## LOCEMEATT RHSUME

| ED 057652 | FL 002722 |
| :---: | :---: |
| AOTHOP | thaterw ret gary no. |
| TTTEE | Some Ruy tor the fronunciation of Engilsh in |
|  | "orthrest Arkansas. |
| PDB DATE | 5 サov 71 |
| NOTR: | 15p.: Spepch presented at the Midwest Regional |
|  | meeting of the Ameriran Dialect Society Deterolt. |
|  | Hichiqan. November 5.1971 |
| EDPS PRICE | MP-50.65 MC-53.29 |
| DESCRIPTORS | Consonants: Drep Structure: Dialects: Environmental |
|  | Influences: Generative Gramar: Oral English: |
|  | Dhomemes: Phonemics: phonology: pronunciation: |
|  | -qedional Dialects: Structural Analysin: Vowels |
| IDENTIEIERS | tarkansas |

## ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes a number of generalizations concerning the vowels used in a dialect of English spoken in northwest Arkansas. The generalizations are in the form of ordered rules in line with theories of generative grammar. The concept of an undeflying system of diaphonemes is used. similat to that of Rudolph Troike. The primary focus is on vovels: consonants are considered when they are involved in relevant phonetic environments. Tense and lax vowels, and diphthonqs are discussed in terms of their appearance in a particular environment. A phonological matrix illustrates the diaphonemes used in the dialect. Some generative rules for pronunciation are provided along with examples, and references are included. (VM)

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This paper is an actenpt co surmarize a relacively mall numer of encraiLzactors to account for sore features of pronunciacion in che varlety of faglish apokan in northwest Arkansas. These generalizations are in the fora of ordered rules. for the theoretical bias of the analysis is that of gererative eramar. This study reflects seneral compatibility with, and iniluence by, S. J. Reyser"a review of the pronunciation of Fnglish in the Atlantic states (1963). Chemay and Halle's The sound pattern of English (1968), James Sledd's articie, Brkaking, unlaut. and the Southern draul (1966), and Pudolph Troike's article. mperall pattern and generative phonology (1971).

The rules postulated in this study constitute a tentative approxipation of a fragment of the abstract phonological system of an idealized Arkansas spanter functioning in a relaxed, convertational styie. Actual speech of any pareicular Axkansawyer may yield data in conflict with the phonetic realizacion of the undarlying phonological units. In anticipation of these counter-examples. a feu explanations will be suggested. First, the hypothesized rules may be wrongin their formulation, their ordering, or both. Second, the countermexamples could be products of dialect mixture, whereas theae rules describe an unmixed dialect. Third, the data of actual speech may yield the even more unpredictable variation that stems from style shifting. Such counter-examplesfare welconed evidence. Obviousiy, those revealing errors in analysis are prized, but those
illustratinc dialect or sylistic mixture are also valuahle, ior they enable che Lavestigator to galn lasights into the systeratic nature of the differmees between the rules for one dialect and another or on atyie and another. ${ }^{\text {l }}$

It should he atressed ac this polint that cheso fulat are not the product of a mere came of intellectual leapirot plajecin in office on the thiversity of Arkansas canpua. Conceptuallzation is only a part of the input. These rules are based upon data contalned in approxitrately 40 hourn of tape secorded interviews. upon the observatioas of laymen-comenentors on Ozark speech such as Vance Randolph (1953) and Charles Morrow wilson (1959). and upon the authur's casual observations made during the past year'a restdonce in Fajetteville, Arkansas. (The auchor hae also erusted his intuicions as a native speaker of a dlalect siellar in eany respects to the one described in this study. i.e., the dialoct of northeast Arianseab.)

An underlying phonological syaton of diaphonores is posited for the dialect under consifleration. The tere diapheneme is used uith efsinntially the same meaing it has in Troike's article, overall pattern and generative phonology. It in not to be confused with the term as it is used in the works of Hill (1958: 59). Weinreich (1954:395). and Scockwell (1959:262). The daphoneric syster is not as abstract as that of syacematic phonenes or morphophoneres, but the diaphoneme ia clearly more generalized and abstract than the caxonomic phoneme. with which it should not be equated or confused.

The postulated aysem ia set forth on the phonological ratrix, though the present rules focus primarily upon the vowels uith some attention to slides and liquids. True consonante are considered at this tire only when they are involved in relevant phonetic environmente for the rules.

