Pacific Voices, 2014 -2019

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Progress report [1/2020]

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1. Introduction

1.1 Challenges

One of the challenges of teaching linguistics, and especially of teaching linguistics to non-majors is to heighten students' awareness of dialect diversity, dialect research, and dialect stereotypes. As professors, we discuss language variation in classes and elicit pronunciations, vocabulary and usage from students, but we often find students to be uncomfortable with the complexity of usage and sometimes nervous that they are not speaking properly. Students in the Pacific Northwest are often surprised to learn that they have dialects and that the speech of the Pacific Northwest might vary widely according to features of region, age, gender, ethnicity, education and social class.

And it's not just students. When we talk dialect diversity with members of the general public, they are sometimes skeptical that the region would have a discernable accent or dialect. A historian colleague who read an essay on Pacific Northwest dialect perceptions questioned whether *bag*-raising was a real phenomenon and asked how dialects compared to other regional styles, like clothing and architecture. An administrator from Texas, reviewing a grant proposal, opined that Oregonians didn't have an accent, "not like Texas."

Here we report on some survey and classroom techniques to bring linguistic research into the classroom and engage students in exploring their own speech variation. Taking Ashland, Oregon, and Bellingham, Washington, as end points along the I-5 corridor of the Pacific Northwest, we piloted a survey of about 887 (mostly) students during the academic years 2014-2019 (continuing into the 2019-2020 academic year), asking about perceptions of pronunciation with a long-term goal of collecting demographic information. After obtaining IRB approval, we used the Qualtrics survey software to develop an online survey

asking students 35 questions, 22 of which had to do with language and 12 of which were demographic, and a final question about using their survey results.[1]

1.2. Goals

Initially, we had four goals. First, we wanted to give students an appreciation for the complexity of dialect data and the way in which representations of dialect (and data) are often abstractions. Thus, in class discussions, students often note that their own speech differs from textbook descriptions, and they cite various anecdotal examples and counterexamples from friends and relatives ("My boyfriend says EYE-ron and it drives me crazy," said one student). By having students analyze actual data from their speech community, they can see where patterns exist and don't, and they may become less judgmental about variation.

Second, we wanted to explore the various vowel shifts and the extent to which they might differently be showing up in the speech of northwest Washington (Bellingham is 21 miles from the Canadian border) and southwest Oregon (Ashland is 13 miles from the California border). We hoped that we might spark students' interest in the topic of vowel shifts and phonetic variation more generally.

A third goal was to collect data on some potentially age- and social class-related items, such as the use of gender neutral *dude*, the double possessive *your guys's*, *hella,* and *legit*, as well as the pronunciations of items like *often* and *coupon.*

Our fourth goal was to develop some questions, activities and exercises surrounding local dialects that would allow us to reinforce learning goals in linguistics as we discuss the survey results in classes.

Finally, in this initial phase of our work, we cast a wide net to experiment with the survey software and to determine both what was doable as researchers and what was important to teach in class. In the conclusion, we offer some suggestions for the future.

1.3. Oregon and Washington

[1] The earliest versions of the survey had 46 questions, 35 of which had to do which language and 10 of which were demographic.

The earliest languages spoken in the Northwest were those of immigrants from northeast Asia, traveling across the continental shelf into what is now Alaska and Canada, making their way along the Pacific coast and inland. As a result, the Northwest shows especially dense concentrations of pre-European languages. First contact by Europeans came by sea, when Spanish galleons landed along the coast of northern California in the mid-1500s. In 1778, on his third voyage to the Pacific, English Captain James Cook sailed to the central Oregon coast and in 1792, Captain Robert Gray of Rhode Island sailed into the mouth of the Columbia River, which Gray renamed after his ship, the *Columbia Rediviva*. The famous expedition of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark and the founding of Astoria in 1811 helped to further establish the American presence in the Pacific Northwest.

From 1818 to 1846, the Oregon Territory was jointly occupied by British and Americans. The Oregon Treaty of 1846 fixed the boundary between Great Britain and America at 49 degrees. Once the border was established, American settlement in the Oregon Territory took off. In *The Willamette Valley: Migration and Settlement on the Oregon Frontier*, William Bowen writes that those settling in that area tended to be "disproportionately from the ranks of unmarried men from the Northeast or abroad." The census of 1850 recorded 11,873 Oregonians, 60% of whom were males and most of whom hailed from the states of Maine, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio (Loy, et. al. 2001, 15).

According to Randall V. Mills, most settlers funneled through the Missouri and Iowa area while preparing to travel west on the Oregon Trail. The migration brought language to the new territory that incorporated the speech of many emigrants from New England or New York (Mills, 1950: 83). In Oregon, Mills proposed three broad founding dialect areas, a narrow strip along the Willamette River from Portland to Eugene, a more rural area extending from the Willamette River Valley to the Pacific Coast Range, and an area to the east of the Cascade Mountains and to the south of the Calapooya Mountains. As for Washington, Carroll Reed (1952) noted that while the Missouri element predominated in the areas of Washington adjacent to Oregon, spreading "all along the Columbia River, particularly in the areas east of Walla Walla," other waves of settlers from Iowa, southern Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio predominated in the Pacific counties. According the Reed, "the speech of southern Illinois and Iowa may be considered typical for most of the state of Washington," at least as far as the founder effect is considered.

Today both states are increasingly multilingual, though less so than much of the rest of the country. According to the data from the Language Map Data Center of the Modern Language Association, about 83 percent of the Oregon and Washington population speak English at home and about 17 percent speak a language other than English, with Spanish,

Vietnamese, Russian, and Tagalog among the most robust.[2] Apart from the founder effects and linguistic diversity, both Oregon and Washington have significant urban-rural divides and show the influence of emerging industries and of emigrants from other states.

Our subjects were 887 (mostly) students at Southern Oregon University and Western Washington University.[3] Demographic data collected included age, gender, ethnicity, hometown, perceived social class, college major, and family household income. We also asked students' self-perception of whether they were urban, rural or suburban and to rate themselves as speakers and writers of English.[4]

2. Pronunciation

2.1 The *cot-caught* Merger

The Pacific Northwest is geographically situated between two current linguistic shifts in vowel production: the so-called California Vowel Shift and the Canadian Vowel Shift. The California Vowel Shift, shown below with the shifts represented by arrows, involves a fronting of the vowels produced in the back of the mouth—the long vowels *boot* and *coat* and the shorter vowels in *could* and *cut* being pronounced more toward the front of the mouth (approaching *butte, key-oat, cud* and *ket*), with the short front vowels being lowered and backed (*kid* toward *ked, get* toward *gat and cat* toward *cot*). At the same time, the earlier distinct vowels in *cot* and *caught* are merging. Linguistic shifts happen slowly over long periods of time, and are sensitive to style shifts and the performance of identity, but overall what had been a vowel trapezoid historically is becoming more of the vowel triangle.[5]

[2] The MLA Language Map Data Center provides information about over three hundred languages spoken in the United States, using data from the American Community Survey and the 2000 US Census. See https://apps.mla.org/map_data.

[3] Since the survey was available by link, some students invited roommates and others to participate and we know of at least one faculty member who took the survey along with a class.

[4] Additionally, we asked about parents' hometown but the results were too unsystematic to be helpful other than anecdotally.

[5] See also Conn (2000), Esling and Warkentyle (1993), Foster and Hoffman (1966), Denham (2019), Becker (2019b), Wassink (2019), Fridland, et al. (2016, 2017), Kennedy and Grama, James. (2012) and Luthin (1987).

