival of the U.S. space program in Huntsville saw a redefinition of the city, the community members I talked to are highly aware of another wave of change on its way. Some of the comments from the interviews I collected in 2007 are included here:

> (5) [The area] has grown up so much. It's changed so much since I was growing up. The Redstone Arsenal—obviously there's tons of people that move into this area because of that. There's tons of people that are government that

move to this area . . . None of this was here, like all these subdivisions. It's crazy. ***—Beth, born 1978***.

(6) The one thing about Huntsville being so dependent upon the military base [is] there's a lot of different people that move through here. ***—Jake, born 1964***

(7) Yeah, it's changed very much. That's been true for many years now—Redstone Arsenal creating that change, I guess. ***—Roger, born 1945***

(8) This community has grown so, and so many people are in it. It's just—you wouldn't believe when we were coming up, what wasn't here. It wasn't like it is now. ***—Margaret, born 1936***

Some believe that the Huntsville dialect will take a path similar to what they perceive Atlanta has taken. They believe that a dissipation of the Southern accent is the future, if not already the present. Roger told me, "I'm going to say Georgia—probably from just south of Atlanta north—talk very much like we do. But for a lot of the same reasons. Atlanta has been such a growing city for so many years." In a 2007 interview, I asked Alice (b. 1938), "Do you think [all the growth] is having an effect on the language of the area?" She replied, "Oh, it will eventually, yeah. It's just like anything. If you have a true, clear, pure version of something, once it's intermingled with other versions, you're going to change."

Jake (b. 1964) referred to Huntsville as "a melting pot," as did Roger. When I asked Roger if people in north Alabama speak differently than people in other parts of the south, he replied, "Really, they do. And I think it's our diverse culture. I think it's a melting pot. Huntsville, Alabama, has so few natives."

I noticed that many other community members were sharply aware of the distinction of being native. I asked my interviewees if people in the Huntsville area generally speak the same. Alice told me in response, "It depends on if they're natives to Huntsville. You find very few natives of this area anymore. Most of them have moved in." Margaret (b.1936) replied, "Yeah. Unless they've come from up north and come here to live . . . they're different."

Some lifelong or generations-back residents will inevitably become proud of their "authentic" heritage as Huntsville's population continues to swell with people from all over the U.S., and this will surely be reflected linguistically, just

as happened with residents of Martha's Vineyard (Labov 1963). As residents increasingly take pride in being "true Huntsvillians," we could possibly expect a resurgence and intensification of Southern features such as the SVS. However, if some residents of Huntsville believe it shares commonalities with Atlanta—as Roger did—the opposite effect could take place. Alternatively, north Alabama could witness a dichotomy of its residents' accents: those who want to stress "native" status versus those who want to stress "cosmopolitan" status.

A more widespread vowel analysis of the speakers in the Huntsville area would certainly be enlightening on the topic of the Southern Vowel Shift. However, the goal of the preliminary study was not to show how Huntsville is just like everywhere else in the South. Rather, the goal was show how Huntsville actually is. It cannot be assumed that areas in the South—or in any dialect area for that matter—will be linguistically homogenous. Margaret told me, "They say, you know, you can tell the Southerners by the way they speak." While she is almost certainly right, we should not take it to mean that everyone uses the same resources in how they personally construct "sounding Southern." ■

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Catherine Evans Davies for suggesting inclusion of my work in Huntsville in this issue and to thank Joey Brackner, Anne Kimzey, and Deborah Boykin for their helpful suggestions. In particular, I very much thank Tom Nunnally for his support and for his extremely helpful revisions, suggestions, and edits, which greatly improved the clarity and form of this article.

Notes

1. The metro area includes part of the population of Morgan County near the city of Decatur, many of whom work and socialize in Huntsville. The Combined Statistical Area includes Huntsville, Madison, Decatur, Athens, Scottsboro and several other smaller towns. Sources: http://www.hsvcity.com/about/demographics.php; http://www.census.gov/popest/cities/; http://www.huntsvillealabamausa.com/new_exp/community_data/demographics/summary.html; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huntsville%2C_Alabama
2. All three women spend time working within the Huntsville city limits, and both Natasha and Caroline received their University educations from the same institu-

tion. However, this is oversimplifying a bit; there are other considerations to be taken into account even within these criteria.

References

Allbritten, Rachael. 2008. "The Southern Vowel Shift in Alabama: The Role of Urban Orientation in Intra-Community Variation." *Journal of Southern Linguistics* 32:1 19-27.

Boersma, Paul and David Weenink. 2007. *Praat: Doing Phonetics by Computer*. Version 4.5.15. www.praat.org

Feagin, Crawford. 2003. "Vowel Shifting in the Southern States." In *English in the Southern United States*. Eds. Stephen J. Nagle and Sara L. Sanders. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 126–140.

Frazer, Timothy. 2000. "Are Rural Dialects Endangered like Island Dialects?" *American Speech* 75: 347–349.

Heller, Monica. 2003. "Globalization, the New Economy, and the Commodification of Language and Identity." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 7: 473–492.

Labov, William. 1966. *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics.

____. 1963. "The Social Motivation of a Sound Change." In *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. Ed. William Labov. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Repr. 1972. 1–42.

Labov, William, Sharon Ash, and Charles Boberg. 2006. *The Atlas of North American English: Phonetics, Phonology and Sound Change: A Multimedia Reference Tool*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Meyerhoff, Miriam and Nancy Niedzielski. 2003. "The Globalisation of Vernacular Variation." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 7: 534–555.

Peck, John. 2007. "Rocket City Blasts to Top in State Census." al.com, affiliated with *The Huntsville Times*. 04/06. www.huntsvillealabamausa.com/news/biz_news/2007/040607_census.htm

Schilling-Estes, Natalie. 1997. "Accommodation versus Concentration: Dialect Death in Two Post-Insular Island Communities." *American Speech* 72: 12–32.

Schilling-Estes, Natalie, and Walt Wolfram. 1999. "Alternative Models of Dialect Death: Dissipation vs. Concentration." *Language* 75: 486–521.

The Monophthongization of [aɪ] in Elba and the Environs: A Community Study

Anna Head Oggs

Judge Marion Brunson, former probate judge of Coffee County and author of *Pea River Reflections*, wrote, "Practically every generation has had a flood story about the Pea River to pass on" (1984: 7). The passages shown with Figure 1 are excerpts from narratives about flooding in Elba, Alabama, that I collected from 2002–2003.[1] Although the stories bring local history to life, I was not writing a chronicle of disaster. Instead, I was launching a study of Southern English in the Alabama Wiregrass area (southeast Alabama, especially Coffee, Pike, Dale, Houston, Geneva, and Covington counties) using the topic of the floods to elicit speech data for linguistic analysis. This study examined linguistic variation within a context of variables, some concerning language itself (internal variables) and some concerning social characteristics of speakers and communities (external variables). This essay reports on the initial stage of my research (Head 2003).

First, I will lay a linguistic and historical foundation for my study, followed by a description of my research community and participants. I will continue with a discussion of the variables investigated. Finally, I will present the results of the study and my conclusions regarding the value of the community study.

Introduction: Just Say "Ah"

Montgomery points out that "both Southerners and non-Southerners identify the South by its language patterns" (1997: 5), and Metcalf identifies Southern English as "the most notable and talked about style of American speech" (2000: 5). Nagle and Sanders state that "the English of the Southern United States may be the most studied regional variety of any language"

The 1998 Flood: African American, female, age 43

My mom had called and . . . she says, "Get up! You can't even see your front doorsteps!" . . . but when we did get inside the house, my kitchen area was into my living room. I don't know where the living room was. For that water to do that much damage you knew it had to be powerful.

The 1990 Flood: European American, male, age 64

We were up all night . . . with the mayor and the city council. Our mayor, when state troopers, the police chief, representatives, myself, we all told him, "Mayor, you need to evacuate at this time," he broke down and cried, "I'm losing my town," and it brings tears now to my eyes to think about it.

The 1929 Flood: European American, female, age 78

. . . I had a pet hen and her name was Tootsie, and the next day of course we could just see everything, passing, floating on the water. Furniture just floating, and I looked out there and there was my pet hen Tootsie on a log . . . passing by.

The 1929 Flood: European American, male, age 84:

I was eleven years old . . . and my brother was just two weeks old, so . . . some men . . . took my mother in a chair holding the baby two doors to the two-story boarding house, and the rest of us followed and went up. And numerous people had to stay there and the water kept coming and kept coming and it was really frightening . . . There were houses being washed away and during the night it was especially frightening because you could hear cows lowing, and trees and houses and things were hitting this house and shaking it, and you wondered how long we would be there.

4,000 FACE DEATH IN ALABAMA FLOOD, SUBMERGING ELBA

Entire Town Under 3 to 18 Feet of Water With People in Attics and on Housetops.

FRANTIC APPEALS FOR HELP

All Will Perish Unless Aid Is Swift, Says Governor Graves, Speaking to State on Radio.

TROOPS ORDERED TO SCENE

Six Escape From District, Bringing Stories of Terror—350 Children Marooned in Schoolhouse.

Figure 1

Front page, *New York Times*, March 15, 1929.

(2003: 1). In regard to the specific characteristics of Southern English, Dorrill points to "the salience of phonology [the sound system] as the most distinctive feature of the speech of the 'most distinctive speech region in the Unites States'" (2003: 120). Similarly, Thomas states that "discussions of the vowel variants of Southern English have been extensive and have continued without interruption for over a hundred years" and goes on to state that "no other region of the United States has attracted this level of interest in its vowels" (2003: 150). For instance, Clopper reports that non-linguistically trained Northern listeners (Indiana University undergraduates) categorized talkers as Southerners if they exhibited "a voiced fricative in 'greasy' [that is, a z sound rather than an s sound], a highly diphthongal [o] [*don't* pronounced as *doh-oont*], and highly monophthongal [aɪ] [m*y* as *mah*] and [ɔɪ] [*oil* as *awl*]" (2000: 63). *See* Nunnally, Appendix A, for explanations of phonetic symbols.

Of these noticeable vowel variants, Thomas calls the Southern pronunciation of the English "long i" a "hallmark of Southern speech" (2003: 150), and Dorrill considers it "the closest thing to a generally identifying feature" of Southern phonology (2003: 123). Sledd refers to this variation of "long i" as "the Confederate vowel" (1966: 25). All are commenting on the fact that throughout the region, most Southerners sometimes pronounce [aɪ] as [a:]; that is, the two-part vowel, or diphthong, in a word like *ride* (Standard English "rah-eed") will sound something like "rahd." To produce this variant, the first sound of [aɪ] is lengthened (written phonetically as [a:]), and the second sound, [ɪ], is weakened or omitted. The diphthong [aɪ] is, therefore, monophthongized into [a:] (changed into a one-part vowel, or monophthong, that does not "glide" to a second sound; see Appendix A for more on the Southern monophthongization of the [aɪ] diphthong). Metcalf observes that "to be recognized as a Southerner, all you have to do is open your mouth and say 'ah'" (2000: 5). This diagnostic monophthongization of [aɪ] is recognizable not only by linguists but also by untrained listeners. In regard to Southerners' own awareness of the variant, Feagin states that "the monophthongal unglided vowel in *I* and *my* symbolizes all Southerners' identification with the South" (2000: 342–343).

Thus, [a:], the monophthongized [aɪ], is held to be a quintessentially Southern variable; however, as Labov tells us, "the more that is known about

a language [feature], the more we can find out about it" (1972: 98). In 2003, I completed a study of the frequency as well as social and linguistic conditioning of [aɪ] monophthongization in south Alabama—specifically, speech in the community of Elba and its environs. However, before further discussing this community and presenting some of the findings from Head 2003, I first want to place [aɪ] monophthongization in linguistic history.

The Monophthongization of [aɪ]: A Short History

To understand the present status of [aɪ] in Southern speech, it is necessary to consider its development in the context of an ancient sound change, the Great Vowel Shift, and a recent and ongoing sound change, the Southern Vowel Shift. The Great Vowel Shift, "a systematic change in the articulation of the Middle English long vowels before and during the early Modern English period," is "the most salient of all phonological developments in the history of English" (Pyles and Algeo 1993: 170), and is responsible for the change in which the Middle English sound "ee" (spelled *i* and written phonetically as [i:]) became a diphthong by 1500. Taking the word *ride*, for example, where Chaucer said "reed," Shakespeare said "ruheed" (written phonetically as [rəid]). In most varieties of English, this "uhee" diphthong eventually became our modern "ahee" [aɪ], as in [raɪd]. From this [aɪ] developed the Southern monophthong [a:], as in [ra:d]. Labov and Ash contend that the Southern Vowel Shift, still taking place across the South today, "is essentially a continuation of the Great Vowel Shift, following the general principles of [sound change] that duplicate [. . .] many of the 16th century movements [in vowel placement]" (1997: 513). The monophthongization of [aɪ] to [a:], they further contend, is part of the Southern Vowel Shift.

Two possible explanations have been offered as to the underlying reasons for the development of the Southern accent as we know it today, including [aɪ] monophthongization. One theory is that settlement history is largely responsible for the development of regional dialects. For example, Bailey acknowledges that it is a "long-standing premise of American dialectology [. . .] that American regional dialects are largely a consequence of settlement history and were formed by the time of the American Revolution" (1997: 255). Similarly, Mufwene states, "Where the presence of African populations was significant

especially during the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, such as in the southeastern parts of the United States, [Africans are likely to have] favored options in English that were more consistent with (some) African languages, such as the monophthongization of [the vowels [aɪ] and [aʊ]]" (2003: 71).

However, Bailey and Tillery (1996), Bailey (1997), and Metcalf (2000) have conjectured that it is after the Civil War that certain fixtures of present-day Southern speech became widely used, including [aɪ] monophthongization. Werner states, "The idea of a 'New South' was perhaps the preeminent intellectual innovation of the post-Civil War era," and proponents of the New South Creed such as Henry Grady "welcomed investment and encouraged business enterprise" (2001: 573). Bailey posits that some of the core features of contemporary Southern English were the product of linguistic activity between 1875 and World War II and cites New South developments such as the emergence of stores (particularly country stores that held liens on tenant farmers), villages and towns, and the expansion of railroads as potential "conduits for the diffusion of linguistic changes" (1997: 271). Building upon Bailey's (1997) research, Montgomery and Schneider (2001) have supported and extended Bailey's claims with the Southern Plantation Overseers' Corpus (*corpus* means a body of data for linguistic study); Schneider divides these features into "Traditional Southern" and "New Southern," and following Bailey (1997) classifies monophthongal [aɪ] as a "New Southern" feature (2003: 34).

Community and Participant Parameters

Despite the historical and cultural visibility of the region, there is "no monolithic South" (Hitchcock 2000), and subregional differences extend beyond the traditional division of upper and lower South. Fitzgerald explains, for example, that "in large portions of north Alabama [during the Civil War], yeoman disaffection with the Confederacy became a critical political force" (1988: 566); one north Alabama county, Winston, "voted to remain neutral as a 'Free State' during the War" (Dodd 1972: 9). Similarly, the Wiregrass region of Alabama was also, though to a lesser extent, characterized by a yeoman Unionism during the war (Fitzgerald 1988: 566). In regard to culture, Southern literature reflects the diversity of the region, and contemporary Southern writers "share a common interest in the stories of those whose voices have long been silenced,

whose stories may heretofore have been told only in small, disenfranchised, and often oppressed communities: people of color, members of lower socioeconomic classes, or individuals from subregions whose populations have traditionally been stereotyped by their heritage or the area in which they live, such as the Cajuns in South Louisiana or the poor Whites in the Appalachian Mountains" (Disheroon-Green 2005: 1077). Thus, despite the South's distinctiveness, it is also a diverse region, and scholars of Southern history and literature have been forced to examine the "cultures" of the South.

For this reason, a study of one area of the South cannot characterize Southern English in its entirety. Although it has been established that Southern English is distinctive "among regional varieties in the United States," it contains "rich internal diversity" (Nagle and Sanders 2003: 1). As Montgomery points out, "although the South is the most distinctive speech region in the United States, it is hardly more uniform than the nation as a whole" (1989: 761). No community study can be expected to describe the language of the South as a whole, but instead to contribute to the body of research that exists on Southern English.

For my 2003 study of variation present within Southern English, I chose Elba, Alabama, in the Wiregrass region as my research community. Elba provides an interesting laboratory because it is at once a unique part of the South but also highly representative. Linguistic Atlas expert Lee Pederson designates the Georgia and Alabama Wiregrass region as one of eighteen subvarieties of Southern English (Algeo 2003: 7). On the other hand, to untrained listeners the Wiregrass may represent a microcosm of Southern speech. In research into perceptual dialectology, Preston has repeatedly solicited the opinions of lay respondents about where people speak Southern English (1989, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2005). He reports that 96 percent of his Michigan respondents believe that "the heart of the South is to be found in southeastern Alabama" (1997: 317).

Elba, in Coffee Country, is a typical small Southern town—almost. Though it is typical in the sense that it celebrates "Friday Night Football Fever" in the fall and that its heart can be found in its "downtown," it is atypical in that the flooding of the Pea River has shaped its history and that among its citizens has been a curious assortment of Alabama historical and political characters. For

example, in spite of the fact that the Wiregrass was largely typified by Union sentiment during the Civil War, Alberta Martin (one of the last known Confederate widows—and believed for a time to be the last Confederate widow) spent most of her life in Elba. In regard to political figures of the Jim Crow era and the civil rights movement, Elba is home to the Folsom clan (including not only Big Jim but also Cornelia Wallace); additionally, Dallas County sheriff Jim Clark, infamous for the "Bloody Sunday" incident in Selma, grew up in Elba and returned there at the end of his life. Recently, research for the Carsey Institute was conducted in Elba, resulting in a study entitled "Changing Church in the South: Religion and Politics in Elba, Alabama." The Carsey Institute, located at the University of New Hampshire, "sponsors independent, interdisciplinary research that documents trends and conditions in rural America." Elba was chosen based on voting trends; while much of Alabama was overwhelmingly Democratic or overwhelmingly Republican, Elba exhibited a degree of political balance (Ardery 2007). Elba's typicality yet simultaneous uniqueness makes it an interesting research community; while it is undoubtedly a quintessential small Southern town in many ways, it is also a meteorological and political anomaly.

Because storytelling produces "styles analogous to how people talk in [. . .] everyday situations" (Bell 1984: 150), I used Elba's history of flooding as the basis for my interview topic. Since most people in Elba tell flood narratives, each of the forty-two research participants was asked to discuss these shared natural disasters. Many of the speakers told performed narratives, that is, stories that they had told time and time again. Others described what they could remember about one or more floods, a format closer to casual interview style. In both cases, my goal as the interviewer was to create a comfortable environment so as to promote speech unmonitored by the speaker. All interviews were conducted in settings that were comfortable for the individual participants so as to minimize the observer's paradox (the influence of the interviewer's presence on the interviewee, changing the language being observed). Additionally, Elba is my hometown, and thus, my prior relationships with the research participants, some extending from childhood, in combination with the interview topic, and the locations in which the interviews were carried out, provided a near-optimal environment for natural speech.

All forty-two participants in the 2003 research were residents of Elba at the time of the study, including two males and two females who originally resided in other towns within southeast Alabama. Two additional male speakers were originally from small communities located outside the city limits, but often considered locally to be part of Elba. Half of the participants were male, half were female, and ages ranged from eleven to eighty-eight. Each participant was middle class or working class and either European American or African American. (Although I have yet to include Hispanic Alabamians in my research, this large and growing contingent will eventually exert linguistic influence throughout the state. See Picone's essay for an overview of current cultural and linguistic shifts.)

Variables Investigated

Sociolinguistic research has discovered a range of possible influences on an individual's language use, such as whether and how often a particular speaker might monophthongize [aɪ] to [a:]. The speaker's incidence and frequency of using the variant may be influenced by (correlate with) two kinds of variables: social or external factors (e.g., style, urban orientation, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and age) and linguistic or internal factors (the following sound environment, part of speech, syllable stress, and word frequency). The following survey discusses prior research on each of these correlates of variation and [aɪ] monophthongization.

External Variables

As Bell explains, "style is essentially speakers' response[s] to their audience[s]" (1984: 145). Regarding style, my study addressed two closely related methodological concerns in the sociolinguistic literature: the observer's paradox and audience design. Hay, Jannedy, and Mendoza-Denton (1999) point to audience design as a significant factor in [aɪ] monophthongization in a study that examined the speech of Oprah Winfrey. Their analysis of her popular daytime talk show provided evidence that when Winfrey talked about an African American (usually an upcoming guest) she was more likely to use [a:] in her speech (1999). The implication seems to be that Winfrey manipulates her dialect from a more standard English style using [aɪ] to a

less standard form using [aː], and the change is in response to the audience's expectation that her dialect will match the topic. When the topic concerns African Americans, she monophthongizes [aɪ] since [aː] is a pervasive feature of AAVE (see below). Similarly, my interviewees told their flood stories to me, a fellow Elban Southerner, reducing their feelings that more standard language would be appropriate.

In regard to the urban/non-urban dimension of [aɪ] variation, Feagin observes that the distinction between urban and non-urban speech in Southern English "has long been noted by [untrained] native speakers and by linguists" (1979: 23). More recently, Thomas, in a study of Texas, has shown a linguistic contrast developing between European Americans living in metropolitan areas and those living in smaller towns and rural areas, with monophthongization as more characteristic of non-urban areas (1997: 144; see also Doxsey's essay).

In regard to ethnicity, monophthongization has been linked with both African-American and European-American speech. Edwards (1997) discusses the speech of working-class African Americans in Detroit, noting that they are more likely to use the monophthongized variant; Bailey and Bernstein (1989) also found African Americans in Texas to be more monophthongized than European Americans. Similarly, Hay, Jannedy, and Mendoza-Denton (1999) identify African-American ethnicity as a factor in [aɪ] monophthongization. In her study of African-American and European-American speech in Memphis, Tennessee, Fridland states that "[w]hile often considered a feature characteristic of White Southern speech, [aɪ] monophthongization has also been recorded in Black speech, both within and outside the South" (2003: 279). She elaborates by stating that "African Americans in Memphis appear to be moving toward forms which symbolize involvement in the Southern community and its associated heritage" (2003: 296).

Socioeconomic status also plays a role in language variation. With respect to this variable, Crane (1977) found that Tuscaloosa's highest class is most likely to use standard [aɪ]. Similarly, Edwards (1997) finds the highest incidence of monophthongization among Detroit working-class African Americans.

Gender has also been documented to have a significant correlation with monophthongization: researchers have found that, when controlling for age,

older men typically use the monophthongized form most. Edwards (1997), examining the speech of working-class African Americans in Detroit, and Bowie (2001), examining the speech of middle-class European Americans in Waldorf, Maryland, report this finding, suggesting that gender may transcend both class and ethnicity.

In regard to age, studies have largely indicated that older speakers of both genders use the monophthongized form [a:] more than younger speakers. Studies that present evidence to this effect include Crane (1977), Bailey & Bernstein (1989), Edwards (1997), and Bowie (2001). However, Fridland's study of Memphis (2000) found all speaker populations (in regard to both ethnicity and age) moving toward monophthongization. This finding was reaffirmed in a 2003 study in which Fridland found [aɪ] monophthongization to be "a feature of Memphis speech generally" (279).

Internal Variables

Researchers have identified four internal variables that affect the incidence of [aɪ] monophthongization: the type of sound that follows [aɪ] in a word (following environment), part of speech, syllable stress, and word frequency. Of these, following environment is discussed most frequently in the literature (See Nunnally, Appendix A, for explanation of voiced and voiceless sounds and terms such as *obstruent* below). A number of researchers (e.g., Fridland 2000, Anderson 1999, 2002, Labov and Ash 1997) report that monophthongization occurs before voiced obstruents (e.g., in words like *ride* and *prize*). Hazen (2000: 221) reports that the following sound environments that favor [aɪ] monophthongization rank as follows from most to least favorable:

liquids (e.g., [l] as in *mile* and rhotic liquids [i.e., r sounds] as in *tire*),
nasals (e.g., [n] in *mine*),
voiced obstruents (e.g., [d] in *bide*), and
voiceless obstruents (e.g., [t] in *bite*).

Bowie (2001) reports a similar pattern: following liquids strongly favor monophthongization; nasals and voiced obstruents favor monophthongization, and voiceless obstruents disfavor monophthongization. Thomas (2001) also cites following [l] as a favored environment.

Bowie (2001) examined part of speech and syllable stress. He observes that

secondary stress within the word slightly favors monophthongization and reports that nouns, adverbs, and verbs favor monophthongization.

Hay, Jannedy, and Mendoza-Denton (1999) found word frequency, which they set as greater than or fewer than five in their corpus, to be a significant predictor of [aɪ] monophthongization. Frequent words were prone to monophthongization.

Exploring the Intersection of Internal and External Variables

Discussions of several of the external variables above identified differences in [aɪ] variation: older speakers monophthongizing more than younger, men more than women. However, when the incidence of [aɪ] monophthongization is considered in relation only to a following environment of voiceless obstruents (e.g., when [aɪ] is followed by the sounds in words such as *pipe, bite, like, life, scythe, mice*, *Elisha*, and *righteous*), another picture emerges.

As mentioned above, older speakers have been shown generally to use the monophthongized form more than younger speakers do. However, research in Texas (Bailey and Bernstein 1989) and Appalachia (Bailey and Tillery 1996) suggests that monophthongization before voiceless obstruents is more likely in younger speakers. These researchers have interpreted this finding as evidence for change in progress. Thomas (2001) also discusses monophthongization of [aɪ] before voiceless obstruents as a newer pattern, predominating in Southern Appalachia, and Anderson (2002) has discussed a similar change as characteristic of African American Detroiters who have forged a relationship with Appalachian whites in Detroit. Turning to the variable of gender, Bailey and Bernstein (1989), looking at Texas, found women to be leading the change in monophthongization before voiceless obstruents (cf. Bowie's (2001) finding that women in southern Maryland are moving away from monophthongization). Obviously, researchers must look at all the variables, internal and external, to understand seemingly conflicting results.

Monophthongization of [aɪ] in Elba

From my interviewees' stories of floods in Elba, Alabama, I collected data pertinent to the variation of [aɪ] and [a:]. I coded the data (gave it codes for statistical analysis) based on the variables reviewed above and performed

analyses using a statistical software package called JMP IN 4.0. The results of my analysis yielded several conclusions (for complete results, see Head 2003). First and foremost, the rate of monophthongization in Elba, Alabama, is quite high. Eighty-two percent of [aɪ]s among the speakers sampled were pronounced as monophthongs [a:].

The Bearing of External Variables on Results

Of the external or social factors tested in this study, age contributed most significantly to the monophthongization of [aɪ] in Elba, Alabama. As consistent with other studies, older speakers monophthongized at a statistically significant higher frequency compared to the rate of younger speakers. Additionally, in Elba as opposed to some locations researched (see above), there is no evidence of increasing monophthongization before voiceless obstruents among the younger speakers. However, the data set represents only three speakers between the ages of eleven and twenty and only seven speakers between twenty-one and thirty-nine. Future research should include additional speakers in these age groups for verification of the findings.

Contrary to research focusing on [aɪ] variation in other locales, the 2003 study did not reveal ethnicity to significantly contribute to monophthongization. However, this corpus represents eighteen African-American research participants and twenty-four European-American research participants, and several of the African-American speakers provided shorter narratives. Thus, subsequent research may benefit from interviewing additional African-American speakers.

