

Contact and the development of American English*

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0. Introduction. Writing in *American Speech* in 1929, E.C. Hills took up Meillet’s “theory of a linguistic ‘substratum’ that underlies and modifies or has modified certain languages” for English as spoken in the United States. He argues against any significant role for contact in the development of American English (1929:432):

The English poured into what was virtually an empty land. The few nomadic Indians were pushed back and sequestered in “reservations.” The Indians have given to English a few words, but otherwise they have had no effect whatever on the English language spoken in America. They have not created in any respect a linguistic substratum.

In perhaps one fiftieth of the United States there are linguistic substrata. These are formed by the French in parts of northern New England and Louisiana, the Spanish of the Southwest, the small German colonies in Pennsylvania, and the negroes in some districts in the Southeast. Elsewhere English has no substratum in the United States. It is true that in certain large cities there are recently arrived colonies of people of non-English speech, such, for instance, as the Italians of San Francisco and the Poles of Chicago. But in these colonies those of the second generation speak English with little or no foreign accent and those of the third generation generally lose the foreign speech completely. It could not be otherwise with the extreme mobility of our population and the great economic pressure that is put on our immigrants to learn English.

If we leave aside its flawed, anachronistic and offensive views of American demographic history, his view is part and parcel of a (still) widespread skepticism. With regard specifically to substrates, this view is driven in no small part by the abuse of language contact as an explanation for change generally and substrates in particular as *deus ex machina*. At its worst, scholars have appealed to substratal explanations where there is no evidence of the alleged substrate language (Hock & Joseph 1996:387, Trask 2000:329).

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Overwhelmingly, as a result, work on the history of American English has tended to bracket out contact as an issue.¹

Even today, American English can seem striking for its homogeneity at the national level. Indeed, even with much media attention to the evidence to the contrary (Labov et al. 2006), most Americans assume that regional variation is modest and receding. The present analysis of language contact in the development of American English, as will become clear shortly, is undertaken at a local level, often meaning both a limited geographical area and some identifiable social group. Numerous scholars find demarcative differences occur on this level, especially in the realm of structural language-contact effects beyond the lexicon. Even at the regional level, we will argue here, the effects of contact on many varieties of American English may be modest, even subtle, on first glance but they do exist in ways that are interesting and important for understanding American language and society today.²

We discuss possible structural impacts on the regional English of monolingual Americans that are likely to have originated in other languages and, to a lesser extent, in other English dialects. We will first lay out some conceptual and theoretical preliminaries (§1), and then touch briefly on structural effects of lexical borrowing (§2). With that, we turn to ethnolects in the U.S. that reflect the linguistic heritage of particular groups (§3). That sets up a more extended case study of the Upper Midwest (§4), where we see features originally associated with the most widely-spoken immigrant languages establishing themselves as regional markers. Finally, we provide a bigger picture with concluding remarks (§5). From its beginnings, we argue, English spoken in the present-day United States has been forged by language contact to a greater extent than is widely appreciated.

1. Background. Perhaps the major challenge for the current topic is determining what is and is not ‘contact-induced’ change. On the one hand, as already suggested, traditional historical linguists have typically preferred ‘internal’ accounts of change unless there is compelling evidence that something is contact-induced. On the other, some now see essentially all language and dialect change as driven by contact, usually in the sense that the spread of change involves diffusion. The former view rests on a dichotomy between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ motivations, where structural and contact-related changes are rigidly separated. That view appears to be incorrect (Dorian 1993, Mufwene & Gilman 1987, Rickford 1986, Thurgood 1996). We aim to avoid “the weakness of simplistic dichotomous thinking” (Dorian 1993:152) and work to trace how ‘internal’ and ‘external’ factors interact in change. (The nature of the interplay differs depending on the type of

¹ There are notable exceptions. Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2006) deal with structural contact effects on American English, such as Pennsylvanian *come with* (cf. §4.3) and derivational morphemes.

² This stands in sharp contrast to the early impact of contact, which led to the formation of a variety of pidgins, cf. Dillard 1992.

contact and varieties in contact.) The latter view risks trivializing the notion of ‘language contact’, rendering it vacuous (see Labov 2001:20). We can control for that problem by distinguishing between the ultimate sources of features and their transmission through communities. Both play central roles below.

Turning to terminology, we take Hills’ term, SUBSTRATE, as a cover term, referring to the residues of language shift, where an adult’s first language (L1) influences L2 acquisition (e.g., Mufwene 2001). Some argue that substrate effects are motivated not by social identity but by structural accommodation in the L2 whereby language learners engage in relexifying portions of their native lexicon through transfer of frequent and perceptually salient or congruent patterns (Trudgill 1986, 2008, Mesthrie 2001). Three aspects of contact theory are most helpful in understanding how source features have been transmitted into American English: IMPOSITION (source features showing up in the developing variety), the process of KOINÉIZATION (variety formation via leveling and reallocation) and TIMING (a post-immigration delay allowing for leveling stabilization).

