

Emerging Hispanic English: New dialect formation in the American South¹

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Although stable Hispanic populations have existed in some regions of the United States for centuries, other regions, including the mid-Atlantic South, are just experiencing the emergence of permanent Hispanic communities. This situation offers an ideal opportunity to examine the dynamics of new dialect formation in progress, and the extent to which speakers acquire local dialect traits as they learn English as a second language. We focus on the production of the /ai/ diphthong among adolescents in two emerging Hispanic communities, one in an urban and one in a rural context. Though both English and Spanish have the diphthong /ai/, the Southern regional variant of the benchmark local dialect norm is unglided, thus providing a local dialect alternative. The instrumental analysis of /ai/ shows that there is not pervasive accommodation to the local norm by Hispanic speakers learning English. There is, however, gradient, incremental adjustment of the /ai/, and individual speakers who adopt local cultural values may accommodate to the local dialect pattern.

KEYWORDS: Hispanic English, dialect accommodation, dialect formation, language transfer, sociophonetics

INTRODUCTION

Spanish speakers are by far the largest group of current immigrants to the United States mainland. During the 1990s, the Hispanic population increased by over 50 percent, and since the 2000 census, it has grown nearly four times faster than the overall U.S. population. In the process, Hispanics have replaced African Americans as the largest minority group in the U.S., with a population now totaling nearly 40 million. At the same time, people descended from the Spanish have populated the Americas since the fifteenth century, and are second only to Native Americans in their continuous habitation in North America. Language variation among Spanish heritage residents therefore ranges from the speech of long-term, regionally situated English monolinguals to that of first generation, low-proficiency English speakers, with a full range of bilingualism in between. Accordingly, language differences in the English of Spanish heritage language descendants may vary from structures

characteristic of the initial stages of second language acquisition to durable ethnolinguistic features only remotely associated with Spanish.

Most sociolinguistic descriptions of Hispanic English in the U.S. have focused on relatively stable, durable communities, such as the Chicano, or Mexican-American communities of the Southwest (Fought 2003; Galindo 1987; Mendoza-Denton 1997; Ornstein-Galicia 1984; Santa Ana 1993) or Latino communities in urban areas of the Northeast U.S. (Newman 2003; Poplack 1978; Wolfram 1974). Though descriptive studies of Chicano English recognize the formative role of Spanish, they tend to describe this variety independent of bilingualism, showing that it combines substrate features from the historical language contact situation with vernacular traits and regional dialect features of American English.² For example, Fought (2003) shows that Chicano English in Southern California combines structural traits that include substrate influence from Spanish, regional Southern California dialect traits, features from African American Vernacular English, and even characteristics associated with stereotypical Southern California 'Valley Girl Talk' to construct a regionally situated, ethnically identifiable variety of English.

While stable Hispanic communities have existed in some regions for centuries now, other regions of the U.S., including rural regions in the mid-Atlantic South, are just beginning to witness the emergence of durable Hispanic communities. Between 1990 and 2000, for example, several hundred thousand migrants from Mexico, El Salvador, and other Central and South American countries, settled in North Carolina. Subsequently, North Carolina experienced a higher percentage of growth in its Latin American population than any other state, and it now has the largest percentage of monolingual Spanish speakers of any state in the U.S. Though these statistics are no doubt a function of the limited representation of Hispanics in North Carolina a decade ago, they are also a testament to the changing demographics of the language situation in the mid-Atlantic South at the turn of the twenty-first century. Many of the new residents who come directly from their country of origin are acquiring English exclusively in the context of their new surroundings.³ Though some of the school-aged children in these communities have been born and reared in the United States, Spanish is still their native language and the dominant language for communication within the community.

The emergence of these communities raises a number of important questions about the development of new varieties of English.⁴ Is a new, regionally situated ethnic variety of Hispanic English developing in these settings? Do new Latino/a residents accommodate to the local dialect traits of their cohort English-speaking communities, and if so, to which community? What aspects of the local dialect are most prominent in their speech and how are they combined with other constellations of English language structures? Does the variety of English show a persistent substrate from Spanish transfer and fossilized interlanguage features that defines it ethnically? New contact situations such as those considered here offer a unique opportunity to examine the

process of ethnic dialect formation and dialect accommodation in its incipient stages.

EMERGING HISPANIC COMMUNITIES

We consider the issue of language transfer and dialect accommodation associated with the emergence of new Hispanic communities in the mid-Atlantic South by examining two developing Hispanic communities in North Carolina, one in the metropolitan area of Raleigh, the capital of North Carolina, and one in Siler City, a relatively small, rural area about 50 miles from Raleigh. As indicated in Figure 1, both are located in the central, Piedmont region of North Carolina. The communities differ in size, as well as in the setting, whether urban or rural, in which they are situated. All of the participants in the Raleigh field site, which has just emerged within the last seven years, are originally from Mexico and live in the same, predominately Hispanic, neighborhood located in South Raleigh. Despite being located in a metropolitan area, the community is relatively isolated in that the speakers live in the same neighborhood and interact socially and recreationally for the most part only with other Hispanics. In work and institutional affiliations such as school, however, they have to interact with English speakers. The neighborhood itself, which is surrounded by student housing and outgrowth from a university community in Raleigh, is comprised of several apartment buildings that collectively house about 400 people, the vast majority of whom are native Spanish speakers from Mexico. This neighborhood community was chosen because it is fairly typical of the type of housing situation, and the insularity, of these residents in an urban setting. The Raleigh speech community shares a common spatial segregation, common social networks, and a common native language background (Carter 2004).

