

# A NEW YORKER'S IDIOLECT CONTRASTED TO THE DIALECT OF NEW YORK CITY

Comparação entre o dialeto de um Nova-iorquino e o Dialeto da Cidade de Nova Iorque

Ein vergleich zwischen dem Idiolekt eines New Yorkers und dem Dialekt von der Stadt New York

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## SUMMARY

The aim of this paper is to make a comparison between the dialect of a New Yorker and the dialect of New York City. Such a comparison includes solely pronunciation and vocabulary because regional variation occurs mainly in these two levels and relatively little in grammatical forms and syntactical structure.

## RESUMO

O objetivo deste trabalho é fazer uma comparação entre o idioleto de um nova-iorquino e o dialeto de Nova Iorque. Esta comparação inclui apenas pronúncia e vocabulário porque variações regionais ocorrem principalmente nestes dois níveis, havendo relativamente poucas variações nas formas gramaticais e nas estruturas sintáticas.

## I — INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to make a comparison between the idiolect of a New Yorker and the dialect of New York. Such a comparison will include solely pronunciation and vocabulary, because regional variation occurs mainly in these two levels and relatively little in grammatical form and syntactic structure. We are, first of all, going to present some outstanding points concerning the pronunciation and vocabulary of New York City, such as the vowel of words of the *ask* group, of the *log*, *frog* group; the palatalization before /*u*:/ in words such as *due*, *new*, *tube*, etc.; the presence or absence of /*r*/ in postvocalic position, that is, the *r-full* or *-r less* speech of New Yorkers, etc. Then, after analysing the informant's speech, all the differences and similarities concerning pronunciation and vocabulary will be mentioned. In addition, some factors which may have influenced the informant's speech will be discussed. These will include education, significant travel, occupation, and factors involved in the eliciting of the material, such as the rather careful pronunciation used in the formal situation of an interview or in the reading of a text.

The informant's dialect will be considered not only from the point of view of a regional dialect but also from the viewpoint of a social dialect. In his discussion of the dialect differences within American English<sup>1</sup> McDavid alludes several times to the existence of class differences as well as regional differences and those based on foreign

language ancestry. According to the regional differences, our informant's dialect is placed among the Northern dialects, that is, the dialect of New York City. Following Fries, Kurath and others who recognize three main types of social dialects: cultivated speech, common speech and uneducated speech, John Smith, our informant, may be placed among those who have cultivated speech. By cultivated speech McDavid means the speech of those who have had educational and social advantages, normally four years of college or beyond, and hold a position of esteem or at least of responsibility in the community. This group includes most educators, most professional people, most people in the high rank of civil service, in short, most of those whose occupational and social obligations require continuous skill in the use of the language. So, having John Smith a superior education and being a teacher, his speech is considered cultivated.

## II — THE DIALECT OF NEW YORK CITY

Before starting to present the characteristics of the speech of New York City, we will briefly comment on some aspects which are considered of great importance for the developing of the work. Such topics include the meaning of dialect and its main causes, the meaning of idiolect, and some of the characteristics of the whole area in which New York City is situated. A comment about those

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aspects of pronunciation and vocabulary which are common throughout the country is also worth noting.

In his article "Variation in language," Bruce Liles refers to the total features of a person's grammar as his *idiolect*. He says that each rule and vocabulary item a person possesses will be shared by other speakers of the language, but no one else will have his exact combination. It is the combination of rules and vocabulary items a person has which makes his idiolect unique, not the individuality of any part of it. As it has been said all idiolects must have many aspects that are similar, otherwise understanding would not be possible. A collection of similar idiolects constitutes a dialect. The term dialect has been used to refer to quite distinct varieties of the language. It is sometimes used to indicate the non-standard or the provincial form of a language; it is sometimes also used for the speech of educated men and women. Some use the term to describe the speech of the younger generation, others use it to describe the speech of the older or the old fashioned.

According to McDavid,<sup>2</sup> "dialect is simply any habitual variety of a language, regional or social." Bronstein (1960) also says that dialectologists think of the term dialect today as "merely a variety of language more or less different from other varieties of the same language."<sup>3</sup> The term includes the language habits peculiar to an area or a section of the country, including the standard usage. It may be the variety spoken by the educated, like "Received Standard."<sup>4</sup> It may be essentially the speech of the uneducated as Cockney is the speech of the uneducated Londoner. It may be regional, as the speech of the North or South of the United States. Particularly in the United States it may have both regional or social dimensions: educated American speech has many regional varieties — South Texas, Boston, The Houston Valley, Iowa, Vermont, but in any region, Boston, for instance, the speech of the natives will have some common characteristics regardless of social level, though in each region educated speech will differ from the uneducated.

