

Best Practices for Representing Appalachian Speech

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What is speech?

- The vocalized form of human language
- The sounds of speech are a series of changes in air pressure created by the vibrations of the larynx and filtered by oral articulations.
- Language functions to communicate, but not just the linguistic information
 - ‘Information about the characteristics of the speaker himself’ Laver 1968:43

Indexicality

- “The array of structured variation available to an individual, coupled with other factors such as ideology ... can be seen as a rich resource from which the individual can choose elements in order to project their identity and achieve particular communicative goals.”

(Foulkes, Scobbie & Watt 2010)

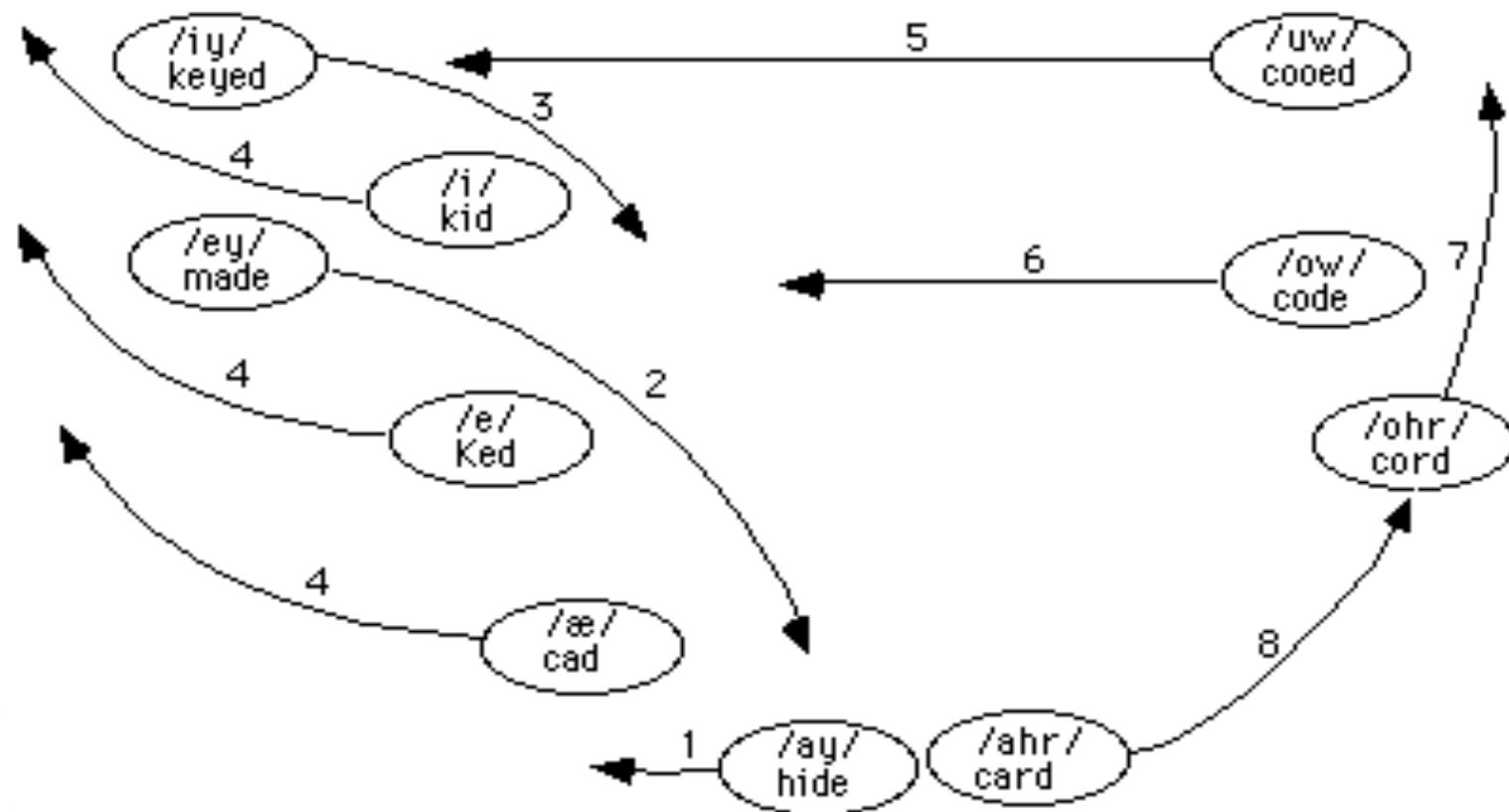
More Indexicality

- ‘Changes operate because communities are heterogenous, and because speaker-listeners *evaluate* competing linguistic forms. They recognize that variants have **indexical meanings** and thus that their use may be more or less attractive, appropriate or valuable in particular social circumstances’.
- (Foulkes, Scobbie and Watt 2010)

What makes Appalachian Speech different?