Imposition. A more nuanced alternative to ‘substrate’ is ‘imposition’ (van Coetsem (1988, 2000, Howell 1993, Winford 2005). Much structural interference can be characterized as ‘imposition’ resulting from imperfect second language acquisition. As van Coetsem puts it, “the source language speaker is the agent, as in the case of a French speaker using his French articulatory habits while speaking English” (1988:3, also in Winford 2005:376). This focus on ‘agentivity’ — where borrowing is ‘recipient language agentivity’ and imposition ‘source language agentivity’ — helps constrain notions of which kind of linguistic item is more or less likely to be borrowed or to be imposed during contact. Howell (1993:189) represents the inverse relation between borrowing and imposition like this:

(1) Stability: Borrowing versus imposition

More open to borrowing	→	Less open to borrowing
Less affected by imposition	←	More affected by imposition

Less stable domains:

lexical items, derivational
morphology

More stable domains:

phonology, inflectional morphology,
semantic system, syntax

Koinéization. While van Coetsem’s model predicts structural types of contact effects, recent work on koinéization in closely related dialects helps illuminate developments under contact. Koinéization, or new dialect creation, proceeds from dialect contact through leveling and simplification (Trudgill 1986, 2004, Britain and Trudgill 1999, Kerswill 2002, Kerswill and Trudgill 2005). In dialect contact, some original features may persist. A Founder Principle applies to mixing situations where dialect features persisting generally come from the first speech communities contributing to the koiné. For example, Kwa-speaking slaves, who were brought to the west early, shaped

plantation African-American English (AAE) much more than more numerous Bantu speakers who arrived later (Mufwene 2001). Generally, dialect features with psychological significance (stereotypical or stigmatized, Dillard 1972, Kerswill and Trudgill 2005) tend to be smoothed over and leveled. This phase thus militates against substrate effects. Consequently, koinéization theory claims that the only substrate effects persisting into the new koiné will be those without psychological baggage. This approach does allow for substrate effects; once the koiné is stabilized via the smoothing out of cross-dialect variation, some variables emerge with new purpose ('focusing' in Kerswill and Trudgill 2005). Thus an effect emerges over the course of two post-contact generations. Kerswill and Trudgill (2005:200; schematized in (2), from Trudgill 1998, elsewhere) argue that it is important for migration to have stabilized by that point as well. This waiting period allowing for stabilization of the koiné occurs with colonialization, hence Trudgill's term *Colonial Lag*.

(2) The path of koiné formation

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Speakers involved</i>	<i>Linguistic characteristics</i>
I	adult migrants (first generation)	rudimentary leveling
II	first native-born speakers (second generation)	extreme variability and further leveling
III	subsequent generations	focusing, leveling, and reallocation

Below we apply this to another apparent imposition, final fortition in the Upper Midwest (§4.2).

As new varieties form, whether through contact among a variety of very different languages or a few closely related dialects, the social significance we assign to particular features changes, sometimes dramatically. Consider an example of dialect contact in American English, rhoticity.³ Rhoticity is a cover term for the consonantal articulation of coda /r/ (*r-fullness*) or non-articulation of /r/ in codas (*r-lessness*). Early colonial settlement on the Atlantic coast brought speakers of both r-ful and r-less dialects — r-less varieties in areas settled from southern England, r-ful in those settled by northern English and Scots-Irish, for instance. R-lessness was regarded as 'prestigious' (Kurath and McDavid 1961), and spread inland in particular directions from urban centers. For example, r-lessness spread northward from Boston into Maine but not westward across Massachusetts or into upstate New York (Bloch 1939), and also spread westward from the Tidewater region in South Carolina from Charleston through the plantation region toward the Blue Ridge Mountains (McDavid 1948). Even assuming the original distribution reflected settler dialects, explanation of subsequent changes — like the diffusion of r-lessness into once r-ful geography from eastern Massachusetts north to Maine and inland from Charleston, South Carolina — requires focusing on social factors like identity, prestige and affiliation to the source location, not migration alone. We then

³ See Downes (1998:150-175) for details on rhoticity as a variable in American English.

see patterns of diffusion defined along such parameters. McDavid (1948) noted that younger speakers, female speakers and urban speakers were r-less, characteristics now associated with carriers of innovations.

Time lag. We can still observe the changing status of r-fullness and r-lessness. In the South, the switch of r-less prestige to r-ful prestige has been well documented, and social variation differs by time and place. Compare McDavid's (1948) picture of South Carolina where female speakers are more r-less to Schönweitz's (2001) survey in *The Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States (LAGS 1986–92)* where female speakers are more r-ful. In New York City, Labov (1966, 1972) found that innovating r-lessness co-varies with social class and argued for a top-down innovation suggestive of hypercorrection. Finally, variation and change in r-lessness among African-Americans confirms the notion that analysis needs to take place locally. Wolfram's (1969) Detroit study shows that r-lessness is sensitive to social class and gender as well as ethnicity (see also Levine & Crockett 1966, Anshen 1969, Schönweitz 2001). Wolfram and Thomas (2002) found older AAE speakers in North Carolina exhibit a wide range of variability from those who are almost exclusively r-less to those who are almost entirely r-ful. Additionally, subtle differences have been found recently in numerous locales. In coastal North Carolina (Wolfram and Thomas 2002) younger AAE speakers have increased in r-lessness while whites are moving towards r-fulness. Myhill (1988) found that AAE contact with white vernaculars leads to r-fulness among AAE speakers, a pattern also found in an Appalachian enclave community (Childs and Mallinson 2004) and a Northern urban city (Purnell forthcoming). Moreover, accommodation (when r-less speakers use r-ful forms) entails consideration of a number of situational factors in a conversation. For example, Baugh (1988) found that r-fullness increased when an AAVE speaker was talking to an unfamiliar person of any race or a non-black speaker. Downes (1998:175) rightly argues that "postvocalic r is a different sociolinguistic variable" across communities, with its own history in each case. In that spirit, our window of analysis must be local.