Dialectologists agree that the United States does not possess a socially preferred standard of speech as is found in England; nor is there one geographical standard that is considered more acceptable than another. Each dialect or subdivision within that dialect has its own standard. To some persons, a standard of speech used by educated Bostonians or Chicagoans might be considered preferable. However, Bronstein points out that no such general preference exists. He says that the speech of educated Bostonians is no more standard than the educated speech of Tulsa and the educated patterns of speech of Chicago or Charleston are not more acceptable than are those of New York. The speech an American uses is, then, considered standard if it reflects the speech patterns of the educated persons in his community. Furthermore, researches show that the language used from region to region is much more alike than it is different.

The differences should, then not be exaggerated. The various standards are in close agreement regarding verb forms, comparison of adjectives and adverbs, pronoun cases, agreement of subject and verb and of pronoun and antecedent. In spoken English the differences between one social class and another within a given region are usually much greater than those among the various regional standards throughout the English speaking world. As far as written English is concerned, there is close agreement as to what is standard. Thus, it is common sense that all dialects are equally systematic, and there is no linguistic reason to prefer one over the other. But it is also agreed that although this point is true, anyone who is unable to use the prestige dialect is severely limited professionally and socially, not because of any features of the language, but because of popular attitudes.

McDavid reports in "The dialects of American English" (1958) that, occasionally, the explanation for dialect differences is simple, attributable to a single force, oftener it is more complex and may be explained only by a combination of forces. Among these, he mentions the influence of the early population of an area; the old political and ecclesiastical boundaries; physical geography, the influence of cultural centers on less important communities, the social structure of an area, cultural innovations, the presence of immigrants with a different linguistic and cultural background, etc.

In order to observe and establish these dialectical differences in grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary, to determine their regional and social distribution and to seek their historical and cultural explanation, some procedures must be followed. A trained investigator collects the data in selected communities by means of a questionnaire especially devised for this purpose. The investigator consults representative informants of each community, recording the interview, which is conducted in a conversational situation, or as near to a conversational situation as is possible. The informality of the interview is necessary so that the informant uses his normal patterns of stress and intonation and is not too cautious about avoiding forms he thinks are incorrect. Free conversation is usually encouraged, especially as a source for the grammatical items.

Through these and other types of dialectical studies, it has been noted as Kurath points out in his "Word geography," that the vocabularies of the arts and sciences, of industries, commercial enterprises, social and political institutions are national in scope because the activities they reflect are organized on a national basis. Kurath goes on saying that "enterprises and activities that are regionally restricted have, on the other hand, a considerable body of regional vocabulary. The cotton planter of the South, the tobacco grower, the dairy farmer, the wheat grower, the miner, the lumberman, and the rancher of the West have many words and expressions that are strictly regional and sometimes local in their currency".

One may observe that regional and local expressions are most common in the vocabulary of the intimate everyday life of the home and the farm not only among the simple folk and the middle class but also among the cultured. Such typical vocabulary includes food, clothing, shelter, health, the day's work, the farm buildings, the weather, the crop, etc. The vocabulary will, then, reveal differences between the rural and the urban life; it will reflect the organization of the family and the political, social and religious structure.

It is not only in the vocabulary that one finds regional differences in American speech. There are pronunciation features as well. To illustrate, we will briefly, mention some of the characteristics which are common to each of the three main areas: North, Midland and South. Throughout the Northern area, for example, the distinction between [O] and [ɔ] in such word pairs as *horse* and *hoarse* and *mourning* and *morning* is generally maintained; [ʒ] regularly occurs in *grease* (verb) and *greasy*, and *root* is pronounced by many with the vowel of *wood*. Within the Northern area such sub-dialects as coastal New England and Metropolitan New York also show many characteristic forms. The treatment of the vowel of *bird* is only one of these, and words of the *calf, pass, path, dance* group constitute another.

In the Midland area speakers do not distinguish between *hoarse* and *horse*. Rounding is characteristic of the vowels of *hog, fog, log, wasp* and *wash*. The vowels of *due* and *new* will resemble that of *food* rather than *feud*.

In the South, *r* is lost except before vowels, as it is in eastern New England and New York City, but not in the Northern area, generally. Words like *Tuesday, due, and new* have a y-like gliding preceding the vowel.