Siler City is located in a rural area of North Carolina 50 miles west of Raleigh and 80 miles northeast of Charlotte, North Carolina's largest city; it is also about 40 miles from Durham and Greensboro, two other large cities. In 1990, Siler City was a small rural area of approximately 5,000 residents, 70 percent white, 27 percent African American, and 3 percent Hispanic. Within a ten-year period, the population rapidly grew to approximately 7,000 residents,

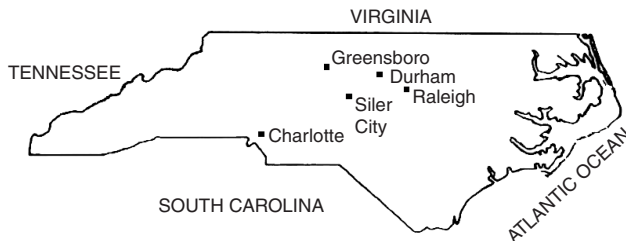


Figure 1: Location of Siler City and Raleigh, North Carolina

with estimates that the population is now over half Hispanic. Most of the recent immigrants came to work in the poultry industry, but now also work in manufacturing and the service industry. In most cases, new immigrants simply join relatives who recently moved there themselves. Though Siler City has a small-town, rural ambience in which 'everybody knows everybody,' this does not extend to the Hispanic community, which has been largely segregated from the long-standing residents of the community. In this respect, it is quite like the Raleigh community, though it is in a rural rather than an urban setting. Like the Raleigh community, the relatively dense, multiplex social networks of the Hispanic community tend to set it apart from the dominant white population as well as from the long-term African American communities of the region, in effect, creating a new type of ethnic enclave within the traditional context of the rural mid-Atlantic South. Although there are some indications of increasing interaction between the long-term residents of Siler City and the newer residents of the growing Hispanic community, the core communities remain relatively segregated (Moriello 2003).

Since 2001, the staff of the North Carolina Language and Life Project has interviewed over 40 Hispanic residents of Siler City and 20 residents in Raleigh, including speakers representing different age groups and lengths of residency (LOR). The LOR in this study ranged from two years to 13 years. At this point, the sample focuses on younger speakers, with some adults in their 20s and 30s included for comparison. Our decision to focus on younger speakers was due to the fact that this is the group most likely to accommodate to the local dialect of the area. In Raleigh, none of the speakers was born in the U.S., a function of the fact that the community is less than 10 years old. Most speakers have lived in Raleigh less than seven years; in Siler City, a few of the speakers were born in the U.S., though the vast majority of speakers were born in a Latin American country. Practically all of the speakers in the study have been exposed to ESL training, either in school or in local ESL programs run by community agencies. Children who were born in the U.S. have also received ESL training, since most speakers, regardless of where they were born, were monolingual in Spanish when they first started school. With a steady influx of monolingual Spanish immigrants, Spanish remains the dominant language in the home and in the community.

Conversational interviews were conducted by bilingual fieldworkers who could converse with participants both in Spanish and English. Though most of the interviews were conducted in English, a few of the interviews, particularly with Raleigh residents, were conducted more in Spanish than English, following the lead of the participant in the study. For the sake of comparison, several interviews were also conducted with white and African American cohorts in order to get an idea of the kinds of benchmark English-dialect models available for Hispanic residents outside of the ESL classroom. The Southern European American dialect found in the region falls well within the parameters of Southern Piedmont speech. This includes a vowel system indicating Southern breaking, fronted back

vowels, ungliding of the /ai/ diphthong, and back-upgliding of the vowel of *bought* and *caught*, as described in Labov (1994) or Thomas (2001). African American Vernacular English in the region is quite like that described for nearby areas of the North Carolina Piedmont, such as Robeson County to the south (Dannenberg and Wolfram 1998) and Warren County to the north (Hazen 2000, 2002).

In the following section, we set the sociolinguistic stage for the emerging varieties of English with some qualitative observations about general dialect and interlanguage traits in the English of the incipient communities. This is followed by a more detailed, instrumentally based examination of one of the most diagnostic phonetic traits of Southern American English, the ungliding of the /ai/ vowel in words such as *time* and *side*.

CONFIGURING HISPANIC ENGLISH

The Hispanic communities in Raleigh and Siler City are obviously in the formative stages of development, and still in the process of negotiating their accommodation to the benchmark English varieties of the region. Speakers represent a full range of proficiency in English, from recently arrived immigrants who know little-to-no English to those who are now proficient in both English and Spanish. Given the continuing flow of in-migrants and the newness of the community, Spanish remains the primary language for communication within most families and within both Latino communities in general. In fact, it is not uncommon for children from the community who were born in the United States to be placed in ESL programs along with those who have recently arrived. This community social setting sets the stage for the perpetuation of language transfer and interlanguage phenomena in the English of residents throughout the Hispanic community regardless of LOR. To illustrate this persistent interlanguage effect, consider the incidence of unmarked past tense, a prominent interlanguage trait in second language acquisition, in excerpts from two speakers: (1) a 9-year-old Hispanic girl who was born and raised in North Carolina; and (2) a 9-year-old girl who came from Mexico a couple of years ago. Tense unmarking is, of course, a well-established phenomenon of second language acquisition (Dulay and Burt 1974; Krashen 1982; Wolfram 1985). All cases of unmarked past tense are italicized and in bold, while marked cases of past tense are simply in bold. Instances of pleonastic tense marking, a by-product of interlanguage, are marked with an asterisk *.

Excerpt 1: Nine-year-old girl, born and raised in Siler City

The little mermaid when, um, she *rescue* a boy. And then they, they-she, um, *help* im, then she *start* singing to him. Then um, cause the boat they **were** on, they-it **started** on fire and it *go* underwater and he **couldn't** breathe underwater so she **took** him over there, and her daddy **said** to them, 'Rescue humans or nothing.' And she don—and then a bird **came** and he **said**, 'He's dead.' Then, um, his grandpa **came** and he *wake* up the boy and he **was**, uh, he **said** a girl **was** singing. Then she *turn* into a human.

