

Ethnic Englishes: American Indian English

Grażyna J. Rowicka (Leiden University)

Due to the British colonial past and extensive emigration from the British Isles, a large number of new English varieties have developed in various parts of the world. I will focus on the varieties spoken by Indigenous peoples in the USA and Canada, generally referred to in the literature as American Indian English (AIE). Early studies concentrated on the transfer from the ancestral languages in bilingual speakers, although it was observed that AIE varieties were also spoken by monolingual (English-speaking) community members (Leechman and Hall 1955, Cook and Sharp 1966, Bartelt et al. 1982, Leap 1977, 1993, Flanigan 1984, Wolfram 1984, a.o.). I will argue for the following.

- Transfer effects fade away when the ancestral language becomes extinct (Rowicka 2005).
- New variables arise that preserve the distinctiveness of AIE. These are often not unique to AIE, but common to many nonstandard English varieties which differ among each other mainly in quantitative terms.
- Contrary to Leap (1993), who claims that each ancestral language gives rise to a distinct AIE variety, the spreading of certain variables among AIE varieties may lead to the development of “General AIE”, with several regional variants.

I will base the above claims on an apparent time study of *t*-glottaling in AIE spoken in Washington State, USA. It involves the replacement of word-final *t*, and much less frequently *p* and *k*, by the glottal stop, as in (1). Such glottal stop is generally audibly released, often followed by an ‘echo’ vowel (boat [bouʔ^{*}]), and distinct from common unreleased *t* and from the preglottalised *t* in unstressed syllables reported for AAVE (Wolfram & Fasold 1974). *T*-glottaling will be compared in the speech of adults, youth and children.

- (1)
- a. PHRASE-FINAL *t*
...it’s a boa[ʔ], and it’s...
What have you go[ʔ]?
 - b. PRE-CONSONANTAL *t*
Can you shu[ʔ] my ga[ʔ]e?
Tha[ʔ] was i[ʔ].
 - c. PRE-VOCALIC *t*
grea[ʔ] elder
if I were taugh[ʔ] a[ʔ] tha[ʔ] age...
 - d. *p, k*
He grew u[ʔ] with a lo[ʔ]a tha[ʔ].
She doesn’ wanna be li[ʔ]e... she said, she didn’...

Similar glottaling has been reported for other AIE varieties and interpreted as transfer from the ancestral languages (Leap 1993). Although all Native languages in the area had ʔ and glottalised consonants, I argue that *t*-glottaling in my data does not involve transfer from those languages, but is a result of diffusion from other nonstandard (American) English varieties, because:

- it was absent from the speech of bilingual (ancestral language and English) speakers recorded in the 1960s.
- its frequency is the highest among the youth and children who have not been exposed to the (extinct) ancestral languages.

- its world-wide spread has recently been reported from the British Isles, a.o. to New Zealand, and its roots have been traced back to Scottish English (Bayard 1990, Milroy, Milroy & Hartley 1994, Macafee 1997, Docherty & Foulkes 1999, Mees & Collins 1999, Stuart-Smith 1999, Fabricius 2002, a.o.).

References

- Bartelt, H. Guillermo, Susan Penfield-Jasper & Bates Hoffer (eds.) 1982. *Essays in Native American English*. San Antonio: Trinity University Press.
- Bayard, Donn. 1990. "Minder, Mork and Mindy? (-t) glottalisation and post-vocalic (-r) in younger New Zealand English speakers." In Allan Bell & Janet Holmes (eds.) *New Zealand Ways of Speaking English*. Clevedon/Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 149-64.
- Cook, Mary J. & Margaret A. Sharp. 1966. "Problems of Navajo speakers in learning English". *Language Learning* 1: 21-29.
- Docherty, Gerard J. & Paul Foulkes. 1999. "Sociophonetic variation in 'glottals' in Newcastle English." Ms. Available from <http://www-users.york.ac.uk/~pf11/ICPhS99-glottals.pdf>.
- Fabricius, Anne H. 2002. "Ongoing change in modern RP: Evidence from the disappearing stigma of t-glottaling". *English World-Wide* 23: 115-36.
- Flanigan, Beverly O. 1984. "Bilingual education for Native Americans: the argument from studies of variational English". In John Handscombe (ed.) *On TESOL '83*: 81-93. Washington, D.C: TESOL.
- Leap, William L. (ed.). 1977. *Studies in Southwestern Indian English*. San Antonio: Trinity University.
- Leap, William L. 1993. *American Indian English*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
- Leechman, Douglas & Robert A. Hall. 1955. "American Indian Pidgin English: Attestations and grammatical peculiarities". *American Speech* 30: 163-71.
- Macafee, Caroline. 1997. "Ongoing change in modern Scots." In Charles Jones (ed.) *The Edinburgh History of the Scots Language*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 514-68.
- Mees, Inger & Beverly Collins. 1999. "Cardiff: A real-time study of glottalisation." In Gerard J. Docherty & Paul Foulkes (eds.) *Urban Voices: Variation and Change in British Accents*. 1999: 185-202. London: Arnold.
- Milroy, James, Lesley Milroy & Sue Hartley. 1994. "Local and supra-local change in British English. The case of glottalisation". *English World-Wide* 15: 1-33.
- Rowicka, Grażyna J. 2005. "American Indian English: The Quinault case". *English World-Wide* 26:3, 301-24.
- Stuart-Smith, Jane. 1999. "Glottals past and present: A study of t-glottaling in Glaswegian." In Clive Upton & Katie Wales (eds.) *Leeds Studies in English*. New Series 30. Leeds: University of Leeds, 181-204.
- Wolfram, Walt A. 1984. "Unmarked tense in American Indian English". *American Speech* 59: 31-50.
- Wolfram, Walt A. and Ralph W. Fasold. 1974. *The Study of Social Dialects in American English*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.