Similarly, though socioeconomic status (SES) was not found to be a significant factor in monophthongization, this study included only ten working-class research participants. Adding additional working-class speakers might provide a better test of the relevance of SES to the monophthongization of [aɪ]in Elba.

As with ethnicity and SES, and contrary to previous research, this study did not identify gender as significantly conditioning monophthongization. One of the most consistent findings in the sociolinguistic literature is that women are more sensitive to stylistic constraints than men, and thus are more likely to use standard variants in interviews. My female participants may have been

disinclined to shift to a more formal style and avoidance of variants considered less standard both because of the topic the research participants discussed and my previous relationship with them, as discussed earlier. This hypothesis could be tested in a subsequent study by asking participants to read a paragraph and a word list, since these language situations will promote a more formal style, one which has been shown to disfavor monophthongization. (See Doxsey's essay for discussion of the influence of more formal styles of speech on the incidence of monophthongization.)

The Bearing of Internal Variables on Results

Consistent with the research literature, the sound environment following [aɪ] had the greatest impact on monophthongization. Also as suggested in several studies, voiceless obstruents inhibited monophthongization. However, the corpus contained relatively few instances in which [aɪ] or [a:] was followed by a vowel or glide. For future study, the environments would need to be equally represented.

Part of speech was also significant in this study. Statistical analysis found words of all parts of speech to favor monophthongization, contrary to Bowie (2001), who found nouns, verbs, and adverbs to favor monophthongization and adjectives and all others to disfavor monophthongization. For future study, more pronouns (other than *I* and *my*) should be collected. (For my 2003 study I removed *I*, *I'll*, *I'm*, *I'd*, *I've*, and *my* as these words were repeatedly monophthongized, and in an analysis of linguistic variation, the presence of items in which "variability has almost disappeared" (Labov: 1984: 141) skews the results.)

Conclusions

My 2003 study was conducted in order to describe the monophthongization of [aɪ] in a non-urban southeast Alabama municipality and was informed by previous research on this characteristic variable of Southern English. In conducting a community study, I intended to expand the body of research on the monophthongization of [aɪ], Alabama English, and Southern English. As Dorrill notes, "there is still much to know about the [sound systems] of English in the Southern United States" (2003: 125). Although this study

laid a foundation for research on the English of Elba, my community study showed me that there is also much to learn about the sounds even in one's own backyard. ■

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Tom Nunnally, Joey Brackner, Anne Kimzey, and Deborah Boykin for suggestions on this essay. Thanks also to Robin Sabino, Tom Nunnally, Bert Hitchcock, Wayne Flynt, and the people of Elba, without whom the project upon which this essay is based would not have been possible.

Notes

1. As required for all research involving human research participants, a protocol was submitted to the Auburn University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB). The project was approved at "Minimum Risk."

References

Anderson, Bridget L. 1999. "Source-Language Transfer and Transfer and Vowel Accommodation in the Patterning of Cherokee English /ai/ and /oi/." *American Speech* 74: 339–368.

______. 2002. "Dialect Leveling and /ai/ Monophthongization among African American Detroiters." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 6: 86–98.

Ardery, Julie. 2006. *Changing Church in the South: Religion and Politics in Elba, Alabama*. http://carseyinstitute.unh.edu/documents/ChangingChurch_final2-16.pdf.

______. 2007. Email Correspondence, April 23.

Bailey, Guy. 1997. "When Did Southern English Begin?" In *Englishes around the World, Vol 1. Studies in Honour of Manfred Gorlach*. Ed. Edgar W. Schneider. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 255–275.

Bailey, Guy, and Cynthia Bernstein. 1989. "Methodology of a Phonological Survey of Texas." *Journal of English Linguistics* 22: 6–16.

Bailey, Guy, and Jan Tillery. 1996. "The Persistance of Southern American English." *Journal of English Linguistics* 24: 308–321.

Bell, Allan. 1984. "Language Style As Audience Design." *Language in Society 13:* 145–204.

Bernstein, Cynthia, Thomas Nunnally, and Robin Sabino, eds. 1997. *Language Variety in the South Revisited*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Bowie, David. 2001. "The Diphthongization of /ay/." *Journal of English Linguistics* 29: 329–345.

Brunson, Marion. 1984. *Pea River Reflections: Intimate Glimpses of Area Life During Two Centuries*. Tuscaloosa, AL: Portals Press.

Carsey Institute. n.d. *About Us*. www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/about.html

Clopper, Cynthia. 2000. *Some Acoustic Cues for Categorizing American English Regional Dialects: An Initial Report on Dialect Variation in Production and Perception. Research on Spoken Language Processing*. Progress Report No. 24. Indiana University. 44–65.

Crane, L. Ben. 1977. "The Social Stratification of /ai/ in Tuscaloosa, Alabama." In *Papers in Language Variation*. Eds. David L. Shores and Carole P. Hines. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. 189–200.

Disheroon-Green, Suzanne, ed. 2005. *Voices of the American South*. New York: Pearson Longman.

Dodd, Donald B. 1972. *Winston: An Antebellum and Civil War History of A Hill County of North Alabama*. Birmingham: Oxmoor Press.

Dorrill, George. 2003. "Sounding Southern: A Look at the Phonology of English in the South." In Nagle and Sanders. 119–125.

Edwards, Walter F. 1997. "The Variable Persistence of Southern Vernacular Sounds in the Speech of Inner-City Black Detroiters." In Bernstein, Nunnally, and Sabino. 76–86.

Evans, Medford. 1935. "Southern 'Long I.'" *American Speech* 10: 188–190.

Feagin, Crawford. 1979. *Variation and Change in Alabama English.* Washington, D.C.: Georgetown UP.

______. 2000. "Sound Change in the South." *American Speech* 75: 342–344.

Fridland, Valerie. 2000. "The Southern Shift in Memphis, Tennessee." *Language Variation and Change* 11: 267–285.

______. 2003. "'Tie, Tied and Tight': The Expansion of /ai/ Monophthongization in African-American and European-American Speech in Memphis, Tennessee." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 7: 279–298.

Fitzgerald, Michael. 1988. "Radical Republicanism and the White Yeomanry during Alabama Reconstruction, 1865–1868." *The Journal of Southern History* 54: 565–596.

Hay, Jennifer, Stefanie Jannedy, and Norma Mendoza-Denton. 1999. "Oprah and /AY/: Lexical Frequency, Referee Design and Style." *Proceedings of the 14th International Congress of Phonetic Sciences, San Francisco*. www.ling.canterbury.ac.nz/jen/documents/icphs.html

Hazen, Kirk. 2000. "A Methodological Suggestion on /aj/ Ungliding." *American Speech* 75: 221–224.

Head, Anna. 2003. *The Monophthongization of /ai/ in Elba and the Environs*. Master's thesis Auburn University.

Hitchcock, Bert. 2000. Lecture Notes: English 0495, Southern Literature.

Labov, William. 1972. "Some Principles of Linguistic Methodology." *Language in Society* 1*:* 97–120.

______. 1984. "The Interpretation of Zeroes." In *Phonologica 1984: Proceedings of the Fifth International Phonology Meeting*. Eds. Wolfgang Dressler et al. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 135–156.

Labov, William, and Sharon Ash. 1997. "Understanding Birmingham." In Bernstein, Nunnally, and Sabino. 508–573.

Metcalf, Allan. 2000. *How We Talk: American Regional English Today*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Montgomery, Michael. 1989. "Language." In *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. Eds. Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 757–792.

______. 1997. "Language Variety in the South: A Retrospective and Assessment." In Bernstein, Nunnally, and Sabino. 3–20.

Montgomery, Michael, and Edgar Schneider. 2001. "On the Trail of Early Nonstandard Grammar: An Electronic Corpus of Southern U.S. Antebellum Overseers' Letters." *American Speech* 76: 388–407.

Mufwene, Salikoko. 2003. "The Shared Ancestry of African-American and American-White Southern Englishes: Some Speculations Dictated by History." In Nagle and Sanders. 64–81.

Nagle, Stephen J. and Sara L. Sanders, eds. 2003. *English in the Southern United States.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

New York Times. 1929. ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2004). 15 Mar. www.proquest.com

Pederson, Lee. 2001. "Dialects." In *The Cambridge History of the English Language, Vol. 6: English in North America*. Ed. John Algeo. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 253–290.

Preston, Dennis. 1989. *Perceptual Dialectology: Nonlinguists' Views of Areal Linguistics.* Dordrecht: Foris.

______. 1996. "Where the Worst English Is Spoken." In *Focus on the USA*. Ed. Edgar W. Schneider. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 297–360.

______. 1997. “The South: The Touchstone.” In Bernstein, Nunnally, and Sabino. 311–351.

______. 1999. *Handbook of Perceptual Dialectology*. Vol. 1. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

______. 2005. “What Has Folk Linguistics Done for You Lately?” Paper presented at the Southeastern Conference on Linguistics (SECOL) 72, North Carolina State. April 7–9.

Pyles, Thomas, and John Algeo. 1993. *The Origins and Development of the English Language*. 3rd ed. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Schneider, Edgar. 2003. “Shakespeare in the Coves and Hollows? Toward a History of Southern English.” In Nagle and Sanders.17–35.

Sledd, James H. 1966. “Breaking, Umlaut, and the Southern Drawl.” *Language* 42: 18–41.

Thomas, Erik. 1997. “A Rural/Metropolitan Split in the Speech of Texas Anglos.” *Language Variation and Change* 9: 309–32.

______. 2001. *An Acoustic Analysis of Vowel Variation in New World English*. Publication of the American Dialect Society Number 85. Durham: Duke University Press.

______. 2003. “Secrets Revealed by Southern Vowel Shifting.” *American Speech* 78: 150–170.

Werner, Randolph. 2001. “The New South Creed and the Limits of Radicalism: Augusta, Georgia, before the 1890s.” *The Journal of Southern History* 67: 573–600.

To [a:] or Not To [a:] on the Gulf Coast of Alabama

Jocelyn Doxsey

The Southern region of the United States is often described as a separate region of the country on the basis of differing cultural practices, geography, history and, especially, linguistic features. In their monumental *Atlas of North American English* Labov, Ash and Boberg (2006) note that while Americans tend to be generally unknowledgeable about regional dialects, almost every non-Southern American is able to reproduce a Southern accent on some level by manipulating the stereotypical features of White Southern English. Perhaps the most salient of these features is the "Southern Vowel," the pronunciation of the Standard American English vowel [aɪ] as [a:]; that is, pronouncing the diphthong (two-part) vowel in a word like *ride* "rah-eed" so that the word sounds something like "rahd," with a lengthened, single sound (monophthong) (see Appendix A for explanations of phonetic symbols and the Southern monophthongization of the [aɪ] diphthong, and see Appendix B, the glossary, for definitions of terms such as "obstruent," below). This variant, while stigmatized in Standard American English, is common throughout most of the South and has been present in the dialect since at least the end of the nineteenth century (Bailey and Tillery 1996, Evans 1935).

However, the incidence of pronouncing [aɪ] as [a:] also differs for speakers of the two main Southern dialects associated with south Alabama and north Alabama (See Davies, "Southern American English in Alabama," and Nunnally, "Exploring"). In general speakers of "Coastal Southern" (stretching from the Atlantic Coast to East Texas) monophthongize [aɪ] into [a:] only when it occurs either at the end of words or before sonorants and voiced obstruents, that is, in words like *my, mine, mile, rise,* and *ride.* When [aɪ] occurs before voiceless obstruents, that is, in words like *mice* and *right,* speakers of Coastal

Southern do not as a rule monophthongize it to [aː], but keep the diphthong [aɪ]. Speakers of Inland Southern, on the other hand, may monophthongize [aɪ] to [aː] in all sound environments, that is, in both *ride* and *right.* For the Coastal Southern speakers, the [aː] variant is stigmatized when it appears before a voiceless obstruent (in words like *mice* and *right*); production of the monophthong in this phonological context is linked to less education and working-class status. However, among speakers of Inland Southern, [aɪ] may be monophthongized to [aː] in all sound environments without these negative reactions.

This essay reports summaries of findings from my research investigating the [aɪ] variable along the Gulf Coast (defined in this essay as Mobile and Baldwin counties) of Alabama to understand its prevalence in the region and to compare it with recent and sometimes conflicting studies (Doxsey 2007). In fieldwork locations in Anniston, Alabama, and rural Georgia, respectively, Feagin (2000) and Melancon and Wise (2005) found evidence that [aː] is disappearing from the dialects of younger speakers. Studies in Texas, however, indicate growth in use of the [aː] variant for younger rural white Texans but decrease in [aː] for younger urban white Texans (Thomas 2001: 144). Furthermore, there is disagreement as to whether this change is related to age alone or to age and social class. My research explores the speech of the Gulf Coast Alabamians to answer the following questions:

- Who is using [aː]?
- Are younger speakers moving away from [aː] (and can anything be said about their social class)?
- Is the [aː] variant present before voiceless obstruents in this region? If it is present before voiceless obstruents, is its distribution in this environment sensitive to any social factors?
- Do levels of formality in style of speech have a bearing on variation?

The Gulf Coast: History, Economy and People

Several linguistic studies have focused on Southern English (for example, Montgomery and Johnson 2007, Nagle and Sanders 2003, Bernstein, Nunnally, and Sabino 1997, Montgomery and Baily 1986 and Picone and Davies, forthcoming) and Alabama English more specifically (Feagin 1979). Thus, why

focus on the Gulf Coast of Alabama? The Alabama Gulf Coast has a different social, geographic, and linguistic history from the rest of Alabama. Furthermore, since these differences are maintained currently, it is reasonable to expect them to be reflected in the language of speakers along the Gulf Coast.

History

Mobile, the major city in the Gulf Coast of Alabama, was settled in 1702 by the French (though Hernando de Soto first explored the region in 1540) (Higginbotham 2001). As such, it is the oldest city in the state. The area's close proximity to the Mississippi River basin and its position on the Gulf of Mexico offered long-range strategic value to the French: access to native peoples via the waterways and a future harbor for seagoing ships (Higginbotham 2001). Thus in 1702 the French founded Mobile. The Gulf Coast region of Alabama remained politically separate later as a British and then Spanish territory until 1819 when Alabama was admitted to the Union. Rogers, Ward, Atkins and Flynt (1994) illustrate the region's uniqueness by stating that with Mobile's "French and Spanish heritage, the city became the cultural center of Alabama" (1994:133). The combination of coastline and Spanish and French occupation (until the early 1800s) made Mobile and the Gulf Coast historically distinct from the rest of the state (see Picone's essay for the multilingual history of this area).

Geographic and Linguistic Boundaries

The southernmost area of Alabama has been treated as a distinctive region in linguistic mapping studies as well as in other academic disciplines such as history. Benson (2003: 309), in a study of dialect boundaries in the South, shows that residents of the state perceive the Gulf Coast of Alabama as linguistically different from other regions in the state. Furthermore, in the TELSUR project, a survey of linguistic changes in progress in North American English conducted by Labov, Ash, and Boberg (2006), Alabama is sampled in four locations: Mobile, Linden, Montgomery, and Birmingham.

Labov, Ash, and Boberg (2006) found that these areas differed linguistically, showing Birmingham to have more Southern Vowel Shift features (including high rates of monophthongization) and to be a member of the sub-category

"the Inland South" (2006: 130. For more on the Southern Vowel Shift see Allbritten's essay and Appendix A). Mobile, on the other hand, showed the lowest rates of monophthongization of the four Alabama sites (Labov, Ash and Boberg 2006: 130). The divisions made in both Labov, Ash and Boberg (2006) and Benson (2003) line up with geographic distinctions. Alabama can be divided into four main regions characterized by differing geographic features: North Alabama or the "Tennessee Valley" (marked by the Cumberland Plateau and the Great Appalachian Valley), Central Alabama (Birmingham area; the Appalachian Valley extends to this area), the Piedmont area or "Black Belt" (located below Birmingham and noted for its rich soil), and finally the Gulf Coast (marked by water access to the Gulf of Mexico as well as the Mississippi River) (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).

Economy

The Gulf Coast also differs economically from the rest of the state. Perhaps the most prominent economic difference in this area is the reliance on the shipping industry. The deep-sea Port of Mobile ranks among the top dozen U.S. seaports. It has the world's largest forest products terminal and is first in the nation for wood pulp export and second for forest products (The City of Mobile 2006). Access to water has given rise to a tourism industry, which is located primarily along the coast of Baldwin County. These two industries, tourism and shipping, have given the Gulf Coast area a different economic landscape from the other metropolitan areas in the state.

People

One final factor is relevant to the discussion of the Gulf Coast—its people, specifically the people who comprise this sample (this study was limited to white Alabamians; therefore, Gulf Coast African-American English will not be discussed). Informants were asked to share their feelings about living in the South, specifically: 1) if they liked living on the Gulf Coast; 2) if they felt the Gulf Coast was different in any way from the rest of the state; and 3) if they identified themselves as being "Southern." Of the twenty-six informants, all responded positively towards questions about the Gulf Coast, Alabama, and the South in general. Furthermore, most informants noted differences between

the Gulf Coast and the rest of the state, as in this description by Margaret (twenty-three, college-educated female)[1]:

> um just because like when I lived in Troy[2], like the people that live in Troy they are like COUNTRY…and people have this set idea about how they think the people in Alabama are but people down here are not like that …they don't talk real slow ([tɑ:k ri:l slo:]) if you grew up down here and you went off somewhere it's less likely that they'll be like "oh you're from Alabama", maybe it's like there's this line like and it stops at Baldwin County…cause there's all these little places…like I knew this one guy he moved to Daphne from Slapout the city is called SLAPOUT…and he was he was COUNTRY and after he lived here for awhile- the people here are not country

Edward (twenty-five, male, graduate education) gives a less linguistic reason for the differences in the Gulf Coast area, and remarks that the Gulf Coast of Alabama is perfect for the following reasons:

> The only place in the country where you— you're thirty minutes from salt-water fishing thirty minutes from freshwater fishing and you can go any type of hunting you want

Data Collection

My experience with the Gulf Coast began in 1991 when my parents moved to Daphne from the Los Angeles area. Although I attended local schools from my sixth grade to my senior year before leaving for Ohio State University, I was not strongly involved with aspects of the community other than my school peers. When I returned for my first research visit in the summer of 2005, I spent three months on the Gulf Coast working and developing relationships with people in the community (through a job at a restaurant, church attendance, my parents, my high school teachers, a local retirement home, etc.). Following this initial visit, I returned in December and began asking people if they would participate in a study about the Gulf Coast of Alabama. Individuals were told that my interviews with them would be recorded and that they would be part of a greater corpus ("body" of collected language) of Gulf Coast English.

I informed those who were interested that in March 2006 and then in May/June 2006 I would be coming back to interview them.

The twenty-six informants were stratified by sex, age, and education. Because much previous research has shown that the level of formality of speech influences the speaker's speech production (see Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 2006: 278), each informant participated in an interview process designed to elicit responses in three styles reflecting three levels of formality: making conversation to elicit an informal style, reading a set passage to elicit a more formal style than conversation, and reading a list of words to elicit the most formal style.

Words containing [aɪ] could be expected to occur naturally in conversation, but I also pre-edited the reading passage and the word list to include words where [aɪ] appeared before voiced sounds (like *ride*) and words where [aɪ] occurred before voiceless obstruents (like *right*). In these ways, the variation of [aɪ] and [a:] could be analyzed over three stylistic dimensions.

Results

Monophthongization of [aɪ] was present for each informant before both voiced and voiceless segments (that is, in words like *prize* and *price).* Rates of [a:] were higher in the pre-voiced environment, confirming results found in other studies (Evans 1935, Sledd 1966, Labov 1991, Fridland 1998, Feagin 2000, Hazen 2000, Labov, Ash and Boberg 2006; tables of data supporting my findings are available in Doxsey 2007 but are omitted in this report).

The data in this study suggest that [aɪ] is monophthongized before voiced segments in tautosyllabic environments (that is, occurring in the same syllable), a result found in Hazen (2000). This finding shows that the following phonological environment does not affect the [aɪ] vowel across boundaries of words and grammatical endings. Thus, [ma: sit] for *my seat* may not be stigmatized in Gulf Coast speech, even though [a:] comes before the voiceless sound [s] in the next word, but [na:s wa:t ra:s] for *nice white rice* is stigmatized when the [a:] forms come before voiceless sounds ([s] or [t] here) within the same syllables.

Of particular importance are the results for [a:] in pre-voiceless environments. Though voiceless obstruents generally disfavor monophthongization

in Coastal Southern dialect regions, all informants in this corpus produced [a:] before voiceless obstruents. Some of the particular words included: *tight, nice, white, right, fright*. This variant has been called the "shibboleth" for class status in non-Inland South regions (Feagin 2000: 342) and is recognized in this Gulf Coast community as such. Many informants commented explicitly on this stigmatized variant, and most informants insisted that they did not use this variant in their speech (illustrating why linguistic researchers do not take speakers' perceptions of their own speech at face value). This denial of using [a:] in words like *right* and *nice* is especially interesting when looking at the frequencies for the informants as well as the results for style. Conversational style favored [a:] in pre-voiceless environments, while reading-passage style and word-list style, with their greater formality calling forth more self-monitoring, disfavored it.

The passages below show two different speakers explicitly discussing [a:] in pre-voiceless environments during their interviews. To illustrate the stigmatized use of [a:] before voiceless obstruents, Rachel monophthongizes [aɪ] in *white, might, night* and *sight,* and Elizabeth does the same in *ice, might, bite, right, white,* and *rice.*

> . . . some of these words now and in normal conversation I may say to you is that a [wa:t] blouse you got on I may say [wa:t] and we [ma:t] be going out Friday [na:t] [LAUGH] and was it love at first [sa:t] [LAUGH] so normal conversation I … that may be what I say and it probably is a lot of times um not as much as my sister my sister was in Georgia for a long time and they really talk like that (Rachel, forty-six, high school education)

> . . . do you want me to make those [a:s] [ma:t] [ba:t] [ra:t] you know my uh other grand uh daughter my other daughter lives in north Alabama and when she moved up there we had thought uh that she would keep her south Alabama accent but she has picked up that [wa:t] [ra:t] [ra:s] and talks just like them up there (Elizabeth, seventy, college education)

The transcriptions above show that the [a:] before voiceless obstruents is a stigmatized variant in this community that is representative of membership

in a "different" part of Alabama or the South more broadly (both informants give examples of this variant and label it as either being "north Alabamian" or "Georgian").

Though informants were sensitive to [a:] before voiceless consonants and made reference to it (as the above transcripts note), they did not make any specific reference to [a:] before voiced segments. This finding indicates that [a:] before voiced segments is not as salient in the community as [a:] before voiceless obstruents and does not arouse disapproval or label one as an outsider.

Men were found to use [a:] more than women, a finding that comes as no surprise as men in general use stigmatized variables more than women (Eckert 1989). However, the males' higher rate was apparent only when all the [aɪ] words were taken together, those in both pre-voiced and pre-voiceless contexts. Results for [a:] in pre-voiceless environments do not show an effect for sex.

Results for education followed a canonical pattern in the two phonological contexts with some surprising variations. Informants with a high school education favored [a:] in both pre-voiced and pre-voiceless environments; this is an expected result. Informants with a college education disfavored [a:] in both phonological contexts; this is also an expected result. The surprise came when results showed that in the pre-voiceless context informants with graduate educations favored [a:] (in the pre-voiced context informants neither favored nor disfavored [a:]). I was not expecting to see informants with graduate educations align, at least linguistically, with high school educated informants; however, my results show that indeed these two groups of informants are behaving similarly in their use of [a:] (specifically in the pre-voiceless environment). These results, plus the statements about Southern speech (e.g., see the passages above) by some of the college-educated informants, suggest that the college-educated informants may be exhibiting some linguistics insecurity (See Hasty's essay). Many of the college-educated informants indicated that they felt as though they did not have a "Southern" accent.

One informant, John (twenty-five, college education), mentioned several times that he did not have a Southern accent. In this excerpt from his interview he describes several occasions where he was mistaken as not being from the South.

> me not having an accent **I've** been mistaken for being from several other places [Interviewer: really?] well when I was working down at the Grand[3] in room service **I** was mistaken for being from uh Australia because I said "g'day" to someone…and then we had quite a few people from Czech and Turkey working there so **I** got mistaken for being from Europe somewhere in Europe…**I** guess they they expect that Southern accent and if you don't have it they don't see you as being from this area

Before the interview began, John made it clear to me that he did not have a Southern accent and wanted to know if I was studying the Gulf Coast because its residents "don't have Southern accents." It is interesting to note that while John was describing his "accent-less" speech he was actually using the "Southern Vowel" [a:]. In the above passage his [a:] in place of [aɪ] is indicated by the bold "I." His overall rate of monophthongization was 40 percent, or 60 out of 149 opportunities to monophthongize [aɪ] during the interview.[4]

My research question concerning age was answered in the affirmative: younger speakers use less of the [a:] variant while older speakers use the [a:] variant the most. However, this finding is true for [a:] only when [aɪ] is in a pre-voiced environment. The findings for age ([a:] before voiced and voiceless environments) corroborate claims made by other scholars (Feagin 2000 and Melancon and Wise 2005) that the rate of monophthongization is declining. In contrast, [a:] in pre-voiceless environments indicates that age is not significant with respect to monophthongization. This result is not attested in the literature. While scholars agree that [a:] before voiceless segments is highly stigmatized for Coastal Southern speakers, none make any claims about age. The results from this study suggest that Gulf Coast Alabamians of all ages monophthongize in pre-voiceless environments (See Doxsey 2007 for full details).

Finally, the incidence of [aɪ] monophthongization correlated in interesting ways with the three styles elicited in the interviews. In fact, the results according to style in this study demonstrate the importance of isolating a variant within various phonological contexts, in this case, pre-voiced and pre-voiceless environments. Comparing the results for style across these two phonological categories highlights the double-duty role that [a:] plays as a stigmatized variant. First, while it is true that [a:] is stigmatized in all phonological environments

in Standard American English, crucially it is only salient for the speakers in this corpus in the word-list style, where they tried to avoid it. Second, [a:] in pre-voiceless contexts is an especially stigmatized variant for Southerners ([a:] in this environment is disfavored in both reading passage and word list styles). These results show that a linguistic variable can vary in levels of stigmatization within a geographic region and that style is not a simple adjustment of the frequency of sociolinguistic variants, but is strongly sensitive to the evaluation of individual variants.

Conclusions and suggestions for further research

The purpose of this study was to describe the status of [aɪ] on the Gulf Coast of Alabama both linguistically and socially. The data from the Gulf Coast corpus indicate that [aɪ] monophthongization is still a robust feature of White Southern English (at least the version spoken on the Gulf Coast). Though [a:] is used by all speakers, it is used significantly less by those speakers in the youngest age category. This decrease in [a:] usage may be indicative of a change in progress. This claim supports Feagin's (2000) suggestion that [a:] is receding in the speech of young Southerners. In this way the Gulf Coast corpus is patterning with other parts of Alabama. The Gulf Coast differs from Feagin's data (2000) in that young speakers still retain [a:] throughout their speech, not just in "I" and "my."

Results from the TELSUR study show the Mobile area as having the lowest rates of monophthongization (when compared with the rest of the state) in both voiced and voiceless contexts (Labov, Ash and Boberg 2006). The data from this study show, particularly in the pre-voiceless contexts, similar results to Labov, Ash, and Boberg (2006), which indicate that there is a dialectal difference between Northern Alabama and Coastal Alabama. Furthermore this difference is most likely seen in the rates of [a:] before voiceless obstruents (Labov, Ash, and Boberg 2006 note that Northern Alabama has higher rates of [a:] before voiceless segments than Coastal Alabama). Nevertheless, it is important to note that [a:] before voiceless segments was present in every interview in this corpus (albeit at lower rates than before voiced segments).

