

New York, Philadelphia & other Northern Cities

Ellen Mulder, 25 September 2009

General remarks

- New York
- Philadelphia
- Northern Cities around the Great Lakes:
Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Buffalo etc
- Dealt with together, but linguistically not the same

Historical background

- In Colonial period, New York and Philadelphia economic hubs
- British, Irish and German immigrants
- Southern and Eastern European immigrants
- Puerto Ricans and other people from the Caribbean
- Not much immigration to Inland North until ordinances in 1785 and 1787
- Erie Canal 1825
- NYC business capital of the North
- Inland North little linguistic variation due to: a) original settlement mainly New Englanders or b) fast growth of the cities and their interdependence had lead to regional standard

New York

- New York mix of influences, on border between Northern and Midland regions
- Historically non-rhotic but increasingly more r-pronouncing
- “Short a” vowel split into 2 phonemes: lax /æ/ and tense /æɔ/
- NY stereotypes: THOUGHT/CLOTH, NURSE, TOMORROW/ORANGE, NG
- R-lessness

Philadelphia

- Researched by William Labov, Univ. Of Pennsylvania
- Mixture of Southern and Northern patterns
- CLOTH/THOUGHT, MOUTH, START, NORTH/FORCE, TOMORROW/ORANGE, TH, WH: same as in NYC
- GOAT/GOOSE: same as in Southern dialects
- “Canadian Rising”
- In the middle of traditionally rhotic area

Inland North

- Home of the “”General American” accent
- Model for broadcast media
- Most significant vocalic features associated with Northern Cities Shift (NCS)

	New York City	Philadelphia	Inland North
VOWELS			
TRAP,BATH,DANCE	lax /æ/: voiceless stops, /tʃ/, /l/ tense /æ̃/: voiced stops, /dʒ/, voiceless fricatives and front nasals	Same as NYC, exceptions voiced stop; mad,bad,glad tense	NCS
LOT	[ɑ] Diphthonged variant [ɑə]: word final voiced stop, /dʒ/, or /m/, and sometimes before voiced fricatives	-	NCS
THOUGHT,CLOTH	[ɔ] to [ʊ], /ɔ/ for working class	Shared with NYC, but raise /ɔ/ to [o]	NCS
NURSE	Front-rising diphthong		
FACE	First [ɛɪ]. Now [e].	Same as NYC	Fronting less extreme
GOOSE (GOAT PHILADELPHIA)	monophthong [u:] or diphthong [ʊu]	Fronting of GOAT & GOOSE.Same as Southern,absent in NYC	-
PRICE,MOUTH	Diphthongs: nucleus-glide differentiation	PRICE diphthong: nucleus or mid or even higher. MOUTH: raised vowel	“Canadian Rising”

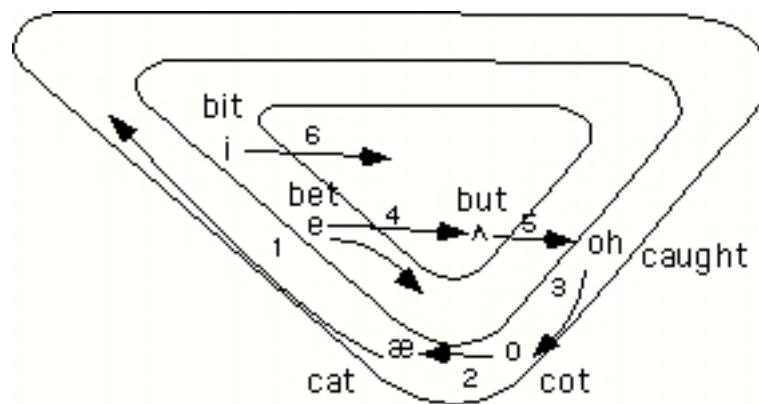
	New York	Philadelphia	Inland North
NORTH,FORCE	Historical distinction,now lost	Tendency towards backing and raising	contrast between /ɔr/ in NORTH and /or/ in FORCE. Now gone, vowel near [o]
START,PALM	[ɑ],[ɑ:],[ɑə] or [pə]. Often backed, may be raised	START: tendency towards backing and raising	PALM: NCS
TOMORROW,ORANGE	[ɑ]	Same as NYC	-
MARY,MERRY,MARY	/æ/, /ɛ/ and /e/ before an intervocalic /r	/æ/ in MARRY, /ɛ/ in MARY and MERRY	[ɛ]
KIT/DRESS	-	Lowering of lax vowels	NCS
STRUT	-	Raised and backed variants	NCS
FOOT (GOAT,GOAL,LOOSE Inland North)	-	Sometimes fronted	Fronting less extreme
FLEECE	-	First lowered/laxed, now raised/fronted	-

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CONSONANTS			
TH	interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ are often realized as stops, [t] and [d] or affricates [tθ] and [dð]	Same as NYC	-
ALVEOLARS	/t/,/d/,/n/ and /l/: tongue blade /t/: glottalization	-	-
NG	[ŋ] as a variant of /ŋ/	variation between [ŋ] and [n] in -ing forms	-
WH	Historical distinction /hw/ and /w/ lost	Same as NYC	-
HJU	Words beginning met /hj/, /h/ deleted	-	-
L	Vocalization	Same as NYC	-
STR-	-	Hushing sibilant	-

Northern Cities Shift

- Affecting 6 vowel phonemes:
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- -KIT: /ɪ/ is backed and lowered to approach /ə/ in extreme cases.
- -DRESS: /ɛ/ is backed and/or lowered in resulting forms such as [ɛ], [ɜ] or [ɐ]
- -STRUT: /ʊ/ ~ /ʌ/ is backed and may also be rounded resulting in [ɔ].
- -TRAP/BATH/DANCE: /æ/ is fronted and raised to a mid or high position and is often produced with an inglide; i.e. [ɛə] or [ɪə]. Phonetically these variants resemble those described above for tense /æə/ in New York and Philadelphia
- -LOT/PALM: /ɑ/ is fronted to near /a/.
- -CLOTH/THOUGHT: /ɔ/ is lowered and/or fronted, often with unrounding, something near [ɑ].

NCS



NCS

- Quite recent
- Changes to /æ/, /ɑ/ and /ɔ/ are older than the others
- Chronology important
- Not limited to urban speech
- Gender/race differences
- Immediately recognized

Bibliography

- NCS drawing:
http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~wlabov/Papers/PCM_files/image004.jpg
- Gordon, Matthew J. “New York, Philadelphia, and other Northern cities: phonology”. In Kortmann, Bernd, Clive Upton, Rajend Mesthrie, Kate Burridge and Edgar Schneider (eds.) (2004) *Varieties of English. Vol. II* De Gruyter: New York.
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