Excerpt 2: Nine-year-old girl, two-year LOR in Siler City

Like the other day I **went** to WaltMar and she **was** there, and we *say* hey to each other, and we **wanted** to spend the night one time at my house but she **couldn't** cause she ***haded** to go with her family. They **were** gonna go somewhere. But I **don't** when *she's* gonna spend the night with me. One time I *spend* the night at her house.

Oh, it **was**, um, a sleepover. We **had** all kinds of friends we *invite* all of her friends, I *invite* mines so she *invite* hers and we **had** a sleepover. Whoever—whoever, um, *sleeps*, whoever *wake up* late, they **were** the ones who *gotta*, who gotta, um cook for them and clean up the room, and paint their face. So, I know I *wake up* early. I always wake up at five o'clock. So I ***didn't had** to clean the room. I ***didn't** even **had** to go in back.

Despite the difference in their birthplace and LOR, both speakers show the type of variable tense unmarking typically found in the interlanguage of second language learners (Wolfram 1985; Wolfram and Hatfield 1985), though there are some differences in the relative frequency of unmarked tense (6 out of 16 cases for Speaker 1 and 11 out of 23 for Speaker 2 in the sample passages). We also find cases of pleonastic tense marking as in *I didn't had* or *haded*, a fairly common consequence of interlanguage tense marking. Other studies indicate that pleonastic tense marking is one of the traits of interlanguage that may fossilize as a kind of persistent substrate influence (Wolfram 1974: 158). While speakers who have been in the U.S. only a couple of years might have more obvious transfer from Spanish than those born in the U.S., excerpts from both of the speakers show a significant overlay of Spanish influence. This is probably a result of the relative insularity of the Spanish communities under consideration, where children raised by Spanish-speaking parents use Spanish almost exclusively in the home and community. Furthermore, the continuing influx of new arrivals from Latin American countries with little-to-no proficiency in English helps maintain the demand for proficiency in Spanish for children regardless of birthplace. In the context of a Hispanic speech community where Spanish is the primary language for communication, English use can be confined to interaction with monolingual English speakers outside of the community, as in work, business, and school. Many children are not exposed to extended verbal interaction in English until they go to school, so that LOR may not be a factor as significant as it is in less-densely populated ethnic communities. In the context of limited English interaction, the question of accommodation to the regional rural dialect (or dialects) of English turns out to be complex and fluid.

Though we have been impressed with the general resistance to extensive accommodation to local forms, even for speakers who have lived the majority of their lives in the U.S., there are signs of selective accommodation, particularly with respect to frequent, well-known Southern lexical items. For example, there is evidence for the early adoption of *y'all* among some speakers, as indicated in Excerpt 3:

Excerpt 3:

- a. I say, Hey *y'all* two, leave me alone. (9-year-old boy, born in U.S.)
- b. Did *y'all* drive here? (9-year-old girl, 2–3-year LOR)
- c. Why don't *y'all* tell us about your stuff. (10-year-old boy, 2–3-year LOR)

The adoption of token lexical items can, of course, take place fairly readily and be incorporated into heavily accented English. For example, one may hear the Southern auxiliary *fixin' to* produced with an overlay of Spanish transfer that includes a high front vowel in the first syllable of *fixin'* and non-reduced vowels in unstressed syllables, as in [fiksintu] vs. [fiks'nd'].

Some lexical items may also be learned from the onset in their Southern dialect production, so that the well-known Southern [ɪ]/[ɛ] merger in items such as *pin* and *pen* may both be rendered as *pin* [pɪn] (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998). Furthermore, if Spanish transfer is imposed on the [ɪ]/[ɛ] merger, as is the case of some speakers who have shorter LORs, an item like *pen* would be produced as [pɪn] rather than [pɛn] or *ten* may be produced as [tɪn] rather than [tɛn]. There is also evidence that other rural Southern-based vowels may be adopted only for particular lexical items. Thus, one young speaker produced the back low vowel of *bought* as [baot], a back, upgliding diphthong still prominent in some parts of the rural South, while, at the same time, producing the vowel of *caught* without the Southern backgliding, as in [kat]. We see, then, that there are two quite distinct phonetic productions for different lexical items within the American English long *o* word set, one that accommodates the local dialect norm and one that does not. The lexicalization of local dialect productions is, of course, not uncommon in the acquisition of another dialect for native speakers of English (Chambers 1992), suggesting that lexical diffusion may be an active process in the acquisition of local dialects of English for speakers acquiring English as a second language in a way comparable to second dialect acquisition. We consider this and other issues related to the process of dialect accommodation in more detail in the following sections.

THE /ai/ DIPHTHONG

To examine the potential influence of a regionally diagnostic variable in more detail, we have undertaken an instrumental analysis of the /ai/ diphthong, one of the most pervasive and symbolic variables associated with Southern American English. In non-Southern areas of the U.S., the diphthong has a significant offglide, but in most areas of the Southeastern U.S. the glide may be reduced to the point that it is perceptually heard as a monophthong. Within the Southern U.S., there are two patterns of /ai/ glide reduction, one in which the glide is reduced regardless of the following phonetic environment and one in which glide reduction occurs only in non-voiceless phonetic contexts, that is, in prevoiced position, including voiced obstruents and nasals (e.g. *tide* and *time*), and syllable-coda position (e.g. *bye*, *tie*) (Anderson 2002; Bernstein

1993; Thomas 2001).⁵ Phonetically, the vowel may range from a monophthongal [a:] to a reduced glide variant, as in [aɛ] (Thomas 2001: 37). The Piedmont region of North Carolina where our study is situated is characterized by the weakening of the glide only in prevoiced phonetic contexts such as *time* and *tide* (Thomas 2001: 194). Throughout this region, /ai/ weakening is a widespread dialect trait that cuts across social class and ethnic boundaries, particularly in rural areas such as Siler City. In an urban area such as Raleigh, it is a less saturated dialect trait and more sensitive to social stratification. For example, /ai/ ungliding in Raleigh is not characteristic of the many transplants from the North who now live there, especially within the university setting adjacent to the Hispanic community. In the context of our study, /ai/ may serve as a potential marker of Southern dialect accommodation for Hispanic residents who learn English in a Southern setting.