The presence of [a:] before voiced segments within White Southern English is not entirely surprising. Though all speakers used this variant and did not

explicitly comment on [a:] before voiced segments, the fact that they did not monophthongize [aɪ] in word-list style suggests that they were still sensitive to it as a nonstandard feature of American English.

Findings from this study suggest that the Gulf Coast of Alabama may be undergoing a change in progress. The data from this study show that this change is accomplished by avoidance of the non-stigmatized variant ([a:] in pre-voiced contexts), demonstrated by the diminished rates of use in the speech of younger speakers. This finding patterns with other studies that show [a:] diminishing in the speech of younger speakers. However, it is important to note that the stigmatized variant ([a:] in pre-voiceless environments) continues to have low and unchanged rates of use across apparent time (see the glossary, Appendix B). If it is the case that White Southern English as a whole is undergoing a change in progress, then this study adds further support for that claim. Furthermore, a change in progress may have implications for the Southern Shift as a whole (see Allbritten). If, as Labov (1991) suggests, [aɪ] monophthongization is the initial step in the Southern Shift, then a reversal of that step may cause changes in other vowels as well. However, if [aɪ] monophthongization is simply part of an "early" step in the Southern Shift, as Fridland (1999) suggests, then there may not be any effect on other vowels. To make a claim either way about change in the vowels involved in the Southern Shift will necessitate a full examination of all the relevant vowels in a corpus more representative of the White Southern English speakers of the Gulf Coast.

In conclusion, this study has attempted to describe the presence of [a:] on the Gulf Coast of Alabama. The results from this study will add to the greater body of work on White Southern English as well as the greater body of work on sociolinguistic variation in any dialect. In particular, this study has shown that style varies and is sensitive to individual sociolinguistic variants. The more opportunities we have to describe language variation, the better able we will be to make claims about language change and its relation to the community at large. ■

Acknowledgments

I am profoundly indebted to John Singler for his patience and support during all stages of this project. I am also grateful to Greg Guy and Renee Blake

as well as the entire New York University Linguistics Department for their comments, questions and general support during my research and preparation of my thesis. Further thanks go to Catherine Davies for connecting me with Tom Nunnally (who graciously extended an invitation to me to be included in this project), to Tom, for comments and suggestions in preparing this essay, and to Joey Brackner, Anne Kimzey, and Deborah Boykin for additional suggestions. Most of all I want to thank all the people who lent their time and their voices to this work. Their words and love for their home have a special place in my heart.

Notes

1. Names of informants have been changed to protect identities.
2. Troy is a small college town located in southeastern Alabama.
3. The Grand Hotel is located on Mobile Bay.
4. John's speech also exhibits another highly salient feature of Southern English, the "pen/pin merger" where [ɪ] ("short i") and [ɛ] ("short e") before nasal consonants both sound like [ɪ]. Out of five –en tokens in the passage, *accent, been, when, then,* and *accent* once more, John pronounces only *then* with [ɛn] and the rest with the Southern [ɪn]. This difference between John's concept of his own accent and its reality is in no way uncommon and illustrates the difficulty speakers have with self-monitoring the less accessible parts of their language systems, such as phonology, as opposed to monitoring word choice, for example.

References

Bailey, Guy, and Jan Tillery. 1996. "The Persistance of Southern American English." *Journal of English Linguistics* 24: 308–312.

Benson, Erica J. 2003. "Folk Linguistic Perceptions and Dialect Boundaries." *American Speech*. 78: 307–330.

Bernstein, Cynthia, Thomas Nunnally, and Robin Sabino (eds). 1997. *Language Variety in the South Revisited*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

City of Mobile. 2007. Maps and Facts. www.cityofmobile.org/mapsnfacts/facts.php

Doxsey, Jocelyn. 2007. /ai/ Monophthongization on the Gulf Coast of Alabama. Master's thesis New York Univeristy.

Eckert, Penelope. 1989. "The Whole Woman: Sex and Gender Differences in Variation." *Language Variation and Change* 1: 245–67.

Evans, Medford. 1935. "Southern 'Long I'." *American Speech*. 10: 188–190.

Feagin, Crawford. 1979. *Variation and Change in Alabama English: A Sociolinguistic Study of the White Community*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

_____. 2000. "Sound change in the South." *American Speech* 75: 342–344.

Fridland, Valerie. 1998. *The Southern Vowel Shift: Linguistic and Social Factors*. Doctoral dissertation Michigan State University.

_____. 1999. "The Southern Shift in Memphis, Tennessee." *Language Variation and Change* 11: 267–285.

Hazen, Kirk. 2000. "A Methodological Suggestion on /aj/ Ungliding." *American Speech* 75: 221–224.

Higgenbotham, Jay. 2001. "Discovery, Exploration and Colonization of Mobile Bay to 1711." In *Mobile: The New History of Alabama's First City*. Ed. Michael Thomason. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. 3–28.

Labov, William. 1991. "The Three Dialects of English." In *New Ways of Analyzing Sound Change*. Ed. Penelope Eckert. New York: Academic Press. 1–44.

Labov, William, Sharon Ash and Charles Boberg. 2006. *The Atlas of North American English: Phonetics, Phonology, and Sound Change: A Multimedia Reference Tool.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Melancon, Megan, and Katherine Wise. 2005. "Dialect Shifts in Rural Middle Georgia." Paper presented at New Ways of Analyzing Variation (NWAV conference) 34. October 20–23.

Montgomery, Michael, and Guy Bailey. 1986. *Language Variety in the South: Perspectives in Black and White*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Nagle, Stephen J., and Sara L. Sanders. 2003. *English in the Southern United States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Picone, Michael D., and Catherine Evans Davies, eds. Forthcoming. *Language Variety in the South III: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Rogers, William W., Robert D. Ward, Leah. R. Atkins, and Wayne Flynt. 1994. *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Sledd, James H. 1966. "Breaking, Umlaut, and the Southern Drawl." *Language* 42: 18–41.

Thomas, Erik R. 2001. *An Acoustic Analysis of Vowel Variation in New World English.* Publication of the American Dialect Society Number 85. Durham: Duke University Press.

“They Sound Better Than We Do”: Language Attitudes in Alabama

J. Daniel Hasty

In the Southern United States and especially the Deep South—Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana—people talk in a distinctive way. The South has in fact been called “the most distinctive speech region of the United States” (Montgomery 1989: 761). This distinctiveness, however, is not necessarily a positive in the minds of many people. While Southern United States English (SUSE) is the most recognized and distinctive dialect in America, Preston has shown through perceptual dialect mapping experiments[1] that in the United States “areas perceived as least correct have greatest distinctiveness” and that “pejorative notions of an area’s speech enhance that area’s salience as a distinct linguistic region” (1996: 306). A speech region, then, will stand out because it is viewed as being less correct. Part of the reason for these perceptions is that, as Wolfram and Schilling-Estes highlight (2006: 12–13), what is known as Standard English in America is not actually labeled as such by the way it sounds; rather, so-called Standard English is known by a lack of features that are perceived as being incorrect. The Southern Dialect, viewed by many people as the regional dialect[2] containing the most incorrect features, is therefore recognized as the most nonstandard or incorrect dialect of American English.

This negative view of SUSE is not necessarily held only by people outside the South; many Southern speakers themselves have this same opinion. This self-deprecating view can be explained by a concept known in sociolinguistics as the *linguistic inferiority principle*: “the speech of a socially subordinate group will be [self-] interpreted as inadequate by comparison with that of the socially dominate group” (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 2006: 7). People in the South have internalized many of the pejorative attitudes toward Southerners and

Southern speech that outsiders hold, and this linguistic insecurity reveals itself most clearly in a highly negative view of a fellow Southern speaker's intelligence. That is, Southerners hearing a speaker with a Southern accent will often think that the person sounds dumb, uneducated, ignorant, and lower class. However, Southerners' attitudes toward the way they speak are complicated. These negative language attitudes[3] are balanced with positive feelings because many people in the South are proud of their origins and proud to live in the South. These positive feelings are expressed in viewing the same Southern speaker—perceived as ignorant and uneducated—as nice, trustworthy, and likeable at the same time. Trudgill (1972) has termed this sort of regional pride in a nonstandard dialect, which often demonstrates itself in assigning greater affection to the nonstandardized variety in certain situations, as *covert prestige*.

In hopes of understanding the issues associated with linguistic insecurity and their interplay with covert prestige, sociolinguists, dialectologists, and social psychologists have been studying the language attitudes of different groups of people for several decades. This paper will describe a recent study of the language attitudes of Alabamians toward SUSE in comparison to Northern and Midwestern varieties and will focus specifically on Alabamians' attitudes toward Alabama English compared to another Southern variety.[4]

I surveyed ninety freshmen (forty-nine female; forty-one male) from sections of the second-semester composition class at Auburn University in the spring of 2006.[5] The respondents' ages ranged from nineteen to twenty-four with 90 percent being nineteen. Most of the respondents were from Alabama originally (68 percent). Georgia (14 percent), Florida (8 percent), Texas (4 percent), and Tennessee (3 percent) were other states of origin. It is important to note that most of the respondents were from Alabama—the heart of the South according to Preston's (1996 and 1997) studies of Southerners' perceptions.

The respondents were exposed to five recordings of speakers from different parts of the country[6]: two from the South (Alabama and Tennessee), two from the North (New York and New Hampshire), and one from the Midwest (Michigan). The five recorded speakers were reading a text; therefore, grammatical and lexical (word-choice) variation were controlled for, and phonology (the speaker's sound system) was isolated as the sole factor educing respondents' perceptions.[7] The respondents were asked to rate each speaker on a semantic

differential scale of one to five consisting of seventeen groups of paired, polar-opposite adjectives (adapted from Soukup 2000):

impolite—polite
not self-confident—self-confident
uneducated—educated
unfriendly—friendly
unsociable—sociable
no sense of humor—sense of humor
lazy—industrious
slow—sharp
shy—outgoing
unintelligent—intelligent
bad manners—good manners
not trustworthy—trustworthy
dishonest—honest
not likable—likeable
not helpful—helpful
not open-minded—open-minded
unsuccessful—successful

The adjectives were arranged with the negative adjective closest to the numeral one and the positive adjective closest to the numeral five (e.g., impolite–1–2–3–4–5–polite).

Respondents were also asked three direct questions about each speaker. Because Preston (1997: 314) has pointed to the lack of assurance that respondents were accurately perceiving the location of the sample voices used in previous language attitude studies, the first question—*What state do you think the speaker is from?*—was to assess the degree to which respondents accurately perceived the origins of the speakers so that reactions toward a particular speaker can be more clearly interpreted as reactions toward a certain speech region.[8] The two other direct questions asked the respondents to identify the speakers' socioeconomic status and education level, respectively. The respondents were given a choice of Upper Class, Upper Middle Class, Middle Class, Upper Working Class, and Lower Working Class for the socioeconomic question, and Graduate School, College Degree, Attended Some College, High School Diploma, and Attended Some High School for the education-level question.

Each respondent was also asked to provide demographic information: age, sex, and race, the city and state they were from, and any other city and state they had lived in for a considerable length of time. This allowed for limiting the study to respondents who were from the South, and it provided social information which might affect their responses.

Earlier language attitude studies have shown through factor analysis that

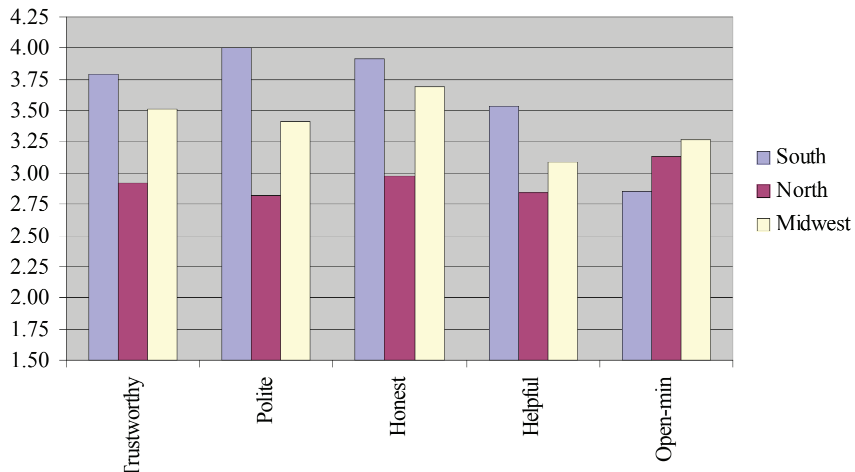


Figure 1
Regional Personal Integrity Ratings

there is a "tripartite structure to judgments about language" (Garrett 2001: 628), so for analytical purposes the scores for the adjectives were grouped using the three categories used in Edwards and Jacobsen (1987): Personal Integrity (Trustworthy, Polite, Honest, Helpful, Open-Minded); Competence (Educated, Intelligent, Self-Confident, Industrious, Sharp, Successful); and Social Attractiveness (Friendly, Sociable, Sense of Humor, Outgoing, Likable, Manners).

In the Personal Integrity category, the South was rated the highest of all the speech regions with an overall mean of 3.62 (on the five-point scale) followed by the Midwest's mean of 3.39 and the North's mean of 2.94.[9] The greatest differences in the adjectives in the Personal Integrity category were for Polite—with the Southern speakers rated substantially higher at 4.01 compared to the Northern speakers' 2.82 and the Midwestern speakers' 3.41—and for Honest—with the South rated at 3.91 to the North's 2.98 and the Midwest's 3.69. The one adjective for which the South was not rated the highest in the Personal Integrity category was Open-minded with the Northern speakers' mean of 3.13 and the Midwestern speakers' mean of 3.26 both higher than the Southern speakers' 2.85 (see Figure 1). The results of the Personal Integrity category are further enlightening when compared with the other category

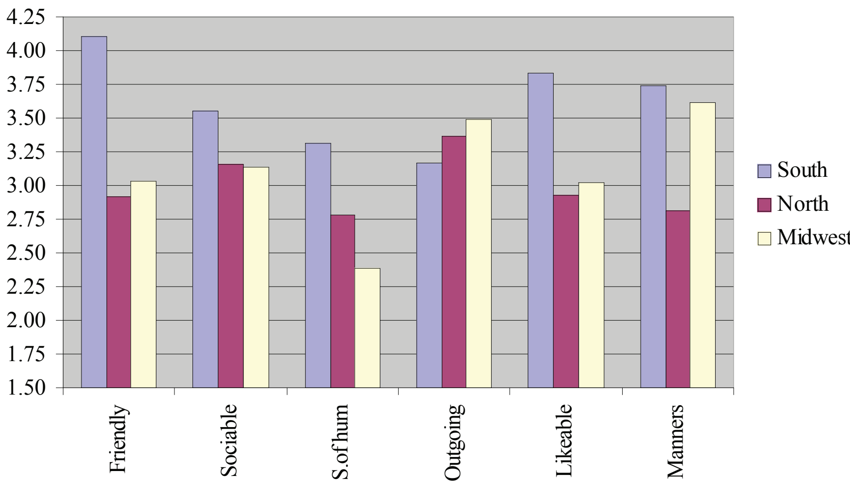


Figure 2
Regional Social Attractiveness

indicative of solidarity, Social Attractiveness.

In Social Attractiveness, the South again was rated higher than the North and the Midwest for all adjectives in that category except Outgoing. The South's combined mean for the category was quite high at 3.62 in comparison to the North's 2.99 and the Midwest's 3.08. The greatest differences between the speakers were perceived in the Friendly and Likeable adjectives. The South was higher in Friendly with 4.11 to the North's 2.93 and the Midwest's 3.04 and higher in Likeable with the South rated 3.83 compared to the North's 2.93 and the Midwest's 3.02 (see Figure 2). From the combined results of the Personal Integrity and Social Attractiveness categories it appears that Southern dialects are perceived by Southerners as being much more desirable on solidarity features than Northern and Midwestern dialects, evidence of the covert prestige Southerners assign to their dialect.

However, in the Competence category, the preference Southerners give to the Southern dialect vanishes. The mean of the respondents' scores from their rating of the two Southern speakers was 2.77 compared to the Northern speakers' 3.41 and the Midwestern speakers' 3.97. There were large differences in all of the adjectives. The greatest differences were perceived in Sharp, with

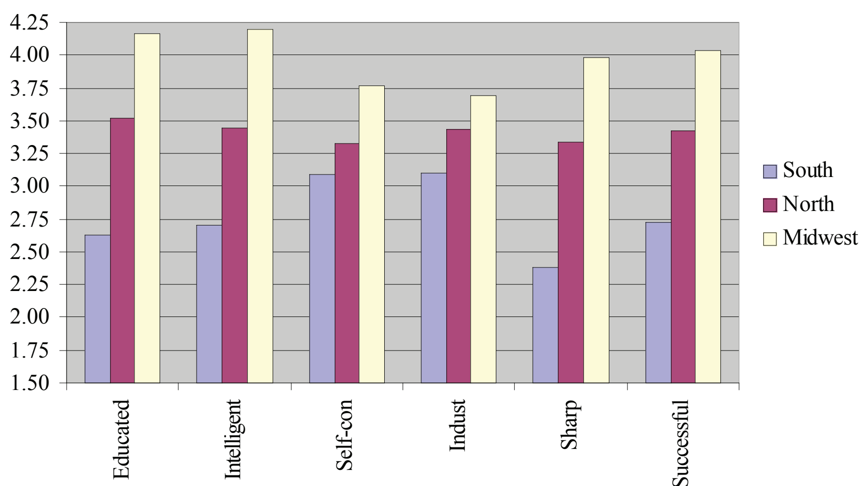


FIGURE 3
Regional Competence Ratings

the South rated 2.38 compared to the North's 3.33 and the Midwest's 3.98, and Educated, with the South rated 2.63 compared to the North's 3.52 and the Midwest's 4.16 (see Figure 3). These findings suggest that speakers of a Northern or Midwestern dialect are considered by Southerners to be much more educated and intelligent than speakers of a Southern dialect, a clear picture of linguistic insecurity.

The results from the direct questions further reveal how the respondents perceived the Competence of the speakers. For the socioeconomic-status question, the South was the lowest-rated of all the speech regions. Based on the scale assigning Lower Working Class the number 1 and Upper Class the number 5, the South had a considerably lower mean of 2.10 as compared to the Northern and Midwestern means of 2.96 and 3.51 respectively. The Southern speakers were placed in either the Lower Working Class or the Upper Working Class by 65 percent of the respondents, and only 35 percent put the Southern speakers in the middle classes with most placing them in the Middle and not the Upper Middle Class. In comparison, the Northern speakers were placed in either the Middle or Upper Middle Classes by 71 percent of the respondents, and the Midwestern speaker was placed in either the Middle or

Upper Middle Classes by 80 percent of the respondents.

For the education-level direct question, the South again was rated the lowest. Based on the scale assigning the number 1 to Attended Some High School and the number 5 to Graduate School, the South had a low mean of 2.38 compared to the 3.32 of the North and the 4.06 of the Midwest. The Southern speakers' highest level of education was perceived by 50 percent of the respondents to be a High School Diploma, and 13 percent even believed the Southern speakers to have only Attended Some High School. Merely 23 percent of the respondents said the Southern speakers had Attended Some College, and only 14 percent responded with College Degree. The Northern speakers, however, were perceived as having a College Degree by 45 percent of the respondents, and when combining that ranking with Attended Some College, the college-educated votes account for 74 percent of the respondents. Further, the Midwestern speaker was placed in the College Degree level by 50 percent of the respondents and in the Graduate School level by 30 percent of the respondents. The direct question data, then, additionally show that Southerners perceive speakers of their own dialect particularly low in both social class and formal education.

Because two Southern speakers (one from Alabama and one from Tennessee) were used in this language attitude study, the responses can be further broken down to reveal respondents' attitudes toward subregional areas of the South. This level of subregional analysis has been absent from previous language attitude research where, in efforts to understandably make broader generalizations of the language attitudes held by one group toward another, an individual speaker from one area inside a larger geographic speech region is often taken to represent a regional dialect in a monolithic way thus erasing further interregional variation. In this study, however, since the vast majority of the respondents were from Alabama, the responses given to the Alabama speaker compared to the Tennessee speaker provide an even more enlightening picture of how respondents from a particular subregion in the South view their own local speech variety. Such knowledge, as will be discussed below, is essential in developing ways to combat the intense negative language attitudes experienced in the South.

Initially, it is important to look at the perceived state of origin of the Alabama

and Tennessee speakers to see if there was actually a perceived difference in the separate dialects of the two Southern speakers. For both speakers, the state of origin most often given was Alabama, with 38 percent of the respondents for the Alabama speaker and 27 percent of the respondents for the Tennessee speaker. From this finding, it would at first appear that both speakers were perceived as being from the same state and thus the same local speech region, but upon looking at the percentages of other states given, a distinction appears. For the Alabama speaker, the second highest state given by the respondents was Mississippi with 27 percent of the respondents followed by Georgia with 10 percent. From these ratings, it is apparent that the respondents perceived the Alabama speaker as coming from the Deep South, which in fact he does. For the Tennessee speaker, however, the second highest state given was Tennessee with 19 percent of the respondents followed by Georgia with 16 percent. These data begin to point to a perceived difference in the two Southern speakers. Looking at the other states given for the Tennessee speaker such as North and South Carolina, which were not given at all for the Alabama speaker, it seems that the respondents did perceive a difference in the dialect of the two speakers, feeling that the Tennessee speaker had more of a Mid-South dialect.

With it being established that there was a difference in the perceived state of origin of the two Southern speakers, it is interesting to compare the ratings on the paired adjectives for these two speakers to see if these speakers are rated differently. Though there were only slight differences in the two categories registering solidarity, a significant difference was seen between the Alabama and Tennessee speakers in the Competence category. The Tennessee speaker's mean of 3.13 for the Competence category is much higher than the Alabama speaker's mean of 2.43. The greatest differences were in the rating for the Self-Confident adjective with the Tennessee speaker's mean of 3.58 being higher than the Alabama speaker's 2.61. Educated (Alabama 2.21 and Tennessee 3.05) and Intelligent (Alabama 2.30 and Tennessee 3.12) were other notably large differences (see Figure 4). From these ratings it is apparent that for these Alabamian respondents the Tennessee Mid-South dialect is substantially preferred in competence features over the home Deep South Alabama dialect. The higher scores of the Tennessee speaker, however, are still substantially lower than Competence ratings for both the Northern speakers

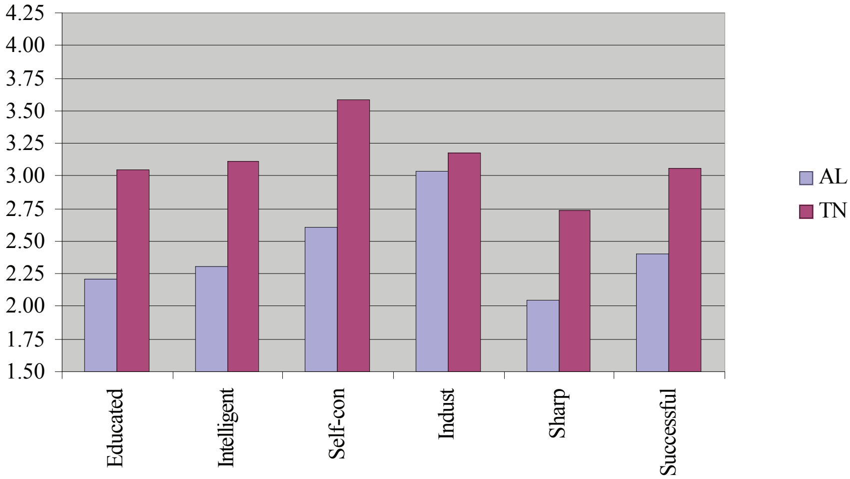


Figure 4
Alabama to Tennessee Competence Ratings

and the Midwestern speaker, so it would be more descriptive to say that these Alabamian respondents perceived the Tennessee speaker's dialect less lowly in competence factors than they did their own dialect.[10]

For both the socioeconomic-status and the education-level direct questions, the Alabama speaker was again rated lower than the Tennessee speaker. For social status the Alabama speaker was given a mean of 1.84 to the Tennessee speaker's 2.37. The Alabama speaker was placed in the Lower Working Class by 43 percent of the respondents while only 15 percent of the respondents placed the Tennessee speaker in that class. In fact, 76 percent of the respondents placed the Alabama speaker in one of the two working classes, while that percentage is only 55 percent for the Tennessee speaker. In education level, the differences between the Southern speakers are further defined. The Alabama speaker was given a mean of 2.12 compared to the Tennessee speaker's 2.64. The Alabama speaker was rated as either Attended Some High School or High School Diploma by 73 percent of the respondents while that percentage is only 51 percent for the Tennessee speaker.

This study demonstrates that Alabamians have an extremely low view of their dialect as compared to Northern and Midwestern varieties, and further

with the interregional comparison this study reveals that these mostly Alabamian respondents rate a Deep South speaker of Alabama English lower than a fellow Southerner from the Mid-South. The results of this study highlight the prevalence of linguistic insecurity in the South and particularly in Alabama, and I hope that through the insights gained in this study, linguistic stigmatization and prejudice (one of the last acceptable forms of discrimination not viewed as politically incorrect by the general public) can be combated and one day reversed—starting first with the language attitudes of the speakers of the most stigmatized regional dialect in the United States.

It is possible that studies of this type could open people's eyes to their own linguistic prejudices—prejudices they may be directing toward their neighbors and even themselves. While Southerners in this study were shown to have a particularly low view of the intelligence of fellow Southern speakers, the high ratings that were assigned to the Personal Integrity and Social Attractiveness attributes of a Southern dialect are encouraging. I believe that encouraging this covert prestige can be a way of helping Alabamians and other speakers of non-prestige dialects to be less self-conscious about their own language. Further, I believe that findings from language attitude studies in specific speech regions could be used to inform the development of programs that encourage dialect awareness and appreciation like those instituted in the Ocracoke community and other areas in North Carolina by Walt Wolfram and colleagues.[11] Programs of this sort could increase covert prestige to the point that these positive language attitudes can make inroads into the intense linguistic insecurity experienced by Southern speakers in Alabama. ■

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Tom Nunnally, Joey Brackner, Anne Kimzey, and Deborah Boykin for suggestions on this essay, and I would like to express my extreme gratitude to Tom Nunnally, Robin Sabino, and Kevin Roozen for their guidance during completion of the larger study upon which the present essay is based.