We show below that systematic indeterminacies follow similar patterns of social and structural change under contact at the local level. By shifting the focus from lexical items to imposition in language structure and to processes and timing of koinéization, we will find the crisscrossing of social and geographic strata by variables yielding distinct subtypes of American English.

2. A note on loanwords. The one effect of contact readily apparent and universally accepted as such is lexical. Even some of the best-known discussions of contact in American English focus almost solely on that, for example, Mencken's "Loan-words and Non-English influences" (1937:150-163). Aside from scattered remarks on structure, like

the intonation of Pennsylvania German English, he restricts discussion largely to the lexicon, as does Romaine (2001).⁴

In and of themselves, loanwords have had marginal impact on American English — they have not changed our stress patterns the way Norman French did for English and their morphological integration is seldom distinctive, at least for American English (but see Cannon 1984 on zero plural marking on nouns borrowed from Japanese). Loanwords have contributed few and minor new phonotactic patterns, and differential phonological integration can be found.

Consider first differences depending on whether a given borrowing came in by written or oral transmission: Among German borrowings, for instance, *danke schön* has generally appeared in American speech with the final vowel /e:/. This reflects the unrounding of German umlauts found in most dialects imported to this country, where Standard German *schön* [ʃø:n] is pronounced [ʃe:n]. This is certainly the case in the Pennsylvania German area, but also a natural way of importing front rounded vowels into English. In contrast, German *über* ‘over’ (often spelled *uber* in English), long known in philosophical usage and as a part of loan compounds (cf. *Übermensch*), has become a productive prefix. It is pronounced with the back vowel [u] rather than front [i]. Japanese is the source language for American *skosh* [skoʃ] ‘[a] little bit’, and both the pronunciation and spelling reflect the loss of an initial-syllable voiceless high vowel of Japanese rather than the transcription of the Japanese form, *sukoshi*. Likewise, our name for the rapidly growing Japanese vine is *kudzu*, approximating the native pronunciation rather than the Romanization *kuzu*.

Second, numerous foreign words and names have been taken into American English (and other varieties) with ‘hyperforeign’ pronunciations, as described in Janda, Joseph & Jacobs 1994. They note that some forms retain relatively native pronunciations (or have had them reintroduced historically) such as *Bach* with the velar fricative [x] or *milieu* as [mɪlʲø]. In many other cases, Americans and other English speakers have extended generalizations about particular languages to over-adapt loans. For instance, the knowledge that French often does not pronounce written final consonants (English *ballet* [bælé]) and its phonological counterpart that French prefers open syllables prompts most Americans to produce *coup de grâce* without its final [s], turning a ‘stroke of mercy’ into a French ‘stroke of grease’. While the voiced palatal fricative [ʒ] is found in some very well established English words, like *measure* and *pleasure*, its foreignness is apparently still evident, by its regular extension to *Bei[ʒ]ing* rather than (the more Chinese-like)

⁴ Much remains to be done in this realm. The key resource for tracking lexical results of contact is the *Dictionary of American Regional English* (Cassidy & Hall 1985–), and it becomes especially valuable when used in conjunction with the volume indices like *DARE* (1993) and von Schneidemesser (1999).

Bei[dʒ]ing, and humorously in *garbage* [gáɪbɪdʒ] > [gɑɪbáʒ], or the chain store *Target* as [tʰɑɪʒé].

Still, the widespread scholarly assumption of a lack of influence beyond the lexicon does not match some folk perceptions about American English in some parts of the country. In the Upper Midwest, as developed below, it is unremarkable for members of communities with strong ethnic/immigrant identities to assume that their personal speech reflects their heritage, even if they are monolingual English speakers. If asked about some distinctive sounding pronunciation, such as ‘stopping’ of interdental fricatives or final devoicing in a word like *beer*[s], speakers may matter-of-factly say “oh, that’s just the Polish/German/Norwegian coming out in me”. We turn now to such imposition-type structural patterns.

3. American varieties shaped by bilingualism. As noted, much attention to language contact in the history of American English has been addressed to what are sometimes called ‘ethnic dialects’, such as French influences on the English of southern Louisiana, Pennsylvania German influence on the English of southeastern Pennsylvania, and Spanish influences on the English of broad areas of the Southwest. This sort of literature has often described English spoken by L2 speakers. The traditionally discussed English of ‘Cajuns’ or ‘Pennsylvania Dutchmen’ was non-native English, reflecting direct imposition from the relevant L1(s), not the residue of earlier language shift. Well into the 20th century, such communities were often not merely bilingual, but often heavily non-English speaking. In the Upper Midwest, communities much smaller and less isolated than the Cajuns or Pennsylvania Dutch remained monolingual 70+ years after immigration. For instance, up to a quarter of Wisconsinites in some German immigrant communities are reported in the 1910 U.S. Census as non-English speakers, many of them second and even third generation in the United States (Wilkerson & Salmons 2008).⁵ The distinctiveness of English spoken under such circumstances reflects L1 interference; it does not reflect stable patterns of American English as a native dialect, but rather typically transitional phenomena, so that almost all such features have been thought to recede and disappear as communities become proficient in English. As such, these patterns are therefore not of primary interest, but they provide a seed-bed from which later features may emerge via the processes of koinéization laid out in (2).