We shall now deal with the main characteristics of the New York City dialect concerning pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax, but before that we shall group the subdivisions of the three main areas. As it is shown by most of the studies in American dialectology, in the North the principal area is that which separates coastal New England from Western New England, New York State, and the territory to the West. In general, this boundary follows the line of the Green Mountains, the Berkshire Hills, and the Connecticut River. The Metropolitan New York area consists of a broad circle with the city itself at the center; the Hudson Valley area encompasses the original Dutch settlements in New York and northern New Jersey, spreading into northeastern Pennsylvania.

The midland area is divided into northern and southern sub-areas, the line of demarcation being just a little south of the Old National Road in Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. Within the Southern dialect region, the Virginia Piedmond and the Delamarya peninsula constitute distinct sub-areas. Below we have all the subdivisions of the three major areas, being New York City placed among the sub-areas of the North:

### The North

1. Northern New England
2. Southern New England
3. South Western England
4. Upstate New York and Western Vermont
5. The Hudson Valley
6. Metropolitan New York

### The Midland

7. The Delaware Valley (Philadelphia)
8. The Susquehanna Valley
9. Upper Potomac and Shenandoah Valley
10. The Upper Ohio Valley (Pittsburgh)
11. Northern West Virginia
12. Southern West Virginia
13. Western North and South Carolina

### The South

14. Delamarya
15. The Virginia Piedmond
16. Northeastern North Carolina
17. The Cape Fear
18. South Carolina

Baugh (1963) thinks that it is best to recognize seven regional dialects in the United States: 1. Eastern New England, 2. New York City, 3. Middle Atlantic, 4. Western Pennsylvania, 5. Southern Mountain, 6. Southern and 7. General American.

New York City, a focal area,<sup>5</sup> is considered by the majority of the dialectologists a subdivision of the North. Baugh says that, although, it is often considered a part of the Eastern New England dialect, the speech of New York City and adjacent counties is on the whole quite different. Hubbel (1950) considers that except for a small minority of New Yorkers, divergencies from the New England pattern are far more numerous than similarities. While it has generally lost the *r*, except before vowels, *cot* and *caught* are phonemically contrasted [kɑt], [kɔt], since the *o* in words like *cot* and *top*, before voiceless stops, is almost always unrounded. The pronunciation of *curl* like *coil, third* like *thoid* is the characteristic most distinctive of New York City in the popular mind, although it should be added that among cultivated New Yorkers *curl* and *coil* are phonemically distinct [kɜrl], [kɔrl].

Some speakers in New York City use [ɒ] for the *wa* words, but most speakers use /ɑ/: [wɑdɜ, wɑsp, wɑtɜ], but [wɔtɜ]. /ɑ/ is preferred in the "r-less" areas of New England, New York City and the South. In words in which *o* is preceded by velar *k, g* or *ŋ*, as in *frock, hog, frog, log*, /ɑ/ predominates in New York in uneducated, common and cultivated speech, with occasional [ɒ]. [ɑ] is also heard in *foreign, orange* and *borrow*. For almost all speakers [ɔ] is the first element of the diphthong for those words with historical long *o* plus

r pronounced [oə], [oər], [ovə], [ovər] in other parts of the country. Such speakers make no distinction between *for* and *four*, *morning* and *mourning*, *border* and *boarder*, *horse* and *hoarse*. The pronunciation of [ɒ] instead of [ɔ] has been noted in New York City: *fought*, *called*, *Laura* [fɔt], [kɔld] and [ldrə]. The levelling of the sounds /ɒ/ and /ɔ/ to [ɔ] is normal to almost all speakers in New York, Boston and Baton Rouge. Actually many speakers in New York and some in Eastern New England use the [hɜrɪ] forms too. [ɜ] is the r-less vowel sound of *third* found in New England and New York City and the South. The retroflex [ʒ̣], an r-coloured [ɜ] is the symbol used for stressed syllabic /r/ in the remainder of the country and by some in New York.

[ʒ̣] is the sound of unstressed syllabic /r/ heard in such words as *father*, *doer*, *latter*. It is the r-coloured lax, central vowel heard in such syllables throughout the country, except in the r-less areas of the country: the South, Eastern New England, and for many, the New York City area. In these areas [ə] is its normal variant. Thus, unstressed [ə] and [ʒ̣] vary as do the stressed and high central vowels [ɜ] and [ʒ̣]. As it has been said above, in New York City and the South, the [ɜ] may be diphthongized to become [ɜɪ] or [ʌɪ], and occasionally to [ɔɪ] or [ɔɪ] in such words as *third*, *earl* and *learn*. The diphthongs are not limited to the speech of the illiterate, the foreign-born, or the lesser educated, although they are commonly heard in all three instances. Many older native speakers, with fine educational and social backgrounds, use one or more of these diphthongal forms. However, as it has been shown above, most speakers in both areas use [ɜ] or [ɜə], avoiding the so called "faulty diphthongs." The common educated forms are [ɜ], [ʒ̣] or [ɜə].