Notes

1. Respondents were given maps of the US with only state borders marked and were asked to draw boundaries around the areas where people spoke the same. To determine respondents' attitudes toward different dialects, the respondents were also asked to rate the fifty states plus New York City and Washington, D.C. for both correctness and pleasantness of speech.
2. The term *regional dialect* is used because a good case could be made that African American English, an ethnic dialect which is not confined to a particular region, is perceived as the most stigmatized and nonstandard single dialect of American English.
3. The definition of *language attitude* used in this paper follows Ryan, Giles, and Sebastian's use of the term "in a broad, flexible sense as an affective, cognitive or behavioural index of evaluative reactions toward different language varieties or their speakers" (1982: 7). The last phrase, "or their speakers," is important to note, for these attitudes are not actually based on a language variety but on the speakers of a certain variety. Niedzielski and Preston highlight this distinction stating that "a language attitude is, after all, not really an attitude to a language feature; it is an awakening of a set of beliefs about individuals or sorts of individuals through the filter of a linguistic performance" (2000: 9).
4. See Hasty (2006) for a complete discussion of this study.
5. To control for ethnicity (see Tucker and Lambert 1969 and Frazier 1973), the scores from the surveys taken by African American respondents were not included in the tabulations of the results.
6. The recordings used in this survey were downloaded from the International Dialects of English Archive (IDEA), maintained by Kansas University (www.ku.edu/~idea/index.htm).
7. IDEA provided minimal background information for the recordings besides state of origin, so the actual socioeconomic status and education level of the speakers are unknown. Since grammatical variation has been shown to be most salient in overtly denoting social class rather than region (see Schneider 2003: 27) and since the recorded speakers were all reading a passage to control for grammatical variation, the respondents' responses are assumed to represent their perceptions of and reactions to the speech regions that the speakers represent. The statistical difference in the respondents' response to the dialects of the Alabama and Tennessee speakers discussed below further suggests that respondents' reactions were based on regional variation and not on socioeconomic differences (if there were any) between the speakers.
8. In this study, the mental maps of dialect boundaries generated by Southerners in Preston (1996, 1997) were used to determine which states actually belong to the perceived speech regions of the respondents. For instance, if a respondent placed the Alabama speaker in Mississippi, the rating would be taken as correct, but if

a respondent placed the Alabama speaker in Indiana, this would be counted as incorrect because Indiana is not included as part of the South in Southern folk-dialect maps. For respondents misidentifying a speaker's region, their scores for that speaker were not counted since these perceptions cannot truly be said to apply to speakers of that region.

9. All differences in mean scores discussed in this paper were determined to be statistically significant at $p<0.05$ through paired t-tests.

10. Hasty (2006) discusses the importance of further determining whether the respondents identify or do not identify with the South. These findings suggest that respondents not identifying with the South have an even more negative view of the Competence of the speaker from Alabama compared to the Tennessee speaker.

11. See Wolfram, Adger, and Christian (1999) for a discussion of the importance of dialect awareness programs in the classroom.

References

Edwards, John, and Maryanne Jacobsen. 1987. "Standard and Regional Standard Speech: Distinctions and Similarities." *Language in Society* 16: 369–80.

Frazier, Bruce. 1973. "Some 'Unexpected' Reactions to Various American-English Dialects." In *Language Attitudes: Current Tends and Prospects*. Eds. Roger Shuy and Ralph Fasold. Washington, D. C.: Georgetown University Press. 28–35.

Garrett, Peter. 2001. "Language Attitudes and Sociolinguistics." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 5: 626–31.

Hasty, James Daniel. 2006. *What Do Y'all Think? A Study of Language Attitudes in the South*. Master's thesis Auburn University.

Montgomery, Michael B. 1989. "English Language." In *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture.* Eds. Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 761–67.

Niedzielski, Nancy A., and Dennis R. Preston. 2000. *Folk Linguistics: Trends in Linguistics, Studies and Monographs 122*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Preston, Dennis. 1996. "Where the Worst English Is Spoken." In *Focus on the USA*. Ed. Edgar W. Schneider. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 297–360.

______. 1997. "The South: The Touchstone." In *Language Variety in the South Revisited*. Eds. Cynthia Bernstein, Thomas Nunnally, and Robin Sabino. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. 311–51.

Ryan, Ellen Bouchard, Howard Giles, and Richard J. Sebastian. 1982. "An Integrative Perspective for the Study of Attitudes toward Language Variation." In *Attitudes Towards Language Variation: Social and Applied Contexts*. Eds. Ellen Bouchard

Ryan and Howard Giles. London: Edward Arnold. 1–19.

Schneider, Edgar. 2003. “Shakespeare in the Coves and Hollows? Toward a History of Southern English.” In *English in the Southern United States*. Eds. Stephen J. Nagle and Sara L. Sanders. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 17–35.

Soukup, Barbara. 2000. *Y'all Come Back Now, Y' Hear! Language Attitudes in the United States Towards Southern American English*. Master's thesis University of Vienna.

Trudgill, Peter. 1972. “Sex, Covert Prestige, and Linguistic Change in the Urban English of Norwich.” *Language in Society* 1: 171–98.

Tucker, Richard G., and Wallace E. Lambert. 1969. “White and Negro Listeners' Reactions to Various American-English Dialects.” *Social Forces* 47: 463–68.

Wolfram, Walt, and Natalie Schilling-Estes. 2006. *American English: Dialects and Variation*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell.

Wolfram, Walt, Carolyn Temple Adger, and Donna Christian. 1999. *Dialects in Schools and Communities*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Code-Switching Between African-American and Standard English: The Rules, the Roles, and the Rub

Kimberly Johnson with Thomas E. Nunnally[1]

The American Dream proclaims that anyone who works hard enough and perseveres can accomplish any goal. This belief rings true. But within this dream there has always been a problem of fairness. Dreams of success and accomplishment are feasible and attainable, but the playing field is not level. Many minorities who chase the American Dream are faced with obstacles that many mainstream white Americans do not have to overcome. One major obstacle is Standard English (SE). Competency in speaking and writing SE is a non-issue for those who grew up in cultures whose mother tongue is close to it, but can be a mountain in the way of success for others.

Debates and arguments over the role of standardization of English have continued for decades. While many argue that society should accept the wide range of dialects as a part of the diversity of America, negative connotations and attitudes are still associated with nonstandard English speakers in mainstream America. Marcyliena Morgan says in *Language, Discourse and Power in African American Culture* that "both social class and racial discrimination affect the larger society's attitude toward African American English" (2000: 70). She affirms that in the past, communication in a style that is not the dominant culture's is a sign of poverty and "at times – ignorance." Malcolm X, painfully aware of this, writes in his autobiography, "In the street, I had been the most articulate hustler out there—I had commanded attention when I said something. But now, trying to write simple English, I not only wasn't articulate, I wasn't even functional. How would I sound writing in slang, the way I would *say* it . . ." (Malcolm X 1964: 171).

Among a majority of African Americans, young and old, who are strug-

gling to fit into or coexist within mainstream America, this feeling of inadequacy is common. Studies have shown that African-American students may become depressed and self-conscious because of low self-esteem originating from social and linguistic backgrounds. The case study presented in *Standard English, African American English, and Bidialectalism: A Controversy* concerns a first-generation college student from a predominantly African-American neighborhood (Taylor, 1989). The subject of this case study felt that his non-use of SE left the perception that he had "missing skills" rather than a cultural and linguistic difference.

This essay grew out of my own experience as an African-American student/parent/educator who has faced the dilemma of using language to succeed in more than one culture. As you read, please know that I am by no means a linguist, but through post-graduate work in that field I was exposed to knowledge enabling me to look at African-American English. Like most people who gain new understanding, I tried to make sense of it through my own life.

I view myself as a regular person with many hats. The hats I wear at present (I am nearing my mid-thirties as of this writing) identify me as a member of an extended family, a wife, a parent, a public-school teacher, and, yet again, a graduate student. One thing I can say is that even with my self-perceived regularity of person, I also view myself as passionate and goal-oriented—which can be good and bad, depending on my goals at the moment. I want the best for my children and myself in all of my roles. As I look at my children, every day I ponder who and what they will become. I want their happiness and success. I want that promise of the American Dream.

I graduated from the University of Alabama with a degree in communications, but soon after graduating I entered a fifth-year master's program to become a school teacher. I have been an eighth-grade school teacher for more than a decade now. Over this time I've taught in a predominantly white north Alabama school system and a predominantly white south Alabama school system. I've also been elected Teacher of the Year by my peers in both places, and I am a Nationally Board Certified Teacher. I am always seeking to expand myself and my knowledge. Because of this quest I ended up back in graduate school working on yet another degree. And this is where I begin—trying to make sense of new knowledge.

Terminology

Understanding any field of knowledge means grasping its terminology and theoretical backgrounds. The concepts below (adapted from *Do You Speak American?* 2005 unless otherwise noted) were especially important to me as I began to understand the functions of my various language varieties. They should help readers of this essay as well.

Speech Community—a group of people who share language characteristics and ways of speaking. They may be located close to one another geographically, or they may share social characteristics such as age, gender, or socioeconomic class. The notion of speech community is useful for studying how nonlinguistic features such as geographical location and socioeconomic status are related to language use.

Standard English (SE)—the variety of English that with respect to spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary is substantially uniform (*Merriam-Webster Online* 2005); the variety of English spoken in the United States that is considered by most Americans to seem right. In the United States, the Midland (i.e., Midwest) area is most often pointed to as the location where standard or mainstream English is spoken. SE is the language variety that is taught in school and is considered necessary for participation and success in American society. Other terms for the same: General English (GE), Mainstream American English.

Dialect—any language variety associated with a particular region or social group. As used by linguists, the term *dialect* involves no judgment of the value of a particular language variety. No variety is inherently superior to any other. When used by the general public, this term often refers to a language variety that is considered inferior to the standard or mainstream variety.

African-American English (AAE)—Geneva Smitherman (1977) calls AAE "an Africanized form of English reflecting [African Americans'] linguistic-cultural African heritage and the conditions of servitude, oppression, and life in America. [African-American] language is Euro-American speech with an [African-American] meaning, nuance, tone, and gesture" (2). Besides differences in the grammar system, words, and pronunciation, it includes its own rich rhetorical tradition, or "African-American Verbal Tradition" (AAVT) (Smitherman, quoted in Lippi-Green 1997: 177). It is probably "used by 80 to 90 percent of

[African-Americans], at least some of the time" (Smitherman 1977: 2). Other terms conveying much the same meaning are African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), Black English Vernacular, Ebonics, African-American Dialect, and African-American Idiom.

Bidialectalism—facility in using two dialects of the same language; also, the teaching of Standard English to pupils who normally use a nonstandard dialect. Those who are truly bidialectal perceive the contrasts between vernacular language varieties and standard varieties of a language and can shift between them.

Code-switching—usually defined as changing from one dialect to another (or one language from another for bilinguals) when speaking. Code-switching takes place whenever there are groups of people who speak the same two (or more) dialects.

Why Code-Switch?

For most African Americans, Standard English is a second dialect of English, not their home language. In many cases the ability to translate into or use SE, or code-switch, is related to socioeconomic standards or level of education. There is an ongoing debate on the necessity for African Americans to switch from the use of African-American English to SE depending upon their social situations.

Some African Americans oppose the need to switch, feeling that doing so fosters an assimilationist attitude. Other African Americans see the need to code-switch because of the reality of language prejudice. Language prejudices are "negative value judgments about a person based on the way he or she speaks, usually directed toward a speaker of a vernacular dialect" (*Do You Speak American?* 2005: *Viewer's Guide*). As a result of these prejudices, those who normally use AAE are also victims of language profiling. Language profiling may have the most adverse effects on a person's social or economic status. Oftentimes decisions about people are based on the variety of language they speak. According to the viewer's guide for *Do You Speak American?*, "Language profiling is most prevalent in people in gatekeeping positions: that is, people in positions of power who make decisions about employment, immigration, living arrangements, and so forth. This process

is very closely related to racial and economic profiling."

Due to language prejudices and profiling, many African Americans have immersed themselves in or created their own bidialectal speech communities. This was the case in the affluent biracial community of Shaker Heights, Ohio. Research found that the majority of the African-American community found it necessary to code-switch, which may have had some effect on reading and writing scores. As the author of the study explains,

> there are separate cultural rules governing speaking (a) [African-American] English, and (b) standard . . . English within the African-American speech community. During their language socialization, [African-American] children learn [African-American] English and the cultural rules for using it as their mother tongue; they also learn standard English and the rules in their speech community for using it. (Ogbu 2003: 182)

Ogbu found that each dialect (AAE and SE) has a separate function and is used for a different purpose. African Americans within the speech community know and accept the separate functions. They identified their need to speak "'proper' English" in contexts of "education, jobs, and communication with 'outsiders'" (182).

The study identified and explicated the "Cultural Rules for Using African-American English and Standard English."

Rules for African-American English—African-American students "used AAE among themselves, in the family and community" or in informal discussions at school.

Rules for Standard English—"Most students understood that they should speak SE at school, especially during lessons." African-American students generally recognized SE at school as important, they understood it was required and expected at school, and they tried to follow that rule.

Using African-American English Out of Place—"Students criticized others who spoke [AAE] where it was not appropriate to do so. There were two kinds of students who broke the rule and were criticized. . . ." One was the group who could not competently code-switch to SE; the other was the transfers from other areas.

Speaking Standard English Out of Place—Using SE "at home and in the community amounted to breaking the cultural rule of SE and was criticized by some [African Americans] as acting white." Those who used SE outside the classroom complained of being ridiculed by other African-American students (Ogbu 2003: 184–187).

In this bidialectal speech community, "no adult or student African American said that he or she was opposed to [SE]." Opposition only occurred when the variety was used out of place (187). This study further validates the ideas of language prejudices and language profiling. Many equate the ability to be successful and "accepted" in mainstream America with the ability to speak Standard English. It also shows the importance of AAE as a unifying cultural part of African-American life and why AAE is not going away soon.

A Case (Self-)Study

I believe, as an African American, that there should be a respect for acculturation in America. However, some view the "melting pot" theory with the suspicion that it destroys African-American culture, so there will be continued resistance to SE. When mastery of SE is considered within a context of bidialectalism, it is important for the minority group or individuals to retain their culture even with entrance into the mainstream. Understanding this need to maintain an identity within my culture, I have examined the incidence of code-switching by myself and family members, some who code-switch and some who do not.

My History as a Code-Switcher

I am from a medium-sized town in central Alabama. My parents grew up in the same neighborhood and "went together" since the eighth grade. They are both from two-parent, blue-collar homes. Four of my uncles joined the military, and all but one returned to his home area after completing their enlistments. No one from my immediate family left home to go to college—except my mother. I'm pretty sure money was their major deterrent. My mother went away to Alabama A&M University, a historically black university in Huntsville, but returned home within two years to marry my father, who did not go to college. I was the first grandchild on my mom's side and the first girl in a generation on

my father's side (he is the youngest of three boys). Even though many family members now have white-collar jobs, my generation, even in the extended family, was basically the first to leave home and graduate from college.

Children from my neighborhood were bused to a predominantly white elementary school, while my church and social settings were completely segregated. I recognized the need and gained the ability to code-switch in elementary school, quickly learning to speak like the white children in my class. I did not interact with white people at all in my life outside of school. Many of the other African-American kids did not learn as easily as I did, so I was more readily accepted by the white and, interestingly, African-American teachers because of my high level of reading and my ability to "adapt." But I paid the price with my African-American speech community. I was not like the other kids and was somewhat of an outsider. Unlike in the Shaker Heights community in Ohio discussed above, code switching even during school was "acting white."

By the end of high school I had discovered my own identity within this speech community. My mother always stressed to me the importance of an education. Furthermore, because she, a generation earlier, had been limited in the choices of where an African American could even attend college, she would not allow me to attend, as many of my friends did, a historically black institution like Alabama A&M, Alabama State University, or even Tuskegee University. She felt that I had to learn to live in a "white world" and needed to immerse myself in a more integrated society. Therefore, I chose to attend the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. Hence, the ability to code-switch and fit in, in her eyes, allowed me a better opportunity for success.

At Alabama, I remember ridiculing an African-American girl in my dorm who either refused to or could not speak AAE. She spoke Southern English, but without the African-American vernacular features combined with it. We, the other African-American students who were code-switchers, did not consider her cool and thought that she "acted white" even though her friends and boyfriend from her home in north Alabama were African American. As I reflect upon this, I realize now that she did not act differently as much as she spoke differently. We projected her speech onto her personality, which was a misconception on our part.

Code-switching was important for me to fit within the integrated society I was working to become a part of, as well as within my own larger cultural and smaller social groups. Added to these earlier functions, I also find code-switching still useful with my students, both African American and white. I code-switch to AAE to come across as genuine to my African-American students, while my AAE also works to increase my authority with white students. I usually switch in classroom management situations, not academic ones. I'll use catchy phrases or statements. For example, if the room is messy or the students don't pick up after themselves, I'll say something like, "I'm not cha maid or ya mama, so clean up!" or "You don't even wanna go there!" or "Chill out!" It gives me authority and authenticity with the kids. But I notice that I do not use so much the features of AAVE ("I ain't yo maid . . .") as much as features of the African-American Verbal Tradition and AAE's "nuance, tone, and gesture" as mentioned above.

Research Into My Code-Switching

To understand my code-switching more particularly, I recorded short conversations between myself and three individuals in one-on-one contexts. These were with a white fellow teacher and team leader at our school; with a female African-American cousin who teaches in a large metropolitan area in Alabama; and with my eighty-year-old grandfather. Tables 1 through 3 present transcriptions of the conversations (most names are changed or replaced by letters for the sake of anonymity). While my conversation with "A" at school (Table 1) lacks features of AAE, the conversations with both my cousin (Table 2) and my grandfather (Table 3) exhibit AAE features, with the most features occurring in Table 3, my AAVE style[2].

TABLE 1

K and A's Informal Standard English Speech

CONTEXT: Informal but professional conversation with Euro-American colleague A during work at middle school.
FEATURES: Lacks defining features of AAE. Contains features of informal SE such as contractions (How's, I'm, I'll)
K: Hey A, How's it going?
A: Hi, How are you?
K: Fine, I'm tired though. That field trip wore me out (laughs).
A: I know, but I think things went really well . . . except for VVV.
K: I know . . . I wanted to strangle her. I should call her mom.
A: We probably should . . . just to let her know . . .
K: I'll give her a call tomorrow, or I'll tell Mrs. WWW to send an email since I don't teach her.
K: Ummm. Do you have our new room assignments?
A: Oh yes. XXX is going to put you across the hall in YYY's room.
K: Oh, no.
A: What? Is something wrong?
K: No . . . um . . . not really . . . well . . . I think ZZZ really wanted to be in that room. It doesn't matter to me, though.

Table 2

K and Q's African-American English with Grammatical and Phonological Features and an Intonational Feature of the African-American Verbal Tradition

Context: Phone conversation with African-American cousin. Q worked in retail in large metropolitan malls during college. She is six years younger than K, a teacher in a large metropolitan school system in Alabama, and, like K, pursuing a graduate degree.

*Features: Non-SE contractions, "haven't" and "aren't contracted to "ain't"; strong intonational change (dramatic change in pitch) derived from AAVT, denoted by **bold** type; variable replacement of R with vowel sound (denoted by spellings); replacement of -ing with -in for present participles; and variable auxiliary-verb deletion, denoted by *, with deleted item in brackets at end of passage.*

K: Hello?	
Q: Hey, Girl . . . (laughs) I ain't heard from you in a while.	
K: (interrupts) I know… I * been busy.	['ve]
Q: Doin what?	
K: Everything—work, Will, kids, grad school . . . You didn't know? I'm supuh-woman (laughs).	
Q: (laughing) I heard yah Mama * been sick.	['s]
K: Oh yeah, feet problems, gout—she didn't start havin problems until the kids left spring break.	
Q: Girl . . . ain't you glad? (laughs)	
K: Don't you know? How's your ghetto school?	
Q: Fine, security had to come up in theh today (laughs).	
K: Girl . . . **why?** . . . Fight?	
Q: No, honey, pink slip day . . .	
K: Uh un . . . * You serious? (laughing)	[are]
Q: Yes, it was **not** a pretty sight	

TABLE 3

K and Butter's African-American English with Additional Features Not in Table 2 Conversation

CONTEXT: K's Conversation with her grandfather, Butter (pronounced as Budduh, without "r" sound) at Butter's place. Butter, eighty, grew up very poor, but completed high school while in the military. He worked at a foundry for many years, then as a custodian, full-time at a military base and part-time at their church. Bug is Butter's name for K, Little Bug is K's daughter, Dayton is her son.

Features: Non-SE contractions, "I'm going to" contracted to "I'ma"; strong intonational change (dramatic change in pitch) derived from AAVT, denoted by ***bold*** *type; variable replacement of R with a vowel sound (denoted by spellings); replacement of -ing with -in for present participles; variable auxiliary verb deletion, denoted by *, with deleted item in brackets at end of passage; variable substitution of "d" for voiced "th" sound* ***[ð]*** *at beginning of words; variable reduction of consonant clusters into single sounds, "chilren," "jus."*

K: Hey, Budduh!	
B: Hey, Bug. Wheh * my little Bug at?	['s]
K: She * in dere (laughs). She * been askin to see you. Dayton too . . . * **You wanna babysit?!**	['s] twice, [do]
B: Nooooo . . . Dayton is too much . . . I'll keep Bug, dough . . . you * got those two chilren spoiled!	['ve]
K: No! Not me! **You** did that!	
B: What * dey do?	[do]
K: He won't sit still! He * got me runnin all over da place! **See**, he * jumpin on your bed, now! (laughing) K: Stop that, Dayton. I'ma make Budduh give you a whippin…	['s] twice
B: Nooooo. You bettuh not touch dat boy. He * jus bein a boy–I mean it. I bettuh not catch you hittin him.	['s]
K: **See what I mean?** Spoiled . . . . (laughing)	

I analyzed the motivations for my code-switching in those conversations with the help of research mentioned by H. Samy Alim in *You Know My Steez: An Ethnographic Study of Styleshifting in a Black American Speech Community*. Alim explains that the protocol for shifting consists of three categories (2004: 55):

- Speakers assess the personal characteristics of their addressees and design their style to suit.
- Speakers assess the general level of their addressees' speech and shift relative to it.
- Speakers assess their addressees' levels for specific linguistic variables and shift relative to those levels.

Categories one and two of the protocol make it no surprise that I spoke SE with my white professional colleague and AAE with my cousin and my grandfather. Interestingly, however, I discovered that my AAE varied in the conversations between my cousin and me and my grandfather and me. With both these African-American family members it is clear that category three is important: I was assessing their "levels for specific linguistic variables" and shifting "relative to those levels." Not only do I code-switch with someone outside of my cultural speech community, the white colleague, but I style-shift within AAE depending on whom I am speaking with.

During the conversation with my cousin, twenty-seven, there were more SE features retained in our AAE, as we talked about things that we had in common, mostly work and graduate school. Looking back on my conversation with my grandfather, eighty, I saw that I tried harder to talk like him and the others who still live in the community. The style in Table 3 contains the AAE features of the style in Table 2, but it moves even further from SE and includes additional features of AAE, those associated with AAVE such as deletion of the forms of the verb "be," and substitution of "d" for "th" in words like *there*.

For comparative purposes, I also reconsidered my conversation with my white co-worker. What if I refused or had not learned to code-switch between SE and AAE? How would the conversation have changed—on my part, as I cannot speak for the other speaker? Table 4 converts my passages of the conversation into the AAVE style of AAE that I use with my grandfather. While conversion to AAVE causes no difference in the meaning of my parts of the

dialogue, the truth is that I would feel as strange talking in that style while wearing my educator hat in my integrated world of work as I would using SE to my grandfather. The codes would be inappropriate in each case, and each conversation would probably produce dismal results because of the baggage each style would bring into the relationship.

Table 4

K's Informal SE Speech with A Converted from K's SE into AAVE Style of Table 3

Original conversation with colleague at work	*K's conversation modified to include probable features of K's AAVE style of AAE*
K: Hey A, How's it going?	Hey, what's goin on? How you doin'
A: Hi, How are you?	
K: Fine, I'm tired, though. That field trip wore me out (laughs)	Good . . . ti'ed. That field trip was **too much.**
A: I know, but I think things went really well . . . except for VVV.	
K: I know . . . I wanted to strangle her. I should call her mom.	I know . . . I coulda choked her. I'ma call her mama.
A: We probably should . . . just to let her know…	
K: I'll give her a call tomorrow or I'll tell Mrs. WWW to send an email since I don't teach her. K: Ummm. Do you have our new room assignments?	I'll do it tomorrow or I'll jus tell Miz WWW to send an email. I don't teach her anyways. Ummm. You have the new room numbers?
A: Oh yes. XXX is going to put you across the hall in YYY's room.	
K: Oh no.	**Uh oh.**
A: What? Is something wrong?	
K: No . . . um . . . not really . . . well . . . I think ZZZ really wanted to be in that room. It doesn't matter to me, though.	I don't guess so . . . ya know ZZZ wanted dat room. I don't care, dough.

Conclusion

Although AAE and especially AAVE are stigmatized in American mainstream culture, they are spoken by millions of people. Within the community, AAE is an important component of group identity. In this sense, using AAE in the community can be as valuable and important as using SE in professional situations. While inability to switch to SE may lead to feelings of inadequacy for those who are struggling to fit into mainstream America, is it also possible for African Americans purposely to resist learning SE because of fear of loss of cultural identity? Geneva Smitherman explains these conflicting desires in her description of what she terms "push-pull": even as African slaves became Americanized away from their African roots, taking up white Americans' "religion, culture, customs, and, of course, language," there were also "strong resistance movements against enslavement and the oppressive ways of white folks." Thus African-American culture exhibits "*pushing* toward white American culture while simultaneously *pulling* away from it" (1977: 10). Looking at language, she continues, "The dynamics of push-pull can help to illuminate the complex sociolinguistic situation that continues to exist in Black America. That is, while some blacks speak very Black English, there are others who speak very White English, and still others who are competent in both linguistic systems" (11–12).

Smitherman does not mention it in this passage, but my look at my own code-switching shows that African Americans can also change their language to be more "black" or more "white" as the need arises, though African Americans who possess more education and wider social experience will, of course, be more proficient in switching to Standard English.

Personally, I think that those whose goals require them to integrate into mainstream America will find success more difficult if they lack the ability to code-switch (unless it is in the entertainment/sports community where SE is not a primary aspect of the job description). I perceive acquiring this skill as a necessity in order to be accepted in both worlds.

Be that as it may, with my parent hat on I often worry aloud to my husband whether my daughter will be accepted by her African-American peers. She is growing up in an environment different from the one I grew up in: an integrated community where many of her friends are white or just like her.

She speaks standard Southern English with few features of AAE. I can sometimes tell when she has spent time at my parents' home, as she shifts slightly. But often many of my old friends, and even college friends, comment to me about how "white" she sounds. Will she be judged as I judged my college peer? Will she make African-American friends that are only like her? Do I *teach* her AAE? I am left with questions and worries that will probably continue to be with me for a while. ■

Acknowledgments

We wish to thank Kimberly's family members and colleagues for allowing her to record her conversations with them. We also thank Deborah Boykin, Joey Brackner, Anne Kimzey, and Randall Williams for helpful suggestions on the essay.

Notes

1. Although this essay is jointly written, the authors chose to present the research in Kimberly's voice to capture the sense of her unique experience and for more effective expression.
2. Listings and explanations of the grammatical, phonological, semantic, and discourse features of AAE, especially of AAVE, are widely available. See, for example, Morgan 2002: 77, the web site *Do You Speak American?* 2005, and other web sites listed in Nunnally's Appendix C.

References

Alim, H. Samy. 2004. *You Know My Steez: An Ethnographic and Sociolinguistic Study of Styleshifting in a Black American Speech Community*. Publication of the American Dialect Society Number 89. Durham: Duke University Press.

Do You Speak American? 2005. MacNeil/Lehrer Productions. http://www.pbs.org/speak/

Lippi-Green, Rosina. 1997. *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States.* New York: Routledge.

Merriam-Webster Online. 2008. Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. http://www.merriam-webster.com/.

Morgan, Marcylienna. 2002. *Language, Discourse, and Power in African American Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ogbu, John U. 2003. *African American Students in an Affluent Suburb: A Study of*

Academic Disengagement. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Smitherman, Geneva. 1977. *Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Repr. Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1986.