The patterns of distinctiveness and non-distinctiveness of American English as spoken by English monolinguals in a whole array of broad and internally-diverse communities — for example, ‘Native American’ or ‘Indian English’ and ‘Jewish English’ — provide insight into roles played by contact in the history of American English. We will briefly treat both, followed by a word about dialect contact in current AAE. We focus on phenomena found among monolingual English-speaking members of communities,

⁵ Note that such situations challenge the widespread assumption that time of immigration reflects the beginning of bilingualism.

which typically begin as ethnic or social features, due to a shared linguistic heritage. Crucially, such features can generalize to become local or regional markers beyond a particular ethnic community.

3.1. ‘Indian English’.⁶ Almost all Native American communities in the United States are today in the late stages of shift to English, and the clear majority in almost every community is made up of native speakers of English.⁷ In the classic work on Indian English, Leap (1993:281-282) begins his summary with these points:

1. American Indian English is an aggregate of English varieties, which differ, as a group and individually, from standard English (as expressed through the language of the metropolis) and from the varieties of English spoken by non-Indians in American society.
2. The distinctive characteristics of these codes derive, in large part, from their close association with their speakers’ ancestral language traditions. In many cases, rules of grammar and discourse from that tradition provide the basis for grammar and discourse in these English codes — even in instances where the speakers are not fluent in their ancestral language.
3. Other components of Indian English grammar and discourse resemble features of nonstandard English; usually, however, these features express meanings not attested in other nonstandard codes. The similarities in form should not overshadow the significance that these features hold in each case.

American Indians speak or spoke hundreds of languages, are in contact with a range of American English dialects, have acquired English under widely different circumstances, and so on. Given that, a central question is whether shared features span tribes and regions. An important historical event bears on the answer to this question. In the late 19th century, the federal government forced many Native children into ‘boarding schools’, where students were made to use English and punished for using their native tongues. Leap concludes from a survey of structural features found in boarding school student letters that most reflected L1 interference. The situation led to the rise of what Leap calls ‘codes-under-construction’, as students learned English using all available input (1993:162), but not to the rise of any broader unified dialect.

Two phonological case studies illustrate paths that English is taking in indigenous communities. First, Rowicka (2005) presents evidence that members of the Quinault Indian Nation in Washington State have begun to use [ʔ] for /t/ in ways shared by other Native American dialects of English. Similar ‘glottaling’ is familiar from an array of

⁶ ‘Scare quotes’ are used as a reminder that each of these terms is a cover for myriad very different dialects and sociolects. We use ‘Indian’ alongside ‘Native American’ here, following Leap’s title, but also in line with current norms within Native communities and beyond.

⁷ Active preservation and revitalization efforts are underway in virtually every Native community, but, as throughout, we focus on L1 English speakers.

other varieties, including white American vernaculars, so this pattern may fit under Leap's point (3), above, perhaps with koinéization. Second, Anderson 1999 compares the diphthongs /ai/ and /oi/ in Cherokee English (westernmost North Carolina) with neighboring non-Cherokee dialects. Monophthongization of /ai/ to [a:] is one of the most characteristic features of Southern U.S. English generally, but the two communities show somewhat different patterns between [ai] and [a:] (along with different monophthongization of /oi/): Cherokee English has [ai] in hiatus or utterance finally, while Anglos monophthongize across all environments. Anderson argues that this reflects a combination of both Cherokee influence and accommodation to local norms.

Quinault English lacks demonstrable imposition on the emerging variety, while the Cherokee example may reflect some transfer, but mediated and mitigated by patterns found in local varieties. What both have in common, then, is that the current situation shows relatively subtle linguistic differentiation from surrounding Anglo vernacular usage. To our knowledge, nowhere have uniquely Native American features of English spread into systematic usage among non-Indian neighbors or contact populations.

3.2. 'Jewish English'. A clear contrast to this situation is found in 'Jewish English'. These varieties are often associated with Yiddish influence, but the designation covers a vast range of groups of very varied cultural and linguistic heritage. Many discussions correlate religious observance roughly with linguistic distinctiveness, from Hasidic communities where Yiddish is learned as L1 to those who consider themselves 'culturally Jewish' but are not observant and whose speech may differ from other local varieties only by a few words. For part of this spectrum, Benor (2004, chs. 4, 5) gives a concise picture of English spoken in Orthodox communities, covering lexical and structural features, as well as discourse and pragmatic patterns.

A number of features strongly associated with Jewish speech have become unremarkable (if recognizable) parts of English for non-Jewish Americans. Consider these examples from syntax and phonotactics, domains susceptible to imposition. First, a stereotype of Jewish speech is the topicalization of indefinites, as in these examples (all examples from Feinstein 1980:15):

(3) Indefinite topicalization

Some milk you want?

A hotel she lives in.

Feinstein's questionnaire results indicate that New Yorkers found such sentences more acceptable than non-New Yorkers. While Jewish New Yorkers reported the highest use, he still considers this a New York feature. Though associated with Yiddish, this is no simple transfer. First, other languages spoken in New York City allowed similar topicalization, including Germanic ones. Second, other varieties of American English allow a closely related topicalization, namely of definites:

(4) Definite topicalization

The book by Bellow I already read.

Him I like.

Feinstein argues that “Yiddish helped to extend the domain of an analogous existing rule in English” (1980:22), rather than introducing a basic change. Moreover, the extension remains incomplete: Yiddish allows topicalization of any element, including non-finite verbs, while the New York pattern does not.

