Koineization

Varieties of American English
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Koiné

- Koiné language = common language (Greek)
- Stabilized contact variety
- A new spoken variety in addition to the original dialects
- Existing dialects are not changed
- Koineization is not a rapid process
- Koiné Greek: first koiné language
  - The common dialect
• Characterized by reduction and simplification
• Regional koiné
• Immigrant koiné
• Leveling leads to reduction in differences between dialects -> gradual homogenization of vernacular speech of region
“Koiné is a stabilized contact variety, which results from the mixing and subsequent leveling of features of varieties which are similar enough to be mutually intelligible, such as regional or social dialects. This occurs in the context of increased interaction or integration among speakers of these varieties.” (Siegel, p. 6)
Where do koinés occur?

- Koiné Greek
- Iraqi Koiné
- Dano-Norwegian
- Svårsk
- Fiji Hindi
- South African English
- New Zealand English
- Australian English
- Quebec French
Why?

- Unconscious development because of historically specific, demographic, psychosocial, socioeconomic, cultural, or political circumstances
- → they make dialect melting advantageous
- Language of imperial authority, law, commerce, and social prestige, language of social mobility
The process of koinéization

- Accommodation (mixing, leveling, simplification) and focusing
  - To seek approval speakers’ speech converges with that of their interlocutors
- Multi-generational model
- Leveling
- Stabilizing
- New varieties
The American Koiné
The process of American koineization

- Almost every county in England had its own dialect
- Dialects mixed when moving to the New World
- Dialects mingled to form distinctly American varieties of English
- Internal migrants practiced code switching
- -> long-term contacts led to leveling
The process of American koineization

- Extensive mixing of English dialects within the colonies
- 1\textsuperscript{st} generation: concurrent use of different dialects
- \(\rightarrow\) speech exhibits diffusion
  - Slow and complicated process of leveling and simplification
- From 2\textsuperscript{nd} generation onwards: unplanned and unconscious processes focus and stabilize the language
Virginia

- Speakers from every part of England
- Comprised a complex family of local dialects
- e.g.: - Sussex countryman: dropping of h's
  - Somerset folk: turning /s/ into /z/, /o/ into /u/
  - -> Zumerzet
  - Berkeley Hundred: many old Saxon words and pronunciations
    - *Ah be* = “I am”
    - *thicke* = “this,” *thucke* = “that”
Factors

- Immigrants' children and grandchildren
- Geographical mobility -> social interaction
- American-born speakers vs. immigrant speakers
- Internal migration
Communication Accommodation Theory

- Examines psychosocial factors behind individual style shifting and some of the social consequences
- Explains motivation for speech convergence
- Goals: - efficiency in communication
  - Social approval
  - Positive social identity
  - Pursuit of material interests
• Geopolitical goals: territory and resources
• Motivation of material, psychic, and social rewards
This is a non-final version and will be updated later.