Taylor, Hanni U. 1989. *Standard English, African American English, and Bidialectalism: A Controversy*. New York: Peter Lang.

X, Malcolm. 1966. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X.* New York: Grove Press.

College Writers as Alabama Storytellers

Charlotte Brammer

My interest in Southern storytelling probably began when I was a child, growing up in South Carolina. I distinctly remember when I was perhaps four or five years old sitting in my great-grandmother's lavender bedroom, sometimes on the fuzzy rug beside her bed, other times on the chenille bedspread beside her, listening to "Little Granny" tell about her childhood exploits. Sometimes she would tell me stories about how my mother or grandmother had ignored some rule or warning and, as a consequence, gotten hurt. In short, I was encouraged to obey my mother and my grandmother lest I too get hurt.

While I never lost interest in Southern storytelling, I developed a new curiosity about how Southerners use stories during my doctoral work on dialect features in writing (Brammer 2002). Storytelling is an art that thrives in the South, and Alabamians love to hear and to tell good stories. Kathryn Tucker Windham of Selma is but one acclaimed Alabama storyteller. Her stories about Jeffrey, the ghost who haunts her house and is blamed for all manner of mischief that occurs there, have entertained listeners for almost forty years, but stories don't just serve to entertain. To Southerners, including Alabamians, stories like the ones Windham tells (1973, 1974, Windham and Figh 1969) and my great grandmother told serve multiple purposes. They help us identify with or relate to one another, developing intimacy among tellers and listeners, and sometimes they are more convincing than "objective" evidence. In this essay, I will use my experience with as well as research about Southern storytelling to discuss how college students sometimes employ features of Southern storytelling in their writing.

As a lifelong Southerner and longtime resident of Alabama, I've discovered that Southerners value personal experience. If we need medical care, we want

to "know" or at least "know of" someone who has similar pains. We seem to want someone with whom to compare symptoms, treatment, and outcomes. We also enjoy sharing our experiences—thus, a pregnant woman who ventures out in public (to the grocery store, church, work, etc.) is likely to hear uninvited stories where narrators detail either their own or a friend's/wife's/sister's labor and delivery. Few of these stories offer real comfort or encouragement to the pregnant woman. Instead, they generally describe unimaginably long and painful labors where epidurals are not possible or births that occur en route to the hospital, usually during hurricanes or aberrant snow storms. From my experience, such stories are generally accompanied by comments to the effect *I hope you have a better time of it than my friend Joyce did; she . . .* or *You probably won't have any problems like this, but let me tell you about . . .* At times, these stories of labor and delivery compare with "fish stories" where one speaker tries to outperform the other.

Such stories generally adhere to specific patterns that Shirley Brice Heath identifies in her 1983 text *Ways with Words*, in which she describes the language use of residents in three communities in the Piedmont region of South Carolina: white middle-class "Townpeople," the African-American community of "Trackton," and the white, working-class community of "Roadville." According to Heath, there is much variability in the ways that Townpeople use stories. Some parents are very creative, weaving outlandish tales of fantasy in which their children are the heroes, while others scaffold stories for their children by asking questions that children are expected to answer in very specific ways (*e.g.*, asking whether the child would like to have participated in the events of a particular story with the intention of having the child elaborate on why). These interchanges, according to Heath, prepare the children of Townpeople for academic success because these practices are used in many classrooms. In Trackton, stories are highly imaginative, resist formulaic introductions and structure, even chronicity, and often show how the speaker or protagonist exhibited super strength to emerge victorious over some fantastic obstacle. According to Heath, these African Americans' stories "do not teach lessons about proper behavior; they tell of individuals who excel by outwitting the rules of conventional behavior" (187).

In contrast to Townpeople and those from Trackton, Heath posits that in

the white community of Roadville, stories are expected to be "factual" and adhere to "strict chronicity, with direct discourse reported, and no explicit exposition of meaning or direct expression of evaluation of the behavior of the main character allowed" (1983: 185). Such stories give an accurate accounting of some event, and storytellers "qualify exaggeration and hedge if they might seem to be veering from an accurate reporting of events." Furthermore, stories often expose the teller's (or the main character's) weaknesses and are intended to teach lessons about appropriate behavior. Biblical references are common as a way for "Roadville members [to] reaffirm their commitment to community and church values by giving factual accounts of their own weaknesses and the lessons learned in overcoming them" (185). For one example of a Roadville community story, Heath prints one of "Sue's" stories about cooking mishaps.

In this story, Sue recalls an incident where she does not adhere to the recipe because she takes a phone call and fails to pay attention to her task. Though Sue does not say so, the caller is a woman known to Sue's listeners as a community gossip. The story is very loosely organized, in terms of theme, includes numerous elaborations and asides, but adheres to a step-by-step recounting of events, including "quoting" from other people involved in the story. To conclude, Sue states the moral: "*Guess I'll learn to keep my mind on my own business and off other folks.*" Heath explains Sue's story as "an occasion in which all recognize their common, but unspoken, Christian ideal of disciplined tongue" (154). I would add that Sue's story should remind most Southerners, even non-Christian Southerners, of Christ's admonition as recorded in Matthew 7:3, "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" Though space does not permit it here, Heath's findings can be corroborated by looking at the storytelling patterns of Southern storytellers, even celebrated ones such as Windham.

In my own collecting and analyzing of stories, I have discovered that the teller of a labor/delivery story—or nightmare—will usually begin with a brief history of the person, often identifying some character flaw (*she didn't know nothing about having a baby and had no idea what a labor pain meant . . .*) followed swiftly by the standard Southernism, *bless her heart*. The teller will begin the story a day or so before the main event, describing activities in order of occurrence, sometimes relating details that serve as clues to the impending

climax of the story, clues that parallel common beliefs about women's intuition and cultural myths about pregnancy that the listener should know, unless of course the listener "doesn't know anything about having a baby." Dialogue is important to the teller, and thus, it is reported—she said this and then he said that. Such details and careful construction render the story believable or authentic and help make it a cautionary tale in the checkout line.

Given the importance of stories to Southern communication, we should not be surprised to find stories woven into students' writing, even in college. I will share two examples of unedited and informal student writing for discussion. Both students attended a large, public university in Alabama when they wrote these responses. I refer to them as "Chad" and "Beth Anne." Chad was born and raised in Jefferson County, Alabama, spending most of his time in a small rural town just north of Birmingham. Chad is the first in his family to pursue a four-year degree and is somewhat typical of a white Southern working-class male who sees education as a way to improve his socioeconomic circumstances. He is married and works full-time, attending school part-time, fitting in classes around his work schedule. Like Chad, Beth Anne is a Southerner, born and raised in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. She too works full time and takes classes part-time. She exhibits a strong work ethic that tends to be representative of individuals with her rural white, working-class background.

As part of a course on human resources management, their instructor asked the students to write an informal journal entry that defined "good service" at a restaurant or a store. Students were not expected to edit their responses carefully, and in keeping with disciplinary practice, I have not changed their original texts. Some students, including Chad and Beth Anne, responded with stories.

Chad wrote a story that clearly follows Southern vernacular linguistic and rhetorical structure. His complete and unedited journal entry follows:

> The Time I Received Exceptionally Good Service
>
> In the fall of 1998, I was on my way to work, as I normally do, when I noticed that my power steering had become not so powerful. Worried, I then noticed my instrument panel started lighting up like it was the Forth of July with the check engine light being the grand finale'. I thought that this could

make me have to pull over on that old lonesome highway where the rest of the commuters would no[t] dare waste their time to try to help a stranded stranger. I, however, was determined not to be one of those people.

I, determinely, drove my troubled truck on down the highway to at last I came to the Heaven sent exit that could lead me to the refuge of the life-line of every troubled motorist, a South Central Bell telephone. I pulled off the exit not knowing if this, until now reliable, troubled truck could make it to a service station up on the next hill from where I exited.

As I began to reach that service station of refuge, I began to become excited. If I could just make it there I could call home for help. When I finally turned into the service station I had a joyous feeling of relief that came over me. I got out of my truck and started walking toward the phone when, as I was digging into my pocket, I noticed I didn't have any money on me. My heart sank into my stomach as I was pondering what to do. I went back to my truck and looked under my hood to see if the problem was maybe a loose wire or something simple that I could fix. My heart sank further into the pit of my stomach. My fan, power steering and alternator belt had broken.

My day was shot. I now was late for work and didn't have a dime to my name to make a phone call. I thought of giving up hope, when out from the service station came an attendant to come to my rescue. He had saw that I was having car trouble and came to offer assistance to a wounded traveler. I told him my belt had broke and I didn't have any money on me to call home or work. This Good Samaritan decided to help me with my problems. He allowed me to call work and tell them I would be late for work. What a relief! I was about to call home to have somebody come and carry me the rest of the way to work when the attendant said "I'll carry [you] over to the auto parts store and loan you the money to get the fan belt." I said "thank you, but I don't have the tools or knowledge to put one on." He said, "don't worry. I can help you put one on." The attendant told his coworker what the situation was and allowed him to leave temporarily to go to the auto parts store.

When we returned the attendant helped me put on the fan belt and got my truck running. The extra mile that the attendant went through to help me in my time of need was a surprise and a blessing. I wished everybody could be this generous.

> I returned the next day and tried to pay the attendant some extra money for helping me, but he would not take any additional money. From then on I have tried to give as mush business to that service station as I could give.
>
> ("Chad," Service Journal for Human Resources Management Course)

Chad informally relates loosely connected details that follow a close chronological order of his thinking during the event; his linguistic variations act to enrich the story in ways similar to that of other Alabama storytellers (see, for example, any of Windham's stories or Rick Bragg 1997). He carefully recounts his thoughts and emotions during the ordeal and seems to faithfully report dialogue from the attendant who helped him. Additionally, and in line with Heath's observation of biblical references discussed above, Chad includes the direct biblical references *Heaven sent*, *Good Samaritan, extra mile,* and *blessing*. We may assume that Chad expects these direct Christian references to resonate with many "Bible Belt" Southerners. Many would identify also with the religious parallel of the *joyous feeling of relief* from "finding salvation" in *that service station of refuge* and the minor challenges to that salvation that are resolved by the "savior" or attendant. Through his story, Chad equates good service with the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The Southern linguistic features, such as the use of the verb *carry*, the verb + double particle in ***drove*** *my troubled truck* ***on down***, and the nuance of grammatical constructions such as *began to become excited*, add charm to the story. More importantly, these dialect features help build solidarity with his assumed Southern readers (see Feagin's essay on the solidarity function of the Southern Drawl; for further discussion of how dialect features build social identity and connections see Donlon 1995, Gee 1996, Delpit 1995, and Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998).

In addition to its regional linguistic features, Southern speech is also known for its politeness (see Davies's essay) as well as for its personal interest (some non-Southerners would say "nosiness"). Storytelling may serve as a way to increase the level of politeness, or rather lessen the risk of offending others. As Johnstone notes, "Deferential politeness (as opposed to friendly expressions of 'positive' solidarity) is especially important when there are potential threats to negative face—[that is,] when it is especially likely that people might offend

or bother one another" (2001: 195). This linguistic notion of *face*, in simplest terms, suggests that individuals behave and use language in ways to avoid embarrassment or threats to personal autonomy and in order to be appreciated by others. Through storytelling, individuals can make comments that might otherwise insult listeners. For example, look at the complete and unedited journal entry Beth Anne wrote in her attempt to define good service:

POOR SERVICE EXPERIENCE

The worse experience I have had was with my new car. The place I bought it from had a great sales department but their service department needed a lot of work. They could greatly improve on their listening and communication skills. The sales guy I got my car from was really nice and understanding, he tried to help me everyway he could. The problem started when my car only had 500 miles on it. I had driven it to the beach and I was going to let my windows down in the back and they would not roll down. Also on the way home I kept hearing this rattle. I could hold my hand on the headliner of my car and it would stop. So Monday morning when I got home I took my car to the service department, I got there early so I could be near the front of the line because I had school that day. I waited for about 15 minutes. The service guy said what is your problem and I started to tell him, when I said the windows wont roll down he said "are you sure" I said yes, he then said "let me see". Sure enough he could not roll the windows down either. Then I started telling him about the rattle and how I could hold my hand on the headliner and it would stop. He did write down rattle in roof of car on the paper. I got my car back 2 weeks later and the rattle was still there. So I took it back and got another service man, he wrote it down. That afternoon I got the call that my car was fixed. I drove it home and it was still rattling. Well the fourth time I had my dad to take the car back. This time they heard the noise and could fix it that day. Well, that afternoon I picked up my car the rattle was gone but the quality of work the service department did was awful. I had grease all over the inside of my car and the headliner was not put back right. The problem was the manufacture and not installed the metal bar that held wires in place.

This simple problem took too long to fix due to the service people not listening and doing their job right. Quality and workmanship build a company and

without these the company will get a bad rep. I know this is true because many people have complained about the same company.

(“Beth Anne,” Service Journal for Human Resources Management Course)

Beth Anne’s story shares many of the features that Heath (1983) describes and that are present in Chad’s story, namely, chronology, asides, and reported dialogue. Rather than using biblical imagery, however, Beth Anne alludes to cultural myths that resonate with working-class Southerners (see Braden 1983 for discussion of how many Southern speakers use allusions to cultural myths to establish solidarity with their audience). In retelling her actions, she emphasizes her attempts to identify and correct the problem (*I could hold my hand on the headliner of my car and it would stop*); her respectable and traditional work ethic, reflecting the agrarian adage “early to bed, early to rise . . .” (*I got there early so I could be near the front of the line because I had school that day*); and the overall importance of maintaining a good reputation. Indeed, the moral of her story is directed toward businesses’ need to maintain their reputations: *Quality and workmanship build a company and without these the company will get a bad rep.*

An equally important cultural myth is the idea that only her father, the masculine protector and “fixer,” is able to get the service department to recognize the problem: *This time* ***they heard the noise*** *and could fix it that day.* This retelling includes an embedded threat: the service department had no choice but to appease the father. The understood context is that her father would have accepted no other outcome, an implicit threat to the service representative’s negative face. Moreover, Beth Anne must acknowledge her father’s success in this quest in order to protect his face, and thus she notes that *Well, that afternoon I picked up my car the rattle was gone but the quality of work the service department did was awful. I had grease all over the inside of my car and the headliner was not put back right.* At least one implication is that her father is not responsible for the service department’s lack of care in the cosmetic aspects of fixing her car. Indeed, in the very next sentence, Beth Anne redirects her criticism away from the service department: *The problem was the manufacture*[r]. Throughout her story, Beth Anne blames only the service department, specifically stating *They could greatly improve on their listening and communication skills*, and she

not only refrains from accusatory remarks against one individual, but rather is careful to note that each technician *did write down the rattle*. In establishing her ethos of honesty and fairness, by giving a factual and chronological retelling, and by blaming the larger, impersonal manufacturer, Beth Anne creates an implicit opportunity for the reader/listener to interpret blame for her, and while she expects this response to blame the service department, her ethic of polite behavior requires her to leave the situation ambiguous. Her final statement, *I know this is true because many people have complained about the same company*, refers to the custom of valuing others' opinions and experiences, of cultural wisdom.

As Chad's and Beth Anne's stories demonstrate, stories serve many useful purposes in Southern culture. They can entertain, teach, and argue, all the while helping us preserve a level of politeness that is perhaps uniquely Southern. The distinctive linguistic features available in Southern English, including discourse features of politeness, are thus important resources that story tellers draw upon to make this method of communication effective. ■

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank my friend and dissertation director, Catherine Evans Davies, for suggesting inclusion of my research in this issue, Joey Brackner, Anne Kimzey, and Deborah Boykin for helpful comments, and Tom Nunnally for suggestions of organization and additional scholarly sources. I also wish to express gratitude to my students who graciously allowed use of their writing in my research.

References

Braden, Waldo W. 1983. *The Oral Tradition in the South*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

Bragg, Rick. 1997. *All Over But the Shoutin'*. New York: Vintage Books.

Brammer, Charlotte. 2002. *Identifying Southern Dialect Influences on Business Student Writing*. Doctoral dissertation University of Alabama. DAI 63.10A, 3533.

Delpit, Lisa. 1995. *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*. New York: The New Press.

Donlon, Jocelyn Hazelwood. 1995. "Hearing is Believing: Southern Racial Communities and Strategies of Story-Listening in Gloria Naylor and Lee Smith."

Twentieth Century Literature 41: 16–36.

Gee, James P. 1996. *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses*. 2nd ed. Bristol, PA: Taylor & Francis.

Heath, Shirley Brice. 1983. *Ways with Words: Language, Life, and Work in Communities and Classrooms*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Johnstone, Barbara. "Features and Uses of Southern Style." In *English in the Southern United States*. Eds. Steven J. Nagle and Sara L. Sanders. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 189–207.

Windham, Kathryn Tucker. 1973. *13 Georgia Ghosts and Jeffrey*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

________. 1974. *13 Mississippi Ghosts and Jeffrey*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Windham, Kathryn Tucker, and Margaret Gillis Figh. 1969. *13 Alabama Ghosts and Jeffrey*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Wolfram, Walt, and Natalie Schilling-Estes. *American English*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998.

Tsalagi Language Revitalization and the Echota Cherokee

Robin Sabino

Of the more than three hundred indigenous languages estimated to have been spoken in North America before the arrival of Europeans, linguists predict only twenty will remain by 2050 (NYS Affirmative Action Advisory Council 2006). With the loss of each language, we lose centuries of accumulated insight into the human condition. Cherokee, Creek, and Choctaw, three languages once spoken in what is now Alabama, are among the indigenous languages that survive today.

The story of the present-day descendants of Alabama's indigenous people is one of resilience. *Access Genealogy* (2004–2007) lists thirty-seven distinct Indian communities once living in territory that is now Alabama. Many of these groups, such as the Alabama, the Biloxi, the Koasati, the Natchez, and the Yuchi, no longer have a presence in the state (Americans.net 1996–2005). Existing tribes survived the initial European encounter, subsequent repopulation of their lands, and detribalization. Like the Mowa Choctaw described by Cormier, et al. (2006), the several state-recognized Cherokee tribes in Alabama descend from Indian people who escaped removal, enduring hardship and discrimination—often publicly denying their Indian heritage in order to protect it privately and thereby remain on land to which they are spiritually connected.

Passing as non-Indians was possible because contact, first with Europeans and later with American settlers, resulted in rapid cultural change for southeastern tribes. During this period, some Creek, Chickasaw, and Cherokee women took white husbands (Walker and Marshall 2005). Although an individual's status with the tribe was determined matrilineally, when seen

from a Western perspective at the turn of the century, tribal leadership was described as mixed.

In 1803, the Reverend Patrick Wilson, traveling along a former Indian route, reported a "rapid increase in the settler population" in what is now Mississippi (Hathorn and Sabino 2001: 215–216). Traveling north through what is now Alabama, Wilson encountered the Chickamauga Cherokee,[1] from whom the Echota Cherokee descend. Praising the success of the federal government's recently initiated so-called civilization efforts, Wilson also documents the retention of Cherokee cultural patterns, remarking on cooperative work details and use of a traditional eating utensil. In the Chickamauga capital, Wilson reports on a "prosperous, culturally mixed population" (Hathorn and Sabino 2001: 211). Since he comments only once on communication difficulties—indicating he needed a translator to converse with a monolingual tavern keeper in Hiwassee, a town formerly located south of Knoxville—we can infer that by this time, bilingualism was well-established in the Cherokee capital and further south.

The mid-nineteenth century saw the emergence of a nationwide English-only education program aimed at eradicating the traditional languages (and thus the traditional cultures) of indigenous peoples living in what had become the United States. It was not until the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1968 that it "bec[a]me legal to be Indian and live in Alabama" (Walker and Marshall 2005: 7). This legacy of cultural repression lingers still: Charlotte Hallmark, former tribal chairman and current tribal chief of the Echota Cherokee, reports that as late as the 1990s elderly Native Americans often voiced concern that admitting to "Indian blood will only bring me trouble" (Charlotte Hallmark, personal communication).

The widespread impact of shameful federally mandated detribalization policies is apparent today on the Indian languages once spoken in what is now the United States. For example, according to the *Ethnologue* about 14 percent of federally recognized Cherokees are native speakers, and the majority of these are elderly and bilingual. The *Ethnologue* also reports only 130 monolingual Cherokee (Gordon 2005); however, Picone cites the 2000 census as reporting 270 self-identified Cherokee speakers in Alabama. Additionally, a number of individuals are attempting to teach and relearn their heritage language.

Four of the southeastern so-called "five civilized tribes," the Creek, the Seminole, the Chickasaw, and the Choctaw, spoke Muscogean languages. Cherokee is an Iroquoian language. Reasons for the migration of the people named Tsalagi by their southeastern neighbors (the Cherokee call themselves *ani ya-wi ya*) and renamed Cherokee by Europeans are still not understood. Subsequent division and displacement has resulted in the creation of Tsalagi dialects: Elati (also called Lower/Eastern Cherokee, now classified by linguists as extinct), Giduwa (Middle Cherokee), and Otali (Upper/Western/ Overhill Cherokee).

The approximately twenty-two thousand Echota Cherokee (Hathorn 1997) are one of four Alabama state-recognized tribes with Cherokee membership; the Alabama Indian Affairs Commission web site also lists the Cher-o-Creek Intra Tribal Indians, the Cherokee Tribe of Northeast Alabama, and the United Cherokee Ani-Yun-Wiya Nation. There also are groups, such as the Bird Clan, whose members include people of Cherokee descent but who have not sought formal recognition.

The Echota are governed by a tribal council that administers communal land, sponsors annual pow-wows, and publishes a bimonthly newsletter. Part of the Echotas' program of cultural preservation and renewal is reacquisition of Tsalagi. This desire provided the motivation for the Echota/Auburn University Tsalagi Language Revitalization Project available at www.auburn.edu/echota. An early step toward realizing this goal was a tribal language survey conducted by Stacye Hathorn in the 1990s. The survey instrument explored existing linguistic resources among the Echota and the symbolic meaning of Tsalagi for Echota cultural identity. Although survey results revealed no self-identified, native Tsalagi speakers among the Echota, it did document Tsalagi being spoken in tribal members' homes within living memory. The survey also documented the Echota's enthusiasm and willingness to work for cultural revitalization and the anticipated social and personal rewards that reacquisition of Tsalagi would bring.

The Echota/Auburn University Tsalagi language revitalization web site is the only free-access, self-instructional resource sponsored by an Alabama institution of higher education. The project began in the early 1990s when tribal member Pat Edwards Ortega requested help with language revitalization. After several

Figure 1

Home page. (The Echota/Auburn University Tsalagi Language Revitalization Project)

unsuccessful attempts to interest funding agencies in a large-scale project to collect language data, a Ford Foundation grant was secured by Paula Back scheider, Auburn University's Philpott-Stevens Eminent Scholar, to develop the web skills of area university faculty. Participation in the grant workshops led to the realization that the World Wide Web provided an inexpensive means of reaching a wide audience in Alabama and beyond. Over the years, the project's web presence has attracted the attention of competent Tsalagi speakers who have generously contributed to the project's linguistic resources.

Development of the project was advanced substantially by the addition to the project team of Bradley Morgan, a web designer and programmer then working with Auburn University's Distance Learning and Outreach Technology. The first version of the web site was officially launched at a workshop in May 2002 attended by officers of the Echota Tribe and administrators and instructors in the federally funded Title IV Indian Education Program. The workshop, which was supported by the Auburn University College of Liberal

Arts and the Department of English, was held in a computer lab on campus. By October 2003 there had been more than 5,400 visitors to the web site. Additional funding from Auburn University's Office of the Vice President for Research and from Auburn University Outreach in 2004 supported substantial site development. This resulted in an updated design, faster page loads, and the development of an interactive vocabulary-reinforcement game. By August 2007, this version of the website had received more than 60,400 hits.

As shown in Figure 1, the home page for the Echota/Auburn University Tsalagi Language Revitalization Project provides a series of menus with links to information on using the web site, the web site's audio and video resources, an index of vocabulary lessons, and information about free and for-purchase cultural resources. The web site's directions for reading and writing Tsalagi currently provide links to a free Tsalagi font designed by Joan Sarah Touze. As this font has been superceded by a unicode font that has been adopted by the Cherokee Nation, a revision of the web site by Auburn University Distance Learning staff is planned.[2]

Due to the current level of the Echota's Tsalagi language resources, the Tsalagi Revitalization web site contains mainly vocabulary items. At present, there are more than two thousand lexical entries distributed over nearly three hundred word lessons. These represent topics such as colors, numbers, material objects, weather, and natural phenomena. Because there are learners of both the Otali and Giduwa dialects among the Echota, the web site lists and, when possible, identifies dialect variants.

	a-wi Ꭰ Ꮻ		'deer'
	a-ni ka-wi Ꭰ Ꮒ Ꭷ Ꮻ	No Picture	'deer clan'
	a-wi (a)-k(a)-ta Ꭰ Ꮻ Ꭰ Ꭷ Ꮤ		'black-eyed susan'
	a-wi e-kwo Ꭰ Ꮻ Ꭱ Ꮙ		'elk'

FIGURE 2

Word entries from the DEER Word Lesson. (The Echota/Auburn University Tsalagi Language Revitalization Project)

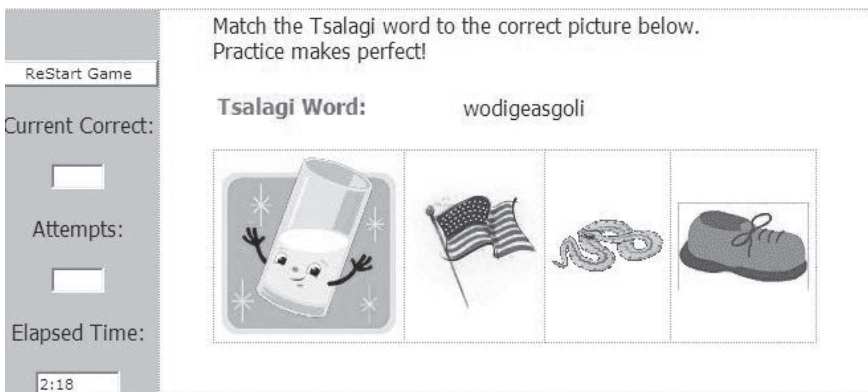


FIGURE 3
Tsalagi vocabulary reinforcement game. (The Echota/Auburn University Tsalagi Language Revitalization Project)

Each word entry minimally contains the Tsalagi word written in both the Roman alphabet and the Tsalagi syllabary, and an English translation.[3] Many word entries also contain sound files and images. The sound files were recorded by Shy Eagle, an Echota who is a fluent second-language speaker of Tsalagi. A second set of sound files has been recorded by a former tribal chief, John Berryhill. These await insertion into the web site. Since relying on translation inhibits a learner's language acquisition, the columns in each row are ordered to minimize translation from Tsalagi to English. The most successful users of the web site will be those who associate the sound, visual representation, and image for each Tsalagi word without recourse to the English meaning.