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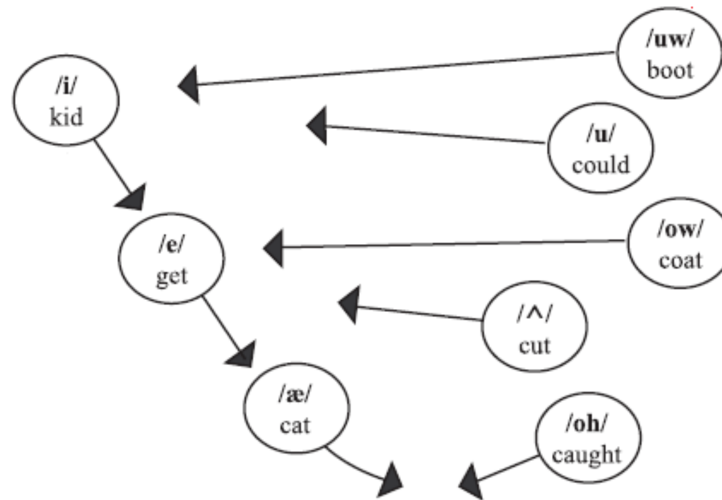


(diagram from Ward, 41, from Hinton, et al.)

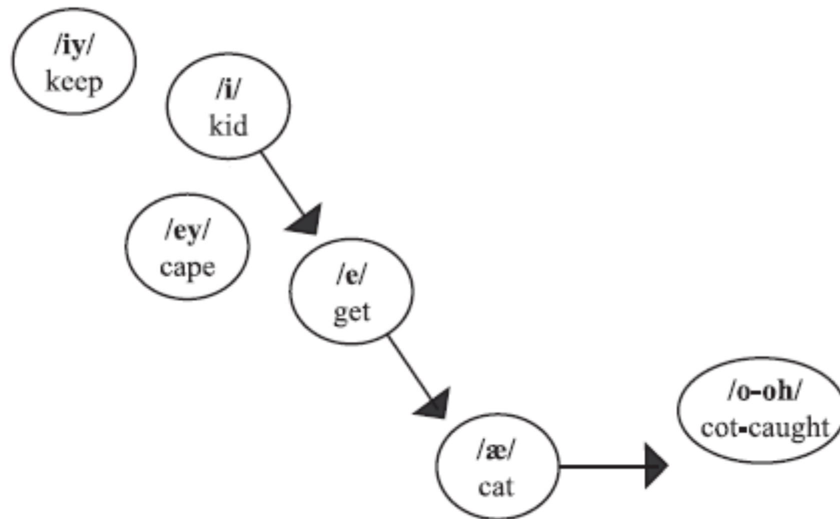
Not shown in the diagram is a counter-raising among the front vowels in syllables ending in velar consonants (*g, k, ng*). There, the lower vowels in the front of the mouth shift upward, yielding *beg* for *bag, laig* for *leg, thenk* (or even *think*) for *thank*, and so on. See Freeman (2013, 2014).

The elements of the California vowel shift are proceeding at different rates and are more prominent in different speech styles and some (such as the lowering and backing of /æ/ and the fronting of /uw/ have made their way into media stereotypes of the Valley Girl/Surfer Dude speech. Students are often aware of the fronting of /uw/ in their own speech as an aspect of speech style but seem to be less attuned to their backing of /æ/.

The Canadian Vowel Shift is similar to the California Shift in several respects. First described in 1995 by Clarke, Elms and Youssef, the shift also involves the lowering of the front lax vowels /æ/ (the short-*a* of *trap* and *cat*), /ɛ/ (the short-*e* of *dress*), and /ɪ/ (the short-*i* of *kit*). It also involves the merger of the *cot* and *caught* vowels, though the merged Canadian vowel is more rounded, slightly lower and slightly further back than the merged *cot/caught* vowel among many speakers in the U.S.

According to Charles Boberg, the retraction of /æ/ is being led by speakers from Ontario, in in east-central, and by women. The shift is somewhat less advanced among speakers from the other regions of Canada and among men (Boberg, 2005). In the *Atlas of North American*

English, (Labov et al., 2006), it is suggested that about a quarter of speakers in the Western U.S., exhibit the Canadian Shift. [6]



(diagram from Ward, 42 from Clarke)

When we discuss the vowel shifts in introductory classes, students are fascinated but also sometimes unsure of their own pronunciation. Thus we begin by collecting data on some of the more easily identifiable of the vowels involved in the shift, the vowel sounds in the names *Don* and *Dawn.* The *don/dawn* pair is salient for students because the orthography indicates the word difference and thus highlights the phonological merger. And often, someone knows in a class knows both a Don and a Dawn and can attest to the possibility of confusion arising from the merger. Two of our survey questions looked at this pair and at *hock* and *hawk*:

> *Q2 - How do you usually pronounce the vowel sounds in the words DON and DAWN? The same or differently.*
>
> *Q19 - Do you pronounce the words HOCK and HAWK the same or differently?*

---

[6] According to Ward, "both Canadian and California English share the low back vowel merger, a lowering of front lax vowels, a retraction of /æ/, a centralization of / ʌ/, and some degree of fronting in the tense back vowels /ow, uw/ and the back lax vowel /u/" (Ward, 42). The California Shift parallels the Canadian Shift, with the apparent distinction that the Californian /ɒ/ is more centralized and less rounded than Canadian /ɒ/. Those studying the Canadian shift are also still trying to resolve the details of the shift of the vowels in *kid* and *dress*, particularly focusing on regional variation within Canada, on whether the shifts are lowerings or retraction, and whether both the /i/ and /ɛ/ are involved. Boberg (2008) also notes that /æ/-raising before /g/ is a regional indicator for the Prairies. See also Becker (2019a).

81% said they pronounce *don/dawn* the same and differently and 83% pronounce *hock/hawk* the same.

It is worth asking at this point whether students are accurately able to self-identify their pronunciations in response to prompts. More research is doubtless needed on this topic, but in section 8 we report on a sub-study comparing actual pronunciation to reported pronunciation for 23 speakers. Here we found an 89% accuracy in identifying their own pronunciation.

2.2 Front vowels

We also asked a set of questions about the pronunciation of the front vowels in the words *Craig, leg,* and *egg,* where the vowels may be tensed /e/ or a lax /ɛ/. The name *Craig* is word of Celtic origin and related to the Scottish Gaelic *creag* "rock," and thus also to the word "crag." The pronunciation varies in the English-speaking world, and in the U.S. and Canada it is often pronounced with the lax /ɛ/. Historically the pronunciation of Craig falls outside of the California/Canadian shift and the alternate pronunciations appear to be in fairly evenly distributed among Pacific Northwest speakers.

Q5 - Do you usually pronounce the name CRAIG as crAYg or crEHg?

59% reported pronouncing the name as crAYg and 41% as crEHg.

In *leg* and *egg* we were looking for evidence of raising of the vowel lax /ɛ/, to a tensed /e/. This is part of the counter-raising aspect of the California vowel shift in particular.

Q7 Do you usually pronounce EGGS more like EHggs or AIggs?
Q20 Do you usually pronounce the word LEGS more like LEHggs or LAYggs?

The results were:

Non-raised /ɛ/	Raised /e/
64% EHggs	**36% AIggs**
62% lEHgs	**38% lAYggs**

Most speakers reported pronunciations with a lax /ɛ/ though just over a third were *egg* and *leg* raisers.

In classes (and conversations, especially those with individuals in the service professions) we also find evidence of raising of the /æ/ vowel in *thank*, which is in a closed syllable before velar /ŋ/ and /k/. *Thank you* is sometimes pronounced /thɛŋkju/ or even /thInkju/. We return to *thank you* in section 8.1 below.

2.3 *Aaron* and *Erin, and Mary, merry* and *marry*

We also examined the pronunciation of the pair of names *Aaron* and *Erin,* which makes a nice pedagogical contrast with *Dawn* and *Don.* In most of the U.S., the pronunciation of Aaron and Erin is the same, with a mid-lax /ɛ/ rather than a low /æ/. American English merged the two sounds before /r/ while they remain distinct in the U.K.[7]

Given this, we expect the American West to show the merger of these sounds quite robustly.

