

Talkin' Tar Heel: How Our Voices Tell the Story of North Carolina

"Nothing is more intrinsic to culture, identity, and community than language. At the same time, language is also among our most indispensable tools. We use language to teach, learn, console, love, harm, and create. Despite the incredible utility of our words, sometimes what we say is less revealing than how we say it... Our voice offers a glimpse into our inherited past – who we are – but even more so, a glimpse of our imagined future – who we wish to be." ~ Talkin' Tar Heel

Overview

"North Carolina has a remarkable, living history that lingers on the tongues of its citizenry...In addition to its dialect varieties, over twenty-five different languages are part of the language legacy of North Carolina" (*Talkin' Tar Heel*, p. 21). In this lesson, students will examine the linguistic aspect of North Carolina history and culture—its languages and dialects—which is often overlooked. In class discussions based on excerpts from the book *Talkin' Tar Heel: How Our Voices Tell the Story of North Carolina*, and video and audio clips, students will consider how we speak may be a reflection of our past and present, as well as how languages and dialects provide a fascinating way to understand North Carolina's rich and diverse cultural heritage. This lesson will culminate with students applying what they have learned to create their own personal dictionary, with an emphasis on regional and personal dialect and language.

NC Essential Standards for 8th Grade

- 8.H.3.1 - Explain how migration and immigration contributed to the development of North Carolina and the United States from colonization to contemporary times.
- 8.H.3.2 - Explain how changes brought about by technology and other innovations affected individuals and groups in North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.H.3.4 - Compare historical and contemporary issues to understand continuity and change in the development of North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.G.1.1 - Explain how location and place have presented opportunities and challenges for the movement of people, goods, and ideas in North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.G.1.2 - Understand the human and physical characteristics of regions in North Carolina and the United States (e.g. physical features, culture, political organization and ethnic make-up).
- 8.G.1.3 - Explain how human and environmental interaction affected quality of life and settlement patterns in North Carolina and the United States (e.g. environmental disasters, infrastructure development, coastal restoration and alternative sources of energy).
- 8.C&G.2.3- Explain the impact of human and civil rights issues throughout North Carolina and United States history.
- 8.C.1.1 - Explain how influences from Africa, Europe, and the Americas impacted North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.C.1.2 - