SOCIAL PERCEPTIONS OF SPEECH: A STUDY OF STUDENT AWARENESS OF STANDARD AMERICAN ENGLISH AND ONE RURAL MISSOURI VARIANT

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by

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and hereby certify that, in their opinion,
it is worthy of acceptance.

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This thesis is only possible because of my family. I cannot thank you enough for all of your encouragement and confidence in me. Most of all, I would like to thank Jamey. You have given me unconditional and unending support of every kind. I would not have started, much less finished this thesis without your urging me forward while never doubting my potential. You are truly квбг моего.

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SOCIAL PERCEPTIONS OF SPEECH: A STUDY OF STUDENT AWARENESS OF STANDARD AMERICAN ENGLISH AND ONE RURAL MISSOURI VARIANT

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ABSTRACT

The following research examines how college students perceive a non-SAE dialect. Participants (n=188) responded to eight audio-recorded SAE and non-SAE statements featuring two male native non-SAE speakers as well as eight typed SAE and non-SAE statements. Questionnaires administered to participants in introductory-level anthropology classes at three Missouri universities tested for perception of speakers' and authors' education, intelligence and environment, which indicates acceptance level of Missouri non-SAE speech. Participants' demographic information was also obtained.

Participants were more critical of spoken than written statements and were more affected by inter-dialectical variation than intra-dialectical variation. Participants' natal environment did not affect their perception of this dialect. Females perceived SAE speech as educated, but both sexes viewed non-SAE speech as uneducated. Together, these data indicate the focus non-SAE dialect is more readily accepted in spoken form than written by all demographic groups, but it is perceived as rural and uneducated by some demographic groups. Future studies in

regions with greater dialectical divergence will further clarify the impact of the listener's environment on their perception of speech.

Chapter 1: Introduction to Research

Introduction

Complaints about non-standard language usage are not a recent phenomenon, nor are they restricted to speakers in the United States. One disgruntled listener from Saintfield, Northern Ireland, wrote over twenty years ago:

> For many years I have been disgusted with the bad grammar used by school-leavers and teachers too sometimes, but recently on the lunch-time news, when a secretary, who had just started work with a firm, was interviewed her first words were: 'I looked up and seen two men' etc. It's unbelievable to think, with so many young people out of work, that she could get such a job, but perhaps 'I seen' and 'I done' etc., is the usual grammar nowadays for office staff and business training colleges. [Milroy and Milroy 1985:38]

This man's editorial contribution echoes complaints about language variation that are simultaneously far-reaching and focused. Milroy and Milroy found that the persistence of these grievances is the basis for tomes that espouse the ideals of 'correct' English and make disparaging remarks that non-standard usage only furthers the ultimate decline of

English (1985:40). They summarize the focus of these types of complaints as being based on the following tenets:

1. That there is one, and only one, correct way of speaking and/or writing the English language.
2. That deviations from this norm are illiteracies, or barbarisms, and that non-standard forms are irregular and perversely deviant.
3. That people ought to use the standard language and that it is quite right to discriminate against non-standard users, as such usage is a sign of stupidity, ignorance, perversity, moral degeneracy, etc. [Milroy and Milroy 1985:40]

This particular collection of ideologies demonstrates that concerns about language usage are persistent. Though discrimination based on language variation may be somewhat relieved thanks to research on non-Standard dialects such as AAVE, conceptions about the proper usage of English and what improper use indicates about the speaker have changed relatively little. It would only take a few moments of keen observation on most city streets to realize that prejudice against non-Standard dialects of American English remains a significant issue.

People are judged by their speech. In the United States, Standard American English (SAE) is considered the benchmark, even though it may not be an accurate representation of contemporary American speech. Many social perceptions of rural Midwestern speech are detrimental to communication and fail to accurately reflect the abilities of speakers whose language is centered on a dialect other than SAE. These perceptions lead to the supposition that speech diverging from SAE indicates a lack of intelligence, and such assumptions are applied to a number of distinct dialects across the

United States. Here I examine how a variant of SAE, my focus dialect, is perceived; I first noticed this NSAE dialect in rural southern Missouri.

I pursued this research as a means of understanding the bias against southern Missouri speech that I observed in Columbia. This bias was typically based on phonetic and lexical components of speech considered to be predominant in the southern Missouri. While living in southwest Missouri, however, I also noticed the use of verb forms that varied from the SAE dialect; speakers in this region use the preterite and past participle verb forms differently than SAE speakers typically do. For example, while SAE dictates *saw* or *have seen*, speakers of the focus dialect will say *seen* or *have saw*. In order to explore the scope of and impetus for dialect bias, I conducted a study on three university campuses. I asked participants to judge the language of two recorded speakers and typed texts that included both SAE and NSAE statements. The purpose of this study was to analyze perceptions of NSAE language for potential biases and to attempt to establish where negative perceptions of this rural NSAE dialect originate.

Following this introduction to my research, chapter two covers background information on dialectology of Missouri and the Midwest. Chapter three describes my research questions, with an introduction to and discussion of basic hypotheses. In chapter four the methods of this research project are outlined. Chapter five deals with the results of data analysis. The final chapter discusses statistical results and offers overall conclusions drawn from the project, as well as possibilities for further research.

Dialects and dialectology

There are myriad definitions of the term dialect; much like the term "culture," it is difficult to simultaneously include all of the implications the term encompasses while presenting a succinct and accurate phrase. The term dialect has been used in a derogatory manner to identify substandard variations of SAE (Lippi-Green 1997). For this reason, Rosina Lippi-Green states that "a dialect is perhaps nothing more than a language that gets no respect" (Lippi-Green 1997:43). However, for the purposes of systematic study of language variants, many definitions include the same three structural components: grammar, phonetics and lexicon. These three components are only the skeleton of dialect variation. Together with consideration of the register and style used in communication, researchers are able to fully understand how language varies and how those variations are perceived.

For purposes of this study, which focuses on participant perceptions of quantifiable structural differences between SAE and the focus dialect, I based my research and analysis on Craig Carver's definition of a dialect. According to Carver (1987:1), dialects are "a variety of language distinguished from other varieties by a set of grammatical, phonetic, and lexical features." Carver's definition is simple, and it can be used in conjunction with studies that seek to incorporate a more complete dialect analysis that includes speakers' registers and styles.

Numerous variations of the more prestigious SAE dialect persist, and they will continue to change along with the language. However, the origins of some dialectical variation, such as the variation presented in this study, are somewhat ambiguous. For

instance, while extensive research has been successful in categorizing and mapping a number of American dialects, "the sociospatial structure of the dialects formed during the initial settlement of the United States, the linguistic content of those dialects, [and] their relationships to settlement history and British regional vernaculars" (Tillery et al. 2004:227) still present a puzzle. Elucidating this history of language variation in the United States is a means of understanding the social prestige given to some contemporary dialects as well as the negative stigma attached to others. There is no question that an idealized universal form of language effectively communicates that its speakers are connected with the highest social and economic stratum of society. For example, usage of a universal American English variant may signify intelligence, professionalism or deference to an interlocutor. What I find interesting is that there exists in this country an ideal, an amorphous perfection of our language to which all individuals are expected to adhere. A failure to master this idealized form of American English, which is represented by the SAE dialect, results in the loss of social status and respect by other SAE users.

Society and dialects

Language usage is fundamental to an individual's social identity; a speaker's or author's class, status, gender and generational affiliation with a group can typically be correlated with the dialect they use. In the United States, the diversity of social identities and the multitude of language varieties converge to create the whole of American English as well as the prejudices between groups of speakers. In order to fully explore the

relationship between varieties of American speech, I introduce the use of SAE as a standard, and then discuss its impact on social identity.

Dialects and standards

The general population's perception of SAE seems to revolve around the notion that it is the most pure and correct form; however, there is much uncertainty about what SAE is exactly. As Shirley Brice Heath (1980:3) observes, some Americans regard SAE as an accentless variety of the language, while others insist it is simply proper grammar and expansive vocabulary. Regardless of particular differences in conceptions of the ambiguous standard, it seems that "both those who speak SE [SAE] and those who don't, recognize it when they hear it, can readily give examples of what it is *not*, and are able to identify places where it is spoken as well as places where it is not likely to be used" (Heath 1980:3). Further complications arise when attempts are made to narrow in on a defined set of characteristics for this "idealized notion of proper dialect" (Johnson 2000:324). Defining and dissecting SAE is actually reminiscent "of the blind men trying to describe an elephant by identifying its individual parts" (Heath 1980:3).

While Heath argues that there are those Americans who speak SAE, or at least are able to recognize when other people do, some scholars propose that "nobody speaks this dialect, and if somebody did, we wouldn't know it because SAE is not defined precisely" (Preston 1993:25, quoting Fromkin and Rodman 1983:251). Though there are differing opinions about the recognition of the American standard, the question remains: to what extent does SAE determine the social acceptability of other American dialects?

With or without a firm understanding of SAE and its features, the effects of this benchmark are clear. Each time a speech act occurs, all interlocutors gain impressions of locale, career, generation, and other social qualities, and often, when a young person's speech is corrected, it is to mold that speech into a form that parallels a desired model. Judgments about a speaker as well as adjustments to improve children's linguistic development seem typically to be based on the assumed norms of SAE. However, those assumptions of improvement and proper grammar are relative to a number of variables, including region, as are the conventional concepts of SAE itself. For example, presumed SAE norms against which speakers may compare themselves or others seem to differ drastically from urban centers, such as New York or Washington, D.C., to rural areas of Georgia or South Carolina, and these differences only account for the Eastern portion of the country.

Considering the fact that the very concept of SAE has numerous forms, the social consequences of variation away from this indistinct standard are intriguing from an anthropological perspective. Marion Wilson (2001:33) contends that "standard expectations, for the most part, are determined by those with the most sociopolitical/economic power," which may help explain why a number of language varieties grouped under the name SAE continue to be socially influential. Taking into account all possible American dialects, it is reasonable to expect that there would be a clear delineation along socio-economic lines that would apply not only to a national scale but also to regional and potentially even local varieties of American English.

Debates about the linguistic importance of SAE and its social ramifications will continue as long as variations remain, but American dialects are also important to

investigate because of the social relationship between people's actual speech and their application of this standard. Linguistic analysis of language variation provides essential information about fundamental dialectic differences however, "what linguists believe about standards matters very little; what nonlinguists believe constitutes precisely that cognitive reality which needs to be described in a responsible sociolinguistics – one which takes speech-community attitudes and perception (as well as performance) into account" (Preston 1993:26). Whether speakers generally adhere to notions of the standard or utilize their natal dialect variation, their speech helps establish and maintain a sense of place in society.

Establishing identity

Individual speakers may be judged against the supposed tenets of SAE, but they are not always expected to mimic the "standard." The interaction between dialects is socially important, because all types of language variation help to define regional and individual identities. Heath notes, while describing the historical American perspective of American English variation, that "individuals from various parts of the country and different social classes clung to their speech forms as part of their identities" (1980:13). In addition, she maintains that more contemporary American society uses NSAE dialects, in comparison to SAE, to judge personal qualities of the speaker, including work ethic, class, status and honesty (1980:31). Based on these observations, identity is established through both in-grouping and out-grouping; individuals identify commonality in those people who use a similar dialect and distinguish themselves from speakers who speak a dialect deemed sub-par in some way.

While the typical assumption of so-called sub-par dialects may center on language variation away from the presumed standard, acquiescence to SAE forms could be sanctioned as well. For instance, Timothy Frazer (1993:13) argues that sound changes originate in urban centers. Considering his argument alongside Wilson's observation of standards and socioeconomic power, out-grouping can be identified as an essential element of forming identity for rural inhabitants as well as those speakers who constitute socioeconomic groups with less power.

Initially, social judgments made using dialectical variation may be assumed to be relatively logical and uncomplicated: speakers identify with others who use similar ways of speaking. However, such an assumption would be overlooking several factors that hinder the complex process of understanding dialect usage and perception. Some scholars speculate that the environment of twenty-first century America proffers unique problems that obscure "traditional regional culture," namely: "continuing and accelerating urbanization (or more accurately, metropolitanization), resurgent foreign and domestic migration, and expanding ethnic diversity" (Tillery et al. 2004:228). Although these factors may be presented in a different form in the twenty-first century than they were in previous periods; the simple fact of the way in which the United States was created allows for these types of complications. Based on the ebb and flow of language in the so-called American melting pot, urbanization, migration and diversity may be more a continuation of the norm in American society instead of a recent development or a minor deterrent to dialectology.

Social perceptions and Missouri dialects

Wilson argues that the perception of speakers influences attitudes about differences in speech, more than the dialects themselves, and she goes on to say that "language becomes the scapegoat for racist and classist stereotypes and biases" (2001: 34). Because language varieties offer rich information regarding social aspects of a society, research focused on dialectology is socially important; furthermore, because there are numerous factors that may influence language varieties, anthropological research of dialects is a complicated process. Based on this information, I estimated a high probability that perceptions of the focus dialect by other residents of Missouri would parallel Wilson's arguments about socioeconomic factors and social stereotypes and emphasize Frazer's assertion about language changes in urban centers.

In order to formally examine this possible relationship between dialects and speakers in Missouri, I focused on the following question: Is there a negative social perception of a dialect, which by its features may be considered rural Missourian, that exists on college campuses in Missouri? The sample for this study parallels the population in that the diversity on college campuses seems to control for a number of variables that other samples would not have been able to do. For example, the complexities of the current American dialectical environment mentioned by Tillery, Bailey and Wikle are relatively consistent among university campuses, whereas within a given career or vocation, diversity of background and linguistic exposure may be more limited.

Conclusion

The study of dialects is anthropologically important, because there is a dynamic relationship between dialects, including SAE, that helps establish identity on several levels, including individually and regionally. Here I examine the relationship between SAE and a common rural Missouri dialect. This study can be easily replicated in other regions for the same purpose of furthering our understanding of the impact of language variation and language standards on social perceptions of speakers.

Chapter 2: Background

Introduction

I organized this study as a way to gain information about possible negative perceptions of speakers who use the focus NSAE dialect. Negative perceptions of speech, as I observed while participants were filling out their questionnaires, can take the form of relatively innocuous joke-telling; however, through negative perceptions, it is also possible that "language becomes the scapegoat for racist and classist stereotypes and biases" (Wilson 2001: 34). Rosina Lippi-Green (1997:210) highlights the following anecdote, reported by a foreign language professor and a native of the South, as an example of language bias that severely affects speakers:

> I got an interview with an extremely elite undergraduate college in the northeast. They conducted the first substantial part of the interview in [another language] and it went well. When they switched to a question in English, my first answer completely interrupted the interview…they broke out laughing for quite a while. I asked what was wrong and they said they 'never would have expected' me to have such an accent. They made a big deal about me having a [prestigious accent in the second language] and such a strong Southern accent. Of course, I had been aiming for bland standard English. After that, I got a number of questions about

whether I'd 'be comfortable' at their institution. Subtle, but to me it was not ambiguous.

Negative perceptions of language variation are impediments to successful and effective communication; however, such language attitudes are not based solely on linguistic variations that listeners identify. Sapir and Whorf made ubiquitous the debate about the extent to which language and culture are inter-related, and many other researchers have focused on the same questions that Sapir and Whorf discussed.

James Milroy and Lesley Milroy (1997) suggest that language change may be more a result of sociopolitical influence than linguistic divergence, and language standardization is certainly similar. For instance, the perception that one speaker has of another speaker is typically based on an amalgamation of linguistic and social variables. Often times, when one of those speakers uses a socially stigmatized dialect, her interlocutor's perceptions will reflect not only negative attitudes about the dialect, but also negative attitudes about the speakers of that dialect (Wilson 2001). Some prejudices, as Marion Wilson (2001) notes, begin with one group being subverted in some way, whether it is due to assumptions about its members' intelligence, education or socioeconomic status; those social biases are then transferred to the language or dialect that that group of people speaks. The way in which a speaker is viewed by others and views other speakers is not simply an interesting topic of study. Attitudes toward language variation also reflect the interplay between language and culture, and in the United States, these attitudes may help explain the unrestrained social currency that the SAE dialect has been granted.

As a means of providing information about social influences on language and language attitudes that have offered motivation and explanation of this study, I include here discussions of: standardization and non-standard language, including the evolution of standard forms, the study of those forms, education of standard language, and the regional differences in the United States that have affected Missouri; the examination of language perception and research similar to this study; and speech in Missouri along with previous dialect research conducted in the state.

Standard and non-standard speech

According to Margaret Shaklee (1980:3), "we all speak a dialect, or, perhaps more accurately, we all speak a variety of dialects, determined by where we live (regional dialect), which social group we identify with (sociolect), and who we are talking to (style levels or 'dialects')." Individual speakers can switch between these dialect types with relative ease for reasons that Wilson (2001:33) elaborates: dialects, though their characteristics may differ to some degree, are all "rule-governed systems" that express uniqueness through "the phonological system, the vocabulary, the syntactic system" as well as in pragmatics and conversation. All of these types of dialects are stable linguistic systems, including the most prestigious of dialects, which is considered the standard.

Over the past two centuries perceptions of language varieties and modifications of standards have caused some disapproval. Labov (2001:10) mentions that Jakob Grimm, when he was documenting Germanic sound shifts, made his opinion clear "that such changes in the sounds of a language were destructive and unfavorable, and [he] referred

to them as 'barbarous aberrations from which other quieter nations refrained.'" Interestingly, Labov himself (2001:6) has much more recently stated that, although broadmindedness about non-standard language forms varies, he has "never yet met anyone who greeted [newer forms] with applause," which makes Grimm's approach more predictable.

Regardless of the dialect a speaker chooses to use, and regardless of the prestige associated with that dialect, "social pressures are continually operating upon language, not from some remote point in the past, but as an immanent social force acting in the living present" (Labov 1972:3); Grimm's displeasure was certainly influenced by social pressures of early 19th century Germany. In the United States, there was essentially no need for a single standardized form of American English in first half of the 19th century (Heath 1980). It was much more important at that time to depend on linguistic flexibility to help with information exchange in a still-developing country.

However, as Shirley Brice Heath points out, when a society chooses homogeneity over variety, the implication stands that one particular variety is preferred. In the case of the United States, there was a dramatic increase in the desire for cultural uniformity in the last half of the 19th century. Rapidly, cultural and linguistic unity became synonymous, and acquisition and usage of so-called proper grammar was seen as a means to a patriotically unified end. The result was that the United States as a national entity "had to view language as an instrument critical to national success as well as to individual knowledge and self-advancement" (1980:19); there were a number of "factors that contributed to a decision about the 'best' variety of language," not the least of which were "geography and social class" (Heath 1980:22-23). Gradually, what became known

as SAE morphed from a tool for cohesive communication to a symbol, and discourse about SAE incorporated moralistic notions about what a standard form should do for its speakers.

Causes for and reactions to language change in general have been ambitiously documented; however, the standard against which those forms are held remains ambiguous. Heath (1980) points out that, generally, symbols used for gaining social status or prestige merely need worshiping or adopting for adornment, where SAE, a symbol that is inconsistently defined at best, requires "near-constant demonstration" (1980:4). Unfortunately, demonstration is difficult, if, as Dennis Preston (1993) argues, SAE is an idealization that nobody actually speaks. Preston writes that if someone did speak it, no one else would recognize it, since it is not properly defined, and he goes on to point out that every region of the United States recognizes a distinct standard, and there is no single model for a single standard English.

To illustrate the degree to which SAE is amorphous and largely undefined, Lippi-Green (1997:55) documented some of the ways that people "who do not write dictionaries for a living" define SAE:

> *Standard English is…*
>
> Having your nouns and your verbs agree.
>
> The English legitimatized by wide usage and certified by expert consensus, as in a dictionary usage panel.
>
> What I learned in school, in Mrs. McDuffey's class, in Virginia, in the mid seventies. It really bothers me when I read and hear other people who obviously skipped her class.

The proper language my mother stressed from the time I was old enough to talk.

Although some of these definitions are peculiarly specific, they are all as unhelpful as the definitions that Lippi-Green found in a number of dictionaries.

There are attempts to define SAE, and there are protestations to the notion of any functional American language standard. However, with or without a concrete grasp of SAE or support for the standard, there are reports of its effects. Thomas Donahue writes that the influence of a standardized English in speech pathology, theatre and education demonstrates that "Americans have allowed a regional dialect to assume social-dialect importance, and have legislated language policies accordingly" (1993:50). Certainly the policies that Donahue mentions are focused on an inclusive concept of language varieties instead of their disconnected aspects. Nevertheless, in order to understand how participants view the importance of grammar as opposed to the importance of pronunciation in this study, it is essential to also understand how non-standard verb forms were molded.

Verb forms in English

English is part of a group of languages known as the Germanic languages. American English as it is spoken today is the result of continual modification of earlier Germanic languages that were spoken in what is now Britain. Old English (OE) developed into to Middle English (ME), which developed into Early Modern English (EModE) and then into contemporary variants of English. Over the past millennium,

there have been substantial changes to nearly every aspect of each successive daughter language, including morphology and orthography; verb forms are no exception.

Germanic languages are unique in their classification of verbs as "strong" or "weak," forms that can now be called "regular" and "irregular" (Baugh and Cable 1993:58). In OE, verbs were distinguished by the following forms of the strong verb:

1. the infinitive (which is also the present stem)
2. the first/third-person singular preterit indicative
3. the second-person singular and plural preterit
4. the past participle [Brinton and Arnovick 2006:206]

This system of four forms differs from Modern American English in that our preterite form does not have separate forms that depend on the pronominal subject. For example, the infinitive form *to drink* changes to the preterite form *drank* and the past participle form *drunk*, and the preterite form is used for first, second and third-person singular and plural. Albert Baugh and Thomas Cable (1993) observe that past tenses in strong verbs are indicated through a vowel change, such as with the verb *to drink*, above, and their example *to sing*, with its preterite *sang* and past participle *sung*.

Unlike strong verbs, the past tenses of weak verbs in OE were formed with the addition of a suffix (Baugh and Cable 1993). This characteristic is apparent in the verb *to walk*, with its preterite *walked* and past participle *walked*. Laurel Brinton and Leslie Arnovick (2006) note that for OE weak verbs, as with our Modern English verbs, there was one form for the singular and plural preterite.

Although the strong verb conjugation was predominant in OE, "the weak conjugation has come to be the dominant one in our language" (Baugh and Cable 1993:

60). Brinton and Arnovick (2006) point out that the separate preterite forms of the strong verbs gradually merged into a single form. As the language slowly changed to Middle English, variation appeared in the singular and plural preterite forms as well as the past participle, which indicated "the beginning of an analogical tendency to reduce the four-way vowel gradation to a three-way one" (Brinton and Arnovick 2006:281). After the reduction of strong verb forms, similar verb form shifts continued through the stages of English until, as Baugh and Cable (1993) write, some OE strong verbs were modified to weak verb conjugation, and the vast majority of new verbs were added with weak verb inflections. One reason for this shift is that weak verb conjugation of past tenses was more consistent than strong conjugation, which included much variety (Baugh and Cable 1993).

The gradual development of Modern American English from Old English altered verb form distinctions. Some, such as the verb *to bid,* appear identical in the preterite and past participle; in others, there is a vowel shift from present to past tenses, where the preterite and past participle maintain the same vowel, but there also exists a suffix that paralles weak verb forms, e.g. *break, broke, broken* (Baugh and Cable 1993). Speakers of the focus dialect interchange preterite and past participle forms. It is only because of the verbs that now have identical past tense forms that some verbs of the focus dialect sound like SAE verbs. For all other verbs, such as *to see, to drink,* and so on, speakers of the focus dialect display a combination of the past tenses of verbs that have maintained their strong verb conjugation. Among other things, linguists document and explain language change, such as the historical changes in English I have outlined here, but there are several views of language change and language varieties that often conflict.

Descriptive linguistics and prescriptive grammars

Beyond historical linguistics, two other approaches to language are important for this study. Descriptive linguistics serves to observe and record a given language. A descriptive linguistic understanding of the SAE dialect is that it stands alone not as a paradigm of proper American English, but only in the social phenomenon of prestige that speakers attach to it.

On the other hand, prescriptive grammarians tend to include the notion that some dialects are of lesser quality than others. Wilson (2001:33) enthusiastically argues that the idea "is patently false." She writes that dialects are simply different, not deficient systems of language," and Frazer (1993:3) calls such a hierarchical belief about standard and nonstandard speech "a sense of moral superiority."

For many people, prescriptive grammar is the most well known approach, and it is often associated with the grammar strictures of elementary school or the disparaging title "grammar Nazi." Heath's (1980) illustration of a critical diatribe against "bad" English from an 1829 publication of *The True English Grammar* is one example, in which the English grammarian, Fowler and his contemporaries, make clear their opinion that without intervention to improve grammar usage, languages will decay, and ultimately lead "to the deterioration of the nation itself" (1980:18).

Although this critiques were written over a century ago, it seems that similar perceptions of linguistic variation persist. For instance, undergraduate students in Wilson's classes over the past two decades or more have consistently aligned themselves with the view that there is one good and correct version of English while other variants are

unacceptable; they adhere to this view even though their own speech includes those other forms (Wilson 2001:32).

Historical perceptions of dialect diversity may be somewhat surprising in their overt condemnation of "improper" language use; however, what is truly unexpected is encountering perspectives that reflect a more descriptive point of view. Samuel Pegge, whose 1807 work on English dialects was distributed among American linguists, argued that "different dialects should not only be recorded, but also recognized for their value to native speakers" (Heath 1980:14). Later in the 19th century, another linguistic scholar paralleled Pegge's descriptive approach by saying: "It has been my constant endeavor to bear in mind the true position of the grammarian…he is simply a recorder and arranger of the usages of language, and in no manner or degree a lawgiver; hardly even an arbiter or critic" (Heath 1980:30).

Clearly, these authors promote the kind of objective viewpoint that Wilson never saw actualized in her classrooms.

Descriptive linguistics and prescriptive grammars are based on divergent approaches to language, but they both have a niche in the study of language. However, as I attempt to flesh out the reasons for bias against certain language varieties, prescriptive linguistics seems to be a source of negative attitudes to NSAE dialects such as the one I am interested in. Through analyzing what an idealized form of American English should be and then directing Americans to adopt that form over all others, laypeople and professionals alike who employ the tenets of prescriptive linguistics only encourage those misinformed perceptions that inhibit effective communication between NSAE speakers and individuals who identify themselves as SAE speakers. While

descriptive linguistics is typically used for research, prescriptive linguistics can be applied to any situation, and one environment that consistently prescribes rather than describes is the classroom.

Education

There is no doubt that language is a living and fluctuating creation of its speakers. Some Americans argue that, in the majority of American classrooms over the past one hundred fifty years, much of the uniqueness and richness of language has been reduced because it is not considered important, and discussions about the differences between standard and non-standard dialects raise "uncomfortable questions about power and control" (Wilson 2001:32). Wilson (2001) argues that since our language is living, and since it does vary over time and between regions, the issues of language standardization and linguistic variation must be included as part of the curriculum.

Over time, what became known as SAE has become indivisibly connected with the speech of individuals who were raised and educated in northern elite environments (Heath 1980). Even now, students are learning to value prestige dialects, and they associate SAE with moral and intellectual superiority (Wilson 2001), even though SAE and other idealized forms of language may simply be myths promoted by cultural hierarchies that only result in rampant linguistic insecurity (Wilson 2001). Instead, students are inundated with the negative associations of speakers and their vernaculars, a term that some variationists use to indicate "the most unselfconscious speech of the poorest, least educated, most isolated informants as a worthy object of study" (Johnson

2000:260). The issue of speakers and dialects, just as with speakers and multilingualism, is a complex one, and with an incomplete explanation comes continued intolerance.

The debate between proponents of a good or proper grammar imposed on speakers and a grammar that reflects language usage is still a significant issue. The concept of SAE is still considered the ideal form that American English should take; however, there are other views to consider. Wilson (2001) emphasizes the complexity of so-called errors in dialects. She asserts that these assumed inaccuracies are not right-wrong binaries, but a more intricate system of unique dialect rules that are applied in distinct speech communities. Heath (1980) illuminated the issue several decades ago by observing that there is often a perception that children who are not taught grammar will not learn to speak correctly, but it is acquisition of the prestige dialect, SAE, in such a scenario that is impossible without formal education.

When delving into the topic of language and education, it is easy to assume that there are only a few pressing variables to remember: dialectical flexibility should be discussed, ideal forms of language are simply ideals, and the issue of linguistic variation is more complex than a simple binary. However, that is allowing the mammoth assumption that all educations in the United States are of similar quality. Discrepancies in educational opportunities, according to Preston (1993), are abundant. Not only has there been a significant increase in the number of private schools, both secular and parochial, but there is also a problem with regulations of curricula in state funded schools. These inconsistencies suggest that universal education in the United States is not yet a reality.

Such occurrences in the educational system are interesting for this study, because the speakers, who are from rural areas, and listening participants, who may be from any envrionment, will potentially have had divergent experiences that shaped their perception of language usage. Wolfram and Christian (1980) noted that speakers of nonstandard dialects are aware that their verbal communication is different from societal norms. These speakers are conscious enough of their differences that they can perceive those disparitities on standardized tests, and they may even be at a disadvantage to speakers of more standard dialects. Most vividly, Wilson proposes that "kids from rural areas" are conscious of the fact that their way of speaking is not acceptable "in an academic community," and these students "tend to accept their linguistic 'failures' as sinners in the hands of an Angry Grammarian" (Wilson 2001:32). Speakers of the focus dialect may be the very kids that Wilson mentioned. They are associated with rural communities, and many in Missouri are also assumed to be more "southern" because of their speech. Missouri encompasses a liminal region between the North and the South that influences both speakers and listeners, and realizing the effects of the northern-southern culture clash in Missouri is essential for understanding perceptual differences of the focus dialect.

American North and South

Some Missourians may consider their southern counterparts to be culturally and linguistically challenged, while southern Missourians may view more northern speakers as snobbish. Dennis Preston (1993) explains this phenomenon by writing that though speakers of every region are able to identify more standardized varieties among their own

local speakers, there is no guarantee that any of the speakers would admit the likelihood of standard varieties in other regions. Such favoritism is an ideal example of group solidarity. As Ferguson and Gumperz (1960) point out:

> any group of speakers of language X which regards itself as a close social unit will tend to express its group solidarity by favoring those linguistic innovations which set it apart from other speakers of X who are not part of the group (quoted in Frazer 1993:14).

By favoring regional usage as a means of maintaining social cohesion, speakers are able to define their ingroup members and exclude all others. Regional dialects may be maintained in spite of the expected standard in order to easily establish speakers as legitimate members of a cohesive group; at times the advantages of speaking the regional dialect could outweigh any disadvantages of not switching to SAE.

Group solidarity is an issue for contemporary North-South distinctions. For example:

> Northerners still know that Southerners are a slow, [un-]healthy, racist, conservative, anti-intellectual, Protestant lot, and Southerners know that Northerners are Jewish and Catholic, quick, dishonest, and lead morally questionable lives (Preston 1993:24).

These cultural stereotypes carry over to perceptions of speech as language varieties are caricatured by speakers from other regions. Missourians stereotype and imitate each other now, but in the aftermath of the Civil War, which plagued the region long after the South surrendered, linguistic differences were a much more serious issue. Regional rivalry intensified considerably, and language was an important marker for social

identity. Where there existed some notion of separation between northern and southern and urban and rural dialects previous to the war, afterward, "the educated urban elite wanted to justify their differences from their 'country cousins' who spoke the idiom of the farm" (Heath 1980: 22). With an increase in consciousness about speech and a heightened awareness of language as a form of patriotism, the concept of language use after the Civil War became much more regimented and focused.

Differences between northern and southern characteristics are often paralleled to urban and rural characteristics, and for this study, all of these distinctions are significant. Census data shows that in 1860, 80% of Americans lived in rural communities of 2500 or less; however, after the second World War, migration to large cities commenced and has not declined. At the turn of the millennium, that 80% of American citizens were condensed into just 280 urban areas (Tillery, et al. 2004:229). While migration to metropolitan areas continues to be a dynamic process all over the United States, the movement of Southerners to Northern cities between the 1910s and the 1970s, and the more recent movement of Northerners to Southern cities in the last 25-30 years has profoundly affected the stability of cultural and linguistic groups. Regardless of shifts in North-South migration, there has not yet been a resurgence of migration to rural communities, which may indicate that the "dense pockets of diversity" among "vast expanses of ethnic homogeneity" that Frey, Abresch and Yeasting predict (Tillery, et al. 2004:241) include these unmodified rural areas.

Interactions between speakers of language varieties considered standard and non-standard influence numerous aspects of society. Some people react to language change or any modification to the as yet indefinable "standard" with repugnance, and some

people are more tolerant. Both of these positions are influential to how language changes, just as approaches to language change certainly formed the Modern English we use; both positions can affect how children approach various dialects; and both help speakers to identify themselves and others as part of a social network, whether it is North or South, rural or urban. Beyond understanding instances of language change and how those changes have been implemented, part of studying language includes taking various perceptions of speakers and listeners into consideration while simultaneously researching how dialect structures differ.

Dialect documentation and research

For linguists, "every native speaker produces utterances which are by their very nature grammatical," however, Lippi-Green (1997:16) also asserts that the message content of various language varieties may not be judged the same way. One primary focus for American linguists has been the exploration of dialect diversity, like the native speaker utterances Lippi-Green alluded to, that is exhibited through features of speech, particularly regions of the Northeast. Although attributes of a dialect may be relatively easily identified, regional characteristics may be more difficult, because regional boundaries are largely malleable and subjective. In order to account for the fact that "particular social factors which correlate with dialect diversity may range from simple geography to the complex notion of cultural identity," Walt Wolfram and Natalie Schilling-Estes (1998:2) propose that linguists concentrate on the idea that a dialect constitutes simply the "variety of a language typical of a given group of speakers."

Whether dialectologists focus on this type of inclusive classification of language varieties or Carver's more structured one, each study must be founded on what *variety* involves.

Lippi-Green (1997) outlines several features of language varieties that are essential to comprehend for successful dialectical research. It is established that "the parameters of linguistic variation are multidimensional" and Lippi-Green further delineates that, "in large-scale terms, these are social, stylistic, geographic, or temporal, and in any one case of active variation, more than one of these factors is probably at play" (1997:30). Speakers are inundated with these multidimensional parameters of influence; in addition, each speaker is confronted with a multitude of varieties to choose from. The choices a speaker makes with regard to language variety are not made haphazardly. The fact is that we, as speakers "exploit linguistic variation available to us in order to send a complex series of messages about ourselves and the way we position ourselves in the world we live in" (1997:30). Variety is chosen. The dialect, or language variety, whether through pressure or agency is selected, sometimes subconsciously, by each speaker for each speech event.

Since variety is chosen, there must be a value judgment made between one dialect and another in a given situation. For my study, the focus is on elements of grammar used in the SAE dialect and the focus NSAE dialect, and speakers who switch between these dialects often employ different grammar rules relative to the speech event and the dialect used. For studies like this one that assess listener perception of various dialects, there are two related concepts that must be identified: "what constitutes the rules of a grammar, and the violation of those rules… and the lack of relationship between some kinds of grammaticality and the inherent value, content, and purpose of the message contained in

the utterances" (Lippi-Green 1997:14). *Variety* does not determine the significance of an utterance. This study and so many others like it propose this very idea; Lippi-Green argues that in order for a listener to perceive that a speaker is different in some way, there must be a significant linguistic difference that may take the form of violated grammar rules; further, an utterance that violates a particular set of grammar rules does not inherently signify the absence of essential qualities of the message contained. All dialects, because they are rule-governed systems, are equally valid forms of communication, however, while the dialect that is chosen "cannot predict the effectiveness of the message… it can predict some of the social evaluation the listener brings to the message, and his or her willingness to listen" (Lippi-Green 1997:18). *Variety* may be assessed on a basis of its grammar; however, phonetic variation is also fundamental to differences between language varieties.

All speakers of one dialect do not use exactly the same pronunciation. Every variety of American English includes allophones, interchangeable sounds that are not distinct phonemes, and there are as many factors affecting individual phonetic variation as there are affecting dialect formation and choice. When laypeople equate "accentual" differences and "dialect" differences, they are discounting a whole spectrum of other linguistic variables that constitute a dialect. *Variety* includes issues of scale. For example, "two varieties of a single language are divided by *accent* when differences are restricted primarily to phonology." It is only when varieties "also differ in morphological structures, syntax, lexicon, and semantics, [that] they are different varieties, or dialects, of the same language" (Lippi-Green 1997:43). For people who are not researching the differences between dialects, the ways they are related, and the means by which speakers

of different dialects interact, Lippi-Green's distinctions may not be important, but for dialectical researchers, such as Dennis Preston, Howard Giles and Peter Powesland, and Elmer Atwood, these concepts are fundamental and intuitive.

Perceptual dialectologist Dennis Preston (1989:2) conceives of "perception" in two ways: "microlinguistically – i.e., how are linguistic categories (at any level) which demonstrate considerable variation processed at all?" and "macrolinguistically (ethnographically) – i.e., what are the ordinary speaker's understandings of language variation?" To assess these two facets of perception, Preston developed studies in which participants designate speech distinctions on a map. These mental maps are a visual representation of "one of the anecdotal commonplaces of the folk confusion of spatial and social facts in language" whereby "most respondents regard the speech of someone who lives a little farther down the road as dialectal, but never their own" (Preston 1989:51).

For example, Preston (1989) conducted one study of white college students in southern Indiana where participants indicated where "correct" English was spoken in the United States. Responses showed that participant perceptions of correct English included New English, the mid-Atlantic region, the upper Midwest, Colorado and the West Coast, whereas the least correct English was associate with the South. Preston mentions that the southern Indiana participants he surveyed responded particularly negative to the speech of their northern Kentucky neighbors. For Preston, such strong disapproval can be attributed to the participants' own linguistic insecurity; participants realize that their speech is similar to their neighbors, but they do not want to associate

their own speech with a variety deemed ungrammatical, so these participants have a negative perception of everything south of study site.

British linguists Howard Giles and Peter Powesland conducted a study in the United States in which they recorded "Mid-Western White speakers" and found that listeners were able to accurately identify which speakers were of high, middle and low status "from their tape[d] voices alone" (Giles and Powesland 1975:39). Giles and Powesland (1975) then expanded the study; they recorded college students telling fables, and then recorded the same students acting as though they were high status individuals. Listeners correctly categorized status of speakers in the recorded fables, but were misled by the affected speech of the "high status" speakers. From these studies, Giles and Powesland concluded that perception of speakers based solely on voice is generally accurate, but is not immune to guise.

Perceptual dialectology studies, such as those conducted by Preston and Giles and Powesland illustrate the complexity of listener perception, and they added to the corpus of dialect research that include Elmer Atwood's 1953 study of verb forms. Atwood's data, collected in *A Survey of Verb Forms in the Eastern United States,* includes detailed descriptions of how various verbs are formed and used on the East Coast. From his notes, it is apparent that Atwood observed verb form usage on the East Coast that parallels the focus NSAE dialect verb form usage in my study. For example:

> *To come*: preterite form is *came* – the preterite form was used by all classes within small perimeter around NYC; two thirds of speakers outside that perimeter use *come*

To see: preterite form is *seen* – found commonly in northern and western NY as well as in much of the mid-Atlantic region

To eat: two preterite form variants noticed in New England – *et* and *eat*

The verb *to go* was not included in Atwood's survey, so any similarity to the focus dialect is impossible to judge.

Atwood's study is influential to studies like the one I present here because of his documentation of various verb forms in given region. Although a similar verb form survey has yet to be completed for the Midwest, one would certainly be useful for my study. Giles and Powesland, as well as Preston, conducted surveys that are important for perceptual dialectology and this study because they deal directly with listeners' perceptions of speech variation. Although there are fewer dialectical studies for Missouri than there are for other regions of the country, the studies that have been conducted are especially beneficial.

Dialect documentation in Missouri

The so-called Midwestern dialect has a uniquely infamous and generalized history. The numerous overlapping layers in the middle of the country led researchers to assume that a Midwest dialect exists (Carver 1987). Whether or not there has ever been a cohesive and "unaccented" dialect for the Midwest, the popular notion of Generalized American gained a foothold. Although the geographic boundaries of General American were debated, the idea was that this dialect was displayed in the speech of Americans who did not speak Eastern or Southern American (Frazer 1993). Even after this

impression was corrected to overturn the idea that General American was the typical speech of the American Midwest, many people continued to view the interior of the country as a single linguistic unit. More perplexing still, was the "established popular belief" that this "uniform Midwestern dialect" was a standard to which other dialects should be held (Frazer 1993:2); in fact, as Frazer (1993) writes, anecdotal evidence suggests that General American, the Midwest dialect and SAE are all synonymous.

A simplistic taxonomy for linguistic regions of the Midwest is not acceptable in Timothy Frazer's view, and neither are efforts to categorize the lower Midwest into a single unit, because they "fail to grasp the complexity of this region where every county may have its own internal linguistic geography" (1993:12). Among the distinctive subdialect areas, the borderlands between "Midwest" and "Southern" speech are significant for their overlapping phonetic and lexical features of Missouri.

In attempt to categorize variations in Missouri speech, Donald Lance and Rachel Faries (1997) discuss migration into Missouri and the resulting linguistic influences at length in their article on the state's regional vocabulary. They observe that from the beginning to the middle of the 19th century, the majority of migrants to Missouri were from southern states, including Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginian and North Carolina. After the Civil War, and continuing through the last half of the 19th century, Southerners were reluctant to move into Missouri because of the "test oath," which identified citizens who had supported the Confederacy; therefore, new Missouri inhabitants were primarily northern migrants, from areas of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York.

As her 1967 dissertation project, Rachel Faries (Lance and Faries 1997) expanded ideas about migrations into Missouri and examined, by county, the history and varieties

of the Missouri lexicon along with settlement patterns of the state (Lance and Faries, 1997). While much of her analyses were only partially conclusive, Lance and Faries were able to determine areas of general Northern influence and general Southern influence, and their conclusions are broadly aligned with the idea that Southern linguistic features spread into Missouri from states that Lance and Faries consider Southern, like Tennessee and Kentucky.

Lance and Faries' (1997) initial data analysis implied that regional division of the state was largely impossible, but further consideration illustrated some patterns. In particular, they found that terms 204 terms were borrowed from northern states, which constituted the greatest number of borrowed words, but the 193 terms imported from southern states were used more frequently; participants used northern terms 17,082 times and southern terms 22,245 times. Lance and Faries also determined that northern terms were used primarily in the northern and western counties of Missouri, as well as in areas of Germanic immigration, while southern terms used primarily in Ozark Highlands, the southeast, and in counties along the Missouri river. In general, terms associated with northern speech were used in the northwest part of state, and terms associated with southern speech were used in the southeast part of state. Further, comments made to Lance and Faries during their studies, indicate that outsiders view "Missouri residents whose families have lived in the state for several generations" as sounding more southern than northern (Lance and Faries 1997:380). Studies like the ones conducted by Lance and Faries are beneficial to understanding dialect patterns of Missouri, but they are focused on lexical differences and do not include verb form variations. While there is a

dearth of dialectical studies of Missouri verb form variations, or grammar variations in general, there does exist some anecdotal records of observed speech patterns.

Outside the realm of systematic research, Vance Randolph and George Wilson recorded their observations of the unique formation of Ozark verbs. Randolph writes that "not only in the hillman's vocabulary and pronunciation, but also in the grammatical peculiarities of his dialect, the survivals of an older English usage are apparent and striking" (1953:79). The Hillman, as Randolph (1953:79) called Ozarkians, usually says rid instead of rode; while this verb usage sounds unique, Randolph recalls that George Washington wrote in his diary "I rid to Muddy Hole plantation." Because of the verbal varieties maintained in Ozark speech, cityfolk are typically taken somewhat aback; the primary difference that is plain to outsiders is "the hillman's confusion in the tense forms of the verbs"; the same interchanging of past participle and preterite, Randolph argues, is found in many celebrated works of 18th century England (1953).

The general tenet of verbal variation in the Missouri Ozarks is a conflation of "all distinction between preterites and past participles in irregular verbs"; furthermore, "when the two forms differ they are often used interchangeably" (Randolph and Wilson 1953:40). According to Randolph (1953), past tense forms of the verb *to see* are very commonly interchanged; not only is *seen* often substituted for *saw*, but sometimes speakers combined the two verbs into the neologism *sawn*. Another Ozark variant is with the verb *to eat*, where the past participle is pronounced like the preterite *ate*. As Randolph (1953:74) states, this verbal usage is not sub-standard. In fact, it is an example of "good English" that dates back to 1300, and this same form was used by canonized authors, such as Austen, Coleridge, and Shakespeare, along with a host of others.

Randolph and Wilson's observations do not constitute dialectical research, however, they are helpful in identifying Missouri dialects that some Americans react negatively to. Randolph and Wilson's remarks on Missouri speech, along with Lance and Faries' studies, present a small corpus of work that is valuable to the construction and implementation of my study.

Conclusion

Because of issues of standardization, the history of American English verb forms, and various social phenomena, American dialects have developed into a means by which speakers identify themselves and others. Although American dialects have been fostered in some areas, they have also been purposefully modified in others. While some speakers of American English switch between registers, sociolects and regional dialects of their own volition, other speakers are hedged into using particular linguistic varieties because of repercussions that accompany the use of stigmatized dialects. The focus dialect of rural southern Missouri, including the Ozarks, is one example of a linguistic variety that is largely unaccepted as educated or cultured speech.

The process of attaching social prestige to one dialect over another is an interesting area for continued research, because the decision reflects a larger social hierarchy. Dialectologists have focused on issues of listener perception and language variation in the United States for decades, and results of their studies have yielded much information regarding grammatical, lexical and phonetic variation in different regions of the country as well as perceptions of these variations. Many of these studies have

emphasized the reoccurring phenomenon a single dialect being given precedence over others, which has significant effect on speakers. Language is an indispensible attribute of human society, and the way language is used signifies numerous qualities of each speaker. In order to fully understand the relationship between culture and language in the United States, it is imperative to fully explore past perceptions as well as contemporary approaches to linguistic diversity and apply them to current research.

Chapter 3: Research Questions

Initial Hypotheses and Reasoning

Several years of personal observation, gained as a student, of Southwest Missouri speech and reactions to it led me to the initial conclusion that interactions between southern rural Missouri speakers and their more northern or urban Missouri counterparts resulted in a negative perception of the rural Southwest Missouri speaker by the northerners and urbanites. My initial conclusions were based on qualitative data: responses to Southwest Missouri speech included a perception of lower intelligence and lack of education associated with speakers from this region. Beyond phonetic variation from the SAE dialect, I also noted a particular verb form variation: the consistent swapping of past participle and preterite forms. In order to quantitatively examine responses to the linguistic variation I noticed and to test the extent to which this variation is used, I based this project on a series of hypotheses that could be statistically measured.

Hypothesis 1: Spoken NSAE will be viewed more favorably than written NSAE

The three primary modes of human communication include gesturing, such as is used in sign languages, speaking and writing. For the purposes of this discussion, the

latter two are of primary interest. There are two problems for me in analyzing the differences in perception between spoken and written language. The first is that some speakers associate variation in spoken language with an "us" versus "them" ideology in which individuals use their interlocutors' speech to ascertain whether that speaker is an insider or an outsider. In this case, spoken language is more important for establishing identity than writing, and listeners may be more aware of differences in speech. The second problem is that some speakers view accepted written forms of language as the model that speakers should use for everyday spoken language; in this case, listeners may view variation from the written model as improper. Below I discuss both perspectives, because both are important for understanding the reason for my hypothesis.

'Us' versus 'them'

Fully developed human language is considered to be contemporaneous with Anatomically Modern Homo Sapiens at one hundred thousand years before present (Boyd and Silk 2000) based on anatomical developments of the pharynx and brain that indicate a physiological capacity for language. This widely accepted premise that human ancestors were capable of spoken communication at such an early date is evidence to the fact that speaking has been the longest-held means of human communication. However, the early capacity for language also supports the idea that speech is an essential tool for cooperation.

Both early foraging groups and more contemporary social networks of varying sizes must consider the amount of valuable resources that are necessary for survival, and these resources must be reserved for members of that group. In order to reduce the

expenditure of limited essential resources on outsiders – those individuals who do not reciprocate goods or services – groups must have a means of determining insider identity. Speech is one way to identify reciprocating individuals. Daniel Nettle reiterates this idea when he contends that sounding like those individuals with whom one wishes to cooperate, and cooperating with those same individuals "is likely to be evolutionarily stable over a much wider range of circumstances than a 'cooperate with anyone' strategy" (1999:222). Jane Hill (1996) also points out that in most cultures, speakers are allowed the possibility of claiming resources based on a particular way of speaking. Hill emphasizes the importance of spoken language homogeneity for communities with strong ties and observes that tight-knit communities will neither express nor accept considerable innovation in speech for the primary purpose of limiting wasted or unreciprocated resources.

Speech is an adequate marker for cooperation between individuals or groups of people, and speech helps to create identity. After all, as John McWhorter (2003:23) points out, "oral language lives not to please language mavens or our sense of linguistic feng shi, but to communicate, to maintain social ties, to live life from mundane moment to moment." However, speech is also highly malleable and therefore may be an imprecise tool for judging a speaker's adherence to more standardized language norms. Although individuals consistently judge others on their abilities with verbal communication, many speakers find it difficult to understand the full impact of writing on perceptions of and changes made to spoken language.

Writing as a model

Comparing the social activity of spoken language with writing, "William Labov…ventured that the written style is 'turgid, bombastic and empty' compared to the vividness of spontaneous utterances" (McWhorter 2003:24). Certainly spoken forms of communication are consistently in a fluctuating state of innovation and modification (Milroy and Milroy 1985), but many American English speakers do not find those fluctuations or innovations as invigorating as Labov did.

Spoken communication has a long history, and speakers continually converse throughout the day in different registers, with inaccurate reproduction and without knowledge or care about variation. Writing, on the other hand, has historically been most often reserved for more formal affairs; writing has only existed for approximately the past five to six thousand years (Salzmann 2004) and was initially reserved for the few and respected literate members of a community. Because of the relatively recent history of writing, and because widespread literacy is also a relatively recent phenomenon compared with speaking abilities, the language used in writing often diverges from that of spoken communication. This point is substantiated by James Milroy and Lesley Milroy, who point out that "there is much greater variability in speech than there is in written language" (1985:54). Written language is less variable precisely because it can be more standardized; words recorded on paper are governed by more universal criteria and can be corrected to match language norms. The impact of writing on speech, then, is illustrated through the idea that there is a circular pattern that has emerged between the two communication forms: linguistic variation is recorded and standardized through

writing; the intolerance for variation typically noted in writing is then re-applied, to some extent, to speech (Milroy and Milroy 1985).

As members of contemporary western society, where literacy is emphasized and even required for social success, the majority of Americans are instructed about the mechanics of writing before we fully understand the intricacies of our spoken native language, which leads us to "process speech as an oral rendition of the 'real' language on the page" (McWhorter 2003:3). Milroy and Milroy (1985:61) also reiterate this point: "handbook prescriptions on 'correct' English (which influences our attitudes to usage) are concerned primarily with correct *written* English," and spoken variants are judged according to the prescriptions of their written counterparts. Given their educational background, the literate majority of the United States may very well tend to visualize the written form of every word as it is uttered (Milroy and Milroy 2003).

There is heavy emphasis on the structured written language as the prestige form in western society. Even though variations of verbal communication can help identify a speaker as an insider or outsider, when directly compared to written communication, spoken forms will be considered as more flexible. The purposes of speech prescribe economy over the elaboration found in writing (Preston 2001); the necessities of economy, efficiency and maintenance of social ties explains differences between speech and writing, but the prestige that writing is given over speech will lead to more acceptance for variation in speech than in writing.

Based on the history of speech and writing, the social functions of speech, and the role written language plays as a tool by which listeners judge spoken communication, I formed this first hypothesis and expect that participants in this study will judge non-

standard variation in written language more harshly than in verbal utterances. If hypothesis 1 is true, then I expect to find that participants will be more critical of the focus dialect in the written texts than in the spoken texts, regardless of the same verb form variants being used for both written and spoken texts.

Hypothesis 2: Verb forms of the NSAE dialect will be less significant in perceptions of intelligence than the speakers' pronunciation.

Speech is a spontaneous social action. Regardless of register, the impromptu nature of spoken communication allows for significant lexical variation in one speaker's speech between different conversations. Phonetic research further indicates that no two utterances of a single word by the same speaker are ever exactly alike (Milroy and Milroy 1997:48). Certainly listeners are aware of significantly divergent "accents," but untrained listeners cannot possibly be aware of the minute differences the Milroys mention. One question, then, is: where is the line of demarcation for assessing whether or not a particular form of spoken language is within the limits of language norms? In order to answer this question, my research is centered on two primary loci of dialectical variation: grammatical and phonetic.

With regard to grammatical variation, my study is focused on the usage of preterite and past participle verb forms. What is typically considered SAE verb formation would categorize a phrase such as *I saw that* as past tense or preterite and a phrase like *I have seen that* or *I had seen that* as present or past perfective, respectively (Renaat 2006:96-97), whereas the focus dialect consistently switches these forms. Strict

adherents to SAE view variants as constituting "bad English," but for speakers in southwest Missouri, *I seen that* and *I have saw that* or *I had saw that* are acceptable manners of sentence construction. Using Renaat's terminology, speakers of the focus dialect consistently use the auxiliary verb from perfective tenses with a participle from the preterite tense; these speakers may also use a participle in the perfective tense without its auxiliary. Because the verb *to live* has a regular past tense, or preterite form, interchanging the forms does not result in any noticeable difference, but for a verb such as *to eat*, the difference becomes clear. Where SAE prescribes *I ate* for the preterite form and *I have eaten* or *I had eaten* for the present and past perfective forms, speakers of this dialect will say *I have ate* or *I had ate*.

The verbal variances that differentiate the focus dialect from the SAE dialect can be explained or justified from two distinct points of view. From a more linguistic perspective, "non-standard varieties, when compared with the standard, have a compulsion to simplify (to eliminate differences such as *saw* (past tense) v. *seen* (past participle)) and regularize" in such a way that the message contained in the communication is much more plain (Milroy and Milroy 1985:83). Linguistically, it is perhaps much more efficient for speakers of this and other dialects categorized as non-standard to standardize their own grammatical variation in order to communicate clearly with greater efficacy. As Milroy and Milroy emphasize, transparency is the issue here. However, with irregular verbs, where the past participle and preterite forms are substantially different, neither verb is eliminated from the dialect. The inclusion, then, of both *I seen* and *I've saw* do not lend to increased efficiency of communication. Another

possibility is the more anthropological perspective I mentioned earlier: language helps to construct "and maintain social identity and social boundaries" (Nettle 1999:221).

Certainly, both phonetic and grammatical aspects of language will affect the perceptions of speakers. However, not all listeners may be as tuned into grammatical differences of spoken English as they are to phonetic differences because of contractions and assimilations made in full-speed spoken language. These qualities of spoken language may emphasize the ease with which listeners can make out differences in pronunciation while decreasing listeners' ability to identify NSAE verb forms.

In order to assess whether participants react more negatively to phonetic or grammatical variables, I recorded two male speakers of the focus dialect reading both SAE and NSAE texts as naturally as possible. If hypothesis 2 is correct, I expect to find that participants will respond that the speaker who tends to 'overpronounce' the dialect is less intelligent than the speaker whose pronunciation is not as stereotypically 'rural' (I offer more information about the speakers and the texts in the next chapter).

Hypothesis 3: Urban-oriented participants react less favorably to NSAE than rural-oriented participants.

Based on my observations of a bias against the focus dialect originating from non-rural areas such as the small city of Columbia, I wanted to assess whether listeners more closely associated with an urban environment, a term I use here to convey the idea of a metropolitan arena as opposed to an inner-city environment, perceive the focus dialect more negatively than listeners more closely associated with a rural environment. My

observations certainly influenced my formulation of this hypothesis, but there are also other attributes of the urban-rural dynamic that led me to this proposition.

According to Frazer (1993), sound changes originate in urban centers. Since larger cities are typically centers of financial progress stemming from large businesses and trade, and because urban areas are stereotyped as the focus of high culture or high education, it is possible that the majority of linguistic modifications made in urban centers will be maintained and expanded as an addition to the Standard. Setha Low points out that "the city is viewed as made up of adjacent ecological niches occupied by human groups in a series of concentric rings surrounding a central core;" nearly every aspect of life, from socioeconomic status to worldview is directly related to an individual's location within or around the core (1996:385). Rural areas, therefore, because of their distance from newer linguistic changes as well as the city center, can easily be considered as distanced from social and linguistic prestige.

Though not all cities are international ports of economic and business advancement, many share attributes with the largest of urban areas. For instance, Low defines a "world city" as one that "articulate[s] local economies in a global economy," has "intense economic and social interaction," is "hierarchically arranged within the world system order" and in itself "constitute[s] a social class – the transnational capitalist class" (1996:393). With such intense focus on social stratification and economic interests that combine local and global interests, there is little doubt that the metaphorical "core" of urban environments affects language, along with many other aspects of life, in an active and dynamic fashion. For the United States in particular, society is based on acquisition of information (Low 1996). Whether from the standpoint of small cities and

the introduction of new technology or large cities and attaining influential global resources, information is essential for success. For such societies as ours, "control over knowledge and information decides who holds power in society" (Low 1996:394), and power in society is not only indelibly linked with economic and social forces, but also with linguistic and cultural pressures.

High culture also tends to grow from urban centers, where there is influence from the media, educational institutions and sundry subcultures (Low 1996), and urban areas offer an ideal environment for models of so-called proper language usage that will become the benchmark against which other varieties are measured. However, it is certainly not the case that every variety of English spoken in urban centers will be equally prestigious. For example, Labov associates the term "speech community" with "a locus in which speakers agree on the social meanings and evaluations of the variations used" (Milroy and Milroy 1997:51). In a speech community centered on an urban environment, speakers will evaluate the multitude of linguistic variants they encounter in a similar way to Labov's observation. Often, at the point when stigmatized non-standard language usage is encountered in one of these environments, the common assumption is that the persistence of such language forms stems from "ignorance, incompetence or even cognitive deficiency on the part of speakers" who are consequently "thought to be either perversely unwilling or mentally incapable of acquiring the 'superior' norms of 'correct' English" (Milroy and Milroy 1985:80-81). Verb forms, particularly, are common features of language that undergo variation that may be judged as significant, such as the "so-called misuses of verb-forms, as in *I does, I seen it*, [which] are particularly salient features of non-standard English"; however, such variants may indicate social, class or

regional differences rather than substantial linguistic differentiation that would alter the semantic structure of a given phrase (1985:83). Language variability is a dynamic process, as is the morphing of social restraints that mold it. However, it seems that while the model held as the finest may vary along with social dogma, the influence of urban dialects on their rural counterparts will likely be much more fixed.

Urban centers are a central driving force for prestigious linguistic variation and language standardization, so it is my proposition that those participants who are connected with urban environments will demonstrate stigmatization of dialects considered less prestigious than what is commonly used in those urban areas. Alternatively, participants associated with more rural environments will be more familiar with the focus dialect and will be less likely to considered it a stigmatized variety. If hypothesis 3 is correct, those participants who indicate on the demographic form that they are more comfortable in an urban environment will respond more negatively to the focus dialect, while the participants who indicate they are more comfortable in rural environments will not be as critical of the focus dialect.

Hypothesis 4: Native Missouri participants will react more favorably to NSAE than non-Missouri-native participants ($MoP_{ns} > nMoP_{ns}$).

The argument that urban environments play a significant role in determining which language varieties are prestigious is closely intertwined with reality that different regions of the country acknowledge their own versions of SAE. Major urban areas of the American Deep South will undoubtedly have a slightly different conception of the Standard dialect than will those of either coast; however, I think that in each region,

general differences between urban and rural environments with regard to prestige will remain relatively stable. What I am interested in, then, is whether participants who are not from Missouri are more or less accepting of non-standard language forms that I think are associated with rural Missouri. Participants who are not from Missouri potentially have limited contact with people who use the non-standard verb forms of the focus dialect relative to participants from Missouri; non-native participants, therefore, may be more critical of unfamiliar non-standard forms – the same language variants that native Missourians can simply attribute to regional differences in the state.

While I do not expect a causal relationship, this hypothesis is closely connected to the urban-rural hypothesis in that both are based on the notion that arguments against language variation have much less to do with grammaticalness of speech, and much more to do with the "notion of *acceptability*," where non-standard forms are merely indicative of stereotyped informal speech or lower social class (Milroy and Milroy 1985:80). The speech community Labov defines is just as relevant for a discussion of regional biases as it is for biases based on environment. So, for urbanites and non-Missouri-natives, perception of the focus dialect may revolve around the idea that there are significant problems with the dialect, when the reality of the situation illuminates the much more straightforward issue of social approval. If hypothesis 4 is true, then I expect to find that participants who indicate on the demographic form that they were raised in Missouri will not be as critical of the focus dialect as those participants who indicate that they were not raised in Missouri.

Hypothesis 5: Female participants will react less favorably to NSAE than male participants.

The final hypothesis for this study has also been formulated in the interest of considering all influences on dialect perception and the reasons for preference of the SAE dialect over the focus dialect, and sex of the speaker must be acknowledged as an influential variable in a listener's acceptance of language variation. Although multiple genders undoubtedly play a role in the approval or rejection of language varieties, this study must first consider the effects of basic linguistic and social variables, which necessitates a focus on simple male-female distinctions. Along with socioeconomic status, the difference between male and female approaches to language is one of the most significant sociolinguistic issues to consider. Similarly, anthropological research often finds considerable differences between females and males not only in subtle sexual dimorphism, but also in social roles associated with both sexes.

My supposition that females will be more critical of non-standard language forms is certainly not unique; it is a widely accepted theory in linguistic research that females initiate language change and use more standardized language varieties. However, it is the social mechanism driving this conclusion, instead of establishing that there is a difference, that is my focus for this project.

From a linguistic perspective, females have typically been significantly more aware of SAE in particular, and they have been more interested in maintaining language standardization in general. Labov offers a focused look at this very phenomenon in his book, *Principles of Linguistic Change: Social Factors* (2001). Labov finds that "women have been found to be in advance of men in most of the linguistic changes in progress

studied by quantitative means in the past several decades" (2001:280). It is important to note, however, that the changes women foster are not variants considered sub-standard; according to Labov, not only do women tend to acquire and practice more prestige variants than men, but they also lead in eradicating stigmatized variations.

While many scholars cite a biological difference in the linguistic abilities of women and men, Labov counters "that women's linguistic conformity is primarily a social, not a biological, phenomenon" (Labov 2001:277). The relatively minimal sexual dimorphism humans display may very well extend to linguistic tendencies; however, Labov's argument is essential, and the integration of biological and social factors must not be diminished. Labov is not the only scholar who has investigated the social and physiological factors that result in consistent data that support this hypothesis. The fact is, many reasons for females tending toward standard variants have been postulated, but the source of the consistent pattern of males' tendency to use vernacular language and females' affinity for standard language is still debated. If hypothesis 5 is true, then I expect that participants who indicated on the demographic form that they are female will tend to respond more negatively to the focus dialect, while participants who responded they are male will be less critical of this NSAE dialect.

Conclusion

Daily conversations present significant amounts of information about a speaker's likely regional and social associations and their propensity to include certain phonetic and grammatical aspects of language. In fact, Daniel Nettle (1999: 220) proposes that in

order to "unleash a stereotyped social evaluation" only "a single socially charged dialectical variable produced in forty seconds of continued speech" is generally needed. Clearly, it takes little time for listeners to form an opinion about a speaker. However, in order to understand the reasons for a listener's opinions of a speaker, it is important for me to identify the differences between speaker and listener with regard to: sex, association with region where I first heard the focus dialect, comfortableness with urban or rural environments, awareness of verb form variations as opposed to phonetic differences, and propensity for lenience given to spoken language. In addition, it is important for me to calculate the degree to which these differences correlate. Based on the data I gathered that are relevant to the hypotheses I outlined in this chapter, I hope to be able to explore and articulate what socially derived aspects of language variation from the SAE dialect lead to negative perceptions of the non-SAE dialect I focus on in this study.

Chapter 4: Methods

Introduction

This study is an extension of a pilot study conducted over the fall semester of 2006. The primary interest of both the pilot study and this thesis is whether or not there exists a significant difference in the perception of SAE compared to the perception of the focus dialect. I devised a survey study and conducted that study in several introductory anthropology classrooms at universities in Missouri. I chose the sample population of undergraduate students because of their relatively uniform age and level of education, and because I anticipated that their varied interests and backgrounds would yield data that accurately represented the opinions of the larger Missouri population.

Pilot study

I conducted the pilot study at the University of Missouri-Columbia, where I surveyed three introductory classes in the anthropology department. This initial study consisted of five instruments: a written consent form, two score sheets, typed texts and a demographic form. I recorded two speakers, whose native vernacular is the focus dialect,

reading a series of twelve texts that I prepared; these texts included both SAE and NSAE verb forms. I also prepared eight typed texts using both SAE and NSAE verb forms. I randomly assorted the recordings and the written texts and delivered the survey to 281 participants.

Participation was accepted on a volunteer basis. Participants were asked to listen to a series of recorded texts and indicate on the first score sheet whether or not they thought the speaker was intelligent. Participants were then asked to read a series of typed texts and indicate on the second score sheet whether or not they thought the author was intelligent. Finally, participants were asked to provide supplementary information about their sex, nativity, comfortableness in urban or rural environments and previous linguistic training.

The pilot study was successful in that participation and interest in the study was high. Many participants seemed confused by the format of the score sheets, and some participants included comments about being hesitant to judge the intelligence of a speaker or author with so little information about them. In order to elicit more helpful responses that could be used for statistical analysis of my hypotheses, I reworked the texts and instruments and ran the study again on a larger scale.

Thesis study

The expanded study was conducted at three universities in Missouri: Truman State University in Kirksville, University of Missouri-Columbia, and Missouri State University-Springfield. I chose these three universities because they are located,

respectively, in the northern, central and southern regions of the state (Figure 4.1), which would give me a more representative sample of the Missouri population than the University of Missouri-Columbia on its own.

Figure 4.1: Map of Missouri - includes the locations of the three test sites: Kirksville in the north, Columbia near the center, and Springfield in the south (Thomas Brinkoff, 2008).

I presented participants with five instruments: a permission form (Appendix 1.1), two score sheets (Appendix 1.2), typed texts (Appendix 1.4) and a demographic form (Appendix 1.3). For this study, I recorded the same two speakers that I used for the pilot study reading; they each read a series of four texts that I prepared using equally distributed SAE and NSAE verb forms. I also prepared eight typed texts with the same number of equally distributed SAE and NSAE verb forms. I arranged both spoken and written texts in a random order and asked that participants indicate on the score sheets

whether or not they thought the speakers and author were educated and intelligent and whether the speakers and author were from an urban or rural environment. Finally, I requested that participants provide some demographic information.

Sample population

The University of Missouri-Columbia is situated on the I-70 corridor between Kansas City and St. Louis, and many students from both of those cities attend UMC. Missouri State University-Springfield is the largest university in the southern half of the state; MSU draws students from many of the rural areas that surround Springfield. Truman State University attracts students from the northern part of Missouri because of its location in Kirksville. In addition, the university advertises itself as the Harvard of the Midwest; because Truman has a reputation as an academically rigorous university, students from all regions of the state matriculate there. I chose these universities because they attract different students and are, therefore, composed of unique students bodies.

One impetus for this study is the dichotomy, if one exists, between an urbanite's and a rural person's perception of speakers; therefore, I asked each participant to indicate on the demographic information sheet where they were born, where they were raised and whether they were more comfortable in an urban or rural environment. My proposition was that urbanites would tend to be more discriminatory against NSAE as well as exhibiting higher instances of SAE conformity, whereas rural participants would exhibit more tolerance for speech that is divergent from SAE. While I anticipated that preference for a certain environment over others would parallel the participant's hometown to some degree, there are ultimately complicating factors. First, while

participants may have grown up in one environment, they could still prefer another; the concepts of environmental preference and hometown environment are not uniform. Second, many participants indicated that they were raised in multiple cities. Based solely on the population of each area, they may be categorized as the same type of environment, while participants could easily view one "hometown" as more rural and another as more urban, which, combined with complicating issues of preference could negate the correlation between hometown environment and preferred environment entirely. Third, as the previous two factors have alluded to, considering oneself or one's hometown as "urban" or "rural" is a subjective and relative concept; these terms constitute varying associations and mental images, potentially for each participant. I intentionally did not define the terms "rural" or "urban" in the study, because of the fact that these classifications are based on emic cultural perspectives. Any attempt on my part to define "rural," "urban" or any other categorical term would only be imposing my own emic concepts onto the participants and the study itself.

I could not easily access each participants' conceptual definition of urban and rural environments through the questionnaires in this study; therefore I used the question regarding which environment participants are most comfortable in as a proxy for attitudes toward language variation and stridency in maintaining SAE. Although I mentioned above that population is certainly not the only consideration participants may rely on when identifying an area as rural or urban, it is the only means that I have for creating some type of categorical system that may explain some of the responses I collected. Solely for the purposes of discussing demographic information of my sample in this document, I will use census definitions. According to the Geographic Areas Reference

Manual (1994:12-1), an urbanized area (UA) is defined as a densely populated region with at least 50,000 inhabitants. An "urban place outside of an urban area" (UP) is compromised of a population between 2,500 and 50,000, and a rural place (RP) has a population fewer than 2,500.

At UMC, I collected data from 112 individuals (Table 4.1). On the demographic form, participants identified themselves as follows: 63% were female; 55% were freshmen; 65% were born in Missouri; 73% were raised in Missouri; 17% preferred a rural environment; and 67% had no linguistic training.

University of Missouri-Columbia, ∑ 112					
Sex	**Class**	**Born in MO**	**Raised in MO**	**Preferred Environment**	**Linguistic Training**
71 females	62 freshmen	38 no	29 no	27 urban	77 no
40 males	26 sophomores	73 yes	82 yes	19 rural	34 yes
1 n/a	17 juniors	1 n/a	1 n/a	57 either	1 n/a
	6 seniors			9 n/a	
	1 n/a				

Table 4.1: demographic data collected from participants at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Those participants who indicated that they were raised in Missouri were asked to include their hometown (Table 4.2). Based on U.S. Census Bureau designations and participant-provided information, 9% of participants were from RPs, 39% were from UPs and 61% were from UAs; participants who chose not to answer accounted for less than 1% of the group total.

Hometown Populations, UMC			
271	Brashear	20,862	Sedalia
332	Foristell	22,494	Webster Groves
960	Hallsville	26,818	Kirkwood
1,134	Edina	30,121	Ballwin(2)
1,343	Brunswick	34,344	Wildwood
1,421	Paris	37,156	Cape Girardeau
2,176	Kahoka	40,564	Jefferson City (5)
2,493	Monroe City	46,272	Chesterfield
3,282	Knob Knoster	50,919	Florissant
3,796	Waynesville	55,031	Blue Springs(2)
4,350	Vandalia	55,092	St. Peters
4,444	St. Genevieve (2)	63,644	St. Charles (4)
8,752	Boonville	74,976	O'Fallon (4)
11,223	Festus	99,174	Columbia (10)
11,662	West Plains	110,704	Independence (3)
11,722	Troy	154,777	Springfield
13,514	Jackson	350,759	STL (18)
14,093	Moberly	450,375	KC (8)
14,139	Lebanon		n/a (2)
17,139	Kirksville		

Table 4.2: Population of each city or town listed by participants at UMC who were raised in Missouri as the area they grew up in. NOTE: multiple towns or cities listed by participants included separately in table; cities or towns listed by multiple participants designated with a parenthetical number of participants claiming that area.

At MSU, I collected data from 44 individuals (Table 4.3). They identified themselves as 66% female and16% freshmen. Of the group, 60% were born in Missouri, 61% were raised in Missouri, 18% felt most comfortable in rural environments, and 57% had no linguistic training.

Missouri State University-Springfield, ∑ 44					
Sex	**Class**	**Born in MO**	**Raised in MO**	**Preferred Environment**	**Linguistic Training**
29 females 13 males 2 n/a	7 freshmen 11 sophomores 12 juniors 10 seniors 2 other 2 n/a	16 no 26 yes 2 n/a	15 no 27 yes 2 n/a	12 urban 8 rural 20 either 4 n/a	25 no 17 yes 2 n/a

Table 4.3: demographic data collected from participants at Missouri State University-Springfield.

Of the native-Missouri MSU group (Table 4.4), 17% were from RPs, 45% were from UPs, and 28% were from UAs; 10% chose not to answer.

MSU	
250	Theodosia
254	Cowgill
746	Reeds Spring
1,041	Stover
1,398	Fair Grove
3,354	Willard
4,305	Fenton
7,499	Branson
8,318	Nevada
11,662	West Plains
14,139	Lebanon(2)
17,043	Sikeston
20,589	Arnold(2)
37,156	Cape Girardeau
46,272	Chesterfield
49,100	Joplin
73,912	St. Joseph
82,820	Lee's Summit
154,777	Springfield (4)
350,759	STL (3)
450,375	KC
	n/a (3)

Table 4.4: Population of each city or town listed by participants at UMC who were raised in Missouri as the area they grew up in.

At Truman, 32 individuals chose to participate in the study (Table 4.5). This group consisted of: 78% females, 13% freshmen, 72% who were born in Missouri, 84% who were raised in Missouri, 25% who preferred a rural environment, and 50% who did not have linguistic training.

Truman State University, ∑ 32					
Sex	**Class**	**Born in MO**	**Raised in MO**	**Preferred Environment**	**Linguistic Training**
25 females	4 freshmen	9 no	5 no	15 urban	16 no
7 males	9 sophomores	23 yes	27 yes	8 rural	16 yes
	9 juniors			10 either	
	9 seniors			1 n/a	
	1 other				

Table 4.5: demographic data collected from participants at Truman State University

Of this Missouri-native group (Table 4.6), all participants offered information about where they grew up. Distributions were as follows: 7% were from RPs, 43% were from UPs, and 50% were from UAs.

Truman	
633	Deepwater
859	Marthasville
5,152	Desloge
5,461	Macon
8,214	Kearney
12,817	Fulton (2)
14,093	Moberly
15,870	Farmington
18,202	Nixa
22,478	Wentzville
27,953	Gladstone
29,993	Liberty
49,100	Joplin
50,919	Florissant
55,092	St. Peters
74,976	O'Fallon
99,174	Columbia
154,777	Springfield
350,759	STL (6)
450,375	KC (3)

Table 4.6: Population of each city or town listed by participants at UMC who were raised in Missouri as the area they grew up in.

All three universities had similar group percentages of females, participants born in Missouri, and participants raised in Missouri. The majority of Missouri-natives at UMC were from UAs; the highest percentage of Missouri-natives from MSU were from UPs, and the highest percentage at Truman were from UAs. My goal was to choose a sample population that adequately represented the general population of the state, and this sample seems to parallel the general Missouri population. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau (1990, 2000), 52% of the Missouri population is female, 73.9% of the population has had education approximate to the freshmen in this study, 67.8% were born in Missouri, and 31% of the population lives in RPs.

Speakers

The two speakers who volunteered to be recorded for the study are from Sarcoxie, MO, a small town in the southwest region of the state between Springfield and Joplin. Both speakers are from affluent families in the community; both speakers lived outside city limits but attended K-12 in the Sarcoxie public school system. At the time of the study, they were 29 years old, and they had some post-baccalaureate education. Speaker A and Speaker B both use the focus dialect as their primary vernacular.

After several years of participant observation of these two speakers, I was able to consistently notice idiosyncratic characteristics of their speech. These subtle differences, I hypothesized, would allow for differences in perception of each speaker even though they both speak the same dialect. While both speakers use some of the phonetic components that are common to all areas of the state, such as the "*cot/caught* merger"

(Gordon 2006:107), both speakers also incorporate, in their daily language, phonetic attributes of Southern American English vowels. To exemplify Southern American English vowel merging, Bailey and Tillery use the words *pen* and *pin* or *ten* and *tin*, and explain that both words are pronounced the way the second word is spelled (2006:13). In addition to some vowel merging, both speakers also tend to reduce the sound of diphthongs in words such as *time* and *decide* so that the words sound more like [taːm] and [desaːd], which is another characteristic of Southern American English (Bailey and Tillery 2006). In fact, Bailey and Tillery point out that such pronunciations "make people immediately recognizable as speakers of SAE [Southern American English]", even before lexical variations become apparent (2006:13-14).

Speaker B exhibits what Schilling-Estes (2002) calls hyperdialectism, with a higher frequency of Southern/South Midland phonetic markers; he also exhibits a lower frequency of non-standard grammatical usage. Speaker A, on the other hand, is the opposite, with a higher frequency of grammatical variation and fewer phonetic markers of the dialect. The speakers' differences in frequency of NSAE verb form usage is not apparent in this study, because I audio-recorded them speaking prepared texts instead of naturalistic conversation; however, after phonetically transcribing[1] the audio-recordings, I was able to illustrate the speakers' phonetic differences (Figures 4.2 and 4.3). Speaker A exhibits higher instances of word-final [œ] or [ə] when followed by /r/, as can be seen in words like /together/ and /easier/ (Figure 4.2). These vowels are lower than the vowels

[1] For all vowel transcriptions, I used Peter Ladefoged's notation of IPA vowels. Although the vowels I have discussed here are not typically used to describe American English vowels, they are the closest of all vowel sounds to what Speaker A and Speaker B use. In addition, they are the clearest means of communicating the vowel differences between the two speakers.

[œ] or [ɵ] that Speaker B tends to use[2] in the same word-final positions when followed by /r/, like the word /return/ (Figure 4.3). A similar difference between Speaker A and Speaker B is their pronunciation of /for/, where speaker A again tends to use a lower vowel, [ɔ], while Speaker B tends to use the higher and more centralized vowel [ɵ] (Figures 4.2 and 4.3). What is most important about these differences is that participants may be able to identify, even on a subconscious level, that Speaker A tends to sound more ″standard″ than Speaker B.

Par 7: It has been a while since they have ridden together. Anymore, they

[ɪt ɪz bɛn ʌ wāl sɪns ðejʌd ɹɪdɪn dʌgɛðəɹ ɛnimɔɹ ðej

usually arrive separately, but today they drove one car. It was easier

juʒʉɐ·li ɐ·ɹaiv sɛpɹatli bʌ·t t^{h}ɐ·dej ðej dɹov wʌn kaɹ ɪt wɛz iziœɹ

for them, and they remembered why they started sharing a car.

fɔɹ ðɛm æn ðej ɹimɛmbœɹd wai ðej st^{h}aɪdɛd ʃɛɹin a kaɹ]

Figure 4.2: Phonetic transcription of Text 7 as spoken by Speaker A.

Par 6: They came for a visit, because they had some free time. They enjoyed the

[ðej kem fəɹ vɪzɪt kʌz ðej hæd sʌm fɹi tæm ðej ɛnʤoid ðʌ

visit, and while they were here, they went to see some old friends.

vɪzɪt n̩ wāl ðej wʊɹ hiɹ ðej wɛnt t^{h}ʊ si sm̩old fɹɛnz

They will be rested and ready for their return trip tomorrow.

ðel bi ɹɛsːɪd n̩ ɹɛdi fəɹ ðʌ ɹit^{h}əɹn t^{h}ɹɪp t^{h}maɹo]

Figure 4.3: Phonetic transcription of Text 6 as spoken by Speaker B.

There do appear to be phonetic differences between Speaker A and Speaker B's speech, and this interspeaker variation may prove important for my study. The subtle

[2] Speaker B's use of [œ] is not as prolific as his use of [ɵ], however, he tends to use [œ] where Speaker A uses [ɶ]. Instances of Speaker B's [œ] usage can be seen in the full phonetic transcriptions of all spoken texts in Appendix 2.

phonetic differences I have outlined here may have influenced participants, however indirectly, to focus on dialect features other than verb forms. It was my supposition that participants in the study would base their perceptions of these two speakers on the amalgamated features of the focus NSAE dialect that include both phonetic and grammatical variation. In addition, I expected that participants would find either the phonetic or grammatical aspect of this dialect more conspicuous, and make judgments about the speakers based on the feature they considered more overt and more significant.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was composed of a consent form, two score sheets, typed texts and demographic form. The score sheets (Table 4.7) were based on a modified version of the evaluation scale that Donald M. Lance (1993) employed. They were arranged in such a way that participants were able to assess the speakers or author based on three variables: education, intelligence and assumed association with a rural or urban environment. Participants were also given a choice of two categories of ambivalence: "don't know" or "can't tell"; these selections indicated either ignorance of variation or a hesitation to consign the speaker or author into a given category.

Text #:				
1. This person seems…				
	a. Educated	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Uneducated
	b. Smart	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Dumb
	c. Rural	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Urban
2. This person seems…				
	a. Educated	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Uneducated
	b. Smart	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Dumb
	c. Rural	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Urban

Figure 4.4: sample section of a score sheet used in the study.

I included eight texts in both the spoken and written sections. For each set of texts, I used third person pronominal subjects (Table 4.8) and attempted to make the content of each passage as neutral as possible to shift the focus of each participant from the content of the text to the language used within the text. I used a uniform system of verbal variation: preterite and preterite, preterite and past participle, past participle and preterite, and past participle and past participle, for both the focus dialect and SAE.

#5: After they'd seen everything, and visited all of the interesting places, they decided to take a break. They'd gone all over on foot and were tired, so they headed indoors and sat down for a minute.

#6: They have showed this to everyone who has not been exposed to it before. They seen it for the first time over a year ago. They didn't get it until just recently, but they could not have gotten it earlier.