Turning to phonotactics, English has historically had word-initial /s/+consonant clusters but not /ʃ/+consonant clusters. Numerous Yiddish loanwords have become ubiquitous without assimilating to the native sC pattern—*shlep* ‘to drag’ and *shmooze* ‘to chat, especially currying favor’ with [ʃ]. The Yiddish pattern matches patterns common to other immigrant languages, such as German, where most varieties allow ONLY /ʃ/+consonant clusters, as found in common pronunciation of proper names like *Schlitz* and *Schmidts* (both family names and brands of beer). Intriguingly, Durian (2007) reports a change in progress of /s/ to [ʃ] before consonants, especially sCr- clusters like *strong* but any possible connection between the change in progress and language contact is too tenuous to entertain.

All these features have generalized beyond formerly Yiddish-speaking communities, but the history is far richer than direct transfer or imposition from Yiddish (or other Jewish languages) onto L1 English. In the first example, an existing English pattern was generalized. In both, changes were supported by parallels in other languages present in the communities. Other features have spread, including *shm-* reduplication (*fancy shmancy*), or features supported by multiple linguistic sources, like coda [ŋg] for expected [ŋ] in *singer* or *long* (also a Slavic pattern).

3.3. ‘African-American English’. The above examples show clear, direct links between bilingualism and contemporary speech. AAE had equally clear roots in language contact, as speakers of many African languages became speakers of English (Wolfram and Thomas 2002:12-31). The development of AAE is also consistent with imposition, koinéization and timing. Mufwene (2000) argues that AAE results more from the convergence of American English and founding African varieties at various times and locations before the Reconstruction of the South than directly from an American or Caribbean creole. The resultant reallocated forms are neither wholly American English (e.g., *gon(na)*, Poplack and Tagliamonte 1996) nor wholly African (e.g., the associative plural, Boretzky 1993).

Today, AAE varieties are more closely tied to local linguistic ecology than to a hypothetical pan-AAE variety. AAE is in contact with essentially all other varieties of American English. Recent literature suggests that AAE speakers are both accommodating

in part to local white vernacular while distinguishing themselves by non-participation in changes sweeping through the rest of the local population (Bailey 1997, Childs & Mallinson 2004, Myhill 1988). For example, AAE speakers who live in the ‘Northern Cities’ area are not fully participating in the vowel restructuring characteristic of urban, white speech (Gordon, 2000, Thomas 2001).⁸ Recent research in the Upper Midwest has begun to explore the role of contact (e.g., Purnell forthcoming). Work to date suggests that these groups are both participating in limited ways, but retaining either pan-AAE features or adopting the local white features.

Since the late 1980s, controversy has flared about the relationship of AAE to general American English, with some arguing that AAE was/is diverging from white vernaculars and others arguing for convergence. This controversy is best understood at the local level because the psychological value of reallocated features is as local as the contact between speakers within a single community (Bailey & Maynor 1989, Rickford 1999). We conclude that the shifting salience of features, along with the leveling of features that appear to have lost significance under contact, reinforce linguistic differences across communities.

The generalization across all these settings is that speakers are navigating a complex cluster of structural and social options in the ways they speak. Much of what we see is imposition, save for its absence in Quinault English. Borrowing is also present in these communities, as English L1 speakers acquire elements of their ancestral indigenous languages in Native communities, for instance for emblematic codeswitching with greetings and leave-takings, or acquire some Yiddish or Hebrew in the case of ‘Jewish English’ (see Benor 2004 on sociolinguistic complexities of this process).

4. Case study: From immigrant languages to regional varieties. We now switch focus to an area where features that a couple of generations ago were directly identified with immigrants’ non-native English have now become regional, and are widely used beyond members of the particular ethnic communities that introduced the features into the mix.

The potential role of influence from immigrant languages has been noted in the recent literature, notably by Mufwene (2006:178, emphasis ours):

... nationalistic parochialism among European colonists, which lasted until the early twentieth century, must have reduced the extent of influence that continental Europeans could have exerted on structures of North American Englishes. Although the overall demographic proportion of these immigrants exceeded that of the Britons in America by the nineteenth century, the incremental pattern of their growth,

⁸ Briefly, the Northern Cities Chain Shift is a restructuring of the vowel space where the most salient shift of /æ/ > /e/ is accompanied by /ɪ/ > /ɛ/ > /ʌ/ > /ɔ/ > /ɑ/ > /æ/.

including the later immigration of some groups and their gradual absorption into the prevailing Anglo socio-economic structure, WEEDED OUT MUCH OF THE SUBSTRATE INFLUENCE they could have exerted on their present English vernacular.

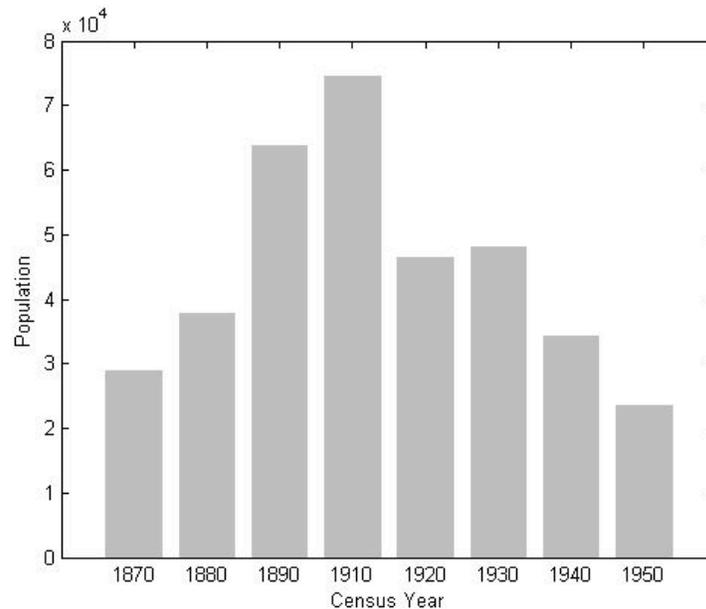
This section sketches some patterns that have resisted this weeding out process and reasons why they might have. We draw here on the Upper Midwest,⁹ where the demographic history of immigration is relatively well understood and the emergence of salient regionalisms is relatively recent and well documented.