Spanish, like non-Southern varieties of English, has an /ai/ diphthong in words such as *bailar* 'dance', *hay* 'there is', and *caico* 'shoal', which contrasts with /a/ in words such as *pan* 'bread', *dama* 'woman', and *tan* 'so'. The fact that both Spanish and English have a diphthong /ai/ does not, however, mean that they are phonetically isomorphic (Borzone de Manrique 1979). Phonetically, diphthongs may differ in the position and steady state of the nucleus, the trajectory and steady state of the glide, and the duration of the glide in relation to the overall production of the vowel (Lindau, Norlin and Svantesson 1990; Peeters 1991). To give an idea of the possible range of /ai/ in Spanish and English, we compare, in Figure 2, the production of the /ai/ vowel for four speakers, two native, non-Southern English speakers and two Mexican Spanish speakers. The graphic display includes the position of the nucleus and the trajectory of the

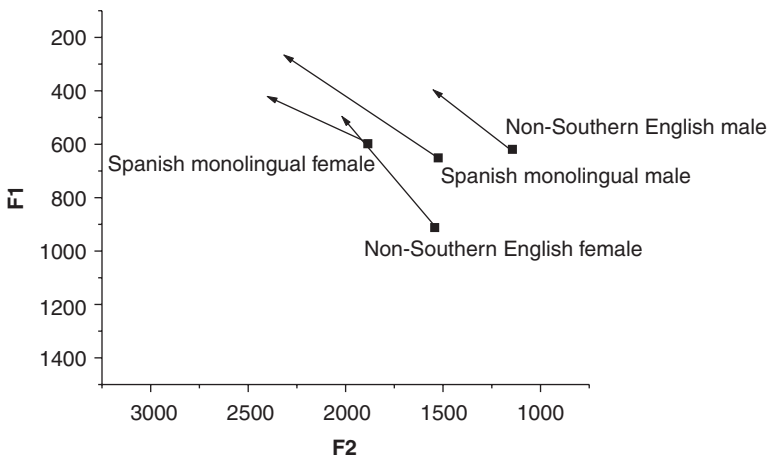


Figure 2: Trajectories of /ai/ glide in monolingual Spanish and non-Southern American English

glide based on an instrumental analysis of their production using the Kay Computerized Speech Laboratory (CSL), model 4300. The duration of glide, which includes its transition and steady state, and the overall vowel segment were also measured in milliseconds. Tokens for /ai/ were limited to pre-voiced consonants for the sake of this comparison, since this is the diagnostic environment to be considered in our ensuing discussion. Tokens of /ai/ occurring before liquids /r/ and /l/, and nasals, were excluded since these environments have coarticulatory effects on production that might skew the measurements for this analysis. Measurements of each nucleus were made .35 milliseconds into the vocoid; measurements of the glide trajectory include both the transition and the steady state of the glide. The position of the nucleus and the trajectory of the glide are based on the mean for six to ten prevoiced productions for each English and Spanish speaker, taken from conversational interviews conducted in English and Spanish, respectively. One male and one female adult are included for each language.

Though it is quite relative, the Spanish production tends to have a longer trajectory and a more high and front endpoint. The duration glide in relation to the overall production of the vowel also tends to be different for Spanish and English. The percentage of the glide in terms of the overall vowel is 76.5 percent for the Spanish speakers and 47.5 percent of the overall vowel for the English speakers. We thus see that the Spanish glide tends to have stronger syllabic prominence than the American English counterpart and its trajectory tends to end closer to the high front vowel [i] than its Standard American English counterpart, which often ends up closer to [e] or [ɪ] phonetically.

The glide trajectory of /ai/

We first consider the production of /ai/ in terms of the location of the nucleus and glide trajectory. For Siler City, acoustic measurements include a subsample of ten Hispanic residents, mostly adolescents and teenagers. The measurements, based on Moriello and Wolfram (2003), are limited to prevoiced position since this is a relevant phonetic environment for glide reduction in the Southern benchmark dialect. For the sake of comparison, we include figures for a European American adult and an African American child cohort from Siler City as representatives of the local Southern norm.

Both the European American and African American speakers included in Figure 3 show the kind of glide reduction that we would expect in this rural region of North Carolina (Thomas 2001: 194). The Hispanic speakers show a much wider range of variation, including speakers who have a more backed nucleus and relatively long glide trajectory. More heavily accented speakers, such as Antonio and Noel, show a longer and higher glide trajectory, whereas speakers such as Manolito and Ana, who show better overall proficiency in English, indicate a much shorter glide.⁶ Though the data show some accommodation to local glide reduction by particular individuals, we do not find the

