

Cross-Roads at The Linguistic Market: Canadian Raising and Post-Vocalic /R/ in a Tourist-Dependent Coastal Maine Community

M.J. Antiqua-Parlee

The local identity practices of speakers are not as straightforward as predicted (e.g. Labov 1972). Alongside linguistic considerations, social motivations may significantly impact a speaker's choice between local variants. However, a speaker's strategies and motives in practicing a local identity are often difficult to deduce. Here, I investigate the role of local feature maintenance for speakers living in Mount Desert, an island tourist community dependent on tourism. Building on work on Martha's Vineyard (Labov 1963), I analyze how members of the community used a particular non-local speech feature (Canadian Raising) to accommodate a group on which they are financially dependent. My analyses rely on data collected from sociolinguistic interviews (N=12, 576 tokens) from native speakers. As in some other American communities (Dailey-O'Cain 1997), speakers here are extending the use of the feature beyond the pre-voiceless environment typical of the Canadian pattern (Chambers 1973). Raising is tied to capital, but social patterns indicate that /aj/ and /aw/ are at different stages of change in the community.

I also find that a locally-identified feature of the regional variety (e.g. Irwin and Nagy 2008), post-vocalic /r/, is dropping out of use. Older speakers do maintain use of the local feature, and for them an interaction between capital score, speaker age and vowel quality impacted variant choice.

References

- Chambers, J. (1973). Canadian English. In The Languages Of Canada. Chambers, J. (ed.). Montréal: Dider.
- Labov, W. (1963). The social motivation of a sound change. *Word*, 19: 273-309.
- Labov, W. (1972). The social motivation of a sound change. In Sociolinguistic Patterns. Labov, W. (ed.), University Of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, PA: 1-41
- Dailey-O'Cain, J. (1997). "Canadian" Raising in a Midwestern U.S. City. *Language Variation And Change* (9,1): 107-120.
- Irwin, P., Nagy, N. (2007). Bostonians /r/ speaking: A quantitative look at (R) in Boston. *University Of Pennsylvania Working Papers In Linguistics, Selected Papers From NWAV 35* (13, 2): 135-147