> *Q17 - Do you say the names ERIN and AARON the same or differently?*

78% reported pronouncing the names the same.

The *Aaron/Erin* merger opens the door to classroom discussion of the three-way contrast before /r/ in the words *Mary* /e/, *merry* /ɛ/, and *marry* /æ/. In New England, New York City and Philadelphia and parts of the South, the three words are often distinct. In the Inland North and mid-Atlantic (excluding Philadelphia), there is often a two-way contrast of with *Mary* and *merry* pronounced as /mɛri/ and *marry* retaining the /æ/ (/mæri/). See Labov, et al. (2006), Dinkin (2005) and Gordon (2008), and Kretzschmar (2008) for more background and discussion.   In much of the rest of the country, the three are merged as /mɛri/. For simplicity's sake in the survey, we took for granted that *Mary* and *merry* would be homophones (pronounced as /ɛ /) for many speakers and focused on *marry* and *merry*.

> *Q 9 How do you usually pronounce the vowel sounds in the words MARRY and MERRY? The same or differently.*

83% reported pronouncing them the same. 82 respondents reported pronouncing both *marry/merry* and *Erin/Aaron* differently, but 110 of those who pronounced *marry/merry* the same pronounced *Erin/Aaron* differently and 70 of those who pronounced *marry/merry* differently pronounced *Erin/Aaron* the same.

[7] The exceptions are New England and parts of New York City and New Jersey. See the discussion on the Linguist List (https://linguistlist.org/ask-ling/message-details1.cfm?asklingid=200384213). There is considerable variation in the U.K. pronunciation of *Aaron* and *Erin*.

2.4 *Horrible*

The pronunciation of the word *horrible* (and similar words (such as *orange, florist,* and *Florida*) with /ɑr/ is common in the area including New York City, New Jersey, Philadelphia and the Carolinas. Elsewhere the pronunciation tends to be the /ɔr/, with the exception that Oregonians typical have an /ar/ in the state's name. We expected the pronunciation of *horrible* to have the pervasive /ɔr/ we represented as HOAR-ible.

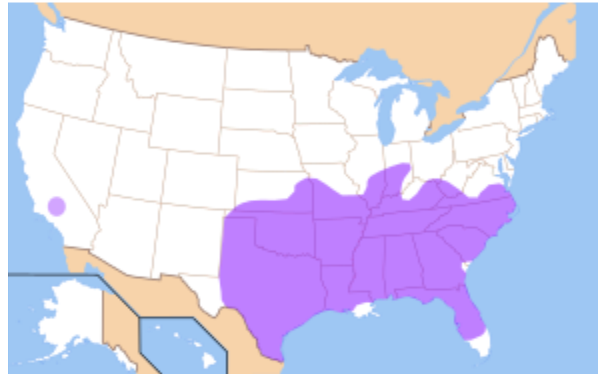
Q6 - Do you usually pronounce HORRIBLE as HAR-ible or HOAR-ible.

97% reported HOAR-ible.

2.5 The *pin/pen* merger

The *pin-pen* merger is a merger of /ɪ/ and /ɛ/ before the nasal consonants [m], [n], and [ŋ], which predominates in the South, resulting in a near homophony in words like *pen* and *pin, gem* and *gym, him* and *hem, kin* and *Ken, bin* and *Ben,* and so on. Bailey and Maynor (1989, 13) report that the merger began "in the last part of the nineteenth century and worked its way to completion during the last half century." The *pin/pen* merger is found in the Midland Regions (Labov, et al. 2006), has expanded west, and is widespread through Kansas City, Houston, Seattle, and Bakersfield, California (Strelluf 2014 and Koops 2008). Since parts of Oregon and Washington were settled by emigrants from the South, we were interested in testing the robustness of this merger in the Pacific Northwest. Impressionistically, it appears to be most prominent with speakers who have Southern roots or close relatives. [8]

[8] See Bigham (2005), Koops, Gentry, and Pantos (2008), Thomas (1958), and Brown (1991) for more discussion.



***pin/pen* merger areas in purple**

We approached this obliquely by asking about the pronunciation of *center,* rather than *pin/pen* directly.

Q18 - Do you usually pronounce the first vowel of CENTER as sen or sin?

Speakers overwhelmingly selected the non-raised vowel. **96% reported the pronunciation SEN-ter.** Of the 4% of respondents whose responses suggest that they have the merger (34 individuals) 8 were from the South or had lived in the South several of the Oregon, Washington, and California speakers reported rural identification.

3. Once-stigmatized forms: *coupon* and *often*

There is of course more to speech variation than pronunciation of vowels, so we have also been collecting data on the pronunciation and use of lexical items that seem to be social variants. One of these is the pronunciation of *coupon*, which in American usage is pronounced with or without a glide following the initial /k/. The glide is a twentieth century development and was for a time stigmatized (and it remains a shibboleth for some speakers and in some pronunciation guides), though current dictionaries give it as standard. But while, dictionaries of American English give both pronunciations, older dictionaries and more prescriptive guides still treat the glide pronunciation as substandard (the *Big Book of Beastly Mispronunciations*, for example, calls it "Spurious" and Bryan Garner says that it "betrays an ignorance of French and of the finer points of English"). Nevertheless, in the U.S., pronunciations with a palatal glide (a /j/) before long /u/ are common after velar consonants (as in *cute, cube, cue, Cupid, skew, factual, regulate, angular,* and *argue*).[9]

[9] Palatalization before /u:/ tends to occur in some relatively well-defined phonetic situations, such as when the /u:/ occurs at the beginning of a work as in *university* or *usual*. Palatalization is especially robust after labial consonants in American

In the case of *coupon*, we offered speakers the third option of reporting that they pronounced it both ways.[10] The speakers we surveyed reported a slight majority pronouncing the word as *COOP-on* but roughly a quarter consistently pronounce it with the glide (CYEW-pon).

> *Q8 Do you usually pronounce the word COUPON as COOP-on CYEW-pon? Or both ways.*

58% reported the pronunciation COOP-on; 21% reported pronouncing the word as CYEWpon or CUEpon; 19% reported pronouncing *coupon* both ways.

In classes, the *coupon* item can lead to a discussion of the misleading role of etymology in judging pronunciation. *Coupon* can be traced back to the French word *coup* (meaning a blow, as in *coup-contrecoup* or *coup de grâce* and later an impressive act (as in a *publishing*

English. These include the stops /m/, /p/, and /b/ (as in *mute, amuse, pew, pure, puerile, repute, beauty, bureau, vocabulary, constabulary*) and also the fricatives /f/ and /v/ (as in *fuse, fuel, fuel, futile, view, revue, uvula*). Palatalization is not automatic after these sounds, however, and spelling is often a clue: *pew* and *pooh, beauty* and *booty, feud* and *food, mute* and *moot*. Not long ago one of us heard someone pronounce the name [Stanley] *Kubrick* as *CUE-brick* and the name *Pulitzer* often has a glide (though Joseph Pulitzer insisted it did not). Aside from such pronunciation, it turns out that the palatalized versions of many common words are often the older forms, still used among many speakers of British and Canadian English: *due, tune, dune, news, lewd*, and so on. Twentieth-century American speech tended to drop these palatal glides.