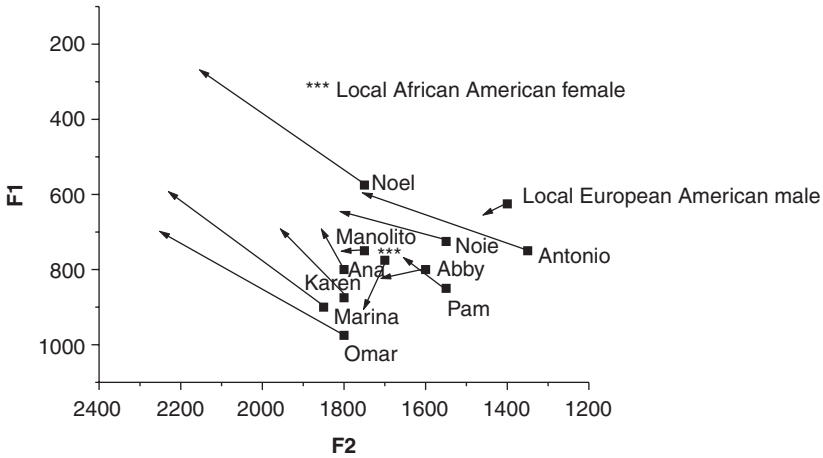


Figure 3: Trajectory of /ai/ glide for a sample of Siler City Hispanic speakers

pervasive /ai/ glide reduction that is typical of the regional variety represented by the non-Hispanic Siler City residents.

In Figure 4, we consider the nucleus position and glide trajectories for a subsample of seven speakers from Raleigh. All of the speakers except one (Victor, aged 34) are between the ages of nine and 15, with LORs between two and seven years. Though the regional dialect norm for native residents of Raleigh is not unlike that of Siler City in that prevoiced ungliding is a regional norm, Raleigh is also much more dialectally heterogeneous. In fact, because of

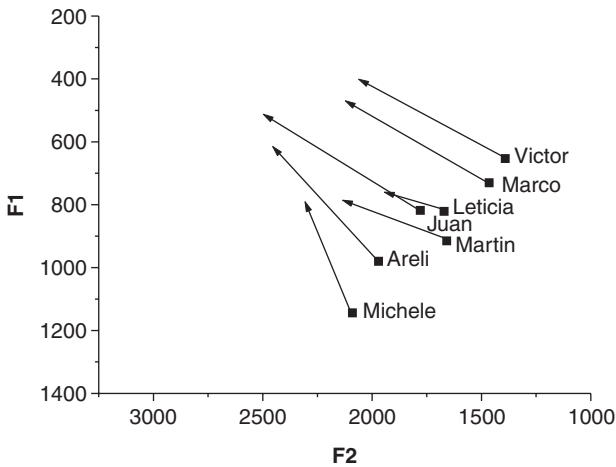


Figure 4: Trajectory of /ai/ glide for a sample of Raleigh Hispanic speakers

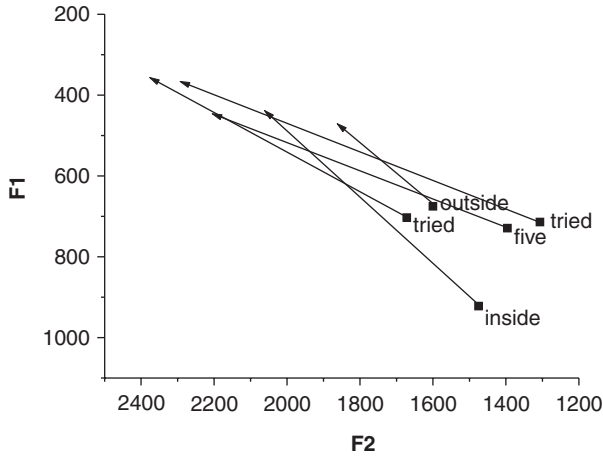
its changing demographics, it is undergoing considerable dialect leveling of its traditional Southern dialect features that may extend to /ai/. The local regional norm, therefore, is much more diffuse. Figure 4 shows that the Raleigh speakers have a fairly strong glide, like that of the majority of their Siler City counterparts. Two speakers, however, show a shorter glide. Both of these speakers, a 10-year-old male and a 14-year-old female, have lived in Raleigh for seven years. This suggests that, over time, some phonetic adjustment may be taking place in terms of the glide to bring it into more conformity with the local norm as residents gain proficiency in English.

Though the comparison of speakers' means gives an overall picture of vowel trajectory, it does not reveal the variation among particular productions of items. To give an idea of this level of variation, we present selected tokens of /ai/ for two speakers in Figure 5, a 15-year-old male, Marco (Figure 5a), who has an LOR of four years and is among the less proficient speakers in the sample, and Martin (Figure 5b), a 10-year-old male with an LOR of seven years who is highly proficient in English. Marco (Figure 5a), the less proficient English speaker, consistently has higher glide trajectories, whereas the more proficient speaker in Figure 5b shows a split: two items have longer glide trajectories and two have shorter ones. This pattern suggests a lexically based difference, or at least, considerable variance in the glide length and trajectory rather than a generalized shift in the glide. Of the four lexical items produced by Martin in Figure 5b, only the production of the word *five*, however, seems to be close to the Southern unglided norm.

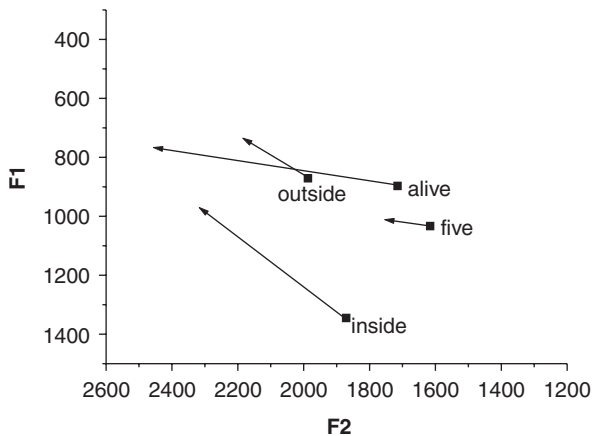
Although we noted some of the differences between Spanish and English productions of /ai/ earlier in our earlier discussion, we did not consider the production of /ai/ for a bilingual speaker who uses both Spanish and English in his/her interview. In Figure 6, we examine a couple of /ai/ productions in Spanish and in English for the 34-year-old male speaker (four-year LOR) who freely switches between Spanish and English in his interview. Though there is variation in the production of the diphthong in both English and Spanish, there is more variation in the length of the trajectory in the English words *drive* and *inside*. Such variation suggests that there is not a simple, generalized transfer effect from Spanish in the production. Instead, there appears to be variation between a more Spanish-like phonetic production of /ai/ and a more English-like production that includes a flatter, weakened glide trajectory. This pattern indicates that transfer effects and accommodation might actually be considerably more gradient and variable than is sometimes assumed in idealized presentations of transfer and accommodation.