Southern and eastern Wisconsin received repeated surges of immigrants, especially German-speaking ones. The largest immigrant group in the region, Germans in eastern Wisconsin provide a handy focus for this brief discussion. Consider census reports of German nativity in the largest city, Milwaukee, between 1870 and 1950, in (6) below, where nativity increases from 1870 to 1910, then falls. While each community's history is unique, the chronology is typically similar across the region, as Radzilowski (2007:217) confirms: "Between 1870 and 1900 the settler immigration that helped fill up the rural areas of the Midwest gradually tapered off." Let us correlate this timing to the source of features and timing of the emergence of reallocated features of the contemporary dialect of the region.

(6) German nativity in Milwaukee as reported on the national decennial census, 1870 – 1950.¹⁰

⁹ We define 'Upper Midwest' here following the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures, to wit as: "Although the exact contours of the Upper Midwest are open to debate, most arbiters apply the term to Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (with overlap into lower Michigan, Ontario, Manitoba, the Dakotas, Iowa, Illinois ...)".

¹⁰ Immigration numbers were extracted from US Census data, accessed through the University of Virginia Library, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/>.



We sketch four patterns associated with the Upper Midwest, each with a distinct relationship to contact: the ‘stopping’ of interdental fricatives (§4.1), final fortition (or ‘devoicing’) (§4.2), the use of *with* as a verbal particle with verbs of motion (§4.3) and innovations in the use of other adverbs (§4.4).

4.1. Interdental fricative stopping. When asked what makes for a regional accent in various parts of the Upper Midwest — including Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, Wisconsin, and Minnesota — one of the most common responses from laypeople is ‘dem, dere, dose’, the use of [d] or [d̥] for interdental fricative /ð/, along with [t] or [t̥] for /θ/, as in *upnort* ‘up north’, a stereotypical reference to Wisconsin’s Northwoods. Among older speakers in one heavily German-ethnic community in eastern Wisconsin, Rose 2006 sees this feature, which she calls ‘stopping’, as key to ‘performing Germanness’ among her speakers, who included German-English bilinguals and English monolinguals. Rose finds that speakers of English or Irish heritage were equally likely to use stops for fricatives. In particular the use among Anglo-Americans indicates that the feature no longer only conveys ethnicity, but has been partially reinterpreted as social variation. Among other things, the feature varies by gender — more widely used by men than women — and by social context — with high rates among those playing skat (a German card game popular in Wisconsin) and bingo, but low among bridge players, for example.

While Rose studied a community with heavy German (and Dutch) roots, stopping is likewise a central part of performing other ethnicities. It was common in many languages brought to Wisconsin and some English dialects, including Hiberno-English (Hickey 2004). In koiné formation, features present in multiple input varieties, thus not readily

identified with one particular group, tend to survive the leveling process into the new variety (Kerswill & Trudgill 2005). The multiple origins of stopping promoted its propagation in the state among even those of English heritage.

From a traditional historical linguistic perspective, it would be easy to deny that the present-day stopping in the Upper Midwest was CAUSED by immigrant language, given that varieties of English spoken around the globe have lost interdental fricatives, sometimes where appeal to language contact is implausible at best, like southeastern England. Moreover, language-internal accounts of this change abound, notably perceptual and articulatory accounts. All these factors favor stopping. At the same time, the feature is stigmatized in some settings, and may be receding in some areas, though it is certainly used among young speakers. As Blevins (2006:20) concludes generally about these segments in English:

In an imaginary *natural* history of English, untainted by literacy, prescriptive norms, social conventions, and language contact, the loss of /ð/, /θ/ ... would likely be complete in all varieties of Modern English. ... However, external factors have intervened — among others, the infiltration of American Broadcasting English to ever more remote corners of the Earth. As a consequence, these phonemes and the contrasts they take part in are hanging onto life

In the Upper Midwest, speakers apparently transformed stopping, once a sign of L1 interference, into a widespread but socially stratified feature found throughout a broader region among speakers of varying ethnic background. Again, we do not see direct transfer of an immigrant-language feature onto the regional dialects. Instead, as in §3, a socially and structurally more complex story is required: As noted, features found in the speech of many different groups — so not identified with any single group — preferentially find their way into the koiné. Like all features, psychological significance changes during reallocation. Stopping has become disconnected to some extent, as Rose shows, from ethnicity, being found now among Anglos, but has taken on new social meaning.

4.2. Final fortition. Another ‘reallocated’ feature integral to the koinéization of Upper Midwestern English is final fortition, or neutralization of the ‘voicing’ contrast in word-final position.¹¹ American English contrasts words like *his* and *hiss* or *bat* and *bad*, for example, while in German *Bad* and *bat* are pronounced [bat], *Rad* and *Rat* as [ʁat]. While devoicing in word-final position has been attributed directly to German influence, fortition or devoicing can also be found in Polish, Dutch, partially in Scandinavian and in some dialects of Yiddish. The following are stereotypical pronunciations.