		Do you usually pronounce the word COUPON as:			
		COOP-on	CYEW-pon	I pronounce it both ways	Total
How would you characterize your social class standing?	Poverty Level	18	11	11	40
	Lower Middle Class/Working Class	174	76	65	315
	Middle Class	68	40	34	142
	Upper Middle Class/Affluent	233	79	64	376
	Total	493	206	174	

[10] Some of the speakers who report pronouncing *coupon* both ways also report having different meanings for the pronunciations: physical ones that you would cut out would be CYEWpons but other kinds, such as internet coupons, are COOPons.

coup). *Coupon* entered English in the 19th century, with a first OED citation from 1822. It was initially a financial term related to certificates attached to bonds. The meaning evolved to refer to prepaid ticket for travel and in the early twentieth century to the familiar sense part of an advertisement redeemable for a discount or free offer.

We also looked at what connections there are between self-perceptions of social class and of speaking/writing ability and pronunciation of *coupon*? There was relatively little difference across class.

		Do you usually pronounce the word COUPON as:		
		COOP-on	CYEW-pon	I pronounce it both ways
How would you characterize your social class standing?	Poverty Level / Lower Middle Class/Working Class	40%	42%	44%
	Middle Class	13%	19%	19%
	Upper Middle Class/Affluent	47%	38%	37%
	Total	493	206	174

We also looked at the self-reports of speaking and writing, and again there is very little difference. Interestingly the CYEW-pon speakers did not consider themselves less good English speakers or writers, suggesting that it is not stigmatized for them.

	Do you consider yourself _____ speaker/writer of English			
	a better than average	**an average**	**a worse than average**	Total
COOP-on	292	211	9	501
CYEW-pon	117	82	6	205
both ways	102	62	1	165
Total	511	355	16	882

58% of COOP-on speakers considered themselves better than average as did 57% of CYEWpon speakers and 61% of those who pronounce *coupon* both ways. COOP-on is still the marginally dominant pronunciation but about 40% of respondents either pronounce the word CYEWpon or alternate. The results are consistent across social class and gender.

The situation for *often*, another former shibboleth, is somewhat more complex than that of *coupon*. The formerly stigmatized form AWFten is vastly preferred, though somewhat less

so by females and urbanites. The preferences of the self-described middle class speakers are fairly close.

Historically, *often* comes from *oft,* and the /t/ was lost among educated speakers in the 17th century. But the /t/ was retained or reintroduced as a spelling pronunciation. Merriam Webster cites the pronunciation as \ˈȯ-fən, ÷ˈȯf-tən\, with the ÷ sign (the obelus mark) indicating "a pronunciation variant that occurs in educated speech but that is considered by some to be questionable or unacceptable." [11]

Others commentators are less diplomatic about the /t/-less pronunciation, with Elster's *Big Book of Beastly Mispronunciations* calling it "less common in educated speech and far more often disapproved of by cultivated speakers—particularly teachers of English, drama, and speech." Elster cites early twentieth century commentators who called it "vulgar" and "sham-refined," or in Henry Fowler's terms, practiced by "the academic speakers who affect a more precise enunciation than their neighbours … & the uneasy half-literates who like to prove that they can spell." Garner refers to it as non-U usage (following the terminology of Alan Ross and Nancy Mitford for upper-class and non-upper-class usage and social practices in England).

Nevertheless, the speakers we surveyed pronounced the word without a /t/ by about three to one, though some noted in class discussion that they sometimes pronounce it either way.

25% reported pronouncing the word with a t (AWFTen)
75% reported pronouncing it without a t (AWFen)

When we cross-tabulated this split for social class we found little difference in the percentages according to class self-perception.

[11] See http://www.merriam-webster.com/help/faq-february-nuclear-pronounce. Merriam Webster adds that "We are definitely not advocating that anyone should use those pronunciations […] or that they should abandon the others that are regarded as more acceptable."

		Do you pronounce OFTEN as		
		AWFen	AWFten	Total
How would you characterize your social class standing?	Poverty Level	14	26	40
	Lower Middle Class/Working Class	79	236	315
	Middle Class	39	121	160
	Upper Middle Class/Affluent	96	270	366
	Total	228	657	887

		Do you pronounce OFTEN as		
		AWFen	AWFten	Total
How would you characterize your social class standing?	Poverty Level	35%	65%	
	Lower Middle Class/Working Class	25%	75%	
	Middle Class	24%	66%	
	Upper Middle Class/Affluent	26%	64%	
		26%	74%	

Gender did not appear to be a factor either: the percentage of females with the AWFEN pronunciation is about the same as the percentage of males.

		Do you pronounce OFTEN as		
		AWFen	AWFten	Total
What is your gender?	Male	69	178	247
	Female	151	463	614

		Do you pronounce OFTEN as	
		AWFen	AWFten
What is your gender?	Male	28%	72%
	Female	25%	75%

However, rural speakers appear to prefer AWFten, 82%, as compared to 65% of urban speakers and 76% of suburban speakers.

		Do you pronounce OFTEN as		
		AWFen	**AWFten**	Total
How would you characterize your background?	**Urban**	50	91	141
	Rural	26	115	141
	Suburban	80	257	337
	Total	156	463	

		Do you pronounce OFTEN as	
		AWFen	**AWFten**
How would you characterize your background?	**Urban**	35%	65%
	Rural	18%	82%
	Suburban	24%	76%

Finally, we looked to see what the preferences of COOP-on and CYEW-pon speakers were with respect to *often* and vice versa (the preferences of AWFen and AWFten speakers for the pronunciation of *coupon*.)

		Do you pronounce OFTEN as		
		AWFen	**AWFten**	Total
Do you usually pronounce the word COUPON as:	**COOP-on**	150	363	513
	CYEW-pon	41	166	207
	I pronounce it both ways	37	128	165
	Total	228	657	885

About 10% more COOP-on speakers preferred AWFen than AWFten and 10% more AWFen speakers preferred COOP-on suggesting a clustering of the former prestige forms for some speakers.

	Say AWFen	Say AWFTen
COOP-on speakers	30%	70%
CYEW-pon speakers	20%	80%
Both	24%	76%

	Say COOP-on	Say CYEW-pon	Say both
AWFen speakers	65%	18%	16%
AWFTen speakers	55%	25%	19%

4. Two other problematic words: *syrup* and *route*

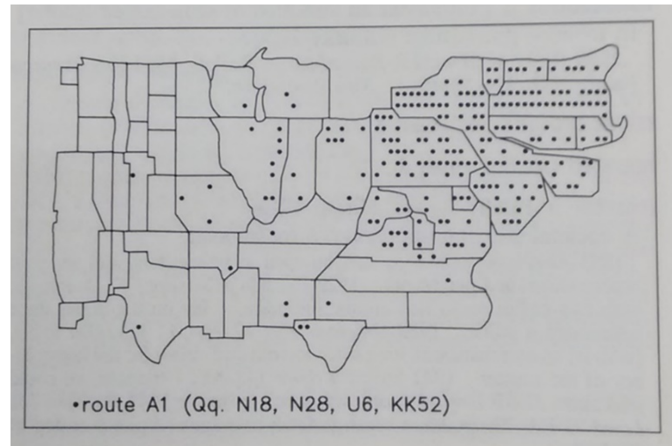
How do you say the words *syrup* and *route? The Dictionary of American Regional English* (DARE) gives the pronunciation of the former as “Usu. ['sɪrəp, sɝəp], Sth SMidl ['sʌrəp, 'sɝp],” noting that there is additional regional variation and evidence from spelling pronunciations. The DARE coding indicates a usual pronunciation with a high lax vowel or a mid-lax rhotic [ɝ] with somewhat different pronunciations in the South and South Midlands. Merriam-Webster offers the pronunciations [ˈsər-əp, ˈsir-əp, ˈsə-rəp] as variants and the Harvard Dialect study points to the widespread use of the variants with the [ʌ] or [ə] in the first syllable.

The various transcription systems make for a sticky situation, but the key question is whether the word is pronounced with a higher front vowel (as in SEER) or a lower more back vowel (as in SIR):

Q3 - Do you usually pronounce the word SYRUP as SIRup or SEERup?

