Moderator: Kelly Elizabeth Wright

2:00-3:00pm

Joseph A. Stanley and Hallie Davidson - Brigham Young University

Variation in early 20th century rural Utah English

This study sheds light on the speech of Utahns born a century ago who grew up in lower class, rural communities. We draw from interviews conducted in the 1980s–1990s with elderly people in Wasatch County. Based on a sample of these people, born 1908–1927, we find features that are rare in contemporary younger Utahns, including phonological variables (CORD-CARD merger, [t]-insertion in /ls/ clusters, and wh-aspiration) and a variety of non-standard grammatical features (a-prefixing, demonstrative them, invariant come, etc.). This study highlights the importance of analyzing archival data to uncover linguistic variation in early 20th Century English

John Winstead - University of Kentucky

Frequency, polysemy, and word persistence in English

This study challenges the assumption that high usage frequency primarily determines word persistence in English. By analyzing the Brown corpus and Oxford English Dictionary data, the interplay between word frequency, polysemy, and persistence was examined. Findings reveal that both frequency and number of word senses (polysemy) positively correlate with persistence, with polysemy showing a stronger effect. A regression model indicates that each additional word sense correlates with increased persistence, with diminishing returns at high numbers of senses. Higher frequency is also associated with increased persistence but has a smaller effect. Words in the Brown corpus exhibit higher polysemy and frequency than those in the OED, reinforcing semantic versatility's role in word longevity. The study also highlights the importance of word class and etymology in predicting persistence. These findings provide a nuanced view of lexical retention, refining our understanding of linguistic change and its applications in historical linguistics and lexicography.

Aidan Malanoski, Bill Haddican, Kyle Gorman, Cynthia Gan, Jack Lacey, Jack Lynch, Andrew Shillingford, Samuel H. Sokol and Kujege Thiam - CUNY Graduate Center, Queens College/CUNY Graduate Center, CUNY Graduate Center, Queens College, Queens College, Queens College, Lehman College, Queens College, Lehman College

A whole new /iw/: The changing syllabification of yod

This poster presents initial findings on apparent-time change in the phonology of /Cyuw/ sequences. We address these issues using data judgments from 645 speakers from the eastern US. Participants provided forced binary choice rhyme judgments on five pairs testing rhymes between /uw/ and /yuw/ (e.g., boot-mute). We find that rhyme judgments for /uw/-/yuw/ pairs are becoming more negative in apparent time, so that younger speakers are less likely to say that pairs such as boot and mute rhyme. We consider three interpretations of these data, ultimately arguing that these reflect a change in the phonological structure of /Cyuw/ sequences.

Kaitlin Young - University of Kentucky

Through the looking glass: Stop variation in the Linguistic Atlas Project

In keeping with literature on language variation, synchronic phonetic variation also merits attention; however, allophones with significantly different places of articulation in American Englishes remain understudied. Preliminary data from the Linguistic Atlas Project, especially east of the Mississippi River, indicates some speakers substitute velar for alveolar stops, as in clothes closet and clothespress beginning with a stop-liquid cluster. Using LAP field worker notes, I will document articulatory variation in other targets like looking glass and clapboards, especially in combination with speaker identity and locality. These results will inform future projects, such as perception studies with current speakers from these regions.

Rachel Steindel - Burdin University of New Hampshire

NORTH of Boston: The NORTH/FORCE distinction among Jews in New Hampshire in the early 1900s

This study examines NORTH and FORCE vowels in the speech of Jewish residents of Portsmouth, New Hampshire born in the early 1900s. NORTH and FORCE are unmerged in Eastern New England English, but a study of Boston Jews in the 1970s (Laferriere, 1979) suggested that Jewish speakers in the region were leading a merger of the two. F1 and F2 measurements from this data set (digitized oral history tapes) suggest Jews in NH were unmerged, unlike contemporary Jews from Boston (Laferriere 1979), but like contemporary non-Jews from NH as reported in Stanford (2019).

