Six Views of New England: Mapping Perceptions of New England Speech

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Background

- The New England dialect region consists of six states: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont (see Fig 1).
- Contemporary studies of the region demonstrate traditional features are dissipating (Kim et al. 2018; Stanford et al. 2012; 2014; Nagy 2001).
- Perceptual dialectology studies of the region have been limited to smaller sub-regions within New England (Fernandes, Routhier & Ravindranath, 2014; Babcock 2014; Hartley 2005).
- We are adapting the methodology from Preston’s (1986) Five Visions of America to New England (Fernandes, Routhier & Ravindranath, 2014; Babcock 2014; Hartley 2005).

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Methods

- Aggregated individual maps (Fig 2)
- Calculated frequency of overlap among regions drawn
- Divided scores of pleasant, correct, and similar into three parts (tertiles)
- Tertile breakdown for pleasant and correct scores:
  - Lowest Tertile (0 – 2.1)
  - Middle Tertile (2.1 – 3.3)
  - Highest Tertile (3.3 - 5)
- Calculated frequency of overlap for each tertile individually
- Converted frequency counts to raster files for visualization.
- Darker shades indicate increased consensus among participants

Results – Pleasantness & Correctness

- Divided scores of pleasant, correct, and similar into three parts (tertiles)
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Discussion & Future Work

New Englanders have nuanced views:
1. Aggregation highlights salient dialect regions for New Englanders.
2. Subsetting gives us a window to explore heterogeneous evaluations of these regions.
3. Boston is most-frequently identified by participants, regardless of state, but evaluated differently.

This method of analysis:
1. Highlights the variation that would be lost through aggregate means of scores.
2. Facilitates visualization of variation by leveraging processing power of GIS applications.

Future work:
2. Compare our method to other methods in Perceptual Dialectology research.

Folk Linguistics Online Mapping

- An open-source software based around the Leaflet JavaScript Library
- Allows researcher to collect perceptual dialectology data online with user-friendly interface
- Link to the Six Views survey can be found at https://tinyurl.com/ycuv2pxv

Participants (n = 64)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection:
- Drew areas where they believed that people spoke differently and provided a label (name)
- Rated the regions they drew in terms of pleasantness, correctness, and similarity to their own way of speaking on a scale of 1 - 5.
- Asked to identify any stereotypes they had heard about these regions

By-State Results – Similarity

- Connecticut
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- Rhode Island
- Vermont

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