72% reported SIRup

In American English, the word *route* can be pronounced as either /ru:t/ (rOOt) or /raut/ (rAWt), making the word polyphonic like *economics, either, garage,* and *Celtic*. Pronunciation may be affected by cultural influences like the iconic Route 66 and by competition from the term *router* for the networking device that moves data packets between computer networks. According to DARE, the usual North Eastern and Central Atlantic pronunciation is /ru:t/ with some variation in specific uses like a rural free delivery mail route or a paper route (/raut/).



DARE respondents for /ru:t/

DARE explains that the /raut/ pronunciation (they give both [raUt and [ræUt]) is "scattered but chiefly IL, OH, wPA, WV, MD." DARE cites an *Oxford English Dictionary* comment that "Down to c 1800 the usual spelling was rout," and that the pronunciation appears in 19th century still "remained in military use, and by many speakers in the U.S. and Canada." DARE also observes that in the west, *route* has an additional sense in which it means the length of time working in a logging camp. Our tentative hypothesis was that westerners would prefer the /raut/ pronunciation, but also be well aware of the /rut/ pronunciation from the media. We asked

> Q4 Do you usually pronounce the word ROUTE as rUWt (like boot) or rOWt (like out) or do you say both?

However, in the first two years of the survey, we forced a choice between the two pronunciations.

> **60% ROWT when there was a two-way choice. When there was a three-way choice, 33% reported ROWT and 42% reported pronouncing *route* both ways.**

Add a map of route in OR & WA

5. Lexical changes in progress

We also asked about several lexical and grammatical changes in progress including the spread of gender-neutral *on accident, dude, your guyses, legitly, hella* and *jo-jos*.

5.1 *on accident* and *by accident*

If you do something accidentally, is it *on accident* or *by accident*? According to Leslie Barratt (2005), younger speakers in different parts of the country are moving toward saying *on accident* while older speakers tend to use *by accident,* a form that is still prescribed by some traditionalists. Barrett and her students studied *on accident* in four communities differing in size and demographics: Terre Haute, Indiana; Farmington Hills, Michigan; Irvine, California; and McRae, Georgia. Barrett's project surveyed actual usage (with a reading passage), reported usage, and reported acceptance of the two phrases. In Indiana, for example, the use of *on accident* was largely nonexistent for speakers older than 30, while both *by accident* and *on accident* were used by those younger than 30. Reported use was not identical with actual use, with about 29% of those who used *on accident* exclusively saying that they would use *by accident*, a confusion which suggests that "some speakers are not aware of the form that they in fact use." Results were similar in Michigan, California, and Georgia, though California speakers (in Irvine and Laguna Beach) showed some divergence:

> While *on accident* occurs more frequently than *by accident* among the 11 and 12 year olds surveyed (22 to 13 for *I did it* ___ *accident*), it is completely absent among those surveyed over age 34. Likewise, in reported use, Californians were slightly less likely to report that they used *on* (21 responses) than they were to use it (26 responses). Finally, people who reported that they used *by* were less likely to accept *on* than the reverse.

Barrett concluded that *on accident* was found nationally among younger respondents in all four states and suggested that the use of *on accident* in different parts of the US dates back to at least the late 1970s. [12] Students in our classes have sometimes proposed a distinction in the use of *on* and *by,* depending on whether the speaker is responsible or someone else is. We tested this with the following two questions, one in which contrasts a third person *she* with first person *I*:

[12] Barrett notes that one poster to the Linguist List (Patricia Kuhlman) even recalled its being used in the 1950s in a rural area outside Chicago, Illinois. Barrett adds that the rise of *on accident* remains unclear and that analogy with *on purpose* is at best a partial account. Other suggestions include reanalysis of "an accident" as "on accident."

Q11 - If your roommate does something wrong unintentionally would you say:

She did it ON ACCIDENT 65%
She did it BY ACCIDENT 11%
I could say either one 24%

Q21 - If you did something wrong unintentionally would you say:

I did it ON ACCIDENT 62%
I did it BY ACCIDENT 13%
I could say either one 24%

It seems that the proposed 1st person/3rd person split distribution is mythical rather than actual, at least in this group of respondents.[13] Overall, younger speakers overwhelming prefer *on accident* and the few younger *by accident* speakers often report being explicitly scolded on the distinction when they had used the innovative form.

5.2 *dude*

If you have seen the 1969 film *Easy Rider*, you may recall the jail scene where the Harley-riding protagonists Wyatt and Billy find themselves in the lockup with boozy lawyer George Hanson, played by a young Jack Nicholson. When George talks the guard into giving Billy a cigarette, Billy says, **“**You must be some important dude. That treatment—”. Here George interrupts, “Dude? What does he mean, ‘dude’? Dude ranch?” and Wyatt explains “‘Dude’ means a nice guy, you know? ‘Dude’ means a regular person.”

The dialogue encapsulates the development of *dude.* The first DARE citation is an 1877 one from painter Frederic Remington who wrote fellow artist Scott Turner, with whom he was swapping sketches: “Don’t send me any more women or any more dudes.” He was referring to drawings of men and women in evening dress that Turner had been sending him. Remington said Turner should “Send me Indians, cowboys, villains, or toughs. These are what I want.”

Dude in Remington’s use means a man or boy pretentiously concerned with his clothes and grooming, as was the case for a city person new to the West, someone who might come to

[13] One speaker suggested that *on accident* is used when a person is involved and *by accident* is used when animacy is not involved, which is worth exploring.

a dude ranch. The sense of being an out of place novice is also found in later uses in military, where *dudes* are new recruits. A 1936 DARE citation finds: "All right, you dudes. Fall out."

Early on, *dude* could also just mean an ordinary male—a guy—and this usage picked up steam by the 1960s, according to both DARE and the OED. [14] And along the way, *dude* came to be used for either sex or even for inanimate objects. From 1968, we find "When the FAC pilot gets the green light to go in he fires one of these dudes to mark the target," and a 1985 citation is "Mom asked me and I said 'No way, dude'."

There's more to the story of *dude*, no doubt, including its popularization by *The Big Lebowski,* and its emergence as a term of address. But stripped to its essentials, *dude* seems to have evolved from a mildly pejorative term to an neutral one and from being semantically male to increasingly generic. Our survey asked

> *Q12 If you use the word* dude*, can it refer to males or females?*
>
> *Yes, it can refer to both sexes.*
>
> *No, it refers only to males.*

88% reported that dude can refer to both sexes. Of the 103 speakers who reported that they would not use *dude* generically, 76 were in the 18-29 age range. One student suggested that *guys* would be his preferred usage for mixed-gender groups.

We will return to the question of *guys* as mixed gender in section 8, along with the competing form *y'all.*

5.3 *legit(ly)*

The word *legit* represents a change in the part of speech as well as a clipping of *legitimate*. In its use as an adjective short form, Merriam Webster dates its origin to 1907 and labels it "informal." MW also includes the adverb form, labelled as "slang," with a first citation from 1998.

Merriam Webster doesn't, however, include *legitly*, the –*ly* adverb. Anne Curzan, writing in her *Lingua Franca* column in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in 2014, reports being contacted by an Michigan teacher who noted students saying things like:

---

[14] There's also a later development in which dude means "a foolish or obnoxious fellow," and the DARE gives a 1970 citation of "There were a lot of good kids in that school. Also, a lot of dudes, but a lot of good kids, too." So perhaps dude expanded that pretentious newbie sense for some speakers.

"I legitly left my homework at home!"

"I legitly bombed that quiz."

