

ENS 207 G English Dialects **Final Paper, Spring 2011.**

First version, posted 14 March. Final version to be published after discussion.
To be submitted by 13 April (provisional date, subject to discussion).

→ Please note that this paper is *not* set up for teamwork: you are expected to submit your own individual work. Any clear similarities between individual submissions in wording or argumentation will result in a rejection of all submissions concerned.

This paper is in two parts.

Part I

Answer question 1 and 2 others. (50%)

In all questions, give *examples* for the points you mention.

Question 1

Explain the concepts *language* and *dialect* as we have used them in this course. Your answer should cover as many of the following point as you can.

- dialect and accent
- dialect continuum (plural: continua)
- linguistic variable
- isogloss and bundles of isoglosses
- how do languages change?

Question 2

Describe ONE of the accent areas within the British Isles. Your answer should include a discussion of the main variables we have been discussing, and bring out the main diagnostic points of difference between this area and the other areas in the British Isles.

Question 3

Describe ONE of the accent areas in English-speaking North America. Your answer should include a discussion of the main variables we have been discussing, and bring out the main diagnostic points of difference between this area and the other areas in North America.

Question 4

With reference to the variables we have been studying in this course, describe the main differences between the three following groups of accents: within the British Isles, in North America, and in the Southern Hemisphere.

Question 5

Answer both a and b.

- a. How do the types of English used in Africa and the Indian sub-continent differ from the accents of the British Isles, North America, and the Southern Hemisphere?
- b. What are the historical reasons for these differences?

Question 6

Answer either a or b.

- a. Discuss *pidgins* and *creoles*. Include in your answer a discussion of the concepts *post-creole continuum* and *de-creolization*.
- b. Is Black English (African American Vernacular English) a decreolized form of language?

Part II Speech samples for recognition (50%)

This part of the paper consists of 7-15 speech samples, which will be published in the Uglapage for this course in the folder “Final Paper speech samples”.

For each sample, identify the variables and locate the accent on the basis of your findings. I shall give credit mainly for your knowledge of the variables concerned and the reasons you give for your conclusions, even if you identify the accent incorrectly. Make your answer as thorough as possible. Don't skip points simply because you're not sure: “I can't hear whether there is an 'r' in this word” gives more credit than ignoring it. If there are no examples in the clip of a variable that is relevant for the region concerned, then say so. Don't hesitate to mention points even if you are not sure what variable is concerned. Notes such as “She has a strange pronunciation on this word” may give you credit. You should also mention unusual dialect forms other than pronunciation: unusual grammar such as negative concord, non-standard inflexional endings, or unusual pronouns, and any other points you find interesting or problematic, even if you're not sure what's happening.

Texts will be provided for *some* of the samples.

Marking:

- For naming a relevant variable correctly, and giving examples, ½ a point.
- For correctly saying whether the variable is positive or negative, ½ a point.
Example: if the sample has negative BATH-TRAP Split, and you say this and give examples, this will give you 1 point. If however you say that the sample has *positive* BATH-TRAP Split, you will receive ½ a point.
- I shall deduct ½ a point if you name the variable incorrectly.
- For correctly locating the passage, 1 point.
- All your points will be added together, and a grade assigned according to the general trend in the class.