Relationship of the glide to the vowel

Another dimension of vowel production that may differ across different language varieties is the duration of the glide within the production of the overall vowel (Laver 1994: 284). Though glide duration may interact with acoustic



a. Marco (limited proficiency in English)



b. Martin (excellent proficiency in English)

Figure 5: Prevoiced /ai/ tokens for two Raleigh speakers

distance in that a longer glide trajectory would be expected to take more time than a shorter one, not all differences in duration are directly related to acoustic range (Lindau, Norlin and Svantesson 1990). It is therefore instructive to consider the duration of the glide in relation to the overall vocalic segment. In Figure 7, we give the mean duration of the glide and the overall vocalic segment in milliseconds. Figure 7a gives the figures for the Siler City Hispanic sample and Figure 7b gives the figures for the Raleigh speakers. Table 1 gives the summary descriptive statistics for Siler City and Raleigh subsamples, including the mean and standard deviation for each group. For comparison, the figures

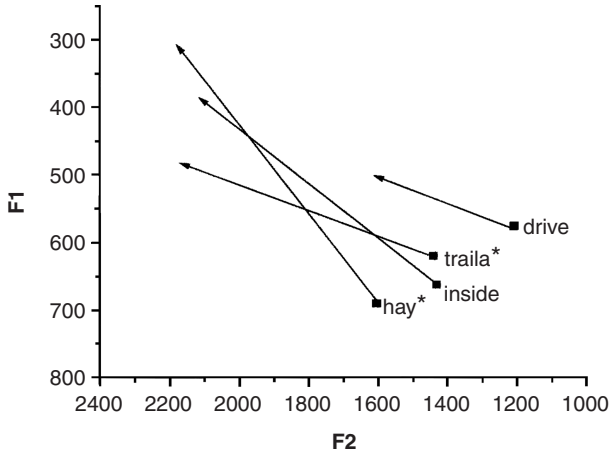
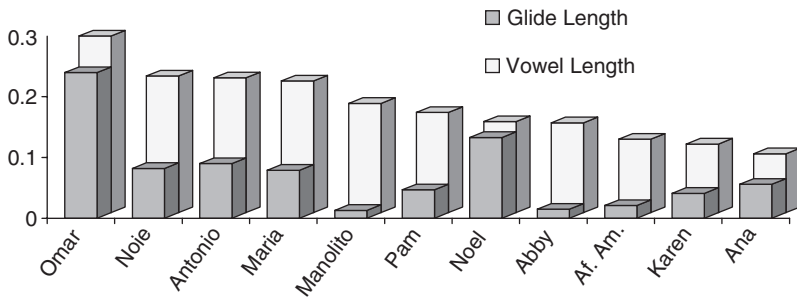
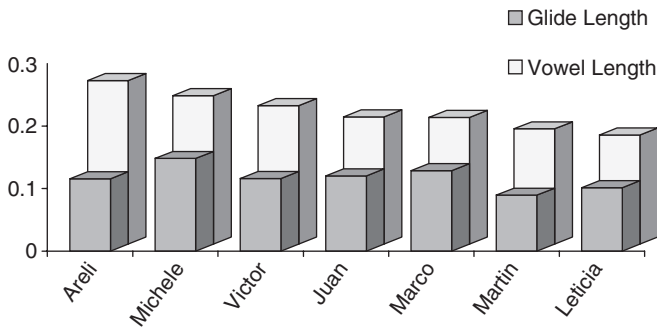


Figure 6: Comparison of Spanish and English /ai/ trajectories for a bilingual speaker



a. Siler City speakers



b. Raleigh speakers

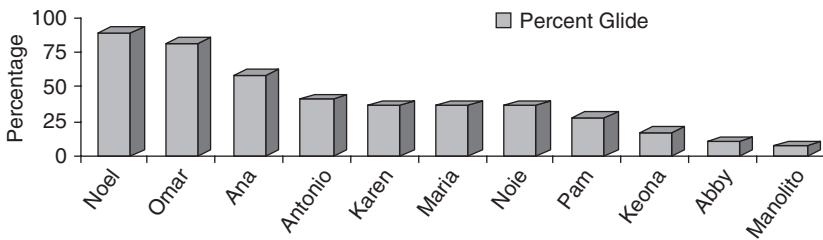
Figure 7: Relationship of the glide to the overall vowel

Table 1: Relationship of the glide to the overall vowel

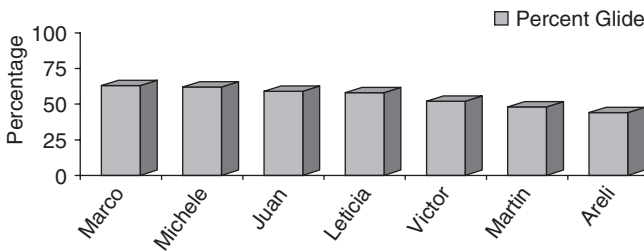
	Spanish	Non-Southern English	Southern English	Siler City Hispanic English	Raleigh Hispanic English
Mean glide (SD)	.191	.120	.021	.080 (.067)	.117 (.019)
Mean overall vowel (SD)	.249	.253	.121	.181 (.059)	.212 (.011)

for the Spanish speakers, the non-Southern American English speakers, and the cohort non-Hispanic Siler City speakers are also given. In Figure 8, the figures are converted into the percentage of the vowel occupied by the glide. The figures are summarized in Table 2. Because of the limited sample of speakers in the comparison groups, no standard deviations are given.