At the time, Curzan found disdain for the –*ly* form in both the Urban Dictionary and the popular press but concluded that "adding an –*ly* to *legit* to make a new adverb is, from a linguistic perspective, far from morphologically rebellious."[15]

Legit, it is worth noting, was first recorded--as a noun--in an 1897 issue of the *National Police Gazette*: "Bob is envious of Corbett's success as a 'legit.' It pained him to see Jim strutting through four acts of a real play." The reference is to boxer Gentleman Jim Corbett, who became an actor after his boxing career ended. The clipping *legit* seems to have originated in the theatre, where it meant regular, normal or standard. The *OED* gives a 1908 citation to "Scene shifters, stage carpenters, actors, everything and everybody strictly 'legit'. In the early citations, the quotes indicate the novelty of the form.

We noticed the adverb uses of *legit* and *legitly* around 2013 and were curious. At first we asked about *legitly*, but based on feedback from students and respondents, who indicated that they used the flat adverb *legit* rather than the –*ly* form, we revised our question in year 2 of the survey.

Q16 If you are trying to explain to your friend that you really like something, would you ever say "I legit love that book."

Yes, I can use LEGIT that way: 27%

I've heard this but do not use it myself: 44%

No, I do not use LEGIT this way and haven't heard it: 28%

Based on the low numbers, it seems, however, that *legit* is still not quite legit.

5.4 *Hella*

Hella, along with its middle-school counterpart *hecka,* is an adverbial intensifier that apparently emerged in the 1970s Bay Area. Linguist Ben Zimmer (1986) gives an early citation from an August 1986 interview in the magazine *Thrasher* in which *Metallica* band member James Hetfield used *hella* twice.[16] As youth slang, it is an index of coolness, and

[15] Patricia T. O'Conner and Stewart Kellerman, in a 2010 post on their Grammarphobia blog, note that both *legit* and *legitly* are used as adverbs, but say, rather too prescriptively in our view, that "we find them clunky, and wouldn't recommend either one."

[16] See *Thrasher*, August 1986, p. 71, Asked if the drug scene scared him, Hetfield replied "Yeah, hella," saying later that "If people are into it that's cool, they wouldn't mind about the subject we're talking about. I was at that party and it freaked me out and I'm hella paranoid."

according to Bucholtz (2006) was “used among Bay Area youth of all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds and both genders, much as teenagers in other parts of the United States use the intensifiers *wicked* and *mad*.” Bucholtz cited examples from a 1995-96 Bay City High School yearbook, suggesting widespread use from across racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds and gender.[17] Among them:

> I love ya'll hella tite. (African American girl)
>
> I wont to say I had a hella fun time Playing with every one from the football team. (African American boy)
>
> this year was hella fun! (Latina girl)
>
> my big sista, known you for hella years, you were alwaysthere for me. (European American girl)
>
> haven't seen ya for hella long (European American boy)

Bucholtz saw *hella* as “a very stable regional marker” in the Bay area and northern California at that time with “only isolated use outside of this region.” Writing in 2006, she noted that *hella* “currently enjoys a much wider circulation, thanks to its occasional use in popular music, television shows, and films aimed at a youth audience … but outside California it appears to be a marked, trendy term, in contrast to its enduring use as an unmarked feature of Northern California youth speech.”

We asked our subjects:

> *Q15 If you are trying to explain to your friend that something is very, very good, would you ever say “That’s hella good.”*
>
> ***Yes, I can use HELLA that way: 57%***
>
> ***I’ve heard this but do not use it myself: 40%***
>
> ***No, I’ve never heard HELLA used this way: 3%.***

[17] Bucholtz explains that the data were written by graduating seniors as part of paid personal messages to friends, family, and others printed at the back of the yearbook. See also Bucholtz, et al. (2009).

From these results it is clear that *hella* is pervasively known (by 97% of respondents) and has clearly gained traction in the Pacific Northwest youth culture, being used by more than half.

5.5 *Your guyses*

Since the loss of the second person singular *thee, thou,* and *thy/thine*, the standard Written English forms have been the formerly plural forms *you* and *your.* A similar process of plural-to-singular is underway with the third person *they/them/their,* which is widely used as an indefinite and today is increasingly used as a singular personal pronoun as well (see Baron 2020). To attenuate the ambiguity of *you* in the second person, various forms have emerged that distinguish singular *you* from plural, such as *you/y'all, you/yinz*, and *you/you guys*.[18] *Yinz* (from *you ones* and sometimes spelled *yuns*) is a regional form (DARE) while *y'all* has seemingly spread to a general friendly second person form. These plurals can be used in the possessive as well, giving *yall's, yinz's,* and *you guys's,* and for many speakers *your guys's*, with the possessive marking on both parts of the compound. Prescriptivists sometimes object to *your guys*. Here is Paul Brian's view, from his *Common Errors in English*.

> **your guys's**: Many languages have separate singular and plural forms for the second person (ways of saying "you"), but standard English does not. "You" can be addressed to an individual or a whole room full of people.
>
> In casual speech, Americans have evolved the slangy expression "you guys" to function as a second-person plural, formerly used of males only but now extended to both sexes, but this is not appropriate in formal contexts. Diners in fine restaurants are often irritated by clueless waiters who ask "Can I get you guys anything?"
>
> The problem is much more serious when extended to the possessive: "You guys's dessert will be ready in a minute." Some people even create a double possessive by saying "your guys's dessert. . . ." This is extremely clumsy. When dealing with people

[18] On the plural second person forms, see Richardson (1984), Maynor. (1996) Spencer (1975), Ching (2001). For singular "y'all" can be singular, see Tillery and Bailey (1998) and Butters (2001).

you don't know intimately, it's best to stick with "you" and "your" no matter how many people you're addressing.

We approached *your guys's* obliquely, by asking about the double possessive and giving speakers the opportunity to say that they don't use *you guys*.

Q13 - If you do say "your guys' party?" or "you guys' party" do you pronounce it with one s or two?

I say YOU(R) GUYS PARTY: 17%

I say YOU(R) GUYSES PARTY: 56%

I might say it either way: 21%

I don't use "you guys" or "your guys" this way: 6%

Only 6% of the respondents said they did not use possessive *you guys,* and the majority did report using two sibilants in the possessive. Of the 53 respondents who eschewed *your guys*, 39 were in the 18-29 year-old age-group and the remaining 14 were older. We have no survey data on whether speakers use *you guys* or *your guys*, though informal observation suggests that the latter predominates.

5.6 *Jojos*

According to local-lore and the popular press, jojos (with or without a hyphen) are a regional specialty and perhaps even an Oregon term for deep-fried, lightly breaded potato wedges. Anne Marie DiStefano, writing in *The Portland Tribune* in 2013, confessed to growing up in California and never having heard of jojos before moving to Oregon. She tracked the usage to the early 1960s, suggesting that "the term jojo potatoes was used widely across the country. But not universally. They also were called home fries, wedges, spuds or tater babies — and Shakey's Pizza trademarked the term 'mojo potatoes.'" Jojos arose from the popularity of the broaster, invented in the 1950s, which sped up the process of frying foods. According to DiStefano, the Flavor-Crisp company of Creighton, Nebraska, claims the word. She interviewed Ron Echtenkamp, retired president of a company that sold Flavor-Crisp pressure fryers, who explained that the dish arose when salespeople at a trade show used Idaho potato wedges from a nearby vendor to clean the oil in the fryer.

Someone set the wedges out on the table and, according to Echtenkamp, one of the salesmen called them jojos. A similar story is told by Paul Nicewonger of Nicewonger Co., a restaurant-supply company in Vancouver, Washington. Nicewonger attributed the story of *jojo* being coined at a food trade show to his late father, whose company introduced the name into Pacific Northwest markets. In any case, the earliest ad found in Newpapers.com seems to be in *The Evening Review* (of East Liverpool, Ohio) from July 14, 1962, for Kennedy's Restaurant in Ohio. The ad refers to Kennedy's "New Flavor-Crisp ½ fried chicken and New jo-jo potatoes."