¹¹ We follow Iverson & Salmons 1995, 2007 and many others, taking laryngeal distinctions in English and German to be better captured by considering aspiration (‘spread glottis’, ‘fortis’, etc.) to be the distinctive feature rather than ‘voice’, as found in Dutch, Yiddish, Polish and so on.

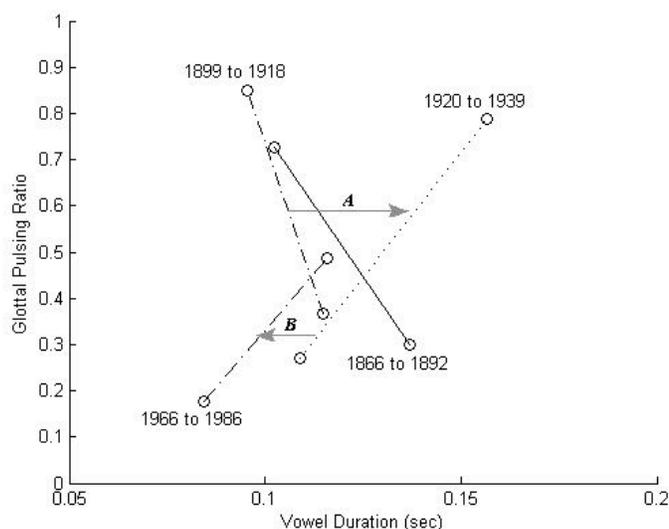
(7) Stereotypical final fortition in the Upper Midwest

Da Bear[s]! (Saturday Night Live television skit, Chicago)

I'm going to wash my hair[s]. (Milwaukee)

The fact that this feature was used as a stereotype of regional speech on national television suggests a psychological awareness of devoicing as being connected to the Upper Midwest. Those skits traded, as well, in stereotypes of specifically Polish-American speech, while the Milwaukee example portrays German-American speech (as underscored by the word form *hairs*, which is a mass rather than count noun for most Americans in this context.) Phonetically, 'voicing' is not only evident in vocal fold vibration during the coda obstruent, but also in the length of vowels preceding the consonant (e.g. Heffner 1937, Parker 1974). These two features — vowel duration and pulsing — can be compared against each other as an overall measure of the change in voicing over successive generations of speakers from southeastern Wisconsin (see (8) below, from Purnell et al. 2005b; see also Purnell et al. 2005a). The figure in (8) depicts changes across four sets of speakers: English speakers with birthdates between 1866 and 1892, 1899 and 1918, 1920 to 1939 and 1966 to 1986. The top point represents the average location for /d/ for that group and the bottom point is the average location for /t/. What is important here is how the speakers differ from the canonical standard relation between /t/ and /d/. We expect that the /t/ points would be in the lower left corner and the /d/ in the opposite corner, the upper right corner. Those speakers born before the peak in German nativity (in (6)) use glottal pulsing for voicing and largely ignore vowel duration. The middle chronological group is most like the generally assumed English pattern. They were born as German immigration waned. The youngest group trades off between vowel duration and pulsing, but it is clear that the magnitude of /d/ is more /t/-like. These speakers are two generations removed from the middle group born in the German nativity decline. Once again, a pattern that survives into contemporary vernacular represents a feature present in a variety of immigrant source languages. We interpret this as final fortition's reallocation.

(8) The historical development of final fortition in Wisconsin (from Purnell et al. 2005b)



4.3. Verbal particle *with*. Consider now a grammatical structure, the use of adverbial/particle *with* together with verbs of motion, as in these sentences:¹²

(9) Verbal particle *with*

We're going now. Are you coming with?
Are you taking your phone with?

Most English speakers would use *along* in this context, or just the verb without an adverb at all. This construction is widespread not only in the Upper Midwest but also in the Lower Midwest, e.g. in Illinois and Indiana and in historically Germanic areas of Pennsylvania (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2006).¹³ This feature is also popularly associated with German heritage, presumably based on familiarity of the parallel construction in German, which has so-called 'separable prefix' verbs with *mit-* 'with': *mitkommen* 'to come along', *mitnehmen* 'to take along', and so on. Like stopping, it has multiple immigrant sources, namely across the Germanic family:

(10) Germanic models

German: Er kommt mit.
 he comes along/with
Dutch: Hij komt mee.
Danish: Han kommer med.

¹² The syntactic analysis of this construction — whether the *with* is better understood as a 'verb particle' construction or adverb — is irrelevant for present purposes.

¹³ It is also reported as a feature of South African English, presumably by a similar historical path from Afrikaans.

This feature has close parallels in English verb particles, such as *to come to* ‘to regain consciousness’ so that this constitutes a lexico-semantic innovation for a set of verbs, not a more broadly syntactic one. Most Germanic languages have large, productive sets of such ‘separable prefixes’, yet no American English dialect has acquired any beyond *with*.

The feature differs socially from stopping in not being stigmatized. Perhaps for this reason, it appears to be increasingly widespread throughout the Midwest and beyond, though it remains foreign, to our knowledge, in the South. Many speakers in the Upper Midwest use it across a wide range of styles and registers, and some are surprised to learn that it is a regional feature. In this case, a seed sown in the region’s immigrant past has flourished and spread (see Benson manuscript) as predicted by the koinéization process.

