

"We Speak Normal Midwestern English...Most of the Time": The Co-Influence of "Place" Ideology and Socio-Geographic Change on Vowel Variation in Columbus

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I present an analysis of the co-influence of "place" ideology, the social evaluation of linguistic variables, and community-level socio-geographic change on the development of the Third Dialect Shift (TDS), as well as other dialect features marked as "local" in Columbus, OH during the course of the 20th Century. (As defined here, the TDS involves the systematic backing of the low vowels /o/ and /ae/, as well as the front short vowels /E/ and /I/.) To do so, I analyze the speech of 62 speakers, born between 1896-1991, including Imer analyses of all significant change trends involving the TDS. I also analyze conversational interview data obtained from the speakers in which they discuss their views on Columbus as a "place" and their social evaluations of linguistic variables in use in the community, as well as demographic data on 20th Century urban growth trends in the community. I then consider the influence of the evaluative and demographic change data on the linguistic patterns of variation and change found via the TDS Imer analyses.

The results of my analysis reveal social evaluation of linguistic features has led to the identification and *enregisterment* of a variety of features perceived to be local to Columbus by area residents as the Columbus Dialect (CD). However, deeper consideration of discussion of place ideology and the impact of socio-geographic changes occurring since 1950 in Columbus*, also reveals that there are essentially two dialects of Columbus speech actively recognized and enregistered by speakers. Each of these varieties is social-class based, and each has different social and socio-evaluative connotations for speakers. (*These include suburbanization, annexation, and an increasing influx of new community residents.)

Given this fact, I propose an approach to investigating the enregisterment process that build on previous research on enregisterment and "place" (e.g. Agha, 2005; Johnstone, et al, 2006; Johnstone, 2013), but also adds a new perspective on that process. In Columbus, I propose enregisterment of the CD among speakers has two components: *negative enregisterment* and *positive enregisterment*. Negative enregisterment involves the working class dialect--a dialect with Appalachian roots--while positive enregisterment involves the middle class dialect--one making strong use of all features of the TDS. Positive enregisterment involves speakers infusing a series of localized dialect features with positive attributes, such as "standard," "correct," "proper," and speakers use these features with overt pride. Negative enregisterment involves another cluster of localized features being infused with negative attributes, such as "ignorant," "improper," "old-fashioned," and these features are subject to overt mocking by speakers.

I then explore the linguistic realities of negative and positive enregisterment of dialect features of the CD in meta-discursive commentary in the community. This includes media discussions of the dialect on television and in newspapers, as well as discussion of dialect features by speakers in sociolinguistic interview data. Finally, I conclude with a consideration of my view on enregisterment as it could be applied to

other communities explored in previous studies of enregisterment and "place," such as Pittsburgh, Chicago, New York City, and New Orleans.