Curious about the term, we included the photo below, limiting our question to *jojos, steak fries, O'Briens,* and *potato wedges*, but other terms for such fare includes the trademarked "mojos," "tater babies" or "tater boys."

Q22 - What name do you use for this food?

Steak Fries
JoJos
Potato Wedges
O'Briens

44% called them jojos and 43% potato wedges with another 8% opting for steak fries. Among Oregon speakers, the percentage of identifying the spuds as jojos rose to 52%.

6. Comparison with the Harvard Dialect Survey

The Harvard Dialect Survey, an online survey developed by Bert Vaux and Scott Golder consisted of 122 questions about phonetic, lexical, syntactic, and morphological differences

in English in the United States. The questions were multiple-choice with a write-in option and used rhyming words to narrow the options for participants. The total number of participants was 30,788, with 385 from Oregon (1.24%) and 860 (2.78%) from Washington. Vaux and Golder's state breakdown page gives results for 166 respondents from Oregon and 511 from Washington.[19]

Below we consider selected results from their study.

Coupon

	V&G (Oregon)	V&G (Washington)	Our results
as in "coop"	56.91%	57.89%	58%
as in "cute"	40.06%	39.70%	21%
			19% (both ways)

The number of COOPon speakers is consistent between our 58% and their 56.91% and 57.89% results. Some of Vaux and Golder's 40% CYEWpon speakers likely alternate.

Craig

	V&G (Oregon)	V&G (Washington)	Our results
as in "say"	52.63%	59.63%	59% (crAYg)
close to "say"	22.99%	18.55%	
as in "set"	12.47%	13.02%	41% (crEHg)
close to “set”	11.63%	8.18%	

Our two-way distinction yielded about a 60%-40% split between [e] and [ɛ] as compared to the 75.62%-24.1% and 78.18%-21.2% splits in the Harvard Dialect study.

[19] The Harvard dialect study was the basis for Joshua Katz's Heat Maps which took population density into account for data visualization; see Katz (2013) and media coverage in *The Atlantic, the New York Times, the Huffington Post*, and elsewhere. The New York Times dialect quiz (based on the Harvard Dialect study) was one of that newspaper's most successful interactive links.

Mary/merry/marry

	V&G (Oregon)	V&G (Washington)	Our results
Mary & marry the same			83%
all 3 are the same	79.44%	78.39%	
all 3 are different	2.22%	3.13%	
Mary and merry are the same; *marry* is different	4.72%	5.48	
merry and *marry* are the same; *Mary* is different	.56%	.63%	
Mary and *marry* are the same; *merry* is different	13.06%	12.37%	

For simplicity's sake, we assumed (based on our observations) that *Mary* and *merry* were identical for most speakers and asked only about the pronunciation of *marry*. Vaux and Golder's 78-79% for all three being pronounced the same is close to our 83%. However, they found 12-13% percent of speakers reporting a *Mary/marry* homophony distinct from *merry*, which suggests that the situation is more complicated that we had anticipated.

Route

	V&G (Oregon)	V&G (Washington)	Our results (3 way)
rhymes with "hoot"	17.56%	15.13%	25%
rhymes with "out"	25.78%	35.11%	33%
either way interchangeably	34.84%	32.01%	42%
like "hoot" for the noun and like "out" for the verb.	16.15%	11.78%	
like "out" for the noun and like "hoot" for the verb.	4.82%	4.06%	
other	.85%	1.91%	

Details of the percentages aside, our results and Vaux and Golder's suggest that most speakers either alternate or prefer the ROWT pronunciation.

When we forced a two-way choice, our respondents reported using ROWT 60% of the time. We did not test for a correlation with part of speech.

Syrup

	V&G (Oregon)	V&G (Washington)	Our results (2 way)
sear-up	23.01%	23.81%	28%
sih-rup	14.49%	11.46%	
sir-up	61.36%	63.61%	72%

Our results are very close to those of Vaux and Golder, assuming that their "sih-rup" group corresponds to people who opted for our "sir-up" choice.

Cot/caught

	V & G (Or)	V & G (Wa)	Our results
Same	87.22%	83.67%	82% (don/daw, hock/hawk)
Different	12.78%	16.33%	18%

The [a]-[ɔ] merger comes in as robust in both surveys.

You guys

Vaux and Golder also asked what words people us to refer to "a group of two or more people" with about 57% responding that they used *you guys*.

	V & G (Or)	V & G (Wa)
you all	8.48%	8.59%
you guys	56.73%	56.65%
You	24.85%	27.47%
y'all	6.43%	4.21%

In our study, which asked *If you do say "your guys' party?" or "you guys' party" do you pronounce it with one s or two?* Only 6% of the respondents said they did not use possessive *you guys.* 94% responded in a way that implied use of *you guys*.

on accident/by accident

	V&G (Oregon)	V&G (Washington)	Our results
by accident	66.47%	67.63%	11-13%
on accident	11.66%	14.87%	62-65%
Both	18.66%	13.97%	24%

There is a puzzling split between our results and those of Vaux and Golder. We found nearly two-thirds preferring *on-accident* while their reported results indicated the opposite.

bag, leg and egg raising

	V&G (Oregon)	V&G (Washington)
[bæg] (like "sat")	86.30%	75.47%
[bɛg] (like "said")	0%	.74%
[beg] ("like "say")	11.08%	20.49%
Other	2.62%	3.29%

The greater percentage of raising in Washington respondents is intriguing. We did not test for raising of [æ] in *bag*, though we did consider the [ɛ]-raising in *egg* and *leg.*

	Our results
EGggs	64%
AYggs	36%
lEHgs	62%
lAYggs	38%

Looking just at Oregon and Washington speakers, 39% of our Oregon respondents said *ayggs* and 42% responded that they said *layggs*; 37% of Washingtonians responded with *ayggs* and 39% with *layggs*.

	Overall	**OR**	**WA**
EGggs	64%	61%	63%
AYggs	36%	39%	37%
lEHgs	62%	58%	61%
lAYggs	38%	42%	39%

7. A Reading Passage

Subjects completing a survey such as ours may have misperceptions about their own pronunciation or usage, the may be unsure or guessing, they may be unduly influenced by spelling, or even misled by clumsily worded questions or transcriptions. As a check, we developed a short reading passage intended to elicit some of the Pacific Northwest distinctions we surveys as well as some others than might not be amenable to a survey method or that might be interesting for class discussion purposes. These are indicated in bold in the passage below, though of course they were not bolded in the actual reading passage. We collected 23 usable samples from speakers, most from speakers from the Pacific Northwest.

Several items in the reading passage parallel ones in the survey: *Dawn, marry, Aaron, horrible, coupons, egg, legs, syrup, route, hawk,* and *center.* The items not in the survey such as *dude, food,* and *new* reflect the /u/ and /o/ fronting found in the California Vowel Shift. The items *both, wash* and *Washington* are possible terms in which we might find an intrusive [l] or [r]. The words *that* and *dad* relate to the backing of /æ/, while *menu, tent* and *rented* to the pin-pen merger.

The repeated *Thank you, thank you, thank you* was an attempt to collect data on the counter-raising of [æ] and to use the allegro repetition of the phrase to induce the raising of that vowel. A few words, such as *Ian and Ann, aunt, mountains, salmon, almond, greasy, poem, Saturday,* and *roof* are indicators of dialect features not typically associated with the Pacific Northwest. *Culinary* and *Josie* were added to contrast with *coupon* and *greasy*.

Here is the passage:

Last year my friend **Dawn** decided to **marry** this **dude** named **Ian**. **Both** of her brothers, **Aaron and Harold**, helped plan the wedding **menu. That** was a **horrible** mistake.