The vocalle portion of the matrix consiset of six cence and aeven lax
 bopic. Iol in bourht, and lal in par. Each of these is palred with a lax counter-
 vowel is axploited in thle dialect only in tio loil diphthons at the diaphonemic level). and lal in gat. The sevench lax vowel. lall io bat, has no matching teace vovel at the diaphonemic leval. Three diphthonges all ulth lax initial -lemence are recopnizedt ioil in buy. Icul in bow, and lowi in boy. In addicion to voule the matrix providen for "true" coasonants. lor two liquids (lel and |li). and for three Elides (inl, IyI, and lwi). These glides are not recogulaed in
 101, the palatal iti, and the volar lu:, whith are [trocalic, -tense, =back, Ehigh ].

THE LAX VCRELS
The lax vovel ill is characterized by centering offrlices before most consonants. The offglide occurs before all [-high] comsoasats (all stopz but lk: and Iglo before fricacives, and before both [tanterior] nasals. Some examplea are tip [tiop], bid [biad]. live [Itov], and pin [pion]. In two envirompats. before [thigh, teontinuent, tatrident] consonant: (as in fish and dish) and before nasal + affricate clustere (as in pinch, inch, and singe) the vowel becones [+zense]. Eleevhere (before lk, g. $\mathrm{E}, \mathrm{JI}$ and liquids and in word-final positions) the vowel is a monophthons [ 1 ].

Like iul, the lax front vowel icl has a centering offglide before [thigh ${ }^{1}$ consonants, ylelding such pronunctacions as [stcep, weab, beot, bcad] for ster wh, bet, and bed. This vovel also become [trense] before [thigh, tcontinuent
tetrident] consonants (fresh and zeasure), and also before igl, as in leg, besp and ans. Before nasale luland lel merge as lil. Pen is [pion].

The 104 front lax vovel lal becomes [ttense] in threc enviroments: before nasal + comoonant cluncers, beforn [-woica, +concinuanc] consonants, and before [thigh] stops (ikl and igl). Like the other eense front vovels. [+tense] IEl developa a palatal offgilde (and a lax initial element) in the pronunciations [pate, lati, zis, deins, reis] (path, lnugh, nsh, dance, ard ras). then followed by the offgifde and a [tnasal] consonant, the low vowel optionally raises to lel before laxing. Thus pante ray he either [pints] or [peints]. In other preconsonantal enoironments lal has a centering offglide as in [keap, rean, heav] (cap, ran, and have).

The [thlgh, tback, -tense] lul has two offglides, a centering offglide before [tanterior] stop: (coop, hood, and foot are [kop, muod, fuot]) and a palatal offglide before [thigh, tcontinuent] consonants. Bush and push are [tuis] and [puis].

The merger of ||l and le| before nasals has airesdy been mentioned, but another coalescence of front vowels occurs in a nasal environeent. All front vowels merge as lol ([-high, -low, tense]) before lyl. As a result think is identical to thank; aine is 1dentical to sang.

THE TENSE VOHELS
The [thigh] or [-round] tense vowels $|||,|e|,|u|$, andiã become [-tense] before $|r|$, but luifrequently merges with $|0|$ and is thus exempt fron the laxing rule. If the [teenac] vowel is maintained before $|r|$, as $|0|$ and $|a|$ are, these vowels do not have matching offslides. Otherwise, all [+tense] vovele have such offgides. One interesting feature of the dialect, however,

1s the laxins of the vocalic peak when accorpanied by a [-tense] offglide. Stressed oz is [or], with a [trense] vowel and no offglide, but on is [Dun], with a [-tense] initial element followed by a velar offglide. It should also be noted thet on and ofm are not homophonous, contrary to popular belief. The two [-10N, tback, temse] vowels $|u|$ and $|0|$ develop centering onsets, a feature not shared by the [+low, +back, tround] vowel. Thus own is [evn], but on is [Dun]. Finally, when lui follows [+coronal] stops, a palatal onglide intrudes. Thae is [tioun].