Several observations can be made on the basis of Figure 7 and Table 1, and Figure 8 and Table 2. Compared to the Southern benchmark variety, the Hispanic English speakers show that the glide occupies a much higher percentage of the VOWEL. Also, the mean duration of the overall vowel tends to be longer, though this is somewhat relative.⁷ There are also differences indicated between the Siler City and the Raleigh subsamples; the Siler City speakers show considerably more



a. Siler City



b. Raleigh

Figure 8: Glide percentages for individual speakers

Table 2: Glide percentages

	Spanish	Non-Southern English	Southern English	Siler City Hispanic English	Raleigh Hispanic English
Percentage of glide (SD)	76.5	47.0	17.5	42.4 (27.0)	55.5 (7.3)

variance than do the Raleigh speakers. For the Raleigh speakers, the proportion of glide ranges from 44 to 62 percent of the overall vowel, whereas it ranges from less than 10 to almost 90 percent for the Siler City speakers. Correspondingly, the standard deviation scores are much higher for Siler City than for Raleigh. This is probably related to the fact that several Siler City speakers show some accommodation to the local Southern norm, unlike their Raleigh counterparts. This may be due to the fact that the Raleigh community itself is somewhat more incipient in its development, or to the fact the local model for /ai/ in Raleigh simply exerts less influence because of heterogeneity in the surrounding English-speaking community.

ON INCIPIENT DIALECT FORMATION

Though our study is still preliminary, the examination of the early stages of English usage in developing Hispanic communities offers a unique opportunity to observe some of the dynamics of new dialect formation in the context of learning English as a second language. Though there is an expanding base of sociolinguistic studies now focused on the English of durable Hispanic communities, few studies examine the initial stages of new community formation as we have done here. These emerging situations, however, provide an important and complementary perspective on principles of new dialect acquisition such as those set forth by Chambers (1992) – with a second language acquisition twist. Most studies of ethnically based dialects are limited to describing the outcomes of language contact situations that combine substrate effects, local dialect accommodation, and independent innovation in the construction of a new dialect.

One of the observations from this preliminary study concerns the prominent role of the lexicon in the early stages of development, not only in terms of the acquisition of particular lexical items but in terms of the acquisition of phonetic processes as well. Thus, some speakers may acquire a glide-reduced production of the /ai/ vowel in the lexical item *Carolina* well before – or even while resisting – the acquisition of a generalized version of prevoiced glide weakening. This suggests that the lexical diffusion may play a prominent role in the early stages of local dialect accommodation in second language acquisition just as it does in second dialect acquisition (Chambers 1992).

We also see that there is much more gradience and variation in the transition from a more Spanish-like phonetic production of /ai/ to the American

English production of this diphthong than idealized models of language transfer assume (Odlin 1989). The phonetic transition from L1 to L2 productions of /ai/, Southern or otherwise, appears to be gradual and incremental rather than abrupt and discrete. It also appears to show a kind of phonetic intermediacy between Spanish and English which resembles Trudgill's (1986) definition of 'interdialectal forms,' that is, 'forms that actually originally occurred in neither dialect' (Trudgill 1986: 62). These forms not only appear in the incipient stages of new dialect formation, but may be incorporated into a stable dialect as well. Thus, Mendoza-Denton (1997) describes the production of the vowel in the *-ing* suffix as intermediate between the [i] vowel of Spanish and the reduced, shwa-like vowel of unstressed syllables in American English. The kind of acquisitional intermediacy indicated here may provide the phonetic foundation for the development of such interdialectal forms into an enduring, ethnically affiliated variety of English.

Our preliminary study also underscores the role of the individual speaker in terms of new dialect formation in a way that is comparable to the role of the individual in stable dialect situations (Wolfram and Beckett 2000). Notwithstanding the effects of variables such as LOR, proficiency in English, and the status of the community, some variation appears to be a matter of individual choice. Thus, we see speakers with similar LORs, levels of proficiency in English, community backgrounds, and family histories making quite different choices in terms of dialect accommodation. The individual basis of alignment was illustrated dramatically in one interview conducted with two siblings, an 11-year-old girl and her 13-year-old brother. Their parents came from Mexico, but the children had lived all of their lives in the North Carolina Piedmont. In the sociolinguistic interview, the girl had only one case of unglided /ai/ out of 17 potential tokens (5.9%), while her brother produced almost two-thirds (62.8%) of his /ai/ diphthongs as unglided, indicating an obvious difference in the accommodation to the local Southern norm for these two speakers. The adolescent boy, who also indicates other Southern vernacular features in his speech, identifies strongly with the local non-Hispanic 'jock' culture of adolescent boys, projecting a strong 'macho' image, while his sister, who uses few vernacular features to go along with her predominantly glided production of /ai/, is much more oriented toward mainstream American institutional values. Such cases demonstrate the symbolic individual choices that speakers may make, even within the same family, as they mold their identities in relation to those around them and for themselves. Though this case might also suggest gendered behavioral roles in that the particular cultural value choice is more viable for boys than girls, not all boys choose this option in local affiliation and vernacular norms. Studies such as Poplack (1978) show a significant gender effect in local dialect accommodation by Spanish heritage language children, with boys modeling vernacular norms and girls modeling local dialect norms. Our study suggests that one of the factors that may guide choices about accommodating to the local dialect is related to the symbolic role of that dialect. In

some instances, the local dialect might be viewed simply as a regional mainstream norm, whereas in other cases, as appears to be the case for the Southern regional norm in this study, it may be viewed as a vernacular norm in conflict with mainstream norms.