Figure 4.5: Sample of texts used. These two texts were included in the written section.

Conclusion

In my thesis study, I used a questionnaire to ascertain data regarding perceptions of language variation based on three variables: education, intelligence and environment. I chose a sample population for the expanded study that included individuals from three universities in northern, central and southern regions of Missouri. The characteristics of the sample population are relatively similar to the demographics of the general population of the state; therefore, I was able to collect data that seems to have accurately represented Missourians.

For the purposes of data collection, I recorded two similar speakers from southwest Missouri who primarily use the focus dialect. In conjunction with my typed texts that compared the focus dialect with SAE, I presented voluntary participants with spoken and written sections that they were able to respond to on score sheets that recorded their categorization of the speaker or author; participants were also able to indicate their indecision about the meaning or existence of variation between SAE language and the language of the focus dialect. Data collected from this questionnaire is presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Data analysis

Initial analyses

The primary objective of this research is to evaluate whether the sample population exhibited adverse reactions to the focus NSAE dialect statements relative to SAE dialect statements. In order to initially explore the responses overall, I calculated the percentage of participants who responded using each choice on every text. By examining the percent of participants who responded positively, negatively or neutrally to each item, I was able to identify which texts may have been particularly problematic as well as recognize patterns in responses that I did not focus on in my hypotheses.

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 illustrate the percentages of participants who responded: "educated" (Ed), "uneducated" (Un), "smart" (Sm), "dumb" (Du), "rural" (Ru), "urban" (Ur), "don't know" (DK), or "can't tell" (CT) to each text; these percentages are based on pooled responses to both speakers. All audio-recorded and typed texts are included in Appendix 1.4 and 1.5. In general, there is a pattern of a higher percentage of participants being willing to label a speaker or author as Un than as Du. For example, the highest percentage of participants (44.15%) chose the Un selection for that speaker (Table 5.1, item 3), but only 18.09% of the participants chose the Du selection. Table 5.2 item 6 shows that 63.83% of participants chose the Un selection and 35.11% of participants

chose the "dumb" selection; both of these percentages were the highest in those columns, but this is the only case where response percentages of Un and Du are so clearly matched. What is most interesting about these percentages is the prevalence of high percentages of DK and CT responses. Nearly all of the intelligence columns have a relatively high percentage of DK and CT responses, and CT responses in all columns account for a substantial portion of the total.

1. NSAE						**5. SAE**					
Ed	23.94%	**Sm**	22.87%	**Ru**	3.72%	**Ed**	60.64%	**Sm**	51.60%	**Ru**	31.38%
DK	18.09%	**DK**	30.32%	**DK**	3.19%	**DK**	11.17%	**DK**	17.55%	**DK**	11.17%
CT	22.87%	**CT**	32.45%	**CT**	4.79%	**CT**	18.09%	**CT**	21.81%	**CT**	18.62%
Un	24.47%	**Du**	6.38%	**Ur**	81.91%	**Un**	4.26%	**Du**	1.06%	**Ur**	31.38%
n/a	10.63%	**n/a**	7.98%	**n/a**	6.38%	**n/a**	5.85%	**n/a**	7.98%	**n/a**	7.45%
2. SAE						**6. SAE**					
Ed	37.23%	**Sm**	27.13%	**Ru**	7.98%	**Ed**	50.00%	**Sm**	42.55%	**Ru**	11.70%
DK	18.62%	**DK**	29.26%	**DK**	7.45%	**DK**	14.36%	**DK**	21.81%	**DK**	15.96%
CT	27.13%	**CT**	30.32%	**CT**	13.83%	**CT**	22.87%	**CT**	25.53%	**CT**	12.77%
Un	9.04%	**Du**	4.26%	**Ur**	65.96%	**Un**	5.32%	**Du**	0.53%	**Ur**	54.79%
n/a	7.98%	**n/a**	9.04%	**n/a**	4.79%	**n/a**	7.45%	**n/a**	9.57%	**n/a**	4.78%
3. NSAE						**7. SAE**					
Ed	19.15%	**Sm**	25.53%	**Ru**	2.13%	**Ed**	36.70%	**Sm**	28.72%	**Ru**	17.02%
DK	8.51%	**DK**	19.68%	**DK**	4.79%	**DK**	18.09%	**DK**	26.60%	**DK**	12.77%
CT	18.62%	**CT**	25.00%	**CT**	8.51%	**CT**	21.81%	**CT**	30.32%	**CT**	14.89%
Un	44.15%	**Du**	18.09%	**Ur**	78.72%	**Un**	15.43%	**Du**	6.91%	**Ur**	51.06%
n/a	9.57%	**n/a**	11.70%	**n/a**	5.85%	**n/a**	7.80%	**n/a**	7.45%	**n/a**	4.26%
4. NSAE						**8. NSAE**					
Ed	46.28%	**Sm**	27.66%	**Ru**	32.45%	**Ed**	28.19%	**Sm**	18.09%	**Ru**	13.83%
DK	13.30%	**DK**	26.06%	**DK**	7.45%	**DK**	17.02%	**DK**	27.66%	**DK**	7.45%
CT	12.77%	**CT**	25.00%	**CT**	20.74%	**CT**	22.34%	**CT**	36.17%	**CT**	15.43%
Un	19.68%	**Du**	10.11%	**Ur**	32.98%	**Un**	24.47%	**Du**	9.57%	**Ur**	57.98%
n/a	7.98%	**n/a**	11.17%	**n/a**	6.38%	**n/a**	7.98%	**n/a**	8.51%	**n/a**	5.32%

Table 5.1: Participant responses to each question by percentage for the spoken section.

1. SAE						**5. SAE**					
Ed	41.49%	**Sm**	26.60%	**Ru**	13.30%	**Ed**	35.11%	**Sm**	30.32%	**Ru**	11.70%
DK	15.96%	**DK**	24.47%	**DK**	15.96%	**DK**	16.49%	**DK**	18.62%	**DK**	10.11%
CT	18.09%	**CT**	30.32%	**CT**	34.57%	**CT**	19.15%	**CT**	34.57%	**CT**	34.57%
Un	16.49%	**Du**	6.38%	**Ur**	25.53%	**Un**	17.02%	**Du**	4.26%	**Ur**	32.98%
n/a	7.98%	**n/a**	12.23%	**n/a**	10.64%	**n/a**	12.23%	**n/a**	12.23%	**n/a**	10.64%
2. SAE						**6. NSAE**					
Ed	42.02%	**Sm**	25.00%	**Ru**	13.83%	**Ed**	4.79%	**Sm**	6.38%	**Ru**	4.79%
DK	14.89%	**DK**	25.00%	**DK**	12.23%	**DK**	12.77%	**DK**	17.55%	**DK**	8.51%
CT	18.62%	**CT**	32.98%	**CT**	34.57%	**CT**	7.98%	**CT**	27.66%	**CT**	28.72%
Un	15.96%	**Du**	4.79%	**Ur**	28.72%	**Un**	63.83%	**Du**	35.11%	**Ur**	48.94%
n/a	8.51%	**n/a**	12.23%	**n/a**	10.64%	**n/a**	10.64%	**n/a**	13.30%	**n/a**	9.04%
3.NSAE						**7. NSAE**					
Ed	4.26%	**Sm**	5.85%	**Ru**	3.72%	**Ed**	11.70%	**Sm**	8.51%	**Ru**	6.38%
DK	9.04%	**DK**	21.81%	**DK**	5.85%	**DK**	10.11%	**DK**	23.94%	**DK**	10.11%
CT	9.04%	**CT**	30.32%	**CT**	22.34%	**CT**	15.43%	**CT**	35.64%	**CT**	21.81%
Un	68.09%	**Du**	29.79%	**Ur**	59.04%	**Un**	52.13%	**Du**	18.62%	**Ur**	52.13%
n/a	9.57%	**n/a**	12.23%	**n/a**	9.04%	**n/a**	10.64	**n/a**	13.30%	**n/a**	9.57%
4. SAE						**8. NSAE**					
Ed	35.11%	**Sm**	22.87%	**Ru**	6.91%	**Ed**	19.15%	**Sm**	15.96%	**Ru**	12.77%
DK	15.43%	**DK**	23.94%	**DK**	12.23%	**DK**	8.51%	**DK**	20.21%	**DK**	9.57%
CT	19.15%	**CT**	32.45%	**CT**	40.96%	**CT**	16.49%	**CT**	37.23%	**CT**	28.19%
Un	20.74%	**Du**	9.04%	**Ur**	28.72%	**Un**	46.81%	**Du**	13.30%	**Ur**	39.36%
n/a	9.57%	**n/a**	11.70%	**n/a**	11.17%	**n/a**	9.04%	**n/a**	13.30%	**n/a**	10.11%

Table 5.2: Participant responses to each question by percentage for the written section.

Another set of initial analyses (Tables 5.3-5.6) illustrates a direct comparison of SAE statements to NSAE statements. As all four tables illustrate, respondents considered the NSAE statements to reflect lower levels of intelligence and education, regardless of whether they were exposed toward those statements in written or spoken form. To evaluate the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the responses observed for SAE statements when compared with NSAE statements (H_o: SAE = NSAE), I used a chi-square test with an alpha value (α) set at .05. Note that the number of responses indicated by the observed frequency reflects 181 participants evaluating four separate

statements for each SAE and NSAE that have been pooled with a total of 724 possible responses. In all cases, the chi-square values far exceed the critical values, causing me to reject the null hypothesis. The adjusted residuals, values that help identify the source of correlation, indicate that the study's participants perceived the focus dialect statements as uneducated and unintelligent relative to SAE.

Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square Values	Adj. Residual
SAE	Educated	293	184.91	63.19	**13.18**
	Don't Know	118	97.21	4.44	**3.22**
	Can't Tell	140	117.76	4.2	**3.19**
	Uneducated	133	284.12	80.38	**-16.6**
NSAE	Educated	76	184.09	63.47	**-13.18**
	Don't Know	76	96.79	4.46	**-3.22**
	Can't Tell	95	117.24	4.22	**-3.19**
	Uneducated	434	282.88	80.74	**16.6**
			Chi-square Value=	305.11	
			Critical Value (.05,3)=	7.81	

Table 5.3: Chi-square test evaluating the proposition that there is no difference in the evaluation of education between written NSAE and written SAE. (Note: an adjusted residual indicates a significant departure from the Chi-square expected values. A value smaller than -1.96 or larger than 1.96 indicates fewer or more responses than expected by chance with the sign reflecting whether there are more or fewer responses than expected. Significant values are bolded.)

Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square Values	Adj. Residual
SAE	Smart	201	135.71	31.41	**8.91**
	Don't Know	173	166.38	0.26	0.84
	Can't Tell	245	248.31	0.04	-0.38
	Dumb	46	114.6	41.07	**-9.99**
NSAE	Smart	69	134.29	31.74	**-8.91**
	Don't Know	158	164.62	0.27	-0.84
	Can't Tell	249	245.69	0.04	0.38
	Dumb	182	113.4	41.5	**9.99**
			Chi-square Value=	146.34	
			Critical Value (.05,3)=	7.81	

Table 5.4: Chi-square test evaluating the proposition that there is no difference in the evaluation of intelligence between written NSAE and written SAE.

Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square Values	Adj. Residual
SAE	Educated	347	286.47	12.79	**6.62**
	Don't Know	117	112.97	0.14	0.59
	Can't Tell	169	158.36	0.71	1.37
	Uneducated	64	139.20	40.62	**-10.12**
NSAE	Educated	221	281.53	13.02	**-6.62**
	Don't Know	107	111.03	0.15	-0.59
	Can't Tell	145	155.64	0.73	-1.37
	Uneducated	212	136.80	41.34	**10.12**
			Chi-square Value =	109.50	
			Critical Value (.05,3) =	7.81	

Table 5.5: Chi-square test evaluating the proposition that there is no difference in the evaluation of education between spoken NSAE and spoken SAE.

Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square Values	Adj. Residual
SAE	Smart	282	231.51	11.01	**5.78**
	Don't Know	179	188.23	0.45	-1.12
	Can't Tell	203	214.40	0.61	-1.33
	Dumb	24	53.85	16.55	**-6.01**
NSAE	Smart	178	228.49	11.16	**-5.78**
	Don't Know	195	185.77	0.46	1.12
	Can't Tell	223	211.60	0.61	1.33
	Dumb	83	53.15	16.77	**6.01**
			Chi-square Value =	57.61	
			Critical Value (.05,3) =	7.81	

Table 5.6: Chi-square test evaluating the proposition that there is no difference in the evaluation of intelligence between spoken NSAE and spoken SAE.

In addition to establishing the difference in perception of NSAE, I was also able to investigate the five hypotheses of interest, outlined in Chapter 3, which will be the focus of the remainder of this chapter. I ultimately conclude that the data I collected indicate the Missouri NSAE dialect in question is viewed less favorably than SAE, but is more readily accepted in spoken form than in writing by all demographic groups tested. Participants were unaffected by phonological variation. Participants' own preferred

environment did affect their perception of this rural dialect to some degree, but whether or not they were Missouri natives had no bearing on their perceptions of the speakers or author. Finally, both sexes perceived the dialect as uneducated. The following discussion explains how I came to these conclusions.

Hypothesis of Interest (HI) 1: spoken NSAE will be viewed more favorably than written NSAE ($NS_{sp} > NS_{wr}$).

My first hypothesis is centered on the proposal that while participants would be aware of verbal variances from the accepted standards of SAE in both forms of communication, they will be more forgiving of spoken communication because of its extemporaneous nature. If this hypothesis of interest is true, then the responses will be less negative to spoken versions than written versions. In order to test this hypothesis, I evaluated whether participant responses to written NSAE corresponded with views that the speaker or author was less educated and less intelligent. I evaluated the hypothesis (Tables 5.7 and 5.8) using a chi-square with $\alpha = .05$ to test the null hypothesis that spoken NSAE is equal to written NSAE (H_o: $NS_{sp} = NS_{wr}$). Please remember that the number of responses indicated by the observed frequency reflects 181 participants evaluating four separate statements for each SAE and NSAE that have been pooled; this is true of all subsequent tables.

In both cases, the chi-square value exceeds the critical value, causing me to reject the null hypothesis for the intelligence and education variables. A consideration of the adjusted residual values (Tables 5.7 and 5.8) shows that participants are more likely to

view spoken NSAE more favorably (9.45, 4.92) and more likely to view written NSAE less favorably (12.13, 4.76).

NSAE Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square Values	Adj. Residuals
Spoken	Educated	221	148.93	34.87	**9.45**
	Don't Know	107	91.77	2.53	**2.42**
	Can't Tell	145	120.35	5.05	**3.50**
	Uneducated	212	323.95	38.69	**-12.13**
Written	Educated	76	148.07	35.08	**-9.45**
	Don't Know	76	91.23	2.54	**-2.42**
	Can't Tell	95	119.65	5.08	**-3.50**
	Uneducated	434	322.05	38.91	**12.13**
			Chi-Square Value =	162.74	
			Critical Value (.05,3) =	7.81	

Table 5.7: Chi-square test evaluating the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the evaluation of education between written and spoken NSAE.

NSAE Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square Values	Adj. Residuals
Spoken	Smart	178	125.44	22.02	**4.92**
	Don't Know	195	179.27	1.38	1.26
	Can't Tell	223	239.71	1.16	-1.19
	Dumb	83	134.58	19.77	**-4.68**
Written	Smart	69	121.56	22.73	**-5.01**
	Don't Know	158	173.73	1.42	-1.28
	Can't Tell	249	232.29	1.20	1.21
	Dumb	182	130.42	20.4	**4.76**
			Chi-Square Value =	90.09	
			Critical Value (.05,3) =	7.81	

Table 5.8: Chi-square test evaluating the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the evaluation of intelligence between written and spoken NSAE.

Although these results are consistent with the hypothesis of interest, they could also reflect that written language is viewed less favorably in general compared to spoken language, regardless of dialect. In order to evaluate this possibility, I used a chi-square with $\alpha = .05$ to test the null hypothesis that spoken SAE equals written SAE (H_o: $NS_{sp} = NS_{wr}$).

I rejected this null hypothesis for both variables because the chi-square values are larger than the critical values. The adjusted residual values (Tables 5.9 and 5.10) show that participants were more likely to view spoken SAE more favorably (2.59, 4.13) and more likely to view written SAE less favorably (5.45, 2.85). These values indicate that participants viewed written language less favorably than spoken language in general.

SAE Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square Values	Adj. Residuals
Spoken	Educated	347	323.01	1.78	**2.59**
	Don't Know	117	118.61	0.02	-0.23
	Can't Tell	169	155.95	1.09	1.68
	Uneducated	64	99.43	12.62	**-5.45**
Written	Educated	293	316.99	1.82	**-2.59**
	Don't Know	118	116.39	0.02	0.23
	Can't Tell	140	153.05	1.11	-1.68
	Uneducated	133	97.57	12.86	**5.45**
			Chi-square Value =	31.33	
			Critical Value (.05,3) =	7.81	

Table 5.9: Chi-square test evaluating the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the evaluation of education between written and spoken SAE.

SAE Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square Values	Adj. Residuals
Spoken	Smart	282	245.61	5.39	**4.13**
	Don't Know	179	178.99	0.00	0.00
	Can't Tell	203	227.81	2.70	**-2.87**
	Dumb	24	35.59	3.78	**-2.85**
Written	Smart	201	237.39	5.58	**-4.13**
	Don't Know	173	173.01	0.00	0.00
	Can't Tell	245	220.19	2.79	**2.87**
	Dumb	46	34.41	3.91	**2.85**
			Chi-square Value =	24.15	
			Critical Value (.05,3) =	7.81	

Table 5.10: Chi-square test evaluating the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the evaluation of intelligence between written and spoken SAE.

Some of the difference between perceptions of spoken and written NSAE (Tables 5.9 and 5.10) is likely due to a general tendency to view written communication more critically; the difference between responses to written and spoken forms of the dialect

statements is greater than the difference between responses to spoken and written forms of SAE. As Table 5.11 illustrates, 301 more responses indicated that NSAE reflected poor education when compared to the responses for SAE. Likewise, 136 fewer responses indicated that NSAE corresponded with a lack of intelligence. These differences suggest that the negative view of written NSAE statements far exceeds that expected for written statements in general. While spoken language is typically less criticized than written language, participants were particularly critical of statements written using NSAE.

Variable	Response	SAE	NSAE	Difference
Education	Educated	293	76	217
	Don't Know	118	76	42
	Can't Tell	140	95	45
	Uneducated	133	434	-301
Intelligence	Smart	201	69	132
	Don't Know	173	158	15
	Can't Tell	245	249	-4
	Dumb	46	182	-136

Table 5.11: Simple table demonstrating the difference between responses to written SAE and NSAE dialects with regard to both education and intelligence.

HI2: Verb forms of the NSAE dialect will be less significant in perceptions of intelligence and education than the speakers' pronunciation ($NS > PR_{SAE + NS}$).

My second hypothesis of interest is based on intra-dialectical differences that I observed between Speaker A and Speaker B. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, Speaker B exhibits hyperdialectism while the phonetic features that Speaker A uses are less exaggerated. If this hypothesis of interest is true, then responses should vary according to speaker more than they vary according to dialect. I evaluated the null hypothesis using a chi-square with $\alpha = .05$, that NSAE language (NS_{vb}) is considered intelligent regardless of the pronunciation (PR) used (H_o: $NS_{vb} = PR$).

Based on the absence of significant chi-square values (Table 5.12), there is no statistical relationship between the speakers' pronunciation and the participants' perception of intelligence, suggesting that intra-dialectical variation has no significant effect on participants, and because H_o: NS_{vb} = PR is not rejected, I must reject this part of the hypothesis of interest.

NSAE	PR	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square Values
	Spkr A	Smart	87	89.13	0.05
		Don't Know	101	97.64	0.12
		Can't Tell	115	111.66	0.1
		Dumb	37	41.56	0.5
	Spkr B	Smart	91	88.87	0.05
		Don't Know	94	97.36	0.12
		Can't Tell	108	111.34	0.1
		Dumb	46	41.44	0.5
				Chi-square Value =	1.54
				Critical value (.05,3) =	7.81

Table 5.12: Chi-square test evaluating the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the evaluation of intelligence between Speaker A and Speaker B.

Although participants were not concerned with phonetic differences between the speakers when responding to the NSAE statements and judging the speakers' intelligence, the participants may have been influenced by the non-standard verb forms included in those NSAE statements. In order to determine if participants responded at all to the phonetic differences between Speaker A and Speaker B, I evaluated responses to the control SAE statements. I evaluated the null hypothesis that SAE statements are considered intelligent regardless of the pronunciation used (H_o: S_{vb} = PR) using a chi-

square with $\alpha = .05$. Because the chi-square value does not exceed the critical value (Table 5.13), it is clear that there is no statistical relationship between intelligence and pronunciation for SAE. This test strengthens my conclusion that I must reject the hypothesis of interest with regard to the intelligence variable; participants did not make judgments about the intelligence of the speakers based on phonetic differences.

SAE	Pr	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square Values
	Spkr A	Smart	151	142.23	0.54
		Don't Know	83	90.28	0.59
		Can't Tell	98	102.39	0.19
		Dumb	15	12.1	0.69
	Spkr B	Smart	131	139.77	0.55
		Don't Know	96	88.72	0.6
		Can't Tell	105	100.61	0.19
		Dumb	9	11.9	0.7
				Chi-square Value =	4.05
				Critical value (.05,3) =	7.81

Table 5.13: Chi-square test comparing responses to intelligence of Speaker A compared to Speaker B for spoken version of SAE.

With chi-square tests (Tables 5.12 and 5.13) showing no correlation between pronunciation and intelligence for NSAE or for SAE, I assessed responses to all spoken statements for a more expansive perspective of the combination of SAE and NSAE statements evaluated against Speaker A and Speaker B. Using a chi-square test with $\alpha = .05$, I evaluated the null hypothesis that SAE statements and NSAE statements are considered intelligent regardless of the pronunciation used (H_o: Spoken = PR). In this test, the chi-square value exceeds the critical value (Table 5.14), which suggests that there is a statistical relationship between language used and pronunciation.

However, the adjusted residuals indicate that because participants were more likely to view both speakers as intelligent when they were using standard dialect statements and more likely to view both speakers as unintelligent when they were using non-standard dialect statements, it is clear that participants are still responding to the differences in language used instead of phonetic differences between the two speakers.

Version	Pr	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square	Adj. Residuals
SAE	**Spkr A**	Smart	151	119.78	8.14	**2.83**
		Don't Know	83	92.61	1.00	0.06
		Can't Tell	98	107.20	0.79	-0.33
		Dumb	15	26.17	4.77	**-5.14**
	Spkr B	Smart	131	111.73	3.32	**4.45**
		Don't Know	96	95.63	0.00	-1.52
		Can't Tell	105	107.20	0.05	-1.37
		Dumb	9	27.68	12.61	**-3.16**
NSAE	**Spkr A**	Smart	87	118.22	8.24	**-2.83**
		Don't Know	101	91.39	1.01	-0.06
		Can't Tell	115	105.80	0.80	0.33
		Dumb	37	25.83	4.83	**5.14**
	Spkr B	Smart	91	110.27	3.37	**-4.45**
		Don't Know	94	94.37	0.00	1.52
		Can't Tell	108	105.80	0.05	1.37
		Dumb	46	27.32	12.77	**3.16**
				Chi-square Value =	61.74	
				Critical Value (.05,3) =	14.07	

Table 5.14: Chi-square test comparing responses to intelligence of Speaker A compared to Speaker B for all spoken versions.

In order to evaluate the second part of my hypothesis of interest, regarding possible differences in perception of education between the two speakers, I used the control SAE statements to isolate any variation in response to the speech of the two speakers. Using a chi-square test with $\alpha = .05$, I evaluated the null hypothesis that SAE (S_{vb}) statements are considered equal in terms of education, regardless of the

pronunciation (PR) used (H_o: S_{vb} = PR). In this test, the chi-square value does not exceed the critical value (Table 5.15), which suggests that there is no statistical relationship between language and pronunciation with regard to education.

SAE	Pr	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square
	Spkr A	Educated	183	174.25	0.44
		Don't Know	55	58.75	0.24
		Can't Tell	75	84.86	1.15
		Uneducated	37	32.14	0.74
	Spkr B	Educated	164	172.75	0.44
		Don't Know	62	58.25	0.24
		Can't Tell	94	84.14	1.16
		Uneducated	27	31.86	0.74
				Chi-square Value =	5.14
				Critical Value (.05, 3) =	7.81

Table 5.15: Chi-square test comparing responses to education of Speaker A compared to Speaker B for spoken version of SAE.

As with the intelligence variable, I then evaluated the amalgamated responses to all spoken texts against the pronunciation differences between Speaker A and Speaker B. Using a chi-square test with $\alpha = .05$, I evaluated the null hypothesis that all spoken statements are considered equal in terms of education, regardless of the pronunciation used (H_o: Spoken = PR). This test was similar to the inclusive chi-square test of intelligence (Table 5.14), in that the chi-square value exceeds the critical value (Table 5.16), which suggests that there is a statistical relationship between language and pronunciation. However, this chi-square test provided much more conclusive results. The statistically significant pattern in Table 5.16 indicate that participants were more likely to view Speaker A as educated when he was using NSAE statements, and participants were more likely to view Speaker B as uneducated when he was using non-standard dialect statements.

Version	Pr	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square	Adj residuals
SAE	**Spkr A**	Educated	183	175.01	0.37	0.99
		Don't Know	55	59.01	0.27	-0.77
		Can't Tell	75	85.23	1.23	-1.68
		Uneducated	37	32.28	0.69	1.21
	Spkr B	Educated	164	171.99	0.37	-0.99
		Don't Know	62	57.99	0.28	0.77
		Can't Tell	94	83.77	1.25	1.68
		Uneducated	27	31.72	0.70	-1.21
NSAE	**Spkr A**	Educated	140	111.46	7.31	**4.19**
		Don't Know	57	53.96	0.17	0.61
		Can't Tell	67	73.13	0.51	-1.08
		Uneducated	83	106.92	5.35	**-3.57**
	Spkr B	Educated	81	109.54	7.44	**-4.19**
		Don't Know	50	53.04	0.17	-0.61
		Can't Tell	78	71.87	0.52	1.08
		Uneducated	129	105.08	5.45	**3.57**
				Chi-square Value =	32.08	
				Critical Value (.05,3) =	14.07	

Table 5.16: Chi-square test comparing responses to education of Speaker A compared to Speaker B for all spoken versions.

Overall, the chi-square tests represented in Tables 5.12-5.15 indicate that my hypothesis of interest is incorrect, either because the chi-square values do not exceed the critical values, or because adjusted residual values indicate that participants were responding more to differences in verb forms between standard and non-standard statements than to the phonetic differences between the two speakers. However, the results from the chi-square test in Table 5.16 indicate that my hypothesis of interest must not be rejected in full. It seems that, combined, these tables indicate that there is an interaction between speech and NSAE verb forms. The subtle speech differences between the two speakers are not viewed negatively in-and-of themselves; however, when paired with NSAE verb forms, there is an increased negative view of Speaker B.

HI3: Urban-oriented participants react less favorably to NSAE than rural-oriented participants ($U_{ns} < R_{ns}$).

Because of the influence that urban centers have on the standardization of language and the introduction of language innovation, I propose that urban-oriented participants would reflect the generalized perception of SAE as the standard dialect of American English, to which all other AE varieties would be compared. Concomitantly, I suggest that rural participants may have been more consistently exposed to dialects that diverge from SAE, which may make them more accepting of other language varieties. As I discussed in Chapter 4, definitions of both terms are focused on emic cultural classifications. My analysis here is only of the responses that participants offered; my analysis is not based on a narrow interpretation of the terms or the participants' approach to them, but it is an attempt to associate environment with attitudes toward language variation and maintenance of SAE using environmental preference as a proxy.

If this hypothesis of interest is true, then the data should show a stronger negative response from participants who indicated a preference for urban environments. Information regarding preference for environment was provided by each participant in the demographic section (Appendix 1.3); participants were given the option of being more comfortable in urban environs, rural environs or being equally comfortable in either. In order to evaluate the hypothesis, I used chi-square tests (Tables 5.17-5.20) with $\alpha = .05$ to test the null hypothesis that reactions to NSAE from urban-oriented participants are equal to reactions to NSAE from rural-oriented participants or those equally comfortable in both environments (H_o: $U_{ns} = R_{ns} = E_{ns}$).

In all four chi-square tests, the chi-square values exceed the critical values; therefore, I reject the null hypothesis and suggest that the data support my hypothesis of interest. As Table 5.17 shows, urban-oriented participants and "equally comfortable" participants were more likely to respond that the spoken NSAE statements were uneducated.

Preferred Environment	Spoken Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square Value	Adj. Residuals
Equally Comfortable	**SAE**	Educated	159.00	132.60	5.25	**3.47**
		Don't Know	49.00	48.54	0.00	0.08
		Can't Tell	80.00	71.31	1.06	1.35
		Uneducated	30.00	65.55	19.28	**-5.69**
	NSAE	Educated	99.00	128.02	6.58	**-3.86**
		Don't Know	47.00	46.86	0.00	0.03
		Can't Tell	65.00	68.84	0.21	-0.60
		Uneducated	96.00	63.28	16.91	**5.30**
Rural	**SAE**	Educated	65.00	50.46	4.19	**2.82**
		Don't Know	22.00	18.47	0.68	0.94
		Can't Tell	28.00	27.13	0.03	0.20
		Uneducated	6.00	24.94	14.39	**-4.48**
	NSAE	Educated	37.00	52.12	4.39	**-2.89**
		Don't Know	26.00	19.08	2.51	1.81
		Can't Tell	28.00	28.03	0.00	-0.01
		Uneducated	34.00	25.77	2.63	1.92
Urban	**SAE**	Educated	97.00	83.40	2.22	**2.12**
		Don't Know	31.00	30.53	0.01	0.10
		Can't Tell	47.00	44.85	0.10	0.40
		Uneducated	25.00	41.23	6.39	**-3.09**
	NSAE	Educated	73.00	83.40	1.30	-1.62
		Don't Know	19.00	30.53	4.35	**-2.47**
		Can't Tell	37.00	44.85	1.37	-1.45
		Uneducated	71.00	41.23	21.50	**5.67**
				Chi-square Value =	115.35	
				Critical Value (.05,3)=	21.03	

Table 5.17: Chi-square test evaluating the null hypothesis that there is no difference in evaluation of education between participants with varying environmental preferences, spoken version.

For the written version of the education variable (Table 5.18), there is an overwhelming occurrence of "Don't Know" and "Can't Tell" responses. Clearly participants are either unclear about whether or not the author is educated or are not willing to respond. Since the chi-square value exceeds the critical value, which

establishes a statistically significant relationship between preferred environment and perception of NSAE statements, my hypothesis of interest is not technically refuted; however, because responses from all participants are equally ambiguous, there is no substantial data to support my hypothesis of interest. It seems that data for the written version of this part of my hypothesis of interest is inconclusive.

Preferred Environment	Written Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square Values	Adj. Residuals
Equally Comfortable	**SAE**	Educated	139	133.06	0.27	0.80
		Don't Know	37	49.07	2.97	**-2.47**
		Can't Tell	73	62.28	1.84	**1.97**
		Uneducated	52	57.09	0.45	-0.97
	NSAE	Educated	33	35.39	0.16	-0.57
		Don't Know	26	33.97	1.87	-1.94
		Can't Tell	59	43.88	5.21	**3.26**
		Uneducated	184	188.26	0.10	-0.52
Rural	**SAE**	Educated	52	57.37	0.50	-0.90
		Don't Know	30	21.16	3.70	**2.25**
		Can't Tell	22	26.85	0.88	-1.11
		Uneducated	26	24.62	0.08	0.33
	NSAE	Educated	14	15.26	0.10	-0.37
		Don't Know	26	14.65	8.80	**3.42**
		Can't Tell	19	18.92	0.00	0.02
		Uneducated	71	81.17	1.28	-1.53
Urban	**SAE**	Educated	91	91.57	0.00	-0.08
		Don't Know	37	33.77	0.31	0.71
		Can't Tell	37	42.86	0.80	-1.15
		Uneducated	43	39.29	0.35	0.76
	NSAE	Educated	28	24.35	0.55	0.93
		Don't Know	20	23.38	0.49	-0.88
		Can't Tell	15	30.20	7.65	**-3.50**
		Uneducated	144	129.57	1.61	1.86
				Chi-square Value =	39.96	
				Critical Value (.05,3) =	23.68	

Table 5.18: Chi-square test evaluating the null hypothesis that there is no difference in evaluation of education between participants with varying environmental preferences, written version.

Evaluating the null hypothesis that participants' perceptions of intelligence of speakers and authors using NSAE statements are equal, regardless of preferred environment, yielded some interesting results. Both rural-oriented and urban-oriented participants were more likely to respond that spoken NSAE statements indicated a lack of intelligence (Table 5.19). "Equally comfortable" participants responded in a similar fashion; these participants were not more likely to respond positively to NSAE statements with regard to intelligence.

Preferred Environment	Spoken Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square Value	Adj. Residuals
Equally Comfortable	**SAE**	Smart	122.00	107.34	2.00	**2.01**
		Don't Know	84.00	84.86	0.01	-0.13
		Can't Tell	101.00	101.28	0.00	-0.04
		Dumb	12.00	25.51	7.15	**-3.23**
	NSAE	Smart	79.00	105.32	6.58	**-3.63**
		Don't Know	84.00	83.27	0.01	0.11
		Can't Tell	118.00	99.38	3.49	**2.61**
		Dumb	32.00	25.03	1.94	1.67
Rural	**SAE**	Smart	65.00	42.06	12.51	**4.57**
		Don't Know	32.00	33.25	0.05	-0.27
		Can't Tell	25.00	39.69	5.44	**-2.97**
		Dumb	3.00	10.00	4.90	**-2.43**
	NSAE	Smart	41.00	42.06	0.03	-0.21
		Don't Know	36.00	33.25	0.23	0.59
		Can't Tell	32.00	39.69	1.49	-1.56
		Dumb	16.00	10.00	3.61	**2.09**
Urban	**SAE**	Smart	73.00	64.94	1.00	1.33
		Don't Know	46.00	51.34	0.56	-0.95
		Can't Tell	67.00	61.28	0.53	0.96
		Dumb	7.00	15.43	4.61	**-2.43**
	NSAE	Smart	45.00	63.26	5.27	**-3.06**
		Don't Know	54.00	50.01	0.32	0.71
		Can't Tell	58.00	59.69	0.05	-0.29
		Dumb	31.00	15.03	16.96	**4.65**
				Chi-square Value =	78.71	
				Critical Value (.05,3) =	21.03	

Table 5.19: Chi-square test evaluating the null hypothesis that there is no difference in evaluation of intelligence between participants with varying environmental preferences, spoken version.

Evaluating participant responses to the written version of the intelligence variable yielded the most interesting results, as rural participants were clearly more likely to respond positively to NSAE statements (Table 5.20). This inclination on the part of rural-oriented participants explicitly supports my hypothesis of interest.

Preferred Environment	Written Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square Values	Adj. Residuals
Equally Comfortable	**SAE**	Smart	113	113.25	0.00	-0.04
		Don't Know	86	89.51	0.14	-0.56
		Can't Tell	103	95.94	0.52	1.10
		Dumb	17	19.78	0.39	-0.89
	NSAE	Smart	88	100.88	1.65	**-1.97**
		Don't Know	82	78.63	0.14	0.57
		Can't Tell	116	103.36	1.55	1.91
		Dumb	27	30.66	0.44	-0.95
Rural	**SAE**	Smart	47	44.80	0.11	0.41
		Don't Know	39	35.41	0.36	0.73
		Can't Tell	29	37.95	2.11	-1.76
		Dumb	10	7.82	0.60	0.88
	NSAE	Smart	59	39.91	9.14	**3.68**
		Don't Know	29	31.10	0.14	-0.45
		Can't Tell	28	40.88	4.06	**-2.46**
		Dumb	9	12.13	0.81	-1.03
Urban	**SAE**	Smart	69	70.96	0.05	-0.31
		Don't Know	56	56.08	0.00	-0.01
		Can't Tell	62	60.11	0.06	0.32
		Dumb	13	12.39	0.03	0.21
	NSAE	Smart	57	63.21	0.61	-1.03
		Don't Know	48	49.27	0.03	-0.23
		Can't Tell	65	64.76	0.00	0.04
		Dumb	26	19.21	2.40	1.91
				Chi-square Value =	25.34	
				Critical Value (.05,3) =	23.68	

Table 5.20: Chi-square test evaluating the null hypothesis that there is no difference in evaluation of intelligence between participants with varying environmental preferences, written version.

Overall, these four chi-square tests do not refute my proposition that rural-oriented participants tend to be more accepting of this NSAE dialect. Participants in all three preferred environments were more likely to respond negatively to NSAE statements at some point. Some of the results were inconclusive. Most importantly for this hypothesis of interest, however, was that rural-oriented participants were more likely than urban-oriented or "equally comfortable" participants to respond favorably to NSAE statements in at least one instance (Table 5.20).

HI4: Missouri-native participants will react more favorably to NSAE than non-Missouri-native participants ($MoP_{ns} > nMoP_{ns}$).

For this hypothesis, I propose that participants who are not native to Missouri would not be as familiar with the NSAE dialect in question and would consequently respond more harshly to this particular variance from SAE. If this hypothesis of interest is true, then the scores should differ according to native or non-native Missouri status. In order to evaluate the hypothesis, I used a chi-square with $\alpha = .05$ to test the null hypothesis that responses from Missouri natives to NSAE are equal to responses from non-Missourians (H_o: $MoP_{ns} = nMoP_{ns}$) with regard to education and intelligence. Tables 5.21 and 5.22 are the chi-square tests from the spoken version; Tables 5.23 and 5.24 are the chi-square tests for the written version.

The null hypothesis cannot be rejected for perceived education levels or perceived intelligence for either spoken or written versions. Native Missourians did not respond in a manner that would indicate their recognition of any differences between SAE and the NSAE statements presented to them for either variable. Based on these results, the H_o: $MoP_{ns} = nMoP_{ns}$ is not rejected; I must therefore reject the hypothesis of interest.

Missouri	Spoken Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square
Native	**SAE**	Educated	267	254.38	0.63
		Don't Know	86	86.04	0.00
		Can't Tell	115	124.94	0.79
		Uneducated	47	47.88	0.02
	NSAE	Educated	161	163.10	0.03
		Don't Know	82	80.05	0.05
		Can't Tell	100	105.49	0.29
		Uneducated	161	157.11	0.10
Non-native	**SAE**	Educated	73	85.62	1.86
		Don't Know	29	28.96	0.00
		Can't Tell	52	42.06	2.35
		Uneducated	17	16.12	0.05
	NSAE	Educated	57	54.90	0.08
		Don't Know	25	26.95	0.14
		Can't Tell	41	35.51	0.85
		Uneducated	49	52.89	0.29
				Chi-square Value =	7.51
				Critical Value (.05,3) =	14.07

Table 5.21: Chi-square test evaluating the null hypothesis that there is no difference in evaluation of education between native Missouri participants and non-native Missouri participants, spoken version.

Missouri	Spoken Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square
Native	**SAE**	Smart	225	205.70	1.81
		Don't Know	122	130.70	0.58
		Can't Tell	143	150.75	0.40
		Dumb	16	17.82	0.19
	NSAE	Smart	136	130.70	0.22
		Don't Know	145	143.32	0.02
		Can't Tell	158	164.12	0.23
		Dumb	59	60.89	0.06
Non-Native	**SAE**	Smart	52	71.30	5.22
		Don't Know	54	45.30	1.67
		Can't Tell	60	52.25	1.15
		Dumb	8	6.18	0.54
	NSAE	Smart	40	45.30	0.62
		Don't Know	48	49.68	0.06
		Can't Tell	63	56.88	0.66
		Dumb	23	21.11	0.17
				Chi-square Value =	13.58
				Critical Value (.05,3) =	14.07

Table 5.22: Chi-square test evaluating the null hypothesis that there is no difference in evaluation of intelligence between native Missouri participants and non-native Missouri participants, spoken version.

Missouri	Written Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square
Native	**SAE**	Educated	215	214.68	0.00
		Don't Know	90	84.55	0.35
		Can't Tell	95	102.19	0.51
		Uneducated	97	95.58	0.02
	NSAE	Educated	51	55.14	0.31
		Don't Know	53	55.88	0.15
		Can't Tell	64	69.11	0.38
		Uneducated	329	316.87	0.46
Non-Native	**SAE**	Educated	77	77.32	0.00
		Don't Know	25	30.45	0.98
		Can't Tell	44	36.81	1.41
		Uneducated	33	34.42	0.06
	NSAE	Educated	24	19.86	0.86
		Don't Know	23	20.12	0.41
		Can't Tell	30	24.89	1.05
		Uneducated	102	114.13	1.29
				Chi-square Value =	8.23
				Critical Value (.05,3) =	14.07

Table 5.23: Chi-square test evaluating the null hypothesis that there is no difference in evaluation of education between native Missouri participants and non-native Missouri participants, written version.

Missouri	Written Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square
Native	**SAE**	Smart	149	146.92	0.03
		Don't Know	130	127.09	0.07
		Can't Tell	170	179.24	0.48
		Dumb	35	32.32	0.22
	NSAE	Smart	42	50.69	1.49
		Don't Know	122	115.33	0.39
		Can't Tell	179	182.92	0.08
		Dumb	139	131.49	0.43
Non-Native	**SAE**	Smart	51	53.08	0.08
		Don't Know	43	45.91	0.18
		Can't Tell	74	64.76	1.32
		Dumb	9	11.68	0.61
	NSAE	Smart	27	18.31	4.12
		Don't Know	35	41.67	1.07
		Can't Tell	70	66.08	0.23
		Dumb	40	47.51	1.19
				Chi-square Value =	11.99
				Critical Value (.05,3) =	14.07

Table 5.24: Chi-square test evaluating the null hypothesis that there is no difference in evaluation of intelligence between native Missouri participants and non-native Missouri participants, written version.

HI5: Female participants will react less favorably to NSAE than male participants ($F_{ns} < M_{ns}$).

It has been generally accepted that females are more closely connected with standardized dialects than males. Labov argued that females encourage standardized variants, adopt standardized variants more readily, and females introduce more linguistic innovation (Wodak and Benke 1998) that then can become standardized. Based on these consistent observations, I considered that this study would show similar results, with females being more in favor of SAE than males. If the hypothesis of interest is true, then responses of self-identified female participants should be more critical of the dialect in question than responses of self-identified male participants. In order to evaluate the hypothesis, I used a chi-square with $\alpha = .05$ to test the null hypothesis that female responses to NSAE are equal to male responses (H_o: $F_{ns} = M_{ns}$) with regard to education and intelligence. Below, chi-square tests of the spoken version are followed by chi-square tests of the written versions.

In both tests (Tables 5.25 and 5.26), chi-square values exceed the critical values, causing me to reject the null hypothesis. What is most interesting here is that tests for both variables reflect a similar pattern among males and females. Based on the adjusted residual values, both sexes were more likely to respond negatively to NSAE statements for the education and intelligence variables. However, females alone were more likely to respond positively to SAE statements for both variables. While the difference between male and female responses are minimal, the clear decision on the part of the female participants that SAE statements are educated and intelligent while NSAE statements are uneducated and dumb may offer some support to my idea that female and male responses to SAE and NSAE are substantially different.

Sex	Spoken Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square	Adj. Residuals
Female	**SAE**	Educated	245	191.74	14.80	**6.18**
		Don't Know	79	76.28	0.10	0.42
		Can't Tell	111	105.83	0.25	0.70
		Uneducated	33	94.15	39.72	**-8.70**
	NSAE	Educated	141	187.23	11.41	**-5.39**
		Don't Know	78	74.49	0.17	0.55
		Can't Tell	96	103.35	0.52	-1.01
		Uneducated	142	91.94	27.26	**7.17**
Male	**SAE**	Educated	95	89.31	0.36	0.85
		Don't Know	36	35.53	0.01	0.09
		Can't Tell	56	49.30	0.91	1.18
		Uneducated	31	43.86	3.77	**-2.37**
	NSAE	Educated	77	89.72	1.80	-1.91
		Don't Know	29	35.70	1.26	-1.34
		Can't Tell	45	49.52	0.41	-0.80
		Uneducated	68	44.06	13.01	**4.41**
				Chi-square Value =	115.76	
				Critical Value (.05,3) =	16.92	

Table 5.25: Chi-square test evaluating the null hypothesis that there is no difference in evaluation of education between female and male participants, spoken version.

Sex	Spoken Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square Values	Adj. Residuals
Female	**SAE**	Smart	201	157.48	12.03	**5.27**
		Don't Know	119	128.28	0.67	-1.19
		Can't Tell	139	147.40	0.48	-1.03
		Dumb	11	36.85	18.13	**-5.49**
	NSAE	Smart	121	156.14	7.91	**-4.26**
		Don't Know	134	127.18	0.37	0.88
		Can't Tell	165	146.14	2.43	**2.33**
		Dumb	46	36.54	2.45	**2.01**
Male	**SAE**	Smart	76	70.36	0.45	0.90
		Don't Know	57	57.32	0.00	-0.05
		Can't Tell	64	65.86	0.05	-0.30
		Dumb	13	16.46	0.73	-0.97
	NSAE	Smart	55	69.02	2.85	**-2.25**
		Don't Know	59	56.22	0.14	0.47
		Can't Tell	56	64.60	1.15	-1.40
		Dumb	36	16.15	24.39	**5.59**
				Chi-square Value =	74.23	
				Critical Value (.05,3) =	16.92	

Table 5.26: Chi-square test evaluating the null hypothesis that there is no difference in evaluation of intelligence between female and male participants, spoken version.

Evaluating the null hypothesis for the written version of the education variable (Table 5.27) shows that there is no statistically significant difference in the perception of education between males and females, because the chi-square value does exceed the critical value. For the intelligence variable (Table 5.28), which technically supports my hypothesis of interest because the chi-square value exceeds the critical value, the adjusted residuals indicate that all participants "couldn't tell" if the author using the focus dialect was intelligent or not. These values are not directly meaningful to the hypothesis of interest; the results in Table 5.28, therefore, are ambiguous.

Sex	Written Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square Value
Female	**SAE**	Educated	208.00	203.88	0.08
		Don't Know	74.00	80.30	0.49
		Can't Tell	96.00	97.05	0.01
		Uneducated	92.00	90.77	0.02
	NSAE	Educated	48.00	52.37	0.36
		Don't Know	48.00	53.07	0.48
		Can't Tell	69.00	65.63	0.17
		Uneducated	309.00	300.93	0.22
Male	**SAE**	Educated	84.00	88.12	0.19
		Don't Know	41.00	34.70	1.14
		Can't Tell	43.00	41.95	0.03
		Uneducated	38.00	39.23	0.04
	NSAE	Educated	27.00	22.63	0.84
		Don't Know	28.00	22.93	1.12
		Can't Tell	25.00	28.37	0.40
		Uneducated	122.00	130.07	0.50
			Chi-square Value =		6.10
			Critical Value (.05,3) =		7.81

Table 5.27: Chi-square test evaluating the null hypothesis that there is no difference in evaluation of education between female and male participants, written version.

Sex	Written Version	Response	Observed	Expected	Chi-square Value	Adjusted Residuals
Female	**SAE**	Educated	146.00	141.14	0.17	0.82
		Don't Know	119.00	122.09	0.08	-0.55
		Can't Tell	171.00	172.19	0.01	-0.19
		Uneducated	30.00	31.05	0.04	-0.35
	NSAE	Educated	44.00	48.69	0.45	-1.27
		Don't Know	105.00	110.80	0.30	-1.08
		Can't Tell	195.00	175.72	2.12	**2.98**
		Uneducated	118.00	126.32	0.55	-1.47
Male	**SAE**	Educated	54.00	58.86	0.40	-0.82
		Don't Know	54.00	50.91	0.19	0.55
		Can't Tell	73.00	71.81	0.02	0.19
		Uneducated	14.00	12.95	0.09	0.35
	NSAE	Educated	25.00	20.31	1.08	1.27
		Don't Know	52.00	46.20	0.73	1.08
		Can't Tell	54.00	73.28	5.07	**-2.98**
		Uneducated	61.00	52.68	1.31	1.47
				Chi-square Value =	12.60	
				Critical Value (.05,3)=	7.81	

Table 5.28: Chi-square test evaluating the null hypothesis that there is no difference in evaluation of intelligence between female and male participants, written version.

Overall, data from these four chi-square tests both support and refute my hypothesis of interest. To the spoken version, both females and males react negatively to the NSAE dialect statements, but females were more positive towards SAE. However, to the written version, females and males react equally negatively towards the NSAE dialect statements.

Additional data analysis

The classifications of "smart" and "educated" may be clearly distinct to some participants and synonymous to others. In order to determine if participants considered "educated" and "smart" as different variables, or if they grouped the two together, I

considered all responses for intelligence and education variables in both spoken and written sections; I hypothesized that participants who responded that speakers or authors are educated would also respond that those individuals are smart. In other words, I hypothesized that there would be an association between the two measurable variables such that as the ranking of one variable increased, the ranking of the other would increase as well. If the hypothesis of interest is true, then the r-value calculated from ranks of participant responses will show a strong correlation.

In order to evaluate this hypothesis of interest, I used the Spearman Correlation with $\alpha = .05$ to test the null hypothesis that there is no association between "smart" responses and "educated" responses (H_o: Sm $\neq$ Ed). The r^2-value (Table 5.29) of .85 indicates a strong correlation between education and intelligence; because the r-value's is so close to 1, it is clear that there is a statistically significant association between "educated" and "smart." This means that only 15% of the time would participants who responded that a speaker or author was "educated" not respond that that speaker or author was also "smart".

	Observed Frequencies		Ranks	
Statement	Education	Intelligence	Education	Intelligence
Spoken 1	45	12	7	10.5
Spoken 2	17	8	14	13.5
Spoken 3	83	34	5	4
Spoken 4	37	19	9	6
Spoken 5	8	2	16	15
Spoken 6	10	1	15	16
Spoken 7	29	13	13	9
Spoken 8	46	18	6	7
Written 1	32	12	10.5	10.5
Written 2	30	9	12	12
Written 3	128	56	1	2
Written 4	39	17	8	8
Written 5	32	8	10.5	13.5
Written 6	120	66	2	1
Written 7	98	35	3	3
Written 8	88	25	4	5

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{6\sum (R_1 - R_2)^2}{n(n^2 - 1)} = 1 - \frac{6(53.5)}{16(256 - 1)} = 1 - \frac{321}{4080} = .92$$

Table 5.29: Spearman Correlation table and r-value formula.

To make certain that there is a statistically significant correlation, as the r-value indicated, I used a t-test, as outlined by Todd VanPool during a class lecture on March 13, 2009, to evaluate the null hypothesis that r = 0 (H_o: r = 0) with $\alpha = .05$. The results, included below, show a t-value of 8.78 that exceeds the critical value of 2.13. I must reject the null hypothesis, which illustrates that there is indeed a strong statistical relationship between "educated" and "smart" responses in that participants who responded that the speaker or author was "educated" were very likely to also respond that that speaker or author was "smart."

Critical value for $t_{(.05,15)} = 2.13$

$$t = \frac{r - 0}{\sqrt{\frac{1 - r^2}{n - 2}}} = \frac{.92}{\sqrt{\frac{1 - (.92)^2}{16 - 2}}} = \frac{.92}{\sqrt{.01971}} = 8.78$$

Considering both the Spearman correlation test and the subsequent t-test, I must conclude that there is an indisputable association between the two variables "educated" and "smart," where as the rank of one increased, so did the rank of the other. Interestingly, regardless of the statistical relationship between these variables, generally, there were only about one quarter the number of participants who responded that speakers or authors were "dumb" as participants who responded that speakers or authors were "uneducated" (Table 5.29).

Conclusion

Statistical analysis of the data I collected from participants allowed me to address not only my hypotheses of interest, but also several additional questions. The data indicate that respondents react negatively to NSAE statements when compared to SAE, but that several factors impact the responses. Written NSAE is viewed more negatively that spoken SAE. Participants most comfortable in urban environments or equally comfortable in both environments also respond more negatively when compared with respondents most comfortable with rural environments. Females responded more favorably to SAE than males, although both responded negatively to NSAE.

Intra-dialect variation in pronunciation does not seem to have a significant impact, indicating that the differences in verb forms are most significant for participant perceptions of education and intelligence of a speaker or author. Equally as statistically insignificant was whether participants were native or non-native Missourians; participants' perceptions of NSAE statements were not influenced by a participant's particular connection with Missouri. Given the importance of dialect to an individual's identity and status, the negative views that do exist and are associated with this rural dialect are expected to have profound negative impact on a large number of Missourians. I explore these issues in my conclusions.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Discussion

Conclusions from Data

The purpose of this study was to explore the veracity of stereotypes I have encountered about the way that 'city people' and 'country folk' talk.

My goals were to: 1) explore the validity of my observations that listeners attribute phonetic and grammatical variation to a speaker's lack of intelligence or education, 2) gather information that might explain the basis of such stereotypes, and 3) examine whether or not college students in Missouri maintain or reject the assumptions about education and intelligence that drive these types of generalizations. The data I collected yielded interesting results. I discuss them here, as well as aspects of the study that could have influenced participants.

Dialect does affect perceptions

The focus dialect does negatively affect listeners' perceptions of speakers' education and intelligence. Statistical analysis from my first hypothesis of interest indicates that participants made allowances for variations in spoken language. However, while these participants were more critical of written language in general, they were

particularly critical of statements written in the focus dialect than they were to SAE dialect statements, which indicates the significance of dialect variation on perceptions of intelligence and education.

While the results from my third hypothesis of interest, which tested the influence of participants' preferred environment on their perception of the focus dialect, were not as marked as I had anticipated, they did indicate that participants' own experiences also influence their view of dialectical variation. What I found most interesting, and what was most pertinent for my hypothesis was the positive response rural-oriented participants exhibited to the NSAE dialect in written form (Table 5.20).

I had proposed that such a difference would be based on an urban-rural relationship that would reflect both differences in social power and the uniting effect of linguistic communities. Although my results are not dramatic enough to form a solid conclusion about the influence of urban-rural relationships on the perception of NSAE dialects, I have evidence enough to suggest that there is a distinction in the way that urban-oriented and rural-oriented participants view the focus dialect in this study. These results, along with my observations of general acceptance of the focus dialect in rural southwest Missouri and a general rejection of the focus dialect in more urban areas, lead me to propose that further studies including more divergent regions of the country may expose more interesting findings. In addition, taking socioeconomic status of participants into account during future studies may highlight a more focused impetus for the general perceptions I have observed and reported here.

One other aspect of this study that illustrated the importance of dialect on perceptions was the difference in responses between males and females. Consistently,

differences between responses of each sex were not as divergent as I expected. While it is largely assumed that females are more concerned with language standardization, data from this study indicate that males are also aware of dialectical variation (Table 5.21 and 5.22). Additionally, male responses illustrate that they tend to be critical of non-standard variants, at least to a greater degree than I anticipated.

One influencing factor on these results may be the population I chose. With continued education, it is inevitable that both male and female students will be exposed to the prestige of the SAE dialect over any NSAE dialect. Regardless of how much male students use their own NSAE dialect, they would be aware of the view that SAE is preferred in college settings. Another possibility is that there is growing equanimity between males and females regarding the use of standardized variants than has been previously documented. Further studies will be able to isolate whether male maintenance of standardized forms has increased to some degree or whether males in this study were simply more influenced by the SAE dialect prestige upheld in academia.

Perception of education versus intelligence

One of the main goals of this study was to assess perceptions of the NSAE dialect speakers' intelligence. While my hypotheses of interest included assessment and discussion of intelligence and education independently, comparing them directly was also important in order to ascertain whether or not participants categorized the two variables separately. The Spearman Correlation showed significant association between the two variables; a statistical relationship was established in which it was clear that participants viewed these two variables as being linked in some way. However, it is impossible to

establish participants' definitions of "educated" and "smart." Perhaps, as I anticipated, participants viewed education as specific knowledge gained through instruction and intelligence as the physiological ability to process, categorize, and discriminately reuse information, but my view is mere conjecture. These terms are colloquially defined and are internal to each participant. So while it is now known that a correlation exists, exactly how these two variables correspond is still unknown.

The patterns I noticed when considering the percentage of responses to each text independently were also helpful in understanding the participants' perspective of the relationship between education and intelligence. With the prevalence of high percentages for "can't tell" responses, especially related to intelligence, it seems that participants are exceedingly hesitant to label another individual as "dumb." Whether participants' impressions correlate with their responses, and whether they would be willing to talk about another individual as being "dumb" but not record that thought on a questionnaire are impossible to determine in this study. Regardless, it seems that labeling a speaker or author as "dumb" is a taboo that fewer participants were willing to break.

Homogeneous population affects results

As I mentioned in Chapter 4, the population I chose for this study allowed me to control for some variables, like exposure to anthropological or linguistic training, however, the similarities between participants may also have added constraints that then affected the results. For example, the majority of students in the Missouri universities I chose would have been at least somewhat familiar with this NSAE dialect. My second hypothesis of interest was based on intra-dialectical differences that I observed between

Speaker A and Speaker B. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, Speaker B exhibits hyperdialectism while the phonetic features that Speaker A uses are less exaggerated. Based on the absence of chi-square value significance, it is clear that pronunciation is not a factor in determining the intelligence of these speakers.

After testing my hypothesis that native and non-native Missourians will view this NSAE dialect differently, the only significant adjusted residual value of any consequence indicated that non-natives viewed SAE as intelligent. Just as with the urban-oriented participants, I expected a more acerbic response to this NSAE dialect. In fact, after the sessions several students approached me; during these impromptu interviews, they expressed their surprise and aversion to what they called the ungrammaticalness of this dialect. Participants who offered their opinions in these informal interviews told me that they were from coastal states, primarily New York. Regardless of these comments, however, responses from the official study showed relatively little significant acknowledgement of differences between SAE and NSAE for the native, non-native variable. One possible reason for the difference between my assumption and the results is that non-native participants may have already been exposed to the focus dialect for a long enough time period during their time at Missouri universities to diminish their awareness of its uniqueness.

Perhaps non-midwestern non-natives responded with the reaction I anticipated, but they were not numerous enough to affect the results. Since the time I finished collecting data for this study, I have encountered several other speakers who also interchange preterite and past-participle verb forms. They were not raised in Missouri, but they were from rural regions of bordering states such as Iowa, Kansas and Arkansas;

maybe a study of differentiating between native mid-westerners and others would reflect a harsher criticism of this dialect from non-native speakers.

Testing procedures affect results

Individual texts. The percentages of participants who responded to each text using a given selection provided insight into which items may not have been as neutral as I thought. Although it is impossible to identify exactly what part of the texts participants were keying off of, these percentages at least highlight patterns that may reflect their perceptions to some degree. Item 6 from the written version was the only example of the highest percentage of participants selecting both "uneducated" and "dumb." The text, included below, features two NSAE verb forms, "have showed" and "seen." This text seems as neutral as the other texts, however, since the text centers around acquiring some new item that others have not been exposed to, perhaps there is an implication of ignorance of recent innovations. Another possible reason for the uniqueness of responses to this text is that it is the only written text that includes the verb form "have showed"; maybe this verb form in particular was distracting to participants or drew their attention to the NSAE dialect more than others.

> #6: They have showed this to everyone who has not been exposed to it before. They seen it for the first time over a year ago. They didn't get it until just recently, but they could not have gotten it earlier.

The data also show a consistently high percentage of "can't tell" responses. For both NSAE texts and SAE texts, the percentage of "can't tell" responses is high enough,

relative to percentages of other selections, to indicate that many participants may simply be unable to distinguish between the SAE dialect and the NSAE dialect for many of the texts. Items 3 and 6 from the written version are the only two items from either the spoken or written version where the percentages of "can't tell" responses in the education column are substantially lower than the percentages of "educated" and "uneducated" responses; 9.04% of participants responded "can't tell" to item 3 and 7.98% of participants responded "can't tell" to item 6 with regard to education. Item 6 is included above and item 3 is included below. Both items include the notion of a new experience and mention a previous unawareness of a type of music or an item that was purchased. Perhaps both of these items indicated to participants that there was a lack of knowledge about popular culture that was then translated by participants to a perception of a lack of education.

> #3: They become fans of that music after their first experience. Now they like to listen to it all the time. Last weekend, they gone several hours for a show, because it was the closest one.

While focusing on the percentages of responses to individual items helped to identify the locus of differences in perceptions, it may only be through interviews in future studies that I will be able to understand with any certainty the reasons that participants responded the way they did.

Speakers. Another aspect of the study that may have influenced participants' responses were the speakers I recorded. Although the two speakers sound similar, my phonetic analysis of their speech in chapter 4 illustrates some significant differences. Along with

their differences in pronunciation, Speaker A took extra care in enunciation, which seems to parallel the careful speech that Schilling-Estes (2002) noticed with interviewees. In contrast, Speaker B attempted more casual and naturalized speech; however, there were several hesitations in Speaker B's recorded speech, particularly with the SAE texts. Preston mentions that speakers employing a non-vernacular variation are using "less well-entrenched rules" that require a greater effort and attention in order to achieve clarity in communication (2001:287). These more "poorly controlled features" (Preston 2001:287) may explain some of the variation I noticed in the recordings of both volunteers; participants may also have been sub-consciously influenced by these features.

The interspeaker variation that the participants encountered may have caused them to examine individual linguistic variables, but they were also confronted with intraspeaker variation. Alan Bell argues that "interspeaker variation is a response to intraspeaker variation" (Schilling-Estes 2002:384), but the differences one speaker has in his own speech may have somewhat contaminated the data of differences between the two speakers. For example, speakers use vernacular variants more often in conversations with their peer groups than they so when interacting with an interviewer (Schilling-Estes 2002). Each speaker knew that they were being recorded because of their use of a NSAE dialect, and they knew that their speech would then be judged against the presumed standard by an audience of university students. It is conceivable that this situation may have caused more hesitation or awkwardness in their speech that usual, which would then potentially affect how participants responded to them. My desire was to capture the closest possible variant to peer-peer speech, but even absent audiences are known to

bring about style shifts (Schilling-Estes 2002); therefore, intraspeaker variation must be considered a possible variable for this study.

Regional varieties of language, like those that I anticipated participants would be aware of, can be divided into social and socioeconomic categories that I did not focus on for this study. However, each individual also uses different registers for particular situations in which they find themselves (Milroy and Milroy 1985). These registers are noticeable in naturalistic conversation, but even with pre-recorded texts that are clearly outside the context of natural speech, individual idiosyncrasies of language are still probable, and may have presented an obstacle for listeners.

As Schilling-Estes (2002) points out, style shifts are conscious at times, and they are subconscious other times; speakers can use features they are not aware they are using. Regardless, I am confident that these speech differences, particularly the intraspeaker variation, influenced participant responses to some extent; the two speakers sound as if they are using different registers. Since these speakers were not trained to eliminate register switching while being recorded for this study, I simply chose the best of repeated recordings and proceeded with research.

Classrooms. Regardless of all attempts to prevent inconsistencies, there were some uncontrollable or unforeseen variables in my research. I was able to contain data collection to anthropology classes, though I was unable to consistently deliver the questionnaires to introductory classes at every university. Truman University, for instance, did not have enough students enrolled in the introductory class to add significant data to the project, and I was given the option of surveying an Anthropology

of Gender class instead. The introductory class at MSU was small as well, and I was therefore offered an additional lower-level anthropology class to supplement the database.

There was also variation within individual classrooms. For example, there were some upperclassmen in underclassmen classes, and there were even a few respondents who reported graduate student status. My concern for maintaining a sample population of freshmen and sophomores was based on the possibility that juniors, seniors and graduate students may have had more exposure to linguistic training or issues of cultural relativity that could offset their initial perceptions of speech patterns. While aiming for consistency is essential, avoiding these irregularities was impossible.

Other issues were also impossible to anticipate. Class attendance is rarely an absolutely assessable variable, and after preparing and amending IRB applications, time was a constraining factor. My visits had to be scheduled well within the last half of the semester, which meant that attendance was more questionable than at the beginning of the term. While I anticipated a sample population of between three and four hundred, I was only able to collect data from one hundred eighty eight individuals. Although it is impossible to estimate, perhaps a larger database would have altered the results.

Although my presentation to each class was controlled as much as possible, my own presentation of the material may not have been as consistent as I intended. Two classes were in large lecture halls. The number of enrolled students for each of these classes was approximately one hundred fifty. The remaining classes were in much smaller rooms and ranged in enrollment from twenty to forty. First, the dynamic in rooms of such varying size and filled with such divergent numbers of students lends to

environmental inconsistencies. I was unable to answer as many individual questions for the larger classes, and I was less able to judge the overall level of understanding of the participants. While I asked each class if there was any need for repetition of the spoken section texts, I may not have been able to accurately determine which students desired another listen but were too shy to ask. In the smaller classrooms, where it is much easier to interact with every student, I think I was much more able to determine whether students had questions about the listening section or any other part of the survey.

Equipment and arrangement. For every subsequent delivery of the questionnaires, I attempted to keep each aspect of the study identical, however, I encountered difficulties. In order to ensure that students were given the same quality of audio-recordings, I used my personal laptop with a set of external speakers for each class. The volume was adequate for both big and small classrooms, and the sound quality allowed each participant to clearly hear the recorded texts. Unfortunately, the speaker-computer interface malfunctioned just before one delivery. I was able to use a separate sound system; however, there may have been resultant effects to participation and responses that in turn affected statistical outcomes.

The section sequence itself was another complication. For each class, I asked them first to respond to the audio-recorded texts, and then to take time to read through and respond to the typed texts. At that point, the students were asked to fill out the supplemental form and turn their packet in. Several students remarked, not only in the pilot study, but also in the final version, that the speakers' voices were replaying in their minds during their assessment of the written texts; these participants felt that listening

before reading biased their perspectives. Unfortunately, while there are undeniable complications here, there is no easy way to correct the confusion.

The point of this study is to isolate naturalistic perceptions to a specific verbal variant that is often stigmatized. Presenting the reading section first may have highlighted the verbal variation that I was testing and therefore skewed results for the listening section. The order of listening and reading sections is problematic, but there is no simple solution, and I am satisfied that participants who continued to hear the speakers' voices while reading the written texts may have interacted at a more focused level with the focus dialect.

Implications for future research

The most significant addition to this study would be an expansion in breadth and depth. In order to understand the remaining questions regarding non-native mid-western perspectives of the focus dialect and participant reactions to possible hyperdialectism, I will have to include participants from a wider variety of geographical locations. I was able to collect adequate and diverse data for this project, however, complications with this stage of research leave several possible extensions for future research. Universities from Kansas City and St. Louis, the two largest metropolitan areas of the state may add a further dimension of urban perception; multiple universities in each of those cities would potentially add depth as well. Including smaller universities and colleges in the state would also be a great benefit, because the population of students in those institutions may vary from larger state universities. For this study I included three state-funded

institutions, but a comparison of data from private and state-funded schools could offer interesting results as well with regard to potential differences in socioeconomic status. There are also several regions of the state that have not yet been directly included, and I would like to gather data from universities in all regions of the state. Perhaps most importantly, it would be beneficial to include university students from coastal regions to get a clearer understanding of outsider acceptance of rural Midwest speech.

Interviewing individuals who express a bias toward the focus dialect may illuminate the source and scope of negative perceptions of the focus dialect. I recently observed the introduction of Speaker A to an individual who lived in Kansas City. At the point when the Kansas Citian realized that his interlocutor was from Sarcoxie, Missouri, he immediately imitated what he thought was "hick" speech, which included an overemphasized pan-southern pronunciation of highly contracted words and "ungrammatical" sentences; this interaction is precisely the type of perception of the focus dialect that I tried to elicit in this study. I did not explore here whether stereotypes of the focus dialect speech originate from cultural perceptions or awareness of dialect variation; however, more expansive studies may be able to draw attention more directly to how the culture-language relationship that Sapir and Whorf debated for so long affects negative perceptions of this NSAE dialect.

Another remaining question from this study is the extent to which female-male relationships and gender roles affect perception of language considered standard and non-standard. Because female and male responses to the dialect variation I included in this study were not as divergent as I anticipated, future studies could further explore gender-based experiences with language and judgments of speakers based on their speech

through interviews of females and males from varying backgrounds and environments. It will be interesting to explore whether, as results from this study have implied, there is a decreasing gap between males and females with regard to expectations of standard language usage.

My intention for these texts was to imitate naturalistic speech, because I am interested in researching social perceptions of speakers in daily interactions. However, since a naturalistic environment is impossible to achieve through a semi-controlled experimental design in which participants are asked to offer their opinions on a questionnaire, it may be more beneficial to deconstruct conversations to the most direct and simple forms of variation that I want to focus on. Therefore, for future research, I may amend texts further by shortening them to just two ambiguous simple sentences, each with one verb.

Overall, further studies will help in identifying whether the intensity of bias against non-standard American English is changing. Whether there is increasing bias, increasing acceptance, or maintenance of long-standing perceptions, it will be interesting to note in what capacity and to what extent perceptions of non-standard dialects affect their listeners and speakers.

Conclusion

Overall, this study has yielded results that are beneficial with regard to my understanding relationships between written and spoken language, education and intelligence, and more general perceptions of variations in language. I was able to begin

exploring how many of my own observations in southwest Missouri are consistent across a broader population of participants. However, there were several aspects of this study that need to be improved, as well as many questions that were not addressed here. Through further inquiries, I hope to be able to fully examine the areas where speakers employ the verb form variant that I have highlighted here; I also want to delve into how and why bias against the focus dialect exists.

Following future expanded studies, I would like to be able to practically apply the results in order to introduce or re-introduce concepts of cultural and linguistic relativity to both speakers and hearers. There must exist a common style of communication for most exchanges. Biases will never be fully eliminated, from perceptions of speech and writing, or cultural differences. There are ungrammatical usages of American English, as there are ungrammatical forms of every language. These concepts are not debatable. However, where there exists a variation from the SAE dialect that is consistently used as a primary form of communication, negative perceptions of speakers who employ that variation are not helpful for successful communication. Through further studies, I may be able to compare perceptions of this focus dialect with other more accepted dialects, such as AAVE, where reception of variation from SAE seems to be more wide-reaching and possibly help ameliorate any tensions between listeners and speakers of this NSAE dialect.

Appendix 1.1: Consent Form

Interactions of Speech and Social Perceptions

Purpose of study: Through this study, I will examine the influence of speech on social perceptions of the speaker.

Participation: Participation in this study is in no way required of any student. All students who wish to refrain from volunteering may do so without concern, because there will be no negative consequences. In addition, any participant who wishes to terminate participation may do so at any time without consequence. You do not have to answer any question if you choose not to do so.

Activities: Each student who wishes to volunteer will answer two separate surveys, one after listening to a series of twelve paragraphs and the other after reading a series of six paragraphs. In addition, any student who so chooses will be able to offer their e-mail address for participation in a follow-up interview based on the information gathered through these two surveys.

Confidentiality: All of your answers from the surveys will be used only in aggregate form so that your identity will not be disclosed. All individual information, both from surveys and follow-up interviews, will be kept confidential.

Potential risks: Risks expected from this study do not exceed those you would be exposed to when reading a newspaper or listening to music.

Potential benefits: One benefit of this study is a better understanding of Missouri dialects and the modes of communication between individuals.

Who can participate: Any student enrolled in an anthropology class taught by Dr. William Wedenoja at Missouri State University who is willing to volunteer and is at least 18 years of age.

Time commitment: The listening portion of this project is anticipated to take between 7 and 10 minutes. The reading portion is expected to take approximately the same amount of time. There will be a follow-up interview a few weeks from now that will be held

outside of class time. If you volunteer for that interview, it will take approximately 15-20 minutes.

I have read and understand this consent form, and I am volunteering to participate in this interview by choice.

Signature: _____

If, at any time, you have questions regarding this project, please contact one of the following:

April Bass
Graduate Student
Department of Anthropology
University of Missouri, Columbia
arbxrb@mizzou.edu

Advisor:

Dr. Todd VanPool
Department of Anthropology
University of Missouri, Columbia
vanpoolt@missouri.edu

UMC IRB:
483 McReynolds
573-882-9585 or www.research.missouri.edu

Appendix 1.2: Sample Score Sheet

After you read each sample, rate the author in terms of education, intelligence and whether he is rural or urban by circling the corresponding label below. Your judgments should be based on your experience interacting with typical speakers. Once again, you are not required in any way to participate in this project, and there will be no repercussions for not volunteering. If you choose not to participate, simply turn in your blank form with the rest of the forms at the end of the allotted time.

Text #:

1. This person seems…

a. Educated	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Uneducated
b. Smart	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Dumb
c. Rural	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Urban

2. This person seems…

a. Educated	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Uneducated
b. Smart	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Dumb
c. Rural	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Urban

3. This person seems…

a. Educated	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Uneducated
b. Smart	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Dumb
c. Rural	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Urban

4. This person seems…

a. Educated	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Uneducated
b. Smart	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Dumb
c. Rural	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Urban

5. This person seems…

a. Educated	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Uneducated
b. Smart	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Dumb
c. Rural	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Urban

6. This person seems…

a. Educated	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Uneducated
b. Smart	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Dumb
c. Rural	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Urban

7. This person seems…

a. Educated	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Uneducated
b. Smart	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Dumb
c. Rural	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Urban

8. This person seems…

a. Educated	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Uneducated
b. Smart	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Dumb
c. Rural	Don't Know	Can't Tell	Urban

Appendix 1.3: Demographic Information Form

If you are willing, please take a minute to fill out this survey. It will provide more information about the aggregate population who has participated in this project. Please remember that there will be no consequence for not participating. Also remember that you are not required to answer any question.

What is your sex? M F

What is your year in college? Fr So Jr Sr Other: _____

Were you born in Missouri? Y N

If yes, which city? _____

Were you raised in Missouri? Y N

If yes, which city? _____

Would you consider yourself more comfortable in urban environments? Rural environments? Either type of environment?

_____

Have you had any formal training, beyond introductory English courses, in the way that languages work? Y N

Would you be willing to participate in a personal interview related to this study? If yes, please provide your e-mail:

_____

Appendix 1.4: Audio-recorded Texts

Par 1: They gone to that place every week so far. They read reviews about it, tried it, and it lived up to its reputation. They have also took a lot of their friends with them, in order to see other reactions.

Par 2: They went directly after work in hopes of having an easier trip. Since they had already seen them a few weeks earlier, they were not in a great hurry, but they didn't want to drive through the night either.

Par 3: They drunk a lot of water today, because it is so hot outside. They come several miles through the heat, which probably made them need more water. At least they aren't dehydrated.

Par 4: They have began a new routine. Now, instead of waiting until later in the morning, they leave early. They knowed it would be a hard transition, but so far it is working.

Par 5: After they had driven around for a while, they returned. There were a lot of things to finish. They had chosen to stay later and complete the tasks before leaving so that they could relax more the next day.

Par 6: They came for a visit, because they had some free time. They enjoyed the visit, and while they were here, they went to see some old friends. They will be rested and ready for their return trip tomorrow.

Par 7: It has been a while since they have ridden together. Anymore, they usually arrive separately, but today they drove one car. It was easier for them, and they remembered why they started sharing a car.

Par 8: Looking at the menu, they couldn't decide what to order, because they had just ate a few hours earlier. They ordered a small appetizer, but when they had went home, they were hungry again.

Appendix 1.5: Typed Texts

If you choose to participate, please read the following series of texts, then follow the directions of the attached questionnaire. Please remember that you are not required to participate and there will be no consequences for opting not to participate. As with the first exercise, if you do not want to volunteer your opinion, simply turn in your blank form along with all the others at the end of the allotted time.

#1: They had already eaten, and were not hungry when others were having dinner. So, instead of joining the others, they drove around for a while. Everyone met up again later to spend more time together.

#2: Since they already saw everything they needed to while visiting, they thought about going home early. They went to one place nearby, got something to eat, and decided to stay until later that afternoon.

#3: They become fans of that music after their first experience. Now they like to listen to it all the time. Last weekend, they gone several hours for a show, because it was the closest one.

#4: They drank plenty of hot liquids to stay warm during winter. Yesterday afternoon, after they had come home, it was still so warm that they were able to enjoy something different.

#5: After they'd seen everything, and visited all of the interesting places, they decided to take a break. They'd gone all over on foot and were tired, so they headed indoors and sat down for a minute.

#6: They have showed this to everyone who has not been exposed to it before. They seen it for the first time over a year ago. They didn't get it until just recently, but they could not have gotten it earlier.

#7: They seen an opportunity to leave town for a while and they took it. After they had drove for some time, they realized they needed something they had left behind. They had to figure out how to replace it for the trip.

#8: After they'd saw their friends and spent some time there, they decided it was time to go. It was late, and after they'd spoke with everyone for a while, they said their good-byes and left.

Appendix 2.1: Transcript of Speaker A Texts

Par 4: They have began a new routine. Now, instead of waiting until later in

[ðej begæn a nʉʷ ɹʉtin næ̃u ɪstʰɛd ʌf wetin n̩tɪl leɾœɹ ɪn

the morning, they leave early. They knowed it would be a hard

ðʌ mɔɹnin ðej liv œɹli ðej nowd ɪt wʊd bi ɐ haɹdœɹ

transition, but so far it is working.

tʰɹænzɪʃʌn bʌt so faɹ ɪt ɪz wəɹkin]

Par 5: After they had driven around for a while, they returned. There were

[æftʰəɹ ðejʌd dɹɪvn̩ aɹaun fɔɹ ɐ wãl ðej ɹitʰœɹnd ðɛɹ wəɹ

a lot of things to finish. They had chosen to stay later and complete the

ɐlat ʌˑf Θiŋz dʌˑ fɪnɪʃ ðejʌd ʧozɛndʌ stʰej leɾəɹ n̩ kn̩ˑplit ðʌˑ

tasks before leaving so that they could relax more the next day.

tʰæsk bifɔɹ livin so ðej kʊd ɹilæks mɔɹ ðʌ nɛks dej]

Par 7: It has been a while since they have ridden together. Anymore, they

[ɪt ɪz bɛn ʌ wə̃l sɪns ðejʌd ɹɪdɪn dʌgɛðəɹ ɛnimɔɹ ðej

usually arrive separately, but today they drove one car. It was easier

juʒ□ɐˑli ɐˑɹaiv sɛpɹatli bʌˑt tʰɐˑdej ðej dɹov wʌn kaɹ ɪt wɐz iziœɹ

for them, and they remembered why they started sharing a car.

fɔɹ ðɛm æn ðej ɹimɛmbœɹd wai ðej stʰaɹdɛd ʃɛɹin a kaɹ]

Par 8: Looking at the menu, they couldn't decide what to order, because they

[lʊkin æt ðʌ mɛny ðej kʊdn disaid wʌt tʰɐ˞ ɔɹdəɹ bikʌz ðejd

had just ate a few hours earlier. They ordered a small appetizer, but

ʤʌs ejtʌ fjʉ auɹz əɹliəɹ ðej ɔɹdəɹd a small æpɛtizəɹ bʌt

when they had went home, they were hungry again.

wɛn ðejʌd wɛnt hom ðej wəɹ hʌŋgɹi ʌgɪn]

Appendix 2.2: Transcript of Speaker B Texts

Par 1: They gone to that place every week so far. They read reviews about it,

[ðej gandʌ ðæt plejs ɛvɹi wik so faɹ ðej ɹed rivjʉwz ʌbæt ɪt

tried it, and it lived up to its reputation. They have also took a lot of

tʰɹæ̤d ɪt ænɪt lɪvd ʌp tɪts ɹɛpjʉtejʃʌn ðejv also tʰʊk latɐ

their friends with them, in order to see other reactions.

ðɛɹ fɹɛnz wɪϴ ðɛm ɪnɔɹdɹːdʌ si ʌðœɹ ɹiækʃʌnz]

Par 2: They went directly after work in hopes of having an easier trip. Since

[ðej wɛnt dɪɹɛkli æftœɹ wœɹk ɪn hopsʌ hæviŋ n̩ iziəɹ tɹɪp sɪns

they had already seen them a few weeks earlier, they were not in a

ðejd ɐɹɛdi sin ðɛm ʌ fjʉ wiks əɹliœɹ ðej wœɹnt ɪˑnʌ

great hurry, but they didn't want to drive through the night either.

gɹejt hœɹi bʌt ðej dɪtn want tʰʌ dɹãv ϴɹʉ ðʌ næt iðœɹ]

Par 3: They drunk a lot of water today, because it is so hot outside. They come

[ðej dɹʌnk ʌlata warœɹ dədej bikɔz ɪsːo hɔt æ̤tsaid ðej kʌm

several miles through the heat, which probably made them need more

sɛvɹʌl mãlz ϴɹɯ̃ʷ ðʌ hĩːt wɪʧ pɹɔli maid ðɛm nid mə̤ɹ

water. At least they aren't dehydrated.

warəɹ ɛt lis ðɛj aɹnt dihaidɹedɛd]

Par 6: They came for a visit, because they had some free time. They enjoyed

[ðej kem fəɹ vɪzɪt kʌz ðej hæd sʌm fɹi tæ̣m ðej ɛnʤoid

the visit, and while they were here, they went to see some old friends.

ðʌ vɪzɪt n̩ wɑ̃l ðej wʊɹ hiɹ ðej wɛnt tʰʊ si sm̩old fɹɛnz

They will be rested and ready for their return trip tomorrow.

ðel bi ɹɛs□ɪd n̩ ɹɛdi fəɹ ðʌ ɹitʰəɹn tʰɹɪp tʰmaɹo]

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