4.4. Other adverbial changes and discourse patterns. We have explored examples where more than one source language contributed to the success of a feature in regional vernacular. Having a source in multiple input languages is not necessary for change via contact. Especially in eastern Wisconsin (but stretching westward), we find direct imposition of features from German, where ‘modal particles’ like *mal* are used to soften requests and convey other information about speaker attitudes and intentions. The English translation of that word, *once*, is today used in the same function:

(11) Modal-particle-like adverbs

Come (over) here **once**

komm mal her

just come over here; come over here, won't you?

Similar pragmatically-oriented transfers are found throughout the region, including tag questions, like Wisconsin *ainna?*, < from ain't it?, calqued from German *nicht wahr?*. The same appears to be true with exclamations, like (American-) Norwegian *uff da!* ‘oh darn!’. Still, such single-source features appear to be less common and less central grammatically.

4.5. Emergence of the regional pattern. We have argued that the Upper Midwest’s immigrant past helped guide the region’s path to increasing linguistic distinctiveness. That path is indirect, involving koiné formation set in motion at the end, rather than beginning, of major immigration to the region. At the outset of this chapter, we remarked that three characteristics of language contact are emphasized by the data we presented in this paper. These characteristics include the following.

- (a) Imposition on particular types of structural domains.
- (b) The process of leveling and reallocation/hypercorrection from potentially multiple sources.
- (c) The timing of the lag after immigration for leveling stabilization.

The examples laid out in §4 exemplify these patterns. First, imposition is found in examples from phonology and syntax (i.e., from the right side in Van Coetsem's scheme in (1)). The Upper Midwest also shows borrowings, but they are less instrumental to regional formation (cf. Cassidy & Hall 1985- on *kaffeeklatch*, *lutefisk*, etc.) Second, the process of koinéization is exemplified by multiple immigrant languages contributing to the leveling process by sharing final fortition, stopping, the *come with* pattern. Third is the timing of the development of the new variety. The historical patterns of immigration appear to match the 'lag' associated with koiné formation, where new varieties arise only generations after immigration ceases.

5. Summary and conclusions. We opened by quoting Hills' arguments against substrates in American English. We close with Meillet's response to Hills, who had sent Meillet a draft of the paper (in Hills' translation):

In order that there may be a linguistic substratum, it is not necessary that there should be only one. A complex substratum, especially, brings modifications which it becomes impossible to evaluate by reason of their complexity and their variety. The fact that French is spoken at the present time in Paris by a majority of provincials and descendants of provincials and of foreigners and descendants of foreigners is, I believe, of great importance. At first sight, the effects are not appreciable, but the fundamental result is that "Parisian" is disappearing, drowned in a sort of Koiné (common speech), just as Attic formerly disappeared drowned in the Greek Koiné. The idiomatic character of "Parisian" is being progressively effaced. I can scarcely believe that the great mixing of population that is taking place in the United States will not have a similar effect. A banal Koiné is being produced.

These comments are similar to the views of many (e.g. Mencken 1937:356). One thrust of modern variationist sociolinguistics has been demonstrating the increasing overall diversity of American English. We raise the question here of whether the diversification of American English today could be seen as the slow-motion resolution of the contacts encoded in our history. The geographical differentiation may spring in part from the local working out of koiné formation and language shift in these communities. Non-English features enter the pool of variants available for incorporation into local and regional speech. Over post-immigration generations, these variables take on social and regional import rather than ethnic/heritage-language meanings. American English has not fully crystallized into one coherent whole, but is developing a set of parochial koinés.

These complex historical paths do not arise *ex nihilo* from contact but often involve extensions of patterns historically present in English, where acquirers or adults seeking to accommodate to new patterns of speech could tweak the inherited pattern to produce the new structures. We see this syntactically in both New York indefinite topicalization (drawing on topicalization of definites) and Upper Midwestern verbal particle

constructions of the *come with* type (drawing on verbal particles of the *come to* type.) Neither is really a fundamental syntactic change such as word order changes, and neither has developed the full range found in the immigrant language (topicalization of any constituent in Yiddish, much larger sets of verbal particles in the Upper Midwest). The negotiation of structural change from contact in American English gives every impression of expanding possibilities and generalizing on restricted processes.

Also temporally, these effects show clear signs that they are not mundane transfers from other first languages categorically imposed on English. In fact, the features were never actually absent from the local varieties, but they may appear to be submerged for a generation or two, only to reemerge later. Similar time gaps between contact and the rise of such features once counted as a reason to discount ‘substrate’ accounts, but they fit nicely with koinéization theory.

The features treated follow van Coetsem’s stability gradient generally, but add some nuance. Borrowing of lexical items is widespread, we see derivational morphology borrowed (prefixal *über*), and we find imposition in phonetics/phonology (final fortition), for example. But borrowing has created new phonotactic patterns (like {C-}) and imposition has been gentler and more indirect than we might expect, whether in the syntactic extensions or the time lag in final fortition.

Time and again, we see the interplay between ‘internal’ or structural and ‘external’ or social factors in the origins and transmission of change. In the extreme case, Quinault English, it appears that we have language shift without lingering L1 transfer into the new variety, but at the same time, the emergence of a new linguistic trait (glottalization) that draws on a familiar pattern in English and shows affinity to certain groups, namely other Native communities. But this outcome appears to be the exception, not the rule.

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