## DIPHTPONGS

The latl diphthong has two pronunciations. In word-final position the diphthongal character is preserved, but elsewhere the pronunciation is monophthongal. When the offglide is retained it is "shortened" from [thigh] to [-high](%5BE%5D). The initial element of the diphthong and the monophthongal variant are both fronted to [a]. In old-fashioned speech, $|t|$ is deleted before $|r|$, and the |a| is not fronted. Tire in old-fashioned speech is [tar], contrasting with [tar] in this analysis. Like all English monophthongs, [a] has predictable length; it is long before voiced fricatives, rather long before voiced stops, somewhat long before voicless fricatives, and short before voiceless stops. Since vowel length is so universally predictabie in modern English, the rules postulated in this study do not attempt to account for it. A more complete set of rules, however, would generate the following pronunciations:
rise [ra:iz] (with a tendency for a weak offglide to develop)
ride [ra:d]
Hice [ra•s]
risht [rat]

The $|\alpha|$ diphthong is monophthorgized before $|r|$, and the $|a|$ is not frooted. When the offglide is preserved, the onset fronts, becoming more advanced than the [a] of the latl diphthong. It is [tfront][æ]. Tower is [tar], but house is [hærs]. This offglide, like all ocher velar offglides in this dialect, undergoes rounding assimilation.

The loll diphthong retains the offglide in all environments, but it assinilates to [o]. The offglide is never deleted; lpt| and $|o|$ do not neutralize. Ball is [boul], but boil is [boorl].

A NOTE ON THE LIQUID III
Various observers of Southern and South Midland speech (e.g., Sledd 1966) have called attention to two varieties of post-vocalic |l| -a "dark" $11 \mid$, and a "clear" |l| . They have also noted the intrusiton of the palatal glide before the "clear" (palatal) $11 /$ and the velar glide before the "dark" (velar) III. And finally, it has been observed that under certain conditions the $11 /$ is deleted. The dialect described in this study shares these three general characteristics with other Southern dialects, but the rules are not the same. For example, in some dialects $|l|$ between two front vowels is "clear", but in north" west Arkansas it remains "dark" or [tback]. Bily is [birli] Post-vocalic "clear" or [-back] [|] is posited only before [thigh, -back, -consonantal, -vocalic] segment $|y|$. However, since the $|l|$ is later deleted, the argument for "clear" and "dark" ills rests on the glide which remains. It is [-back], not [+back]. Consider these three names: Will. Willie, and William. Will is [wi×1]; the $11 \mid$ remains [+back] and the glide is also [tback]. Willie is [wiylt], the $11 \mid$ and the glide being identical to those in the previous example. But William, is different; it is [wityom]. ${ }^{2}$ This pronunciation is
generated by three rules: first, $|1|$ becomes [-back]. The intrusive glide is, therefore, also [-back]. Then $\mid$ ll is deleted (the alveolar contact disappearing), but the palatal glide remains. It appears that $|l|$ vocalizes before any [-vocalic] segment (i.e., ary true consonant or glide), but under certain conditions it vocalizes in word final position after [+back] vowels, especially in unstressed syllables. Rule ${ }^{n} 20$ is obviously inadequate since it does not account for the larter deletion.

Clearly, much of the phonological system has not been studied, even tentatively. Some problems that remain are:

1. vowels in unstressed syllables
2. the loss of word-final 111
3. the simplification of word-final consonant clusters
4. the simplification and assimilation of medial consonant clusters
5. the so-called "weakening" of final stope (There is evidence in our tapes and the printed records of devoicing of voiced stops, of voiceless stops becoming glottal stops or disappearing altogether, and of vowels + nasals becoming nasalized vowels only.)
6. Initial $\mid$ hyl and $\mid$ thw $\mid$ clusters
7. initial $\mid$ (ol in monosyllables 1

## NOTES

$1_{\text {Obviously, }}$ I reject Labov's (1969) concept of inherent variability as a means of explaining pronunciation variation in favor of more conservative theoretical assumptions about dialect mixture and style shifting. My position is closer to DeCamp's (1969: 172, esp.) than Labov's. Such variation, as between [pean] and [piən] for pen, is regarded as the product of dialect or style shifting, not as inherent variability. It is assumed that the rules for a particular style or dialect are an ordered set. Different styles or dialects differ in that they may not share the same rules, they may share identical rules with different ordering, or they may share partially similar rules with differences in contexts, restrictions, etc. Thus, when one's performance is characterized by pronunciation fluctuation, it is assumed that the variation is the result of the speaker's switching, however brief, from the set of rules for one dialect or style to another. For example, if a speaker of the dialect under analysis pronounces tire as [tar] and then at another time as [tor], the latter would be considered the product of code switching. He would have not followed Rules 16 and 17 , but instead Rule 15', which would belong to another rule set.