Figure 2 shows four words from the DEER word lesson. The first column contains sound files. The second column shows the spelling of the Tsalagi word in both Roman and Tsalagi. The third column contains images. The last column shows an English translation. Links connecting the word lessons encourage web site users to create individualized learning paths through the word lessons as they select the proportion of audio, video, textual, and graphic instructional materials that best suits their learning styles. For example, *a-wi* 'deer' is linked to the ANIMALS word lesson. *A-ni ka-wi* 'Deer Clan' is linked to the lesson on *ANI* "plural marker used with nouns that name living things." *A-wi (a)-k(a)-ta* 'black-eyed susan' is linked to the EYE lesson. *A-wi e-kwo* 'elk,' literally "deer

Echota Tsalagi Language Revitalization Project
ADMINISTRATION
Add Page | List & Edit Pages | List Page... List Page
Search for English Word(s) Search for Cherokee Word(s)
Add New Word | List & Edit Words | Add Media File | Edit Media Files |
Add Free Resource | List & Edit Free Resources | Add Other Resource | List & Edit Other Resources | View Graphs | List Survey Data | Edit Site News | Edit Site Credits | Edit "About Cherokee" Page | View Website | Find Orphan Words

FIGURE 4
Administration page. (The Echota/Auburn University Tsalagi Language Revitalization Project)

big," is linked to the BIG word lesson. By thinking about the similarities and differences among Tsalagi words like these, learners can discover grammatical relations such as the position of the animate plural marker or the adjective with respect to the noun.

The most popular word lesson has been ANIMALS with more than 2,068 hits since the current version of the web site was launched. The BIRDS word lesson has been accessed more than 1,500 times. The web site's sound files have been played nearly 25,000 times. A word-recognition game that reinforces vocabulary recognition (see Figure 3) also has proven popular.

Associated with the language lessons is a set of administrative utilities that facilitate the management and expansion of web site content (see Figure 4). These utilities create and delete word lessons and permit population and editing of the web site's pages by providing for the addition and deletion of images, sound files, orthographic representations, and links. The utilities also permit organization of lexical entries within a word lesson. Other utilities permit management of pages associated with the other menus and, although no information on individual web site users is collected, provide access to overall site-use statistics.

Because the word lessons are populated by a database, it also has been possible to begin the creation of similar self-instructional web sites for Arabic and Mandarin. These projects document applicability of the programming to other languages and scripts. Our hope is that members of communities interested in creating their own noncommercial heritage language materials will be able to use the programming developed for the Echota/Auburn University Tsalagi Language Revitalization web site. ■

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Joey Brackner, Anne Kimzey, Deborah Boykin, and Tom Nunnally for their editorial suggestions.

Notes

1. Unwilling to relinquish additional territory to the U.S., the Chickamauga seceded from the Cherokee Nation in 1777. The U.S. government officially recognized the Chickamauga Cherokee in 1817. This was only 12 years before the Alabama state legislature outlawed Native American governments, voided contracts made with and canceled debts to indigenous peoples, and declared testimony against whites to be invalid.
2. This transition may result in a temporary unavailability of the Tsalagi font to web site users.
3. The Tsalagi writing system is syllabic rather than alphabetical. That is, each symbol represents a syllable such as *wi* or *tla*. When represented in Roman orthography as a guide to pronunciation, syllables within lexical units are separated by hyphens. When a word is composed of two or more lexical units, the lexical units are separated by a space. See Picone, this issue, for an illustration of and the history of Sequoyah's syllabary.

References

Access Genealogy. 2004–2007. *Alabama Indian Tribes*. http://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/alabama/

Alabama Indian Affairs Commission. n.d. *Tribes, Chiefs, and Commissioners*. http://www.aiac.state.al.us/tribes.aspx

Americans.net 1996–2005. *Native Languages of the Americas.* http://www.nativelanguages.org/alabama.htm

Cormier, Lori A., Jacqueline A. Matte, Reva Lee Reed, and Cedric Sunray. 2006. "*Yakni*–The Binding Force: Nature and Culture Among the MOWA Choctaw of Alabama." *Tributaries* 9: 42–57.

Gordon, Raymond G., Jr., ed. 2005. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. 15th ed. Dallas, TX: SIL International. Online version: http://www.ethnologue.com/

Hallmark, Charlotte. Undated personal communication.

Hathorn, Stacye. 1997. "The Echota Cherokee Language: Current Use and Opinions About Revival." *Teaching Indigenous Languages*. Ed. John Reyhner. Flagstaff: Northern Arizona University. 228–38. http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/TIL_19.html

Hathorn, Stacye, and Robin Sabino. 2001. "Views and Vistas: Traveling through

the Choctaw, Chickawaw, and Cherokee Nations in 1803." *The Alabama Review* 54: 208–220.

NYS Affirmative Action Advisory Council. 2006. "Native Language Preservation Bill Becomes Law." *Native American Affairs*. Dec. 15 www.nysaaac.org/native_american_affairs.htm

Walker, Ricky Butch, and Lamar Marshall. 2005. *Indian Trails of the Warrior Mountains*. Lawrence County, AL: Lawrence County Schools/Indian Education Program.

Appendix A:

The Sounds of English and Southern English

Thomas E. Nunnally

Readers will better enjoy this issue not only by knowing some of the working principles of linguistics in regard to language variation (see Nunnally, "Exploring") but also by understanding something about the science of sound description, particularly of vowels, the heart of every word. This discussion covers merely the basics of the study of speech sounds (technically called phonetics and phonology) to help with reading the essays. It should be noted that other descriptive systems disagree on some minor points or use slightly different symbols for some sounds (See the note to Feagin's essay on the Southern drawl for an expanded set of vowel symbols that fit her data more appropriately than the set of symbols discussed below). But it is hoped that this information will increase the accessibility of the essays that discuss sound technically.

The International Phonetic Alphabet: One Sound, One Symbol

Linguists have developed special alphabets to represent each speech sound by one and only one symbol. Any symbol could have been used for any sound, but because of the world dominance of Europe and the United States, the alphabet of their languages, based on the Latin alphabet, became the basis of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

Most of the IPA symbols for consonants correspond to their usual values in English, so that, for instance, the consonant symbols [m] and [t] in *mate* and *meet* look and sound familiar (phonetic spellings are placed in brackets to distinguish them from regular letters). Several consonant sounds have special symbols, however, to exclude two-letter spellings for some sounds (th, ch, ng), and ambiguous spellings (g, c). These special symbols for a few English consonants (listed with key words in Figure 1) include [ʔ] for the pause in *uh-oh*,

[θ] for the th- in *thin* and [ð] for the th- in *then*; [š] for the "sh" sound in *shy*, *sugar*, and *action*, and [ž] for the sound in the middle of *measure*; [ǰ] for the beginning and ending sound in *judge* and [č] for the ch- in *child*; and and [ŋ] for the sound spelled –ng in *long* and *going*. (I am using the phonetic symbols that most American linguists prefer. The IPA uses alternatives for some of them, such as [j] for the *y* sound in *yes*.) Each consonant symbol may be associated with a class of consonant sounds as to its place and manner of articulation in the mouth. For example the sound [b] is 1) "bilabial," made with the "two lips," 2) a type of sound called a "stop," meaning the sound requires interruption of the airstream, and 3) "voiced," meaning the vocal chords vibrate when [b] is produced (see below for more on voicing). This appendix will not fully explain the features of consonants, as it is not necessary for reading this issue, but the chart (Figure 1) provides basic information for those interested (See the web sources in Appendix C for further study).

Unfortunately for English speakers, the IPA symbols for vowels do not

ENGLISH CONSONANTS

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Inter-dental	Alveolar	Alveo-Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops--voiceless	p			t		k	ʔ
voiced	b			d		g	
Fricatives--voiceless		f	θ	s	š		h
voiced		v	ð	z	ž		
Affricates--voiceless					č		
voiced					ǰ		
Nasals	m			n		ŋ	
Liquids--lateral				l			
retroflex				r			
Glides	w				y		

Key words for special symbols
[ʔ] uh**-**oh
[θ] **th**in
[ð] **th**en
[š] **sh**y
[ž] mea**su**re
[č] **ch**ild
[ǰ] **j**u**dg**e
[ŋ] lo**ng**

FIGURE 1

Consonant Articulation by Manner and Location, IPA Symbols (Chart adapted from www.wright.edu/~henry.limouze/ling/conson.htm and used by permission of Henry S. Limouze.)

correspond to most vowel spellings in English. They look the same, but do not represent the same sounds. The IPA symbols [ɑ], [e], [i], etc., represent the vowel-spelling sounds of European languages such as German, French, and Spanish; that is, [ɑ], [e], [i] represent the sounds "ah, aye, ee." Therefore, we have to "unlearn" our notions of thinking of the IPA *symbols* [ɑ], [e], [i] as our familiar *letters* that "say" "aye, ee, eye." Basically, it means learning to read all over again. The trick is not letting the IPA vowel symbols deceive us when we read the transcriptions [met] and [mit] (and if you just read these transcribed words as *met* and *mitt* instead of *mate* and *meet*, you now see what I mean. As I warn my students, "Don't be seduced by spelling!").

The International Phonetic Alphabet also fixes the problematic practice in English teaching pedagogy of calling completely different vowel sounds by the same name plus the designation "short" or "long." For example, when learning to read, we are taught that the vowels in *mat* and *mate* are "short a" in *mat* and "long a" in *mate*. In fact, length of the sound (how many milliseconds it takes to utter it) has nothing to do with differentiating these sounds. The so-called "short a" and "long a" are formed in very different parts of the mouth and therefore sound completely different (see the vowel chart below). Do we have long and short vowels, that is, do we hold some longer than others? In a sense, yes, but not to tell different vowels apart. For example, the IPA symbol [æ] represents (or spells) the so-called "short a" vowel sound in *mat* and *mad*. In normal pronunciation, the [æ] in *mad* is actually held longer than the [æ] in *mat*, but the sound is still basically the same, whether held longer [mæ:d] or shorter [mæt] (colon represents lengthening). In the same way, the IPA symbol [e] spells our "long a" sound in both *mate* and *made*, though the [e] sound in *made* [me:d] is also held longer than the [e] sound in *mate* [met].

It takes us longer to say *mad* and *made* than to say *mat* and *mate* because of the sounds that follow the vowels, the consonants [d] and [t]. This phenomenon brings us to another important linguistic concept: voicing. We say that [t], a voiceless consonant, does not affect the length (in milliseconds) of [æ] in [mæt], while [d], a voiced consonant, does add length to the [æ] in [mæ:d] (the colon means the sound is held longer). But since you can hear both the [t] and the [d], how, you may ask, is [t] voiceless?

Voiced and Voiceless Sounds

Voicing doesn't have to do with audibility but with whether the vocal cords are vibrating during the production of a sound. The easiest way to understand voiced and unvoiced sounds is to put your finger on your Adam's apple (larynx) or use your fingers to close your ears and then alternate making the sounds ssssss and zzzzzz. The extra vibration or buzzing you will feel and hear with zzzzzz is the vibrating of the vocal chords because [z] is a voiced sound. All our vowels are voiced, as are the consonant sounds that we spell with the letters m, n, ng, l, r. But the other consonants are either voiced like [z] or voiceless like [s]. This distinction is of major importance since voicing is the only difference between many pairs of sounds, as our demonstration with zzzz and sssss showed. For one more illustration, slowly say the words *lazy* [lezi] and *lacy* [lesi] to feel that [z] and [s] are made in the same place in the mouth and in the same manner except for the voicing of [z].

Therefore, consonant sounds separate into voiced and voiceless groups. But since some groups of consonants are more vowel-like in their production (e.g., [l], [m], [n]), the terms *vowel* and *consonant* fail to address the voiced/voiceless contrast adequately. Linguists have found it more helpful to classify language sounds into two classes. **Sonorants** are all the vowels and those vowel-like consonant sounds that can "continue to sound" almost like vowels (like llllll, mmmmmm, nnnnn). **Obstruents** are the rest of the consonants, usually forming pairs of sounds that differ only in being voiced or voiceless, as seen above with the [s] and [z] in *lacy* and *lazy*. The obstruents include three types of consonants: sounds called *stops* that cannot be continued (like the voiceless/voiced pairs [p]/[b] and [t]/[d]) and sounds called *fricatives* and *affricates* that can continue to sound but set up air turbulence in the mouth (like the voiceless/voiced pairs [f]/[v] and [s]/[z]) (You can review the consonant chart above to see where these are made in the mouth).

Putting Words in Your Mouth, Literally

Understanding sonorants and obstruents is importance for understanding a major feature of Southern English Dialects, the pronunciation of *lie*, *line*, and (for only some Southern speakers) *like*, as something like "lah," "lahn," "lahk," to be discussed below. For now, however, we return to vowels and

the IPA. The IPA symbols for vowels of English (including the two-sound or "gliding" vowels called diphthongs) are listed in Table 1 along with a theme word to cue pronunciation and some additional information. Some of these vowels are produced with much more tension of the mouth and tongue muscles so that the descriptors *tense* and *lax* help identify sounds. Also, some vowels produced in the back of the mouth are accompanied by lip-rounding. Finally, diphthongs start with a sound produced in one place in the mouth and move (glide) to another sound, necessitating a two-part description.

Table 1:

The Vowels of English, Symbols, Transcription, Features

IPA symbol	*Theme Word*	*Transcription*	*Tense, Lax, or Non-applicable*	*Rounded Lips*
[i]	*leek*	[lik]	Tense	No
[ɪ]	*lick*	[lɪk]	Lax	No
[e]	*late*	[let]	Tense	No
[ɛ]	*let*	[lɛt]	Lax	No
[æ]	*lack*	[læk]	N/A	No
[ʌ]*	*ab**o**ve*	[əbʌv]	N/A	No
[ə]*	***a**bove*	[əbʌv]	N/A	No
[a]	So. English *lie*	[la]	N/A	No
[u]	*Luke*	[luk]	Tense	Yes
[ʊ]	*look*	[lʊk]	Lax	Yes
[o]	*low*	[lo]	Tense	Yes
[ɔ]**	*law*	[lɔ]	Lax	Yes
[ɑ]	*lock*	[lɑk]	N/A	No

Dipththong Vowels (American English)***

IPA symbol	*Theme Word*	*Transcription*	*Glide Movement in Mouth*
[aɪ]	*like*	[laɪk]	low central [a] to high front [ɪ]
[aʊ]	*loud*	[laʊd]	low central [a] to high back [ʊ]
[ɔɪ]	*loin*	[lɔɪn]	mid back [ɔ] to high front [ɪ]

NOTES:

*[ʌ] (called caret) and [ə] (called schwa) are basically the same sound, a middle-

of-the-mouth "uh" sound (often called the neutral vowel), but [ʌ] is used to transcribe stressed syllables while [ə] is used to transcribe unstressed syllables for a good reason. [ʌ] is an actual sound that differentiates one word from another, rug and rag ([rʌg] and [ræg]), and has a limited number of spellings: <o> in *love, money, come*, etc.; <u> in *rug, munch*, etc. The schwa [ə], on the other hand, is a reduced sound found in unstressed English syllables, and it can be spelled many ways: <a> in *sofa*, <e> in *dozen*, <i> in *majority*, <o> in *symptom*.
**Many American dialects exhibit the "low back merger" in which [ɔ] merges with [ɑ] so that *caught* and *cot* sound the same. This merger is a change in progress and is making inroads in the South, especially in urban areas.
***Some American treatments spell these diphthongs differently, using [j] for the front glide in [aj] and [ɔj] and [w] for the back glide in [aw]. Some scholars also write the tense vowels of American English as diphthongs, writing [i], [e], [u], and [o] as [iy], [ey], [uw] and [ow] since their research concerns gliding in general and the tongue and jaw do move in these tense vowels just as in the three diphthongs proper. Treatments of British English list up to nine diphthongs since certain vowel + –r combinations are usually diphthongs (peer [ɪə], pair [eə], poor [ʊə]).

The vowel symbols can be arranged to suggest their points of production in the mouth. Figure 2, a typical chart, suggests a cross-section of the mouth cavity as if one is looking at a face in left profile. Each vowel symbol appears

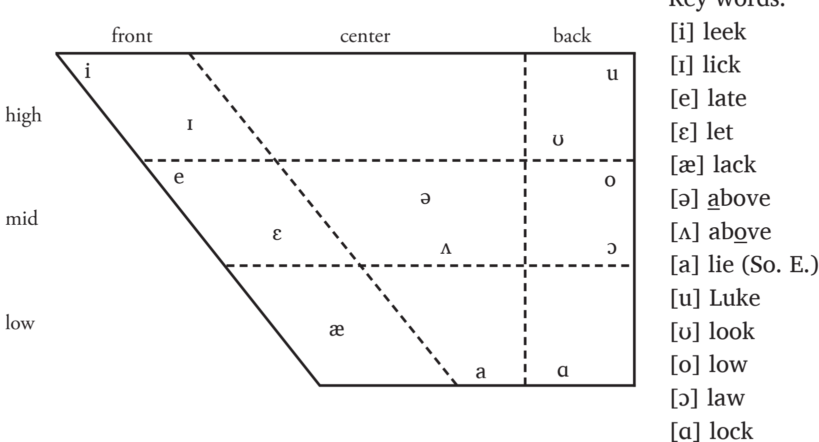


FIGURE 2
Location of Vowel Production in the Mouth and Key Words for Sounds of IPA symbols.

in relation to the position of the jaw and tongue for production of the sound, identified by the height of the tongue and jaw (high, mid, low) and where the tongue is forming the sound in the front, center, or back of the mouth.

The illustrations in Figure 3 place the two-part vowels, or diphthongs, [aɪ] [aʊ] [ɔɪ] in the vowel chart (suggesting placement in the mouth) to show where these sounds begin, the path of the "glide" denoted by the arrow, and where they end.

Now that we have presented the system, it is time to remember that these descriptions of vowel placements and sounds are standardized, a homogenized fiction, as it were. First, some speakers of American English don't use all the sounds on this chart. Many Northern, Western, and urban Southern speakers

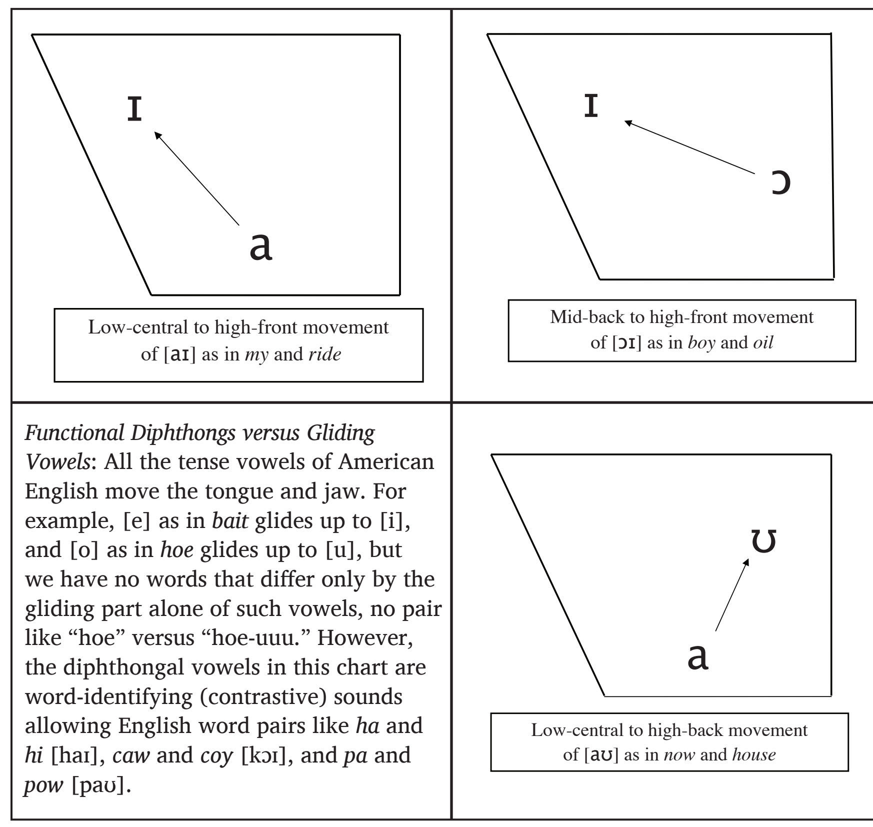


Figure 3

Start and End Positions of the Three Diphthongs of English.

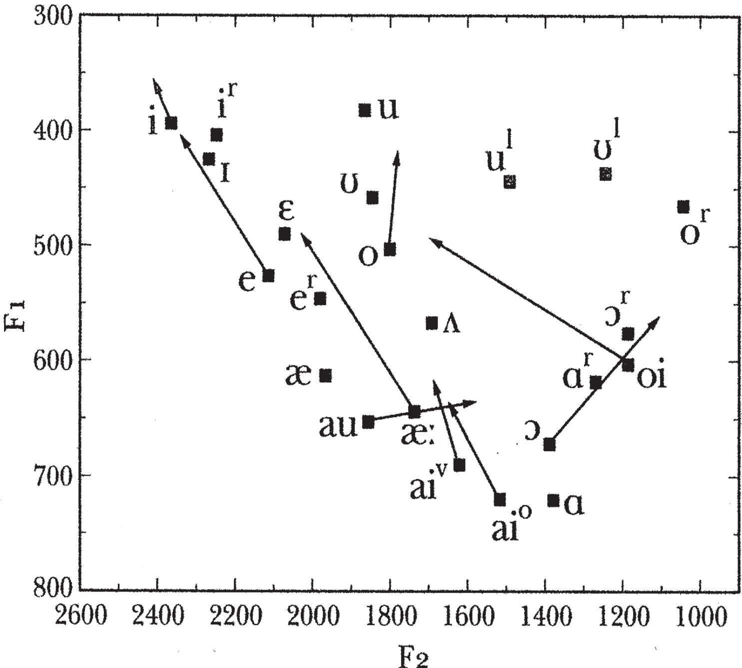


Figure 4
Plotted Vowels of 81-year-old North Carolinian male (Thomas 2001: 120) (Used by permission of Duke University Press)

speak varieties that have undergone the "low-back merger," that is, pronunciation of [ɔ] and [ɑ] the same so that *caught* and *cot* are pronounced as *cot,* using the [ɑ] sound. Such speakers' crows say, "Cah, cah, cah" instead of "Caw, caw, caw." We also saw above how voiced consonants like [d] tend to cause lengthening of preceding vowels in *made* [me:d] versus *mate* [met]. Other processes change one's production of vowels as well, so much so that each of us produces the same vowel in slightly different ways. Acoustic equipment and computer programs can now graph a person's vowel production in a grid that mimics the chart of the mouth shown above. Figure 4 presents such a graph. Laboratory equipment plotted the vowels of an 81-year-old North-Carolinian male (Thomas 2001: 120). The arrows indicate gliding of the three diphthongs as seen in Figure 3 above (spelled here as ai, au, and oi) and the gliding of vowels. You will notice that some of the IPA vowel symbols, such as [i] and

[e] (think eee and aye), appear in more than one place, though usually near the standard placement on the vowel chart in Figure 2 above. These multiple, slightly different productions of the "same" vowel illustrate how standard vowel charts are generalizations of data rather than reflections of reality (For more explanation and illustrations of acoustic analysis, see Feagin's essay).

Putting Sounds in Your Head: Phonemes and Allophones

In general, the essays in this issue focus on physical sounds rather than phonological theory, but it may be helpful to present a short explanation of two important terms central to such theory: phoneme and allophone. In discussing Figure 4, I remarked that the grid shows the "same" sound in several locations, that is, being pronounced in slightly different ways. One may well ask, how is it possible for sounds to be both the same and different? The answer to this interesting question has to do with how our minds treat language sounds. Tackling this subject obliquely, we'll first look at how our minds treat other things that are the same but also different.

As we experience the world around us we learn that a dog is not a cat. These are contrastive mental entities or categories, which I will represent as DOG and CAT. But note that there is no such thing as DOG, only kinds of dogs. If I were to ask you to mentally picture DOG, you could not do so, as you would have to imagine some actual pooch, perhaps one of the varieties in Figure 5.

Yet you really do know what DOG is, in spite of the fact that there is no such physical thing. You created that mental concept of DOG from all the different actual dogs you became aware of, all sharing enough of the features of dogginess to keep them separate from cattiness. They are different *dogs* but each is equally an embodiment of the mental concept DOG. At that level of abstraction they are the same, or to use *allo-*, a Greek word for 'same,' they are allo-DOGS. Note that once that abstract concept is part of your knowledge base, you would never say, "No, Fido is not a dog; he's a retriever." Furthermore, as hostile as our DOG concept is to our CAT concept, it is flexible enough to include Brutus the St. Bernard and Chico the Chihuahua without missing a beat.

Similarly, when we were acquiring our language in the first years of life, we

FIGURE 5
ALLO-DOGS of the concept DOG.

discovered what sounds can create different words—technically, what sounds "contrast" with one another. For example, the vowel in *bit* and the vowel in *bet* are the sole differences that create these different words. Linguists say that these vowels with the sounds [ɪ] and [ɛ] are **phonemes** of English, and write them within slants, /ɪ/ and /ɛ/, to denote their phonemic status (The sounds symbolized in Figure 1 and Table 1 above constitute all the phonemes of English and could be written in / /) . But as we as children pluck the phonemes of our language out of the air (the language spoken around us), we unconsciously come to understand that the same sound can be made in slightly differently ways. For example, consider the vowel in *bid* and *bit*. If you pause to pronounce

them one after the other, you will notice that, just as we saw for *mad* and *mat* above, the [ɪ] in [bɪːd] (colon shows lengthening) is held longer than the [ɪ] in [bɪt]. Acoustic analysis would prove that they are different sounds in the sense that one is held longer (in milliseconds) than the other.

In some languages just such a length difference in a sound creates two words, as in Finnish *taakka* 'burden'and *takka* 'fireplace' where [ɑː] and [ɑ] are produced the same way in the mouth but the first syllable in *taakka* is held longer: to Finnish speakers [ɑː] and [ɑ] are two sounds, capable of making different words by their contrast alone (Rentz 1997). If a Finn yawned while saying *takka* 'fireplace,' changing [ɑ] to [ɑː], she would change it into a *taakka* 'burden.' Yet English speakers don't think of [ɪː] and [ɪ] as two sounds but as one since the two sounds [ɪː] and [ɪ] NEVER create different words. Even if I artificially prolong the [ɪ] sound in *bit* to [bɪ::::t], it is still just the word *bit*, and even if I rapidly pronounce *bid* as [bɪd] without the normally lengthened [ɪː], it is still just the word *bid*. As we acquired English, we categorized [ɪː] and [ɪ] as the same sound though they actually differ slightly. The pronunciations of the vowels in *bid* and *bit*, that is, [ɪː] and [ɪ], are physically different in length, but they are also "the same" in that we don't think of them as separate sounds.

We unconsciously have grouped such slightly different sounds as versions of a particular sound (and we even cease to hear the physical differences). Each of these versions of the "same" sound is called an **allophone** ('same' + 'sound'), and all the allophones taken together make up a specific mental entity, a **phoneme**, that is an abstract, idealized sound that is different from all the other phonemes in the language. As noted above, Figure 1 and Table 1 present all the phonemes of American English. Besides using slants to enclose phonemes, like /ɪ/, linguists use brackets to enclose allophones, the physically produced versions of the phoneme, like regular-length [ɪ] in *bit* or lengthened [ɪː] in *bid*.

To pull the discussions together, we see that DOG is, therefore, just like a phoneme, an abstract entity known to the mind, but which is expressed only in the various physical manifestations of DOG such as poodle or golden retriever, each of which might be termed an ALLO-DOG in analogy with an allophone. In the same way the phoneme /ɪ/ gives rise to allophones [ɪː] in *bid*

and [ɪ] in *bit* during the vocal production of words. Since we must choose some symbol for the phoneme, the basic symbol is used for identification purposes only, as in /ɪ/, but that idealized /ɪ/ must actually be pronounced as one of its allophones, [ɪː] or [ɪ] or others we won't discuss for the sake of brevity. We barely scratch the surface of phonology here, but this explanation may help below when we treat the Southern English allophone of the phoneme /ai/ (*my eye* sounding similar to "mah ah").