Across the communities, we have been impressed with the overall reluctance of speakers to accommodate to the general Southern-based vowel system. There are certainly exceptions, based on individual choice and cultural alignment, but at this point of development, the Hispanic communities do not indicate extensive accommodation to the regional Southern phonetic norm. There are a couple of possible reasons for this lack of accommodation. One may be the relative insularity of the communities, where social networks are still fairly dense and multidimensional, and the dominant pattern of social interaction remains ethnically segregated. The vast majority of residents have limited interaction with the members of the adjacent, resident European American and African American communities, limited to employment, school, and other institutionally mandated social occasions. The predominant use of Spanish within the community also augments this ethnic segregation. The steady stream of in-migrants, proficient only in Spanish, fosters the need to maintain Spanish as the primary means of communication within the community and within the home, even among children who were born in the United States.

Another possibility relates to models of English provided for speakers. Although we do not have extensive ethnographic information, we have nonetheless observed that the majority of ESL teachers in schools and other agencies do not use the local Southern norm. The majority of ESL teachers are, in fact, outsiders, including speakers of non-Southern English. This may serve as a mitigating effect in the acquisition of a local dialect norm in the initial stages of learning English, though this question deserves much more extensive examination. It also may be the case that the overall reluctance to accommodate the local norm is simply a stage in the life cycle of the incipient communities which have emerged for the most part over the past decade and are still in the process of establishing their sociolinguistic identity.

With or without local dialect accommodation, aspects of language transfer and interlanguage may serve as a formative substrate base for the perpetuation of an ethnic variety of Hispanic English. At this stage, it is still too early to predict where the mix of local speech accommodation and substrate will end up. As the Hispanic populations of Siler City and Raleigh become more established speech communities within the overall dialect landscape of the mid-Atlantic South, they will secure a more stable sociolinguistic relationship with the long-standing European American and African American speech communities. Obviously, we cannot predict the future development of these varieties in terms of their status as ethnically aligned varieties; however, we can provide insight into the linguistic and social mechanisms at work in the formative stages in the process. Whereas researchers who describe well-established, stable Hispanic English communities independent of bilingualism can only speculate about the

formative stages of these varieties, this investigation demonstrates the significance of examining the earliest stages in this dynamic process empirically.

NOTES

1. Research reported here was supported by the William C. Friday Endowment at North Carolina State University and by NSF Grants BCS No. 0236838 and BCS 0213941. All of the interviews in Raleigh, North Carolina, were conducted by Phillip Carter, who was also responsible for doing the instrumental analysis of vowels for that site. Beckie Moriello conducted the majority of the interviews in Siler City, with assistance from Ronald K. Butters, Becky Childs, Christine Mallinson, Michael Oles, and Tanya Wolfram. Beckie Moriello conducted all of the instrumental measurements of vowels in Siler City. We are thankful to Erik R. Thomas and Ron Butters for assistance and reaction to earlier drafts of this paper.
2. Santa Ana (1993: 15), for example, limits the term Chicano English to a variety 'spoken only by native English speakers,' noting explicitly that it 'is to be distinguished from the English of second language learners.'
3. Census data from 2000 show that the total Hispanic population in North Carolina is about 379,000 or 4.7 percent of the statewide population of over eight million, compared to 1990, when the total Hispanic population was only about 106,000, or 1.2 percent. In 2000 Mexicans comprised 3.1 percent of the population, or about 247,000 and 65 percent of the total Hispanic population in the state. North Carolina currently has the lowest rate of English proficiency among all speakers of foreign languages, with almost half (49.4 percent) of those individuals that speak a language other than English at home reporting that they spoke English less than 'very well.'
4. The labeling of Spanish descendents and, by extension, terms for their varieties of English, reflects the diversity of situations and the socio-political contexts in which they are embedded. For Southern California alone, Fought (2003: 17) notes a range of terms and opinions, with the terms Chicano, Latino, and Mexican-American strongly preferred over Hispanic, which is described as a 'white person's word.' The labeling game is compounded further by the fact that terms such as *Chicano English* and *Latino English* use the masculine suffix *-o* to refer to the speech of both men and women, thus raising issues about the use of masculine grammatical forms for generic reference. In some regions of the U.S., *Latino* and *Hispanic* seem to be used interchangeably, while the label 'Mexican' is socially stigmatized to the point of becoming a taboo term. At the same time, Hispanic seems to be an acceptable supra-regional term used most notably in national Spanish language television programming, and for some, may imply a sense of cohesion for a group with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. We use the term Hispanic English in this paper, though we are aware that labeling a variety associated with a Spanish-English contact situation can become a sociolinguistic issue in its own right, sensitive to region, socio-political context, and ideology. In some ways, the labels for non-Hispanics are just as elusive. In the Southwest U.S., the term Anglo or 'white' refers to non-Latinos of European descent, who are, in turn, distinguished from Native Americans and African Americans. In other parts of the U.S., European American or simply 'white' is the preferred label for this population. In this discussion, we use the term European American.

5. Technically, the contrast is between prevoiced and non-prevoiced environments, with the latter including voiced phonetic segments and word boundaries. For convenience, we simply refer to the latter as prevoiced.
6. Overall proficiency and accent levels of speakers were assessed impressionistically by three independent judges on a three-point scale: high, mid, and low proficiency. Although this assessment procedure has obvious limitations, it was adequate for the purposes of this investigation.
7. The figures are somewhat skewed for the two non-Southern English speakers by one subject who used a very deliberate style of speech in her conversational interview. Her mean duration for the overall vowel length was .309, as compared with .197 for the male.

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