- ‘Appalachian is a place as well as places, people as well as peoples’. Montgomery 2013:15
- Reflecting diversity: geography, social differentiation, identity and personality
- The Southern Shift
 - A series of vowel changes happening across broad areas of the South (Labov, Yaeger, and Steiner 1972)
 - Focused primarily in rural areas; Not uniform

The Southern Shift



Advanced Southern Shift examples

- A monophthongized /ay/

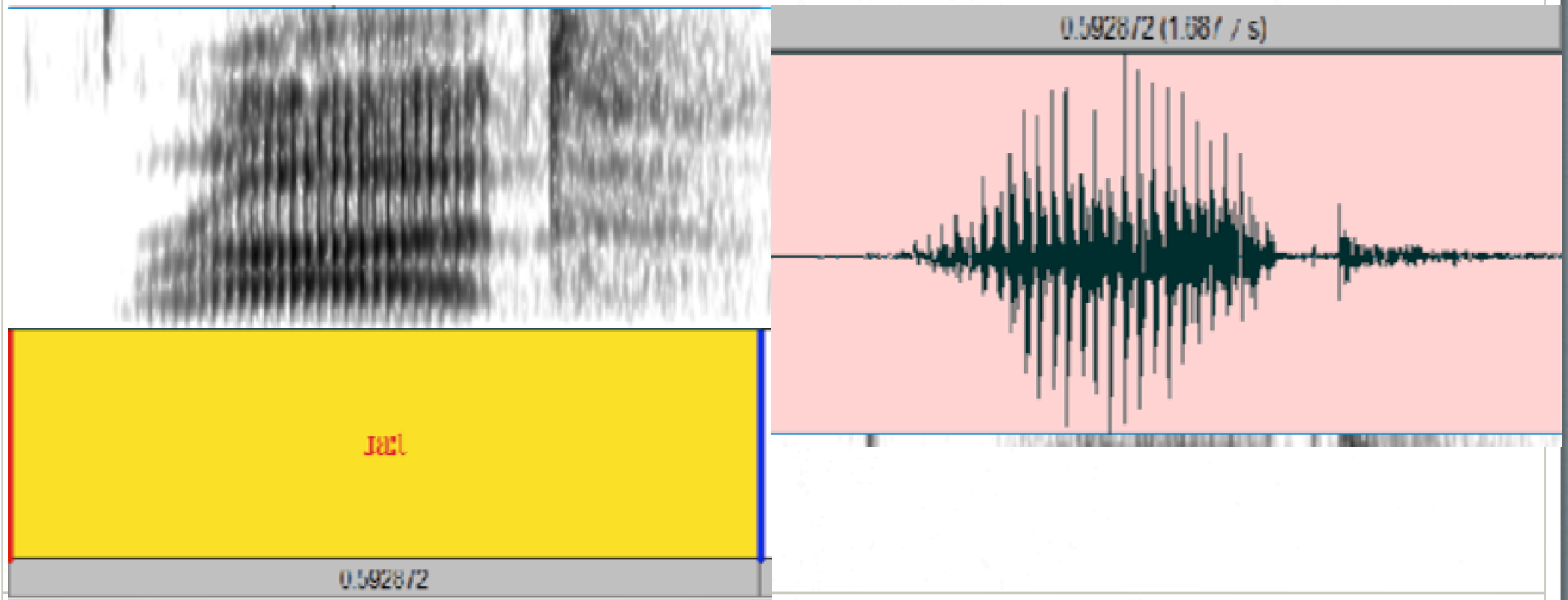


- Fronted back vowels



How can it be represented?

- Linguists can use things like spectrograms or waveforms



More representation

- Or you could use the International phonetic alphabet
- [la:k.ðis.]
- But, all of these can be hard to read/understand

THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (revised to 2005)

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC)													© 2005 IPA
	Bilabial		Labiodental		Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p	b				t	d		ʈ	ɖ	k	g	ʕ
Nasal	m		ɱ			n			ɲ		ŋ	ɴ	ʔ
Trill		ʙ				r							
Tap or Flap				ɸ		ɾ							
Fricative	ɸ	β	f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ	x	χ	ħ
Lateral fricative						ɬ	ɮ		ç		ʁ		ʕ
Approximant			ʋ			ɹ			j		ɰ		
Lateral approximant						l			ɭ		ʟ		

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a voiced consonant. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible

CONSONANTS (NON-PULMONIC)