$$
\text { 15'. } \left.\quad \begin{array}{l}
\text { L/U } \\
- \text { tense }
\end{array}\right] \rightarrow \phi /\left[\begin{array}{l}
\text { a } \\
\text {-consonantal } \\
\text { trocalic } \\
\text {-round }
\end{array}\right]\left[\begin{array}{l}
\text { +consonantal } \\
\text { +vocalic } \\
\text {-anterior }
\end{array}\right]
$$

2
The symbolization [ぃ] should not be misinterpreted as vowel length, which would be noted as [ı:]. The second [l] in this transcription, it will be remembered, is merely a cover symbol for a palatal offglide, the specific tongue height being unspecified.




$$
\begin{aligned}
& \begin{array}{c}
\text { STanOM } \\
\text { XIXIVW OILanohd dill }
\end{array}
\end{aligned}
$$

SOME RULES FOR THE PRONUNCIATION OF ENGLISH IN NORTHWEST ARKANSAS
i. $\quad\left[/ \varepsilon / x / v,\left[\begin{array}{c}\theta \\ \text {-tense }] \\ - \text { high } \\ - \text { low } \\ \text { back } \\ \text {-tense }\end{array}\right]^{\prime}\left[\begin{array}{c}\text { toonsonantal } \\ \text { +vocalic } \\ \text {-anterior }\end{array}\right]\right.$


6. $\left[\begin{array}{c}\varepsilon \\ -h i g h \\ - \text { low } \\ - \text { back } \\ - \text { tense }\end{array}\right] \rightarrow\left[\begin{array}{c}e \\ \text { tense }] /\end{array}\right]\left[\begin{array}{l}\text { toonsonantal } \\ \text {-vocalic } \\ \text { tvoice } \\ + \text { high }\end{array}\right]$



WHERE $C=$ ANY CONSONANT, LIQUID, OR GLIDE
$1 / e / \sqrt{x}$
u/o/s
10. $\phi \rightarrow\left[\begin{array}{l}\text { thigh } \\ \text { back } \\ \text {-tense }\end{array}\right]^{\prime}\left[\begin{array}{l}\text { back } \\ \text { tense }\end{array}\right]$ $X$

WhERE $X \neq\left[\begin{array}{c}r \\ \left.+\begin{array}{l}\text { consonantal } \\ \text { +vocalic } \\ \text {-anterior }\end{array}\right]\end{array}\right]$

OPT

12. $\phi \rightarrow\left[\begin{array}{l}\text { thigh } \\ \text {-back } \\ - \text { tense }\end{array}\right],\left[\begin{array}{l}t / d / n / z / Y \\ - \text { continuant } \\ + \text { coronal }\end{array}\right] \quad\left[\begin{array}{l}\text { thigh } \\ + \text { back } \\ + \text { tense }\end{array}\right]$





WHERE $X \neq \#$
18. $\left[\begin{array}{l}\text { l } \\ \text { tronsonantal } \\ \text { +vocalic } \\ \text { tanterior }\end{array}\right] \rightarrow[$-back $] / \longrightarrow\left[\begin{array}{l}\text { y } \\ \text { - consonantal } \\ \text {-vocalic } \\ \text {-back }\end{array}\right]$
19. $\phi \rightarrow\left[\begin{array}{l}U \\ \text { thigh } \\ \alpha \text { back } \\ \text {-tense }\end{array}\right]^{\prime}\left[\begin{array}{l}\text {-consonantal } \\ \text { tvocalic }\end{array}\right]$ ! $\left[\begin{array}{l}\text { tconsonantal } \\ \text { tvocalic } \\ \text { tanterior } \\ \alpha b a c k\end{array}\right]$

1/1
20. $\left[\begin{array}{l}\text { +vocalic } \\ \text { +anterior }\end{array}\right] \rightarrow \phi / \longrightarrow[$-vocalic]
21. $\left[\begin{array}{c}t \\ \left.\begin{array}{l}\text { ack } \\ - \text { tense }\end{array}\right]\end{array} \rightarrow \cdots \not /\left[\begin{array}{l}\text {-consonanta1 } \\ \text { +vocallc }\end{array}\right] \quad\left[\begin{array}{c}i \\ u \\ \text { aback } \\ - \text { tense }\end{array}\right]\right.$

hTERE C = ANY CONSONANT, LIUUID. OR GLIDE


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