Initial or medial *oi*, *oy*, as in *oyster* or *boil* may be heard as [ɔɪ], [ɜɪ] or [ʒ̣] in less cultivated speech in New York City area, so that the words may be heard as [ɜɪstə-ʒ̣stə; bɜɪl — bʒ̣l]. This is not as common a substitution in less cultivated speech as the [ɜɪ] for [ɜ] of *bird* and *third*. Educated speakers in New York area who may use [ɜɪ] for [ɜ] do not substitute [ɜɪ] for the *oi* — *oy* words. In their speech, *curl* and *coil*, *oil* and *earl*, *foil* and *furl* are not homonyms.

In rapid careless speech, [ɔɪ] before *l* may be shortened to a monophthongal [ɔ] or [ɔɪ]. "The boiled eggs were spoiled" may sound like [ðə bɔɪld eɡz wɔɪ spɔɪld]. A raised and lengthened [ɔɪ] is heard in *lawn*; [uɔ] is heard in *won't*.

While the sound [e] is heard in cultivated, common and uneducated speech in words like *Mary* and *dairy*, the same speakers have a raised and lengthened [æ̃] in *pan*, *can*, *tan*, etc. There is actually no complete consistency, either in the same regional area, nor in the speech of a given individual. New Yorkers use [ɛə] in the words *fairy*, *fair*, *wary*, *where*, *there*, *beware*, *care* and *pear*, etc. but both [æ̃] and [e] are commonly heard in *Barbarian*,

*Sarah*, *parent* and *various*. The sentence "Harry married Mary in the area of the stairs," for instance, would sound like [hæɪrɪ mæɪrɪd mɛəɪrɪ ɪn ðɪ ɛəɪə əvðə steɪz].

Below we have a list of some words and their pronunciation by educated speakers in New York:

far, barn [fəɪ, bɑn]

poor, third [pʊə, θɜ:d]

Others say

[fəɪ, bɑɪn]  
[pʊə, θɜ:d]

hog, frog, dog [hɑg, frɑg, dɑg]

occasionally

[hɑg, frɑg, dɑg]  
four, [fɔ, fɔə, fɔɪ]  
hoarse [hɔ:s, hɔəs, hɔɪs]

park, [pɑ:k, pɑk, pɑɪk]  
farm [fɑ:m, fɑəm, fɑɪm]

ask, dance [æsk, dæns]

orange, foreign [ɑrɪndʒ, fɔrɪn]

worry, courage [wʌrɪ, kʌrɪdʒ]

nice, [naɪs, naɪs]

blind [blaɪnd, blɑɪnd]

With regard to consonantal phonemes some points concerning the pronunciation of New York must be shown. In careless or indistinct speech, the /t/ and /d/ may be lost especially when final or in certain clusters: *eight*, for instance, is pronounced /eɪθ/. After *n* and before an unstressed vowel /t/ and /d/ may be dropped. Ex.: *twenty* /twenti/. The substitution or the actual deletion of the *th* sound occurs in certain difficult clusters. The words *fifths*, *sixths* and *months* may sometimes be enunciated as [fɪfθs] or [fɪfθs], [sɪks] or [sɪkθs], [wʌnθs] or [wʌnθs]. Of course, such phenomenon does not occur only in New York City, but almost throughout the country in excessively rapid or careless speech.

The cluster [hw] is not regularly used in the speech of most in New York City and in certain sections of the East. The words *when* and *where*, for instance, would be pronounced [wɛn, wɛə]. Hubbel reports, in his book *The pronunciation of English in New York City* (1950), that, those New Yorkers who consistently use [hw] are rather rare, and those who do, seem to have consciously adopted the sound.

Words like *tune*, *duty* may be pronounced [tʃun, dʒu:ti] often [tʃun, du:ti], but occasionally [tʃun, dʒu:ti].

Hemph's research shows that there is a greater tendency to use voiceless *s* in *grease* and *greasy*. Massachusetts, like New England and the North generally favours *s* in the adjective and the verb. According to Hemph (1971) the incidence of [s] and [z] in these two words is primarily dependent on the geographical location of the speaker, rather than on his social or educational level. So, [s] is, in general Northern, and [z] Southern, being [gʁɪs] and [gʁɪz] the pronunciation in New York City.

Another pronunciation that is frequent in uneducated and common speech in New York is the use of /d/ instead of /ð/ in some words. *This*, for instance, would be pronounced [dɪs], and *them* [dem].