Sound Change within Regions

With all the variation cropping up in each individual's speech (review Figure 4) and with all individuals having to recreate the language in their own minds from what is spoken around them, is it any wonder that all languages slowly change over time? At present, two major changes in the American vowel system are well underway. One set of changes, called the Northern Cities Chain Shift, centers in American cities near the Great Lakes, and another set of changes, called the Southern Vowel Shift, is occurring over large areas of the South. (We will return to the Southern Vowel Shift below). While one might expect Americans to talk more alike from the influence of the communications media, these vowel shifts actually are moving the dialects of Northerners and Southerners further apart, not closer together.

But an earlier vowel change differentiating Southern and non-Southern Englishes is generally recognized as the phonological (sound) feature of Southern English standing out the most: the pronunciation of the diphthong [aɪ] as the single sound [aː] (*lie* pronounced something like "lah," as mentioned above).

The Confederate A: From Diphthong to Monophthong

The [aɪ] as [aː] Southern speech feature, discussed repeatedly in the essays in this issue and in almost any discussion of Southern speech, deserves special attention. As mentioned above, the sound often called "long i" is actually a type of vowel sound called a diphthong (from Greek for *di* 'two' + *phthong* 'sound') and symbolized phonetically as [aɪ] (phonemically, it is often symbolized as /ai/). Say "eye" carefully and slowly in Standard English while looking in a mirror and you will both hear, feel, and see your jaw and

tongue move (or "glide") from a low position for the first sound to a higher jaw and tongue position for the second sound. Now, say "eye" carefully again, but do not let your tongue or jaw move past the first part of the sound. You have just "smoothed," or "unglided," or "monophthongized" [aɪ] and turned it into the single sound [a:], a *monophthong* (Greek for one sound). Southern English revels in this variation of [aɪ] that reduces or even deletes the second part of the diphthong.

This monophthongized or unglided [aɪ], that is, [aɪ] pronounced as [a:], is so familiar as a hallmark of Southern speech that it has even been called the "Confederate a." But the name "Confederate a" is a misnomer in one sense in that research has suggested that its broad adoption across the Southern states occurred *after*, not before, the Confederacy. It is one of the features, along with the merger of /ɪ/ and /ɛ/ before nasal sounds (e.g., *pen* and *pin* both pronounced as [pɪn]) that belongs to the era of the New South (see Bailey 1997 and Schneider 2003) and (as I discussed in Nunnally, "Exploring") that is a feature of the South's "linguistic secession."

As sociolinguistics has shown us, the occurrence of a linguistic variable is more often a case of frequency rather than absence versus presence. Pronouncing the phrase *my eye*, for example, a native Alabamian like me might say [ma: a:], [maɪ aɪ], [maɪ a:], or [ma: aɪ]! That is why results are usually presented as percentages in the essays in this issue examining the variation between Standard English [aɪ] and Southern English [a:] (and in Feagin's essay on the Southern drawl). In other words, when a particular number of words containing [aɪ] are present in a speech sample, what is the percentage that the speaker used the monophthongized [a:] form instead of the [aɪ] form?

(To phrase the question phonologically using the discussion above, the English sound system contains the phoneme /ai/. Besides realizing this abstract, contrastive sound entity with the diphthongal pronunciation, that is, as the allophone [aɪ], most speakers of Southern English have acquired an unglided or monophthongized allophone, that is, [a:], which they employ variably.)

The question becomes more interesting when researchers try to find out what correlates with the [a:] usage in two areas, the sound characteristics of the words themselves (linguistic variables), and the characteristics of the speakers such as socioeconomic level, educational attainment, ethnicity, gender, and

regional affiliation (non-linguistic variables). The authors of several essays in this issue present you with examples of the interaction of a particular speech feature with linguistic and non-linguistic variables (see Feagin, Allbritten, Oggs, and Doxsey).

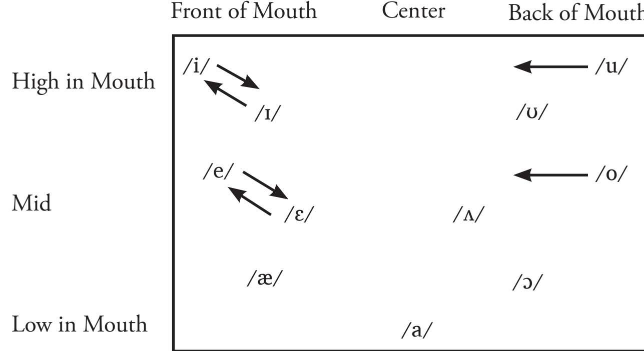
Particularly, one linguistic variable of supreme importance for understanding why [aɪ] is or is not pronounced [a:] concerns whether [aɪ] comes before a "voiced" or "voiceless" sound, bringing us back to our terms *sonorant* and *obstruent* and to the major linguistic divide of Alabama dialects into Coastal Southern and Inland Southern (see Davies's essay). For various reasons such as shifting to a more formal style (see Doxsey's essay), Southerners may not monophthongize [aɪ]. But if they do monophthongized [aɪ] to [a:], Alabama's Coastal Southern dialect speakers and its Inland Southern dialect speakers play by a slightly different set of rules. Whether the sound following [aɪ] is voiced or voiceless (as discussed above) will influence speakers of Coastal Southern, but not speakers of Inland Southern. Table 2 divides the question of [aɪ] monophthongization to [a:] into three options, non-Southern English, Coastal Southern, and Inland Southern, using the words *ride* and *right*. Both *ride* and *right* end in obstruents, not sonorants (see above), but note that in *ride* [raɪd] the [aɪ] preceeds the voiced obstruent [d] whereas in *right* [raɪt] the [aɪ] precedes the voiceless obstruent [t].

TABLE 2
Monophthongization of *ride* and *right* in Three Dialects

Dialect	[ɑɪ] *before voiced obstruent as in the word* ride	[ɑɪ] *before voiceless obstruent as in the word* right
Non-Southern	[raɪd]	[raɪt]
Coastal Southern	[ra:d]	[raɪt]
Inland Southern	[ra:d]	[ra:t]

As Doxsey's and Davies's essays and Bernstein (2006) show, Alabama speakers of Coastal Southern often assign lower social status to speakers who monophthongize [aɪ] before voiceless obstruents (e.g., "white rice" pronounced as [wa:t ra:s]). The pronunciation may be called a "shibboleth," that is, a use of language that distinguishes one group from another (See the story in Judges

The square approximates the mouth in cross section as viewed from the left side. The arrows DO NOT denote tongue movement during production (as in diphthong glides), but the new places to which vowel production has migrated within the mouth in connection with this sound shift.



As the diagram shows, there are a number of shifts among the vowels:

- the tense-vowel sound /i/ in words such as *meet* is shifting back and downwards to sound like muh-eet
- the lax-vowel sound /I/ in words such as *mitt* is shifting upwards and forwards, often becoming diphthongized, as is common among tense vowels in Standard English to sound like meeyuht
- the tense-vowel sound /e/ in words such as *mate* is shifting back and downwards to sound like mah-ate
- the lax-vowel sound /ɛ/ in words such as *met* is shifting upwards and forwards, becoming diphthongized, as is common among tense vowels in Standard English to sound like may-et
- the tense-vowel sounds /u/ and /o/ in words such as *moot* and *mote* are shifting forwards to be pronounced without the lips being rounded to sound like muh-oot and muh-oat

Notes:

1. This chart does not distinguish between low-back [ɑ] and low-central [a], crucial to understanding the Southern monophthongized /ai/ diphthong. See Davies and Appendix A for more information.
2. The chart's enclosure of vowel symbols in / / rather than [ ] denotes important linguistic status of the sounds, but can be ignored for this survey without harm. For help with the phonetic symbols and the terms such as tense vowel, refer to discussions in Appendix A.

— Adapted and expanded by Thomas Nunnally from The Language Samples Project, Southern Vowel Shift http://www.ic.arizona.edu/~lsp/Features/SVS.html. (Courtesy of Norma Mendoza-Denton, Sean Hendricks, and the Regents of the University of Arizona). Used and adapted by permission.

Figure 6

The Southern Vowel Shift

12:6). But with a current Alabama governor who speaks Inland Southern ([ra:d] [ra:t]) and who beat a Coastal Southern speaker ([ra:d] [raɪt]) in the last election (see Spencer 2006), it is anyone's guess as to whether [ra:t] will increase its prestige throughout the state.

The Southern Vowel Shift

While [aɪ] monophthongization is a, or even THE, major feature of Southern—and thus Alabama—English, specifically Southern pronunciations of other interconnected vowels in a major sound shift mentioned above are also adding to linguistic distinctiveness of the South. This sound shift, called the Southern Vowel Shift by researchers, occasions comment in many of the articles in this issue and is the major topic in Allbritten's essay. Figure 6 will help you gather the main points as well as tune your ears to listening for evidence of it in the language varieties you hear every day.

Other language variations distinguish Southern and non-Southern English and give Alabamians their own voices (see Davies), but I hope this short excursion into phonological study has been helpful. If so, perhaps with your ears tuned for greater sensitivity to the sounds of Alabama's Englishes and with new insights into the linguistic folkways of the state afforded by this issue, you will find increased enjoyment in tracing the tributaries of language flowing through Alabama. ■

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank James Daniel Hasty and Anna Oggs for helpful comments on content in this essay and Joey Brackner, Anne Kimzey, Deborah Boykin, Brian Seidman, and Randall Williams for their editorial suggestions. I also wish to express gratitude to my many students over the decades who have honed my understanding and teaching of linguistics with their enthusiasm or, at least, patience.

References

Bailey, Guy. 1997. "When Did Southern American English Begin?" In *Englishes around the World*. Vol. I. Ed. Edgar W. Schneider. Amsterdam and Phildelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 255–75.

Bernstein, Cynthia. 2006. “Drawing Out the /ai/: Dialect Boundaries and /ai/ Variation.” In *Language Variation and Change in the American Midland: A New Look at “Heartland” English*. Eds. Thomas E. Murray and Beth Lee Simon. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 210–32.

Rentz, Päivi. 1997. *Introduction to Finnish*. Module for Information Design Class at the University of Texas Austin. http://www.ddg.com/LIS/InfoDesignF97/paivir/finnish/page1.html

Schneider, Edgar. 2003. “Shakespeare in the Coves and Hollows? Toward a History of Southern English.” In *English in the Southern United States*. Eds. Stephen J. Nagle and Sara L. Sanders. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 17–35.

Spencer, Thomas. 2006. “Sounds like Alabama.” *Birmingham News*, Sunday, November 05, 1E, 4E.

Thomas, Erik R. 2001. *An Acoustic Analysis of Vowel Variation in New World English*. Publication of the American Dialect Society Number 85. Durham: Duke University Press.

Appendix B:

A Glossary of Select Linguistic Terms

Thomas E. Nunnally

NOTE: As an aid to the reader, I have compiled the following definitions of terms appearing in the articles in this issue. To do so I have compared my own understanding of the terms as they appear in context to standard definitions from multiple sources both in print and on the web, adapting as necessary. Cross references appear when I thought they would be helpful.

accent — an imprecise term meaning 1) the marking of a syllable with prominence (e.g., the accent is on the first syllable in the word *apple*), 2) speech marked with a cluster of recognizable features carried over from one's native language (e.g. speaking English with a French accent) or 3) (often used dismissively) a dialect varying considerably from the conception of the standard form of a language (e.g., speaking with a Southern accent). See **stress**.

accommodation — the speaker's attempt, largely unconscious, of sounding more like the person one is conversing with.

acoustic formants — Bands of resonance within a sound that can be illustrated by acoustic measurements. These formants give vowels the qualities that differentiate them to our hearing, especially the F1, the first, and F2, the second formants.

amplitude — The height and depth of a sound wave as graphed by acoustic equipment. The greater the amplitude, the more energy in the production of the wave.

apparent-time analysis — A method for studying language change by comparing the language of people of different ages at the same time. For example, in 2000 one might compare pronunciations of eighty-year-olds (b. 1920)

and thirty-year-olds (b. 1970). The assumption is that the eighty-year-olds' pronunciations have remained basically the same since their youth. If the thirty-year-olds' pronunciations are different, it is assumed, all other things being equal, that the difference is reflecting language change within the fifty-year period. For example, if for the word *farmer* an eighty-year-old upper-class male says "fahmah" while a thirty-year-old upper-class male of similar background says "farmer," the implication is that traditional Southern r-less speech (not pronouncing the r sound after vowels) is giving way to r-full speech. See **change in progress**.

audience design — The concept that the speaker's understanding of the communicative needs of his or her audience is a major factor in the choices made about the features of the communication.

bidialectal — Descriptive of a person able to function well in more than one specific variety of a language, e.g., Standard English and African American Vernacular English.

central glide — A gliding or movement of the tongue during vowel production such that the first sound of the vowel shifts or glides to a sound produced in the mid-center of the mouth, the schwa, as in the word *them* pronounced as "thee-yum" [ðiəm]; also called schwa glide.

change in progress — An assumption that when linguistic data is collected from older and younger speakers and analyzed to show a clear difference based on the ages of the speakers, the change is change in progress. For example, suppose urban, upper-middle-class Alabamians over fifty say "caught" and "cot" differently, but urban, upper-middle-class Alabamians under twenty-five say both words as "cot." This generational difference, all other things being equal, would denote a change in progress called the "low back vowel merger." See **apparent-time analysis**.

code switching/shifting, style shifting — A speaker's changing his or her variety of language or dialect (a "code") for specific purposes. In bilingual countries, one language may be deemed appropriate for work and business while another may be deeded appropriate for domestic communication. Similarly, a speaker may shift to different styles or dialects of one language as associated with particular topics or uses.

cohort — A generational group as defined in demographics, statistics, or certain kinds of research.

conditioning factors — Influences that cause variation in language usage. These may be linguistic, that is, conditioning factors arising from "inside" the language itself, or social, that is conditioning factors arising from "outside" the language per se. For example, in Southern English the sound "eh" is linguistically conditioned to be pronounced "ih" when it occurs before the sounds m and n, as in *pen* being pronounced just like *pin*. Use of double negatives ("I ain't got no money"), however, is a product of one's socio-economic background and speech community, and thus is socially conditioned.

corpus — A collected "body" of data for linguistic research designed to yield meaningful results when analyzed, for example, a set of taped interviews or a collection of texts of an era and type.

covert prestige — Assignment of prestige not to standard forms (overt prestige), as is expected, but to nonstandard forms because of their power to act as in-group markers and to invoke pride and solidarity among nonstandard speakers, to show nonconformity, or to identify with "cool" groups (e.g., use of AAVE "What up?" among middle-class white youngsters as a greeting).

creole — When not capitalized, not a specific language such as Louisiana Creole, but a native language (i.e., a language that children acquire in the normal way) that developed from a pidgin or trade language formed from an elementary form of two or more languages mixed together for simplified communication. See **pidgin**.

deictic, deixis — Concept for words in discourse that provide orientation or "point" outside the discourse in reference to person (*You* are a friend of *ours*), time (I went *yesterday*), or space (Put the book *over there*), or point inside the discourse to another part of it (As I said *above*).

dialect — A term relating to a form of a language. In linguistic understanding, every form of a language is a dialect, and a language is composed of the sum of its dialects. In societal practice, one dialectal form, that of the powerful and influential, is perceived as the correct or "real" language and is enhanced in its written form with additional normative features; the other

dialectal forms are judged as more standard or as less standard, compared to that now non-spoken standard variety. Besides national standards, languages develop regional standards that also allow judgments of deviation from the privileged variety of a region.

diphthong, diphthongize — A two-sound (complex) vowel written with two IPA symbols, the starting sound and the ending sound. American English is said to have three contrastive diphthongs, the so-called "long i" in *pie* [aɪ], the sound in *pout*, [aʊ], and the sound in *point*, [ɔɪ]; that is, their pronunciation is distinctive enough to contrast with other vowel sounds, making the hearer able to distinguish one word from another, as in *light* vs. *lot*, *loud* vs. *laud*, and *roil* vs. *role*. Other two-part sounds are also called diphthongs because of the presence of glides, such as the "long o" in home, but these phonetic diphthongs are not contrastive. Whether one says "hohm," "ho-uum," "hah-uum" or "heh-uum," the word is still *home*. Different linguistic traditions represent the three diphthongs with slightly different phonetic symbols (e.g., [ai], [ay], [aj] variously for "long i"), but each representation still shows the complex-vowel starting with the tongue at one position (making one sound) and ending by gliding to another position (making the second sound). To make a one-sound vowel into a two sound vowel is to diphthongize it, as in the drawled pronunciation of *yes* as "yay-yus," but this does not create a contrastive diphthong as explained above. See **monophthong**. See Appendix A for a basic introduction to phonology.

environment — In linguistics, the sounds surrounding another sound that influence its production; for example, preceding environment is important for conditioning the lack of consonantal pronunciation of "r" by some speakers (e.g., "fahmah" for *farmer*), and following environment is important for conditioning the monophthongization (smoothing) of the "long i" sound [ai] into [a:] for some speakers ("mahn" for *mine*).

formant — A frequency at which the vocal tract resonates. The F1 formant tends to shift with the height of the tongue body, with a low F1 signifying a high tongue body. The F2 formant tends to shift with the backness of the tongue body, with the difference between F2 and F1 indicating relative backness of the tongue body. A low value (F2 minus F1) signifies that the

body of the tongue is located in the back of the mouth.

fricatives — Hissy consonant sounds formed by near closures of parts of the vocal tract to make turbulence, i.e., in English the sounds [f], [v], [θ], [ð], [š], [ž], [h] in *foe, vie, thin, thy, shoo, leisure,* and *he*. Other than for [h], they are in voiced and voiceless pairs, differentiated by whether the vocal fold vibrates during the production of the sound, giving it "voice." See Appendix A for a basic introduction to phonology.

glide — The second part of a diphthong, as the tongue moves from one sound to the other. Most glides are "off-glides" following the major sound of the vowel, as in /ai/ ("ah-ee"), but some glides are "on-glides" like the /i/ before /u/ in the Southern pronunciation of *tune* ("tee-OON"). Off-glides may move to the high-front part of the mouth (*hi,* "hah-ee"), the mid-back of the mouth (*how*, "hah-ow"), or the central part of the mouth (*them* pronounced as "thee-yum").

grammatical — A judgment formed by a native speaker's intuition as to whether an utterance in the language is well-formed or defective. This use of the term is not in reference to school-book grammars or artificially created rules such as "do not split an infinitive."

Great Vowel Shift — A systematic shifting of the long vowels (in milliseconds) of Middle English into different sounds. The high back and high front vowels became diphthongs while the other long vowels moved higher and sometimes fronter in the mouth, e.g., the vowel in the word *sweet* was "ay" for Chaucer but "eee" by the time of Shakespeare.

idiolect — The personal speech variety of an individual.

intonation — The rising and/or falling of pitch accompanying a sentence or word (a suprasegmental feature), for example, in English the rising of the voice to a higher pitch at the end of an utterance when asking a question, or when talking in California "upspeak" or "uptalk"?

jargon — The specialized, usually technical vocabulary of a trade or subject area such as medicine, computer engineering, literary criticism, etc. Jargon contrasts with the generally nontechnical terms of young ingroup communication, that is, slang.

lexical, lexicon — Having to do with the wordstock of a language, its lexemes, and with external lists of words and definitions (i.e., a dictionary) or internalized knowledge of words (a mental lexicon).

lingua franca — Any language that is adopted for purposes of common communication by speakers of various languages. For example, many of the Native American tribes of the Southeast such as the Alabama used Mobilian Trade Language for communication within the region.

linguistics — The scientific study of language, containing many sub-areas.

liquids — Consonants formed by the tongue in the middle of the mouth and having vowel-like qualities, thus in English the lateral liquid sound [l] and the bunched or retroflex liquid [r]. See Appendix A for a basic introduction to phonology.

metalinguistic — Language that specifically talks about linguistics, as when interviewed people discuss their own dialects.

monophthong, monophthongize, monophthongization — A one-sound vowel written with a single IPA symbol is a monophthong. Monophthongization is the process of dropping or greatly reducing the second sound, or glide, of a diphthong, especially the Southern English pronunciation of [aɪ] as a lengthened [aː] so that *ride* sounds much like "rahd." See **diphthong**.

morphemes — The smallest meaningful units of a language. All words contain at least one morpheme but every morpheme is not a word. The types of morphemes of English include lexical, grammatical, and derivational morphemes (prefixes and suffixes). For example, the word *king* is a content or lexical morpheme; *kings* contains two morphemes, the lexical morpheme *king*, and the grammatical morpheme "plural" expressed as the sound z (though spelled with an s); *kingly* also contains two morphemes, the lexical morpheme *king* and *–ly*, a derivational morpheme, in this case a suffix, that derives adjectives from nouns.

nasals — Sounds produced by closing off all or part of the mouth so that the sound proceeds mainly from the nose; in English the nasals are [m], formed by stopping sound with the lips, [n], formed by stopping sound in the middle of the mouth, and [ŋ] (spelled –ng), formed by stopping sound at the back

of the mouth. See Appendix A for a basic introduction to phonology.

observer's paradox — A problem faced by field researchers whereby the presence of observers of language changes the linguistic context and thus possibly the language data collected.

obstruent — In English a large subclass of consonants in which air flow is obstructed, as opposed to the sonorants, the unobstructed consonants [l], [r], [m], [n], and [ŋ] and all the vowels. See Appendix A for a basic introduction to phonology.

patois — A nonstandard local dialect, especially used for dialects of French other than Parisian French taken as Standard.

phonology — Branch of linguistics dealing with the study of sounds of languages; also, the part of a language dealing with its sound system, its phonology. Adj. phonological. See Appendix A for a basic introduction to phonology.

pidgin — A simplified language developed from two languages in contact for basic communication; when a pidgin becomes more elaborated and is adopted as a native language, it has become a **creole**.

pragmatics — The linguistic study of how meaning is created and decoded in the three-way context of the speaker, the hearer, and the formulation of the message.

prevoiceless and prevoiced — Descriptive of a sound occurring before a voiceless sound or a voiced sound. See **voiced and voiceless**. See Appendix A for a basic introduction to phonology.

r-less and r-full speech — Also called rhotic and non-rhotic speech, it is not a reference to lack of all r's in a dialect, but the lack (r-full) or presence (r-lack) of r pronounced as an "rrr" sound in certain environments, predominantly when it occurs after a vocalic (vowel) sound. Received Pronunciation in Great Britain is r-less (*lord* pronounced as *laud*, *here* as "hee-yah"), as are traditional plantation Southern and New England speech. Irish English and most forms of American English are r-full.

real-time analysis — As opposed to apparent-time analysis, linguistic investigation of language change based on language samples collected at different

times, for example, tape recordings made in the 1950s and in the 1990s.

segmental — Having to do with the individual sounds or "segments" that make up words

semantic — Having to do with meaning rather than sound (phonology) or grammar (morphology and syntax). Semantics is the branch of linguistics that investigates meaning.

shibboleth — A language usage that differentiates a speaker from other speakers, usually with negative connotations of otherness (see the Book of Judges, Chapter 12 for the origin of this expression); for example "boid" for *bird* would be a shibboleth for identifying a stereotypical speaker from the Bronx in New York City.

sociolinguistics — Study of language in relation to society, especially research that correlates particulars of language use with social characteristics of the users; typically sociolinguists study the correlation of linguistic variables, for example the use of *–ing* versus *–in* to end verbs such as *walking*, with social factors such as age, socioeconomic class, region, ethnicity, and education.

standard variety (often capitalized) — The dialect of a language that is held as the correct form, usually derived from the dialect of speakers who hold the power and prestige within a speech community.

stress — Also called **accent**, the extra volume or pulse given to a particular syllable in a word or group of words, thus the emphasis on the first syllable in *lively* but on the second syllable in *alive*.

style shift — See **code switch**.

suprasegmental — Having to do with features such as stress, tone, and pitch added to the segments (individual sounds) of words, e.g., the rising of the pitch on the last word of a question is a suprasegmental feature, whereas the words of the question are made up of phonetic segments.

syllabary — A writing system that uses symbols to represent commonly occurring syllables rather than single sounds (as an alphabet does), used for languages that construct words out of a limited set of syllables, such as Tsalagi.

tautosyllabic — Referring to sounds occurring within the same syllable, i.e.,

in the word hit [h], [ɪ], and [t] are tautosyllabic.

vocal tract — The physical organs used to produce speech, i.e., lips, teeth, alveolar ridge, (hard) palate, soft palate, uvula, upper throat, voice box (larynx), tongue tip, tongue blade, tongue body, tongue root.

voiced and voiceless — A sound quality determined by whether the vocal folds or cords are vibrating when a sound is made. Consonants in English are usually in pairs, made essentially in the same way except for "voicing," thus, for example, the difference in the beginning sounds of the fricative pairs like *fie* and *vie*, the affricates *cheer* and *jeer*, and stop pairs like *tab* and *dab*. See Appendix A for a basic introduction to phonology.

Appendix C:

Web Sources for Further Study

Thomas E. Nunnally

Each essay in this issue provides a list of references, and Davies's essay provides an annotated list of collateral reading. However, more and more helpful linguistic sites are showing up in cyberspace. For example, Wikipedia (wikipedia.org) has information on just about any linguistic question that I can imagine, though one must be cautious regarding accuracy of every article.[1] The sites listed below (which omit Wikipedia sites), allow further insights on topics in this issue. If you find links below that are no longer active, or if you find additional sites not linked from some of these and deserving of their own separate inclusion, send me a message at nunnath@auburn.edu in case a future list of this kind is published.

Overviews of Linguistics and Dialects

An excellent non-technical guide to linguistics in relation to American English is the web site based on the PBS series, *Do you speak American?*: www.pbs.org/speak/.