So, the guests arrived—from **Oregon,** California, **Washington**, Idaho, **Nevada,** Texas, and there was even one **aunt** from **Florida**. Her **Mom** and **Dad** had arranged for the wedding to take place in a **tent** they **rented.** It was a cool setting, in a park with a view of the **mountains**.

Anyway, back to the **food**. It turned out that **Aaron and Harold** had gotten all the wrong **food** for the reception. They had supermarket **coupons** and bought random stuff: little **hot dogs, salmon with almond sauce, milky egg** salad, **greasy** chicken **legs,** and melting ice-cream cake covered with **chocolate syrup**. It was a **culinary** nightmare. Luckily **Dawn's** friends **Ann, Mary and Josie** retraced the **route to** the store, and **bought** some **real** wedding food. It was a **miracle** that everything worked out, and **Dawn's parents just** kept saying **"Thank you, thank you, thank you**."

Then **just** as the ceremony was ending and **Mary** was reading a **poem** called **"Saturday**," a red-tailed **hawk** swooped into the **center** of the **tent** and snagged some of the **salmon**. It almost got stuck under the **roof** but didn't. **Dawn** and **Ian** got **married** and went on their honeymoon. As for **Dawn**'s brothers, their **new** job was to **wash** the dishes from the party.

As a check on the Qualtrix survey, we also asked the passage readers to respond to the short survey below, which was checked against their recorded pronunciations.

1. How do you usually pronounce the vowel sounds in the words DON and DAWN?
   the same differently

2. Do you usually pronounce the word SYRUP as
   SIRup SEERup

3. Do you usually pronounce the word ROUTE as
   rUWt (like boot) rOWt (like out)

4. Do you usually pronounce HORRIBLE as
   HAR-ible HOAR-ible

5. Do you usually pronounce EGGS more like EHggs or AIggs
   EHggs (with the EH vowel in get) AIggs (with the AY vowel in say)

6. Do you usually pronounce the word COUPON as:
   COOP-on CUE-pon I pronounce it both ways

7. How do you usually pronounce the vowel sounds in the words MARRY and MERRY?
   the same differently

8. Do you pronounce THANK YOU as more like
   thAHnk you (like the vowel in drank) thEHnk you (like the vowel in pen)

9. Do you pronounce OFTEN as
   AWFen AWFten

10. Do you say the names ERIN and AARON
    the same differently

11. Do you pronounce the words HOCK and HAWK
    the same differently

12. Do you usually pronounce the word LEGS more like LEHggs or LAYggs?
    LEHggs (with the vowel in less) LAYggs (with the vowel in lay)

Comparing actual pronunciation to reported pronunciation for 23 speakers, we found that an 89% accuracy in identifying one's own pronunciation.[20]

8. What we learned and what's next

8.1 Struggles

There were some rough spots. In the initial survey, we collected demographic data in a relatively open-ended fashion, asking about hometowns and parents' hometowns, with respondents giving both leaving both gaps and giving answers like "military brat" or "moved around a lot." We did collect zip codes, which facilitates the eventual mapping task, but we first collected age as numbers, which required us to regroup the data later to get age ranges.

Asking about social class and their perceptions of their own speech also proved to be interesting in that most self-identified as middle class and self-identified as "a better than average speaker/writer of English" (not surprising since many were English or linguistics majors). The later iterations of the survey (2015 forward) supplemented the self-identification of social class with a question about income levels, though many subjects preferred not to answer that. Later iterations of the survey also contained fewer questions, age ranges, a full list of US states and regional universities, and a question about whether hometowns were urban, rural and suburban.

We struggled with the best folk orthography for questions. From 2015 onward survey we added some homophones to the answers in the hopes that questions would be easier to follow. We initially collected data on the pronunciation of *thank,* but stopped because it seemed that respondents were unduly influenced toward thAHnk by orthography; only 98

[20] We included the item *often* in the survey but not on tape as a further check of our online survey; here 30% responded with AWFEN and 70% with AWFTEN, close to our online results of 25%/75% AWFEN/AWFTEN.

responded identified thEHnk as corresponding to their pronunciation suggesting that *thank* might be better studied in a reading passage.

Going forward, we might drop some of the questions related to issues that seem well-resolved among young Pacific Northwesterners and add some new items, such as *bag* and *beg,* and *bit* and *bet*. The reading passage too could be simplified (respondents especially struggled with the phrase "salmon with almond sauce" and other tongue twisters that arose from our trying to do too much).

8.2 Learning opportunities

The most rewarding aspect of the research has been the way in which the work of studying data on regional speech—and their own speech—has engaged students in language study and critical thinking about language. By involving students in a local survey and discussing the issues connected to language variation and change that they can observe, we are able to engage them at several levels—as consumers of surveys and media, as thinkers about language and linguistic diversity, as speakers of a particular region, and as co-investigators in research.

The in-class discussions that arise from the survey debriefs are especially rich. Since many of the students are planning careers in fields in which they will be working with language, the survey experience gives them a first-hand look at the variability of speech and at language change in progress. Students think about their own usage, about where they came from about what has influenced their speech, and about the codes and styles that they switch into and out of. They also think about language they encounter in their lives and become curious about language and less prescriptive in their outlooks.

Various activities and discussions that can be tied to the survey questions. Here are a few we have attempted (but certainly not honed to perfection).

1. Discussing the loss of the old singular second person (*thee, thou, thy*) forms and the re-emergence of the plural (*you guys*) in relation to the extension of the third person *they, them, their,* a topic which is on the minds of students. Discussion of pronouns can reinforce the idea that such forms have shifted for social reasons in the past.
2. Introducing and critiquing the principle of "one form—one meaning" as it relates to *by accident* and *on accident*, and other terms. One reader of an early draft of this report commented that it seemed like a dumb thing for language change to create "confusing" homophones like *Dawn* and *Don* and *Erin* and *Aaron*. We have the

opportunity to illustrate that the logic of language change does not always match our preconceptions of what makes sense communicatively.

3. Identifying and documenting other instances of preposition variation, which tends to be less remarked upon than other types of variation (such as waiting “in line” or “on line” or getting something “on the internet” or “off the internet”).
4. Taking *jo-jos* as the point of departure, exploring further variation among other culinary terms (including server slang, as described by Adams (2009). Students might design and administer their own food term surveys or research local eateries.
5. Extending the analysis of selected terms using dictionaries and databases, such as the OED, The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) or the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA).
6. Researching the history of parallels between *guys* and *dudes*, the history of *guy* (Metcalf 2019) and some of the contemporary criticism of the term’s use (Carey 2016, Pinkster 2018).
7. Studying intensification and the emergence of *hella* and others forms (see for example Ito and Tagliamonte 2003).
8. Introducing acoustic analysis of select vowels via Praat (Van Lieshout, 2003, Wassink 2016, Freeman 2013, 2014, Becker, et al. 2016).
9. Research on local communities and on identity and affiliation, perhaps involving map tasks (Hartley 1999, Evans 2011, 2013), local history (Denham 2019), or dialect Story Maps (Szukalski and Carroll, 2019).

8.3 Next steps

What is next? We are considering relaunching the survey in the fall of 2020, perhaps inviting a wider swath of participants from Oregon, Washington, and Northern California. Along with this, we may wish to add a simplified reading passage and a (short) wordlist that can be used for acoustic analysis, and which can be recorded on a phone. Eventually, we might identify key communities in the Pacific Northwest for a comprehensive survey to be done in conjunction with presentations on dialect and linguistic diversity to include audio and video samples. An ideal next step would be an app that provided some feedback and a systematic expansion of the survey to other Oregon, Washington, and Northern California universities. We also will want to promote the work and the connection to teaching,

diversity, and local history in order to generate interest in the survey from potential participants and partners.

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