As to morphology, syntax and vocabulary only a few examples typical of New York will be given. We may find "he lives in King Street" and "we stood on line" in uncultivated, common and cultivated speech. While these three groups use *dominic* for *preacher*, *pot cheese* for *cottage cheese* and *-kill* for *small stream* in proper names only, in the rural area, in common and uncultivated speech *barrock* is used for 'haystack', *suppawm* for 'corn mush' and *skimmeton* and *skimmilton* for 'mock serenade'.

From what has been said up to now, one may observe, mainly in respect to pronunciation, how inconsistent it is. Within a single area two or three different pronunciations may be heard for the same word. Sometimes a single individual, as it will be seen in the next section, pronounces the same word in more than one way, perhaps due to several types of influence such as the ones mentioned in the previous section.

### III — THE INFORMANT'S IDIOLECT

Before discussing some of the aspects of the informant's idiolect so that we may compare it with the features of the dialect of New York City, presented in section II, we will briefly mention some important points about his bibliographical data, such as significant travel and the communities in which he has lived. We think that these points are quite important since they may have influenced his way of speaking.

John Smith, a thirty-five year old man, was born in New York, where he lived for thirty years. He also lived in Los Angeles, California for one year. He graduated from New York University and was working as an English teacher in Brazil at the time of the interview. John Smith travelled to Japan, Vietnam, England, France, Germany and Italy. His parents, who were also born in New York, have superior education. His maternal grandparents as well as his paternal grandparents, however, were Italian.

A questionnaire divided into four parts was presented to John Smith, being both the questions and the answers recorded. An additional recording with the informant reading both the questions and answers was, then, made so that the fieldworker had further information about his pronunciation. This questionnaire is being used as part of an

on-going project at the Center for American English, Illinois Institute of Technology. With this questionnaire A. L. Davis and Lawrence M. Davis are attempting to sample the major standard English dialects of the United States and Canada. The first part of the questionnaire contains two hundred and thirty nine questions including items such as ordinal and cardinal numbers, the days of the week, words referring to the climate, to daily affairs, food, parts of the human body, etc. The questionnaire was devised in such a way as to elicit words which are present in almost any study of American dialects. These lists include, for instance, *curl* and *coil*, *collar* and *caller*, *pen* and *pin*, *cot* and *caught*, *pool* and *pull*, *ladder* and *latter*, *mourning* and *morning*, etc. Such a procedure will lead us to verify if these pairs of words have different vowels or if they are homonyms in the informants' dialects. The second part of the questionnaire contains a list of words, which the informant was supposed to read. This list would confirm the informant's previous pronunciation or show inconsistency in the uttering of some words, that is, different pronunciations in different parts of the interview. As the third part, the interview contains some words which have already been elicited in the first part. To finish the interview, a few minutes of connected speech should be elicited from the informant. He should talk freely about an incident where he was in great danger, or about any interesting experience connected with his school occupation or even a TV story or a movie. Unfortunately, due to a technical flaw in the recording of the material, the last part of the interview, which would show characteristics of the informant's syntax and morphology was not recorded. Thus, our concern, here, will be only with the informant's pronunciation and vocabulary.

In order to interpret the collected material we shall use the vowel and consonantal charts presented by Gimson in his book *An introduction to the pronunciation of English* (1970)<sup>6</sup> as well as the phonetic alphabet devised by the same author. Beginning with the high front vowels /i:/ and /ɪ/ we have noticed that the informant's data present this contrast: *beat* is pronounced [bɪt] and *bit* [brɪt]. Other words which have the short vowel /ɪ/ are: *mirror*, *whipping*, *sister*, *widow*, *with*, etc. Unlikely speakers of some other dialects, who pronounce *pen* and *pin* as homonyms, John Smith presents the contrast /e/ — /ɪ/ in /pen/, /pɪn/. The words: *bet*, *met*, *deaf*, *bread*, *dead* all have /e/. All the *ask* group has the low front vowel /æ/: *ask*, *dance*, *can*, *pan*, *path*, *cab*, *bat*, *Mary*, *ash*, *answer*, *last*, *rafter*, *calf*, *half*, while the contrast /e/ — /æ/, which is not present in some dialects, is also shown by Smith in the following words: *Mary* — *merry*; *bat* — *bet*; *marry* — *merry*, etc. The words *January* and *February* are also pronounced with the /æ/ vowel. It is interesting to note that there was inconsistency in the pronunciation of some words, which were pronounced differently in the various parts of the interview. The word *aunt*, for instance, was pronounced /ɑːnt/ and /ænt/; the first time the proper name *Mary*

was pronounced, it had the vowel of *marry* and the second time it followed the *merry* group. The word *genuine* was also pronounced differently in the two recordings: /dʒɛnʌɪn/ and /dʒɛnʒʌɪn/.