Clicks		Voiced implosives		Ejectives	
◌ǀ	Bilabial	◌ɓ	Bilabial	◌ʼ	Examples:
◌ǃ	Dental	◌ɗ	Dental/alveolar	◌pʼ	Bilabial
◌ǂ	(Post)alveolar	◌ɟ	Palatal	◌tʼ	Dental/alveolar
◌ǁ	Palatoalveolar	◌ɠ	Velar	◌kʼ	Velar
◌ǁ̥	Alveolar lateral	◌ɣ	Uvular	◌sʼ	Alveolar fricative

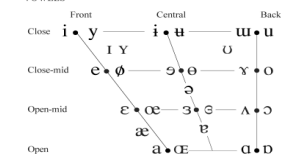
OTHER SYMBOLS

ʌ	Voiceless labial-velar fricative	ʑ	Alveolo-palatal fricatives
w	Voiced labial-velar approximant	ɺ	Voiced alveolar lateral flap
ɥ	Voiced labial-palatal approximant	ɥ̟	Simultaneous ɥ and x
ħ	Voiceless epiglottal fricative		
ʕ	Voiced epiglottal fricative		Affricates and double articulations can be represented by two symbols joined by a tie bar if necessary.
ʕ̰	Epiglottal plosive		

DIACRITICS Diacritics may be placed above a symbol with a descender, e.g. $\overset{\circ}{\eta}$

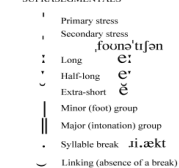
h	Voicless	h	d	..	Breathily voiced	b	a	..	Dental	t	d
	Voiced	s	h	..	Creaky voiced	b	a	..	Apical	t	d
	Aspirated	s	h	..	Lingual	t	d	..	Labial	t	d
	More rounded	o	o	W	Labialized	t	W	dj	..	Nasalized	e
	Less rounded	o	o	..	Palatalized	t	dj	..	..	Nasal release	e
	Advanced	y	y	V	Velarized	t	V	dV	..	Natural release	e
	Retracted	e	e	..	Pharyngealized	t	dV	..	..	No audible release	d
x	Centralized	e	e	..	Velarized or pharyngealized	t	t	..	..	..	d
	Mid-centralized	e	e	x	Raised	e	(j)	..	-voiced alveolar fricative)	..	..
	Syllabic	n	n	..	Lowered	e	(j)	..	-voiced bilabial approximant)	..	..
	Non-syllabic	e	e	..	Advanced Tongue Root	e	e	..	..	..	..
	Rhoticity	e	e	..	Retracted Tongue Root	e	e	..	..	..	..

VOWELS



Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

SUPRASEGMENTALS



TONES AND WORD ACCENTS



Literary Attempts

- George Washington Harris
 - Hit am an orful thing, George, tu be a nat'ral born durn'd fool. Yu-se never 'sperienced hit pussionally, hev yu? Hits made pow-fully agin our famerly, an all owin tu dad. I orter bust my head open agin a bluff ove rocks, an' jis' wud du hit, ef I warnt a cussed coward.
- Mary Murfree
 - They 'lowed don yander ter M'ria's house ez this hyar Evander Price hev kem ter be the headin'est, no 'count critter in the kentry: The 'lowed he hev been a-foolin' round Pete Blenkins's forge, a-workin' fur him ez a striker, till he thinks hisself ez good a blacksmith

Problems

- Can be hard to read
- What exactly is being represented?
 - Some things are how we all speak (wuz, tu, hev)
 - Not linguistically nuanced/consistent (not all the potential changes are made)
- Functions more as a type of belittlement
 - Indicates, since it is a counterpoint to a more mainstream narrator or other characters, a lack of modernity/education

Other Example Representations

- James Still – uses mainly lexicon
 - Aplenty, rag edge, etc.
- Silas House – uses some syntax/morphology and lexicon
 - Knowed, I done that, etc.
- Amy Greene
 - Uses syntax/morphology and some lexicon

How can we improve?

- Knowing how important speech is for indexicality, how can we improve?
 - First, understand exactly what the linguistic situation is, so that any attempt can be more informed
 - Must also think of the reader
 - Anecdote from an aspiring author friend
 - Find a balance
 - Linguistic fidelity and readability

Proposed Options

- For monophthongization of /ay/
 - Right → raht
 - Strike → strahk
- For fronted back vowels
 - School → skewl (schewl)
 - Soap → seop (seowp)
- High Front vowels
 - Chicken → cheeken
- Let the Reader Know!
 - Preface; Appendix (Young 1987, Preece 2007)
 - These two authors used slightly different techniques (quite successfully!), and they alerted the reader.
 - Know how this will be perceived

Selected References

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