Jules Blank - University of Kentucky

Some spiders have three legs: Biographical influence on language variety

This poster uses data from the Linguistic Atlas Project of New England (LANE) to

showcase the complex and often contradictory nature of language variation in a narrow region. This is accomplished by looking closely at informant commentary as it relates to target words in the category of 'frying pan' within the Connecticut region of LANE. Breaking down the more anecdotal aspects of the Atlas interviews allows for a fresh look at the ways individual experience and biographies impact linguistic perception. Overall, this project serves as a brief glimpse into the importance of individual experience in the study of linguistic variation.

Jennifer Cramer - University of Kentucky

#heaintfromhere: Perceptions of what makes authentic Kentucky speech

In an interview, Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear said, "Let me just tell you; JD Vance ain't from here." Kentuckians took to X to expound upon what it might mean to be from Kentucky using the hashtag #heaintfromhere. I analyzed the tweets to determine how often linguistic comments appeared; to describe the kinds of linguistic comments that appeared; and to explore whether the descriptions of linguistic features aligned with what might be expected in Kentucky speech. Results indicate that linguistic comments happen less frequently than other types and primarily include references to words or pronunciations believed to be specific to Kentucky.

Keiko Bridwell and Margaret Renwick - University of Georgia

Variation in rootedness: Vowel systems across culturally differing North Georgia counties

Sociolinguistic research finds that people with strong ties to the place where they live are more likely to use local dialect features, but what happens when the cultural values associated with a specific place do not match those associated with the broader regional dialect? Here the effect of rootedness is studied in two adjacent northeastern Georgia counties: one politically and culturally aligned with commonly perceived "Southern" values, versus one embodying a less conventional version of Southern culture. Results show that, in the second county, increased positivity toward and participation in local culture corresponded to lower use of traditional dialect features.

Vincent N. Mariani - University of Delaware

Is it giving Gen-Z? A survey on knowledge of LGBT+ slang across age groups

This study examines knowledge and usage of selected LGBT+ terminology across age groups. Participants completed an online survey and were asked to self-rate their familiarity, provide a definition, and state where they may have heard the terms (it's) giving, tea, (serving) cunt, -ussy/bussy, slay, bottom, twink, icon, kiki, (throw) shade, femme, and butch. Familiarity was determined both by self-rating and by the definitions provided. I find that participants in younger age groups rate themselves significantly more familiar with the terminology than older age groups, however the same relation does not hold for the definition matching task.

Ifeoluwaposimi John-Idiagbonya and Betsy Sneller - Georgetown University, Michigan State University

"If you think that was bad, then just listen to this…": A case study of oral narrative development

How people tell oral narratives has been important to sociolinguistics and related fields for many years. However, few papers study the development of narrative structure as speakers mature, and none use naturalistic data. In this case study, we use longitudinal naturalistic data from MI Diaries to examine how a child's narrative structure develops over the course of 3 years, between the ages of 5;11-8;11. We find that as he ages, his narratives begin to show a wider range of length and complex structure. He also develops the ability to tell multi-episode narratives, and include codas to close out his narratives.

Ian Schneider - Pennsylvania State University

Reading dialectological horoscopes: Negotiated literacies between students and ChatGPT in an undergraduate introductory linguistics course

This pedagogical pilot study explored students' critical and negotiated AI literacies where students queried Chat-GPT about the "5 features of the [language]" spoken in their hometowns. 118 undergraduate students in an introductory general education linguistics course participated, submitting a short reflection on the (in)accuracy of Chat-GPT's observational output regarding their hometown dialects. Chat-GPT's relative ineptitude to supply specific local linguistic features led to a common genre of vague linguistic points of differentiation, which students used to "read in" their local hometown language – a linguistic horoscope. I use this to discuss implications of situated and negotiated AI literacies in linguistics education.

Wil Rankinen - Grand Valley State University

The pragmatic use of "eh" in Michigan's Upper Peninsula English

This study investigates the pragmatic use of the discourse marker "eh" in Michigan's Upper Peninsula (U.P.) English, focusing on its multifunctionality in both statements and questions. Based on data from the U.P. Words Survey (749 respondents), the analysis examines "eh" in affirmation, question formation, exclamation, and proposal. Findings indicate that "eh" functions similarly to Canadian English but with unique regional subtleties. The study highlights the geographic distribution of "eh" and "hey" across the U.P., underscoring their role as enregistered markers of local identity. This research contributes to understanding regional linguistic variation and sociolinguistic enregisterment in U.S. English.