NORTHERN CALIFORNIA VOWELS IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

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THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA VOWEL SHIFT: PRINCIPAL FEATURES
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS
METHODOLOGY

- Emerging Adult (Arnett, 2001) speakers
  - 21 males; 20 females
  - White/Caucasian, heterosexual
  - Southern Illinois “born & raised”

- Word list reading task
  - 11 stressable monophthongs
  - b_t and h_d contexts
  - 5 repetitions per vowel per contexts
    (110 tokens per speaker)

- F1, F2, duration measured with Praat
  - Data normalized using a modification of Watt & Fabricius (see Bigham, 2008)
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS VOWELS: FEMALES

Female Speakers' Vowels
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS VOWELS: MALES

Male Speakers’ Vowels
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS VOWELS: ALL SPEAKERS, NORMALIZED MEANS
“Squished” Vowel System

Southern California (Hagiwara, 1997)

Southern Illinois (Bigham, 2008)
So... How did California vowels end up in Southern Illinois?

- The “Southern Illinois” vowel system shares many variants with the “Northern California” vowel system
  - Exceptions: GOAT-fronting, LOT~THOUGHT

- Probably not migration or stylistic choices
- Not a “geographically-based” vowel system
- Convergent Evolution of the vowel space
- Not a vowel “system” but only a statistical artifact
PROBABLY NOT…

- Population migration
  - Vowel variations brought to Illinois from California
  - Vowel variations brought from Illinois to California

- “Social” style
  - “petulant drama princess” => Northern California
  - “chill; mellow” => Southern Illinois
  - speakers are not necessarily from the same “clique”
NON-GEOGRAPHICALLY BASED SYSTEM

- GEOGRAPHY is linguistically non-agentive

- Non-geographically bound social networks
  - A new “emerging adult” dialect
  - Myspace, Facebook, Youtube, live gaming, etc.
  - Interactive, two-way communication
  - Unlike “old media”
CONVERGENT EVOLUTION

- Convergent Evolution-1: Linguistic Drift
  - Variants are related in a chain-shift
    - (1) LOT moves toward or merges with THOUGHT
    - (2) TRAP moves back / STRUT moves forward
    - (3) DRESS moves down / KIT moves down
  - Problems for GOOSE, GOAT, FOOT

- Convergent Evolution-2: Dialect Contact
  - So.Ill. = transition zone; Northern~Midland~Southern
  - Western North America = mixed settlement history
    - GOAT-fronting is specific to the “petulant drama princess”
**Vowel “System” as Statistical Artifact**

- Are vowels mathematical objects?
- What is the normal distribution of F1 and F2 for a given vowel when averaging data from different numbers of speakers, tokens, and consonantal contexts?
  - How do these and other (N)s change the outcome?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DSB</th>
<th>Hagi.</th>
<th>PB</th>
<th>HGCW</th>
<th>CPJ</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speakers</td>
<td>20f/21m</td>
<td>9f/6m</td>
<td>28f/3m</td>
<td>48f/45m</td>
<td>4f/4m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokens</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contexts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (N)</td>
<td>200/210</td>
<td>81/54</td>
<td>28/33</td>
<td>48/45</td>
<td>20/20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- Southern Illinois vowels are most like California vowels, not the vowels found in the surrounding or nearby dialects. Why?
  - Geographically “free” interactive media communities
  - Convergent Evolution of the vowel system
  - Statistical artifact of the data
OUTCOME & MAJOR QUESTIONS

- The occurrence of Northern California-like variants in Southern Illinois challenges traditional models of dialect acquisition and dialect spread.

- Q: What is the effect of new media on language?

- Q: Which parts of a vowel system are linked and in what ways?

- Q: How many speakers, tokens, and contexts do we need to measure for dialect description?
THANK YOU!

Northern California Vowels in Southern Illinois

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***References and handouts available by e-mail***
Cali vowels in SoILL

- TRAP split:
  - Female, 18, “class” / “Anna”
  - Male, 18, “class” / “pan”

- KIT, DRESS lowering:
  - Males, 18, “Illinoiser” / “metals”
  - Female, 18, “at Fred’s and talk to my friends”

- FOOT fronting & lowering
  - Female, 18, “very good about”
  - Male, 18, “hood”

- But not GOAT fronting:
  - Female, 18, “social”
  - Male, 18, “go”