Let us now turn to the central vowels /ə/, /ɜ:/, /ʌ/ and /ɑ:/. The words *first*, *third*, *furniture*, *purse*, *worm*, *girl*, *church*, *nurse*, *sermon*, *curl*, *syrup*, *stirrup*, all have the mid central vowel /ɜ:/. The words *curl* and *coil* are not homonyms in the informant's idiolect. They are pronounced /kɜ:ɹl/ and /kɔ:ɹəl/ respectively. All the three words *furry*, *hurry*, and *worry*, however, have the mid central vowel /ʌ/, which also appears in *butt*. /ə/ is present in all final unstressed syllables which contain r: *farmer*, *former*, *collar*, *caller*, *scissors*, etc. It is also inserted between a diphthong and the consonantal sound /l/ in words such as: *boil*, *coil*, *wail* and *whale*. The low central vowel /ɑ:/ is present in the following words: *father*, *card*, *barred*, *far*, *sari*, *heart*, etc. The contrast /ɔ/ — /ɔ:/ is also present in the informant's idiolect. Thus, while the group *log*, *dog*, *fog*, as well as the words: *frost*, *frog*, *sorry*, *closet*, *chocolate*, *watch*, *wash*, *orange*, *Florida*, *moth*, *forehead*, *strong*, *college*, *hospital*, *cot*, *cob*, *Tom*, *hod*, *hot*, *palm*, *balm*, *bomb*, all have the short low back vowel /ɔ/; the words *porch*, *scorch*, *coarsely*, *morning*, *mourning*, *daughter*, *horse*, *hoarse*, *caught*, *caller*, *fork* have /ɔ:/. From the above pronunciation, one may observe that while the words *horse* and *hoarse*, *morning* and *mourning*, *balm* and *bomb*, *wore* and *war* are homonyms, *cot* and *caught*, *sorry* and *sari*, *collar* and *caller* are not. Concerning the high back vowels /u:/ and /ʊ/ we may notice that the informant presents this contrast in the words *pool* and *pull*, and words such as *room*, *broom*, *roof*, *tooth*, which may have both vowels according to different speakers, have /ʊ/ in the informant's dialect. Other words which have the /ʊ/ sound are *wool*, *butcher*, *root*, *wounded*, *book*, *stood*, *pushing*, etc. The words *spoon*, *hoops* and *music*, however, have /u:/. The group: *new*, *tube*, *chew*, *due* does not have the semivowel /j/ before the /u:/ sound. So they are pronounced /nu:/, /tu:b/, /tʃu:/ and /du:/ respectively. *Tuesday*, *suit* and *during* are also included in this list: /tu:zɔ:ɹɪ/, /su:t/, /dʊrɪŋ/.

Considering the diphthongs, it may be observed that some vowel clusters are not present in the informant's speech. Among them we may cite /æʊ/, /əʊ/ and /ɛə/. On the other hand the diphthong /ɔə/ appears in words such as *poor* /pɔ:ɹ/, *pour* /pɔ:ɹ/ and *pore* /pɔ:ɹ/, being these three words homonyms. While a great number of Americans pronounce the final sound of the names of the week like /ɪ/, the informant has /eɪ/ in his dialect: *Monday* /mʌndeɪ/, *Tuesday* /tu:zdeɪ/, etc. The words *plow*, *house*, *pounds*, *mouth*, *drowned* have the diphthong /aʊ/. The diphthong /oʊ/ instead of /əʊ/ is present in the following words: *coat*, *stones*, *home*, *yolk*, *won't*, *shoulders*, *hotel*, *boat* and *goes*. The diphthong /ɪə/ is heard in *beer*, *dear* and *beard*; and a triphthong in *hired*, *fire*, *boiled* and *coil*, which are pronounced /hɪəɪəɹd/,

/fɪəɪəɹ/, /bɔ:ɪəɹd/ and /kɔ:ɪəɹ/, respectively. Where some Americans would have the diphthong /ɛə/, which is more common in British English, the informant has the pure low front vowel /æ/: *chair*, *scare*, *bare*, *dairy*, *care*, etc.

In relation to consonantal sounds and consonantal clusters, some important points must be mentioned. A voiced variety of /t/, which is commonly heard in all regional areas of the country is also present in the informant's dialect. Some phoneticians have labeled this an allophone of /t/ and called it voiced *t*. Others consider it an allophone of /d/. From the material collected, we may see that this allophone, which is also called flap [D] occurs in a) intervocalic position before an unstressed vowel: *latter*, *ladder* (being these two words considered homonyms in the informant's speech), *attic*, *beautiful*, *butter*, *thirty*, *forty*, *water*, etc.; b) preceding a syllabic /l/ as in *Beatle*, *little*; c) between unaccented vowels as in *put it on*. As Bronstein reports in his book *The Pronunciation of American English*<sup>7</sup> (1960), this voiced variety of /t/ varies freely with the voiceless variety in educated speech, but in more formal situations and when the speaker desires greater precision of speech, the use of the voiceless variety is common. Perhaps, due to this, we find both varieties in the informant's speech. While he uses the voiced variety in the above words, he uses the voiceless one between /n/ and unstressed vowel as in *twenty* /twentɪ/ and *seventy* /seventɪ/.

Like the majority of people in New York, the informant pronounces *grease* and *greasy* with /s/: /grɪs/, /grɪsɪ/. Unlike most speakers in New York City, the /r/ sound is pronounced in all positions in the informant's speech: *far* /fɑ:ɹ/, *chair* /tʃɪəɹ/, *third* /θɜ:ɹd/, *purse* /pɜ:ɹs/, *tired* /tɪəɹd/, *morning* /mɔ:ɹnɪŋ/, *hard* /hɑ:ɹd/, etc. While a *linking r* may be heard in "... answer in a hoarse voice" /ænsəɹ ɪn ə ho:ɹs vɔ:ɪs /; "fear and horror" /fɪəɹ ən ho:ɹɹ/, "an hour or more" /ən əʊəɹ ər mɔ:ɹ/, etc., there is no *intrusive r* in "the idea of it" /θɪəɪdɪə əv ɪt /.

As to *wh* words, it may be observed from the pronunciation of the words *white*, *whipping*, *whooping*, and *wheelbarrow*, that the *h* does not sound. So, words such as *whale* and *wail* are homonyms in the informant's speech.

Perhaps due to the formality of the situation, almost all clusters were clearly pronounced, there having no substitutions and deletion of sounds. So, the *th* was distinctly pronounced in all ordinal numbers: *eighth* /eɪtθ/, *fifth* /fɪfθ/, etc. An exception is the word *moths*, which was pronounced /mɔ:ɹtʃ/.

We shall now consider the pronunciation of some isolated words. It is interesting to note that *either*, for instance, was pronounced /əɪðəɹ/ rather than /ɪ:ðəɹ/; *garage* was pronounced /gəɹɑ:dʒ/ and the word *chocolate* was pronounced in two different ways, with initial /tʃ/ and with initial /ʃ/: /tʃɔ:kələt/, /ʃɔ:kələt/.

With regard to vocabulary there are no striking aspects worth mentioning. With only a few excep-

tions, the vocabulary elicited from the informant coincided with the vocabulary presented by the questionnaire. For a *small stream* the informant gave the word *brook*, instead of *creek*. The other items which differed were: *bench* instead of *porch*; *drying* in the place of *ironing*; *burned* for *scorched*; *straps* for *hoops*, *steeple* for *roof*, *wake* for *funeral*, *wheelbarrow* for *hod*, and *guest* for *caller*. It does not seem, however, that this is due to dialectal differences.

In concluding this section we may consider the main aspects of the informant's pronunciation. We feel that he has tried to be as clear as possible, pronouncing all sounds carefully with no deletions, substitutions, and other characteristics of common or uneducated speech. Even characteristics of informal styles were absent from his speech.

Concerning vowels, the main points are: the use of the low front vowel /æ/ in words of the *ask* group and the *chair, care* group; the vowel /ɔ/ in the *log* group; the insertion of /ə/ before /l/ in words like *boil* and *coil*; the contrast /ɔ/, /ɔ:/ in words like *pot, port*; the contrast /ʊ/, /u:/ in *pull* and *pool*; the absence of a y-glide in the *new* group; the diphthong /ɔə/ in words like *poor*; the diphthong /oʊ/ in *coat, stone, etc.*, /ɪə/ in *beer, dear* and /eɪ/ as the final sound of the days of the week.

As to consonantal sounds the main features are the r-full speech, the absence of /h/ in words of the *wh* group, the voiced variety of /t/ in some words, the /s/ in *grease* and the clear pronunciation of most consonantal clusters.

#### IV — COMPARISON BETWEEN THE DIALECT OF NEW YORK CITY AND THE INFORMANT'S IDIOLECT

In this section we will compare the idiolect of our informant with the data collected from the dialect of New York. We will deal, at the same time, with the similarities and differences, but only the main points concerning vowels and consonants will be compared. By comparing both vowel systems, we may observe that the distinction between *curl* and *coil*, which is present in the pronunciation of most educated speakers is also present in our informant's speech. He never pronounces *curl* as *coil* or *third* as *thoid*. On the other hand, /ɑ/ predominates in the speech of New York, for words of the *frog, log* group, while the informant has the vowel /ɔ/ for the same words. Other points which are similar are the pronunciation of the *horse* — *hoarse*; *morning* — *mourning* group, such words are homonyms in both the informant's idiolect and in the dialect of New York and the pronunciation of the *hurry, worry* group, which has the /ʌ/ vowel. The pronunciation of /ɒ/ for words such as *fought, called, Laura*, which has been noted in New York City, is not present in the informant's idiolect. He uses [ɔ:] instead. The monothongal [ɔ] instead of /ɔɪ/ is not present in his speech either. The word *boiled*, for instance, is pronounced /bɔsələd/, not /bɔld/. While many speakers in New York

City have the schwa sound in unstressed syllables followed by r, such as *father, doer, batter*, our informant has /ɜ:/: /fɑ:ðər/, /bætər/, etc. Another common point is the pronunciation of the words of the *ask* group, which are in both dialects pronounced with the low front vowel /æ/. Words such as *fair, there, care*, which may be heard with three different vowels /ɛə, æ, e/ in New York City, have the vowel /æ/ in the informant's dialect.

As to consonantal sounds we may note that there is an agreement in the pronunciation of *grease* and *greasy*. The pronunciation with /s/, which is heard throughout New York, is also present in the informant's idiolect. While most of the New Yorkers have an -r less speech, the informant's idiolect is -r full, that is, r is pronounced in all positions in the word. Words of the *tune, duty* group, which may occasionally be pronounced with the semivowel /j/ in the dialect of New York, is never pronounced with such a y-like glide by our informant. Perhaps due to his excessively careful pronunciation, the informant has not deleted or substituted sounds throughout the interview, except for the word *moths*, which has been pronounced /mɔts/. So, the deletion or substitution of the *th* in such difficult clusters as /tθ/, /sθ/, /fθs/, which is quite common in rapid speech throughout the country, has not occurred during the interview. The deletion of *t* in *twenty* or *seventy*, which is also common, has not occurred either. The cluster /hw/, which Hubbel (1950) considers to be of rare use by speakers of New York, is not present in the informant's speech, words like *wheelbarrow*, for instance, were pronounced /wi:lbrɔv/.

There are, then, some aspects in the informant's pronunciation, which are in complete agreement with the current pronunciation of New York City, at least, with the pronunciation of the majority of educated speakers, who have cultivated speech. So, many of the differences noted are so considered not in relation to the pronunciation of the educated, but in relation to common or uncultivated speech.

#### V — CONCLUSION

In concluding the work, we shall summarize what has been done, recognizing, first of all, that as the field work has not been completed, we did not have enough material to make a complete comparison. Possible peculiarities of the informant's dialect related to morphology and syntax could not be studied as it has been previously explained. But due to some quite important factors already mentioned, as the informant's background, his superior education and cultivated speech, we may infer that the two aspects referred to above are probably in conformity with the considered standard dialect of New York City, that is, the speech of the educated people of the area. The informant's pronunciation is a good point to base our observation because as it has been sufficiently said, his speech does not include substitutions and deletions of

sounds or other characteristics not pertinent to the standard speech. However it is worth noting that some factors may have interfered for the excessively careful pronunciation of the informant. Among these factors we may cite the fact that he has not used rapid speech and perhaps due to his professional position as a teacher, he has tried to show a greater precision of speech. In addition, we must not forget that even trying to be as informal as possible, a field worker and an informant are, most of the time, engaged in a formal situation.

#### NOTES

- 1 MCDAVID JR. *The Dialects of American English*. p. 480, 491, 492, 534.
- 2 MCDAVID JR. *British and American Standard and Nonstandard*. p. 92.
- 3 BRONSTEIN, p. 39.
- 4 RP (Received Pronunciation) is basically the educated Southern British English. This preferred pattern of dialect is found in use today all over England, possessing no real distinctive or local flavor. It is the dialect spoken by the educated leaders of England, a dialect not of region but of the highest social status. It is the speech commonly used by parliamentary leaders, bankers, industrialists, and professionals.
- 5 A focal area is one which because of its political, commercial, cultural or other importance has influenced the speech of surrounding areas.
- 6 GIMSON, p. 93, 144.
- 7 BRONSTEIN, p. 74-5.

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