Particularly helpful in conjunction with the essays in this issue are these segments:

Sociolinguistics Basics: www.pbs.org/speak/speech/sociolinguistics/sociolinguistics/
Standard English: www.pbs.org/speak/seatosea/standardamerican/
American Varieties: www.pbs.org/speak/seatosea/americanvarieties/
Rful Southern (far-mer vs. fah-muh): www.pbs.org/speak/seatosea/americanvarieties/southern/
Language Prejudice: www.pbs.org/speak/speech/prejudice/
Drawl or Nothin' (Texas accent): www.pbs.org/speak/seatosea/americanvarieties/texan/drawl/

Power of Prose: Voices of the South: www.pbs.org/speak/seatosea/powerprose/south/

To hear video clips of speakers of English from various regions of the USA and other countries and speakers of other languages, see these links:
http://csumc.wisc.edu/AmericanLanguages/english/eng_us
http://web.ku.edu/idea/

African American Vernacular English and the Ebonics Controversy

Jack Sidnell of the University of New England, Australia, provides a brief, accessible starting point to learn about lexical (vocabulary), phonological (sound), and grammatical features of AAVE. www.une.edu.au/langnet/definitions/aave.html

The Library of Congress *American Memory* collection includes digitalized recordings of 23 former slaves interviewed in the 1930s and 40s. Alabamians may now hear the actual voices of Alabama ex-slaves: Alice Gaston of Gee's Bend, Isom Mosely of Gee's Bend, and Joe McDonald of Livingston.
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/voices/index.html

For a thoughtful discussion of the Oakland School Board's "Ebonics resolution" of December 18, 1996, and public reaction to it, see "A Linguist Looks at the Ebonics Debate," by Charles J. Fillmore.
www.cal.org/topics/dialects/ebfillmo.html

Additional Internet resources on AAVE include a site from which I quoted Walt Wolfram in Nunnally, "Exploring," John Baugh's page in *Do You Speak American?* and the links Baugh provides therein.
http://linguistlist.org/topics/ebonics/
www.pbs.org/speak/seatosea/americanvarieties/AAVE/ebonics/#baugh

More Technically Advanced Sites

For treatments of varieties of English at a more technical level than those in *Do You Speak American?*, visit the *Language Samples Project* web site *Variet-*

ies of English, under development at the Anthropology Department of the University of Arizona. Varieties listed include African American Vernacular English, American Indian English, British English, Canadian English, Chicano English, Northeast US English, and Southern States English. The sites for the varieties listed are in various states of completion and seem to be mainly if not completely devoted to sound (phonological) differences. The section on British English is especially informative for speakers of American English.

www.ic.arizona.edu/~lsp/main.html

The Child Phonology Laboratory at the University of Alberta, Canada, has created an excellent on-line survey of the Phonological Features of African American Vernacular English (AAVE). Two particular strengths include a comparison of the scope of each linguistic feature, that is, whether the feature is found in other varieties of English, as is often the case, and an updating of the list of AAVE sound features using recent studies. As the authors explain,

> Most commonly referenced descriptions of AAVE phonology are based on data collected in the 1960s from adolescents in northern urban areas . . . . As a result of the dynamic nature of spoken language, these oft-cited descriptions may no longer be accurate for AAVE speakers today or for AAVE speakers in different regions of the U.S. Using existing literature from sociolinguistics and child language, along with our own data from Memphis AAVE-speaking children and adults and . . . data from Texas AAVE-speakers, we have compiled an updated list of AAVE phonological features.

www.rehabmed.ualberta.ca/spa/phonology/features.htm

The Southern Vowel Shift is a major topic for Allbritten's essay. I explain it in some detail in Appendix A but only mention the equally interesting and important sound shift taking place in the North, called the Northern Cities Shift. William Labov's "Driving Forces in Linguistic Change" treats the Northern Cities Shift within an interconnected theoretical framework of language change, bringing in effects of social class and gender.

www.ling.upenn.edu/~wlabov/Papers/DFLC.htm

Linguistic Study of Speech Sounds

For the official site of the International Phonetic Alphabet, see www.arts.gla.ac.uk/ipa/index.html

For a more practically useful site that actually plays recordings and presents images of production of sounds, visit the University of Iowa Phonetics site. Two caveats are needed: the Iowa site makes no distinction between [a] and [ɑ] in its symbols, though the media examples of speech clearly differentiate the sounds. Also the dialect of the speaker who provides the sound clips of example words for each vowel has undergone the merger of [ɑ] and [ɔ]. The speaker pronounces the words *jaw* and *raw* with [ɑ], though *jaw* is listed as a sample word possessing the vowel [ɔ]. (Compare asking a Southerner who pronounces *pin* and *pen* with the same [ɪ] sound to illustrate the [ɛ] sound by saying *ten*!)

www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/

For a fun and artistic use of phonetic transcription and a look at phonetic transcription following British English practices, see the YouTube video created by "Justinlrb" of jazz greats Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong singing "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off" (you say *potato* and I say *potahto*, etc.)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lJJVrJYvUA

Web Sites of Some Major Linguistic Projects

The granddaddy of American linguistic projects was begun in 1929 as the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada. Now called Linguistic Atlas Projects (LAP), and appearing not to include Canada, it is housed at the University of Georgia under editor-in-chief William Kretzschmar. The mapping of dialect regions of the U.S. began in the 1930s and is still underway. Because of the time involved in collecting data and the technological advances in and methodological changes to the study of linguistics, each finished segment of the Linguistic Atlas differs from the ones before it. For example, The Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States, directed by Lee Pederson, was the first to develop much broader sociolinguistically oriented methodologies. Nevertheless, a certain level of comparability remains between all projects. For information

on ten projects, see the UGA web site: http://us.english.uga.edu.

The TELSUR Project is a massive TELephone SURvey that collected phonological (sound) information from carefully determined locations across the nation. The project's Atlas of North American English (ANAE) is the culmination of the years of important work by William Labov of the University of Pennsylvania and allied scholars. Labov has earned the title "father of sociolinguistics" because of his groundbreaking work in relating variation in how people speak to social factors such as socio-economic class. (Labovian sociolinguistics laid the foundation for the essays by Feagin, Allbritten, Oggs, and Doxsey in this issue.) The map from ANAE in Nunnally's "Exploring," shows findings from TELSUR being used to determine dialect areas. Full access to ANAE is available only by purchasing the volume and CD and receiving full web access from the publisher, but much can be learned from the materials at the free web site (an older version, still accessible at this writing, is listed along with the updated version).

www.ling.upenn.edu/phonoatlas/ [links to publisher Mouton for free demo]

www.ling.upenn.edu/phono_atlas/home.html#regional [includes maps and essays]

The North American Regional Vocabulary Survey (NARVS), developed by Charles Boberg at McGill University in Montreal, uses a survey on the web to map differences in lexical items (vocabulary) across the U.S. and Canada. For example, one survey question explores the term for "a carbonated, non-alcoholic beverage, like Coke®, Pepsi®, Sprite®, or Mountain Dew®," and offers the options "coke, cola, cold drink, fizzy drink, pop, soda, sodapop, soft drink, and tonic." The results verify the frequent Southern practice of calling all soft drinks "cokes."

www.arts.mcgill.ca/programs/linguistics/faculty/boberg/research.htm

The North Carolina Language and Life Project (NCLLP), founded by Walt Wolfram at North Carolina State University, is a model program for study and documentation of language use, diversity, and change in a state within

its cultural contexts. NCLLP has published a series of books and audio-visual materials that bring knowledge of the rich linguistic and cultural resources of North Carolina to a broad audience and also sponsors various educational outreach programs. www.ncsu.edu/linguistics/ncllp/index.php

The Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE) was begun in 1963 by Frederic Gomes Cassidy. It is the opposite of a dictionary of Standard English in that it "seeks to document the varieties of English that are **not** found everywhere in the United States—those words, pronunciations, and phrases that vary from one region to another, that we learn at home rather than at school, or that are part of our oral rather than our written culture." The fifth volume covering the alphabet (Sl—Z) will be published in 2009. The first link below is a transcript of an informative and enjoyable chat with chief editor Joan Houston Hall. The second is the general link to the DARE site.

http://wordsmith.org/chat/dare.html

http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/dare/dare.html ■

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank James Daniel Hasty, Joey Brackner, Anne Kimzey, and Deborah Boykin for helpful comments and suggestions.

Notes

1. Although caution is enjoined regarding accuracy of the entries in Wikipedia, I have discovered that other web sites appearing to be of a scholarly nature contain overgeneralizations and misinformation in the feature-descriptions of Southern English. I caution readers to be skeptical when a web site presents certain features and lexical items as emblematic of entire populations of Southern regions, fails to note that many such features are fading and recessive forms, neglects to explain the sound environments for certain features, misunderstands [ɑ] versus [a:] (rampant even for trained Northern linguists as I explain in Appendix A), and cites no sources for the information or the admittedly attractive maps. It is my fervent hope that the information presented in this issue of *Tributaries* will help readers discern between accurate and inaccurate descriptions of Southern English varieties.

Notes on Contributors

Rachael Allbritten is a doctoral candidate in the department of Linguistics at Georgetown University. She works primarily in sociolinguistics and English dialectal variation, particularly in the American South in and around Huntsville. In addition to studies in general variation topics such as vowel shifts, she works in acoustic phonetics, language change, language perception, language and community, and narratives. She is also interested in style-shifting and the use of various resources in language to construct long- and short-term identity. One of her other main interests is computational linguistics, concentrating on issues in machine translation. Rachael received her undergraduate degree from the University of North Alabama.

Charlotte Brammer is assistant professor of communication studies, Howard College of Arts and Sciences, and director of Writing Across the Curriculum, Samford University, Birmingham. Her research interests include writing pedagogy, professional communication, and sociolinguistics. She has presented at regional, national, and international professional conferences, and has published in several academic journals. Currently, she serves as the book review editor for IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication. Although a native of South Carolina, Charlotte has lived in Alabama for twenty years and completed her Ph.D. at the University of Alabama.

Catherine Evans Davies, Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley, is professor of linguistics in the English Department at the University of Alabama. She was president of the Southeastern Conference on Linguistics in 2003, and is co-editor with Michael Picone of *Language Variety in the South: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (forthcoming). As a current member of the Alabama

Humanities Foundation's Road Scholars program, she gives a lecture based on her article in this volume.

JOCELYN DOXSEY completed her graduate studies in linguistics at New York University. Her work is primarily sociophonetic in nature and deals specifically with American English dialects. Her master's thesis concentrated on Southern American English dialect variation; specifically on the coast of Alabama. Additionally, she has contributed to NYU's ongoing study of dialect variation in New York City English. Jocelyn completed her master's degree in 2007 and currently works in the publishing industry in New York City.

CRAWFORD FEAGIN, a native of Anniston, specializes in sociolinguistics, particularly the study of variation in the grammar and phonology of Southern States English. Dr. Feagin earned her doctorate at Georgetown University with the University of Pennsylvania's William Labov as advisor. Her book, *Variation and Change in Alabama English: A Sociolinguistic Study of the White Community*, provided the first extended view of the grammar of whites in the American South, with many comparisons to the grammar of African American English as well as other varieties of English, past and present. Her more recent work has centered on phonological change in Alabama English, especially vowel shifting. She was a Fulbright guest professor at the University of Klagenfurt in 1992, and more recently a visiting professor at Georgetown University and the University of Zurich.

JAMES DANIEL HASTY is pursuing a doctorate in the department of Linguistics and Germanic, Slavic, Asian, and African Languages at Michigan State University. Daniel is a sociolinguist focusing on Southern United States English. He works primarily in language attitude studies and as a result is keenly interested in non-prestige dialects of American English, Southern identity construction/maintenance, language policy, and issues associated with the Standard Language Ideology. Daniel is also interested in traditional variationist topics including the Southern Shift, back vowel fronting, and the relationship between African American English and Southern United States English. He holds an MA in English from Auburn University and a BA in English from Tennessee Technological University.

Kimberly Johnson teaches eighth-grade language arts at Auburn (Alabama) Junior High School. Nationally board-certified in early adolescent language arts in 2004, Kimberly started teaching in 1998 at Cedar Ridge Middle School in Decatur before moving to Auburn in 2004. Originally from Anniston, she received a degree in communications from the University of Alabama and a master's in language arts education from Alabama A&M University. In addition to taking care of her growing family, Kimberly is currently working on an education specialist's degree in English language arts education at Auburn University while serving as a mentor teacher and head of the English department at Auburn Junior High.

Thomas E. Nunnally, associate professor of English at Auburn University, is guest editor for this volume. He received his PhD from the University of Georgia. His special interests are the dynamics of language change in English over the last thousand years, Old English language and literature, and cultural views of language usage. He has co-edited two books of essays in sociolinguistics and dialectology, and has published in *American Speech, Language, The SECOL Review*, and other journals. His honors include two Fulbright awards and NEH Seminar participation. His current projects include research into the sociolinguistic forces behind dialect change and lexical change, the development of relative clauses in English, and lexical collocation. He was president of the Southeastern Conference on Linguistics in 1998–99.

Anna Head Oggs is a doctoral candidate in the English department at Auburn University as well as an instructor there in the English as a Second Language Program. Her areas include the language, literature, and history of the American South. Her work on Southern English has focused primarily on speech in the Alabama Wiregrass. Anna received both her bachelor's and master's degrees from Auburn.

Michael D. Picone is professor of French and linguistics at the University of Alabama, where he began teaching in 1988, shortly after earning his doctorate at the Sorbonne (University of Paris). He also organizes courses and seminars on Francophone Louisiana, Francophone Africa, and other subjects. His

publications and program of research encompass an assortment of lexicological, phonological, and language-contact topics, as well as contemporary and historical profiles of language use in Francophone Louisiana and elsewhere. He is author of *Anglicisms, Neologisms and Dynamic French*, a detailed study of borrowings and other types of lexical creativity in the French of France. With Catherine Evans Davies, he was co-organizer of the third Language Variety in the South symposium, held at the University of Alabama in 2004, which brought together more than one hundred scholars to present research on all aspects of language and dialect in the South (a volume of selected papers is in preparation).

Robin Sabino is an associate professor in the department of English at Auburn University, where she is Coordinator of Graduate Admissions, teaches classes in linguistics and writing, and works with the Echota/Auburn University Tsalagi Language Revitalization Project. She serves as Co-Executive Secretary of the Southeastern Conference on Linguistics. She earned her Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania under the direction of William Labov. Her research interests include language contact, variation, and change—especially creolization, language loss, and second language acquisition.

Invitation to Tributaries Readers

The authors and editors of this special double issue of *Tributaries* are interested in your own linguistic discoveries and thoughts as a result of our work as well as questions the essays have raised. We would welcome your ideas and observations as they occur to you from your reading.

Here is a list of some of the topics covered in our essays that may stir reflection:

- Alabama's rich linguistic heritage
- The influence of Spanish and other languages on the languages of Alabama
- The key features of Alabama English
- Differences in how Alabamians talk from other Americans and from each other
- Uses of "might could" and "may can" for politeness
- Drawling in men and women and across the generations and regions
- Southern Vowel shifting such as pronouncing *kit* as "keeyut" and *tea* as "tuhee"
- Monophthongization of the "long i" in *ride* and *right* to sound something like "rahd" and "raht"
- Alabamians' attitudes toward their own dialects
- The social importance of one's "home language" such as African American English
- Uses of Southern English in storytelling and community building

- Preservation/resurrection of Alabama's native languages

Please send questions and comments to Tom Nunnally, Department of English, Auburn University (e-mail nunnath@auburn.edu). If you wish to contact a particular author to offer a comment or ask a question, your message will be forwarded.

Note also Catherine Davies's invitation (page 88) to provide language examples for linguistic study:

> With the development of technology in the form of digital recordings, we now have the possibility of capturing wonderful data and storing it in easily accessible forms. If you are interested in contributing to this developing database and being part of our ongoing research on Southern American English in Alabama, please contact me in the English Department at the University of Alabama at cdavies@bama.ua.edu or at (205) 348-5065.

We look forward to hearing from you.

To order additional copies of this special issue or other back issues of *Tributaries*, or additional Alabama Folklife Association products, shop online at www.alabamafolklife.org.

www.alabamafolklife.org

AFA Membership and Products

You can support the efforts of the AFA to preserve and promote Alabama's folklife by becoming a member and/or buying publications and recordings that have been produced with AFA support. As of 2008, membership dues are: Student ($15), Regular ($35), Patron ($100) and Sustaining ($200 or more). Non-membership donations of any amount are welcome.

Include your name and address information with a check, payable to AFA, and mail to the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture, 410 North Hull Street, Montgomery, AL 36104. Members receive *Tributaries* and notice of the AFA Annual Meeting. Contributions to the AFA are tax-deductible.

The publications and recordings below have been produced with the support of the AFA. To order, list the items and quantities desired, include shipping and handling (a flat fee of $2.50 for any number of items), and send a check (payable to AFA; may be combined with membership dues) for the total to the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture, 410 North Hull Street, Montgomery, AL 36104. You can also order the following directly from our website at www.alabamafolklife.org.

☐ ***Bullfrog Jumped!*** ($17) is a collection of songs sung by mothers, grandmothers, school teachers, babysitters, and children across Alabama. During the summer of 1947 they sat at their kitchen tables and on their front porches in front of a portable disc recorder and enthusiastically shared

their favorite folksongs with Professor Byron Arnold, a "songcatcher." They wanted children to learn them and sing them for many years to come. 42 of these folksongs and games are on this CD along with a 72-page booklet that contains the words to all of the songs and gives information about the singers."

- ☐ ***Sweet Is the Day: A Sacred Harp Family Portrait*** ($20 DVD or VHS, please specify) produced by Erin Kellen and directed by Jim Carnes: In this hour-long video members of Wootten family of Sand Mountain speak of their long and deep involvement with shape-note singing and sing more than a dozen hymns from *The Sacred Harp*. An accompanying booklet provides historical information and further explanation of shape-note traditions.

- ☐ ***Tributaries, Journal of the AFA,*** Vol. 1 ($8). Contains essays on the great shoal fish trap, Mobile Bay jubilees, quilting, occupational folklore, more.

- ☐ ***Tributaries, Journal of the AFA,*** Vol. 2 ($8). Contains essays on Hank Williams, revival of interest in Indian tribal ancestry, Alabama's outlaws, cultural roles of African-American women in the Wiregrass, and more.

- ☐ ***Tributaries, Journal of the AFA,*** Vol. 3 ($8). Contains essays on graveshelters, the Skyline Farms, the Piney Woods Regional Folklife Project, geophagy, and more.

- ☐ ***Tributaries, Journal of the AFA,*** Vol. 4 ($8). Contains essays on contemporary Christmas curb lights in Birmingham, Creek Indian migration narratives, the Ballad of John Catchings and more.

- ☐ ***Tributaries, Journal of the AFA,*** Vol. 5 ($10). This special thematic issue contains essays on Alabama's blues topics such as Butler "String Beans" May, Ed Bell, "Jaybird" Coleman, Willie King, Vera Ward Hall, and "John Henry."

- ☐ ***Tributaries, Journal of the AFA,*** Vol. 6 ($8). Contains essays on Alabama's first folklife celebration, "FolkCenter South"; family reunions; pre-Columbian highways; and more.

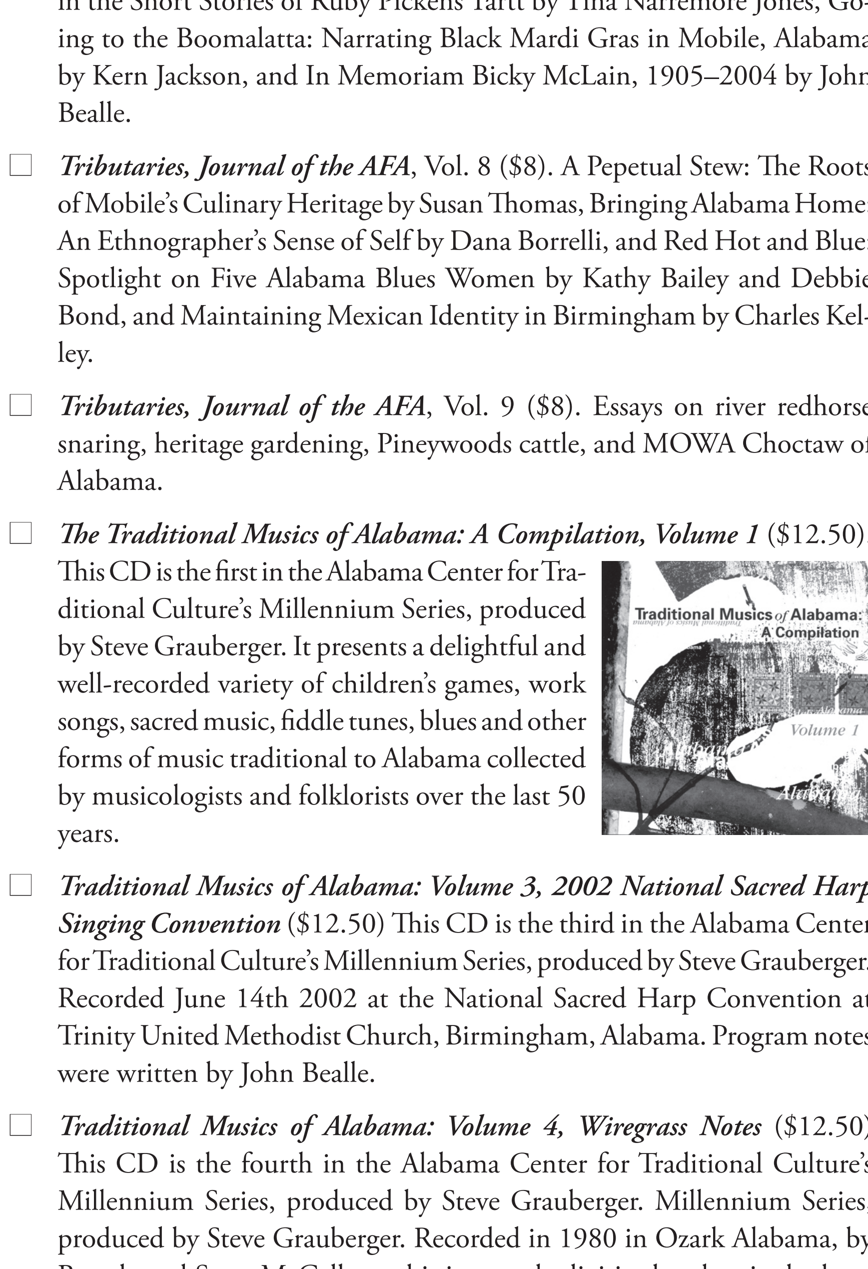
- ☐ ***Tributaries, Journal of the AFA***, Vol. 7 ($8). Roots Running Deep: Picking Mayhaws by Lori Sawyer, Confronting the Big House and other Stereotypes

in the Short Stories of Ruby Pickens Tartt by Tina Narremore Jones, Going to the Boomalatta: Narrating Black Mardi Gras in Mobile, Alabama by Kern Jackson, and In Memoriam Bicky McLain, 1905–2004 by John Bealle.

☐ ***Tributaries, Journal of the AFA***, Vol. 8 ($8). A Pepetual Stew: The Roots of Mobile's Culinary Heritage by Susan Thomas, Bringing Alabama Home: An Ethnographer's Sense of Self by Dana Borrelli, and Red Hot and Blue: Spotlight on Five Alabama Blues Women by Kathy Bailey and Debbie Bond, and Maintaining Mexican Identity in Birmingham by Charles Kelley.

☐ ***Tributaries, Journal of the AFA***, Vol. 9 ($8). Essays on river redhorse snaring, heritage gardening, Pineywoods cattle, and MOWA Choctaw of Alabama.

☐ ***The Traditional Musics of Alabama: A Compilation, Volume 1*** ($12.50). This CD is the first in the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture's Millennium Series, produced by Steve Grauberger. It presents a delightful and well-recorded variety of children's games, work songs, sacred music, fiddle tunes, blues and other forms of music traditional to Alabama collected by musicologists and folklorists over the last 50 years.



☐ ***Traditional Musics of Alabama: Volume 3, 2002 National Sacred Harp Singing Convention*** ($12.50) This CD is the third in the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture's Millennium Series, produced by Steve Grauberger. Recorded June 14th 2002 at the National Sacred Harp Convention at Trinity United Methodist Church, Birmingham, Alabama. Program notes were written by John Bealle.

☐ ***Traditional Musics of Alabama: Volume 4, Wiregrass Notes*** ($12.50) This CD is the fourth in the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture's Millennium Series, produced by Steve Grauberger. Millennium Series, produced by Steve Grauberger. Recorded in 1980 in Ozark Alabama, by Brenda and Steve McCallum, this is a newly digitized and revised release originally produced by Hank Willett and Doris Dyen as the LP *Wiregrass*

Notes: Black Sacred Harp Singing From Southeast Alabama. Included are the songs in the original release plus 13 additional songs taken from original event recordings.

- ☐ ***John Alexander's Sterling Jubilee Singers of Bessemer, Alabama,*** ($10). This cassette recording features Jefferson County's oldest African American a capella gospel group.
- ☐ ***Jesus Hits like an Atom Bomb,*** ($16). CD version of the Sterling Jubilee cassette described above.
- ☐ ***Cornbread Crumbled in Gravy: Historical Alabama Field Recordings from the Byron Arnold Collection of Traditional Tunes*** ($12.50). This box set includes a 64-page booklet and a cassette featuring field recordings of folk, gospel, and parlor tunes recorded in 1947.
- ☐ ***Traditional Music from Alabama's Wiregrass*** ($10). A CD capturing bluegrass, gospel, blues, and Sacred Harp singing as done in Southeast Alabama.
- ☐ ***The Alabama Sampler*** ($12). A CD featuring live performances at City Stages of Alabama blues, bluegrass, Sacred Harp, Gospel, railroad calls, etc.
- ☐ ***Benjamin Lloyd's Hymn Book: A Primitive Baptist Song Tradition*** ($29.95 hardcover). A book of essays exploring Alabama's oldest hymnal, published in 1841, and enclosed CD with twenty examples of ways in which congregations sing from it.
- ☐ ***In the Spirit, Alabama's Sacred Music Traditions*** (paperback book/CD, $15): A dozen essays about such forms of religious music as "Dr. Watts singing," bluegrass gospel, gospel quartet singing, African-American Covenanters, shape-note and more. CD features examples of each.

- ☐ ***Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*** (Book/CD, $29.95) This 160-page hardbound book and CD by Joe Dan Boyd with an introduction by John Bealle tells the story

of Judge Jackson of Ozark, Alabama, who in 1934 published *The Colored Sacred Harp*. It also describes the formation and rise to prominence of the Wiregrass Sacred Harp Singers, led by Dewey Williams and Japheth Jackson. The enclosed CD contains 2 historic recordings in which Judge Jackson participated and 23 others from *The Colored Sacred Harp* as well as the Cooper version of *The Sacred Harp.*

Non-AFA Products of Related Interest:

☐ ***Rich Amerson*** ($7 for cassette, $10 for CD). Folk tales and songs recorded in Livingston, Alabama, in 1961.

☐ ***Possum Up a Gum Stump: Home, Field and Commercial Recordings of Alabama Fiddlers*** ($9 for cassette, $15 for CD). Contains rare recordings of nineteenth century fiddlers and field recordings of twentieth century fiddlers who played in older styles. Twenty-four-page liner notes.

☐ ***White Spirituals from the Sacred Harp: The Alabama Sacred Harp Convention*** ($10 for cassette, $15 for CD). Alan Lomax recorded these shape-note songs from the Sacred Harp in 1959 in Fyffe, Alabama.

☐ ***The Colored Sacred Harp*** (CD, $16). The Wiregrass Sacred Harp Singers of Ozark, Alabama, sing from Judge Jackson's 1934 compilation of shape-note songs.

☐ ***Desire for Piety*** (CD, $16). A rare example of black Sacred Harp singing from rural southeast Alabama as sung by the Wiregrass Sacred Harp Singers.

☐ ***With Fiddle and Well-Rosined Bow*** (paperback book, $19.95) A social history of old-time fiddling written by Joyce Cauthen.

☐ ***Allison's Sacred Harp Singers*** (CD, $13.50) Re-mastered selections of rare Sacred Harp recordings made in 1927-28 by singers from Birmingham.

☐ ***Religion Is a Fortune*** (CD, $13.50): Remastered commercial recordings of various Sacred Harp groups recorded in 1920s and '30s.

☐ ***Lookout Mountain Convention*** (CD,$15) More than 30 songs from the 1960 edition of The Original Sacred Harp recorded at the Lookout Mountain Convention in August 1968.

- ☐ ***In Sweetest Union Join*** (2 CDs, $25) 1999 recording commemorates 40th anniversary of Alan Lomax's historic Sacred Harp recording made in 1959.
- ☐ ***The Sacred Harp Hour***, WCPC Sessions (CD, $15) Selections from Sunday morning radio show in Houston, Mississippi, on air since 1959.
- ☐ ***Spiritualaires of Hurtsboro Alabama: Singing Songs of Praise*** (CD, $15) 16 songs by one of the last active gospel quartets with origins in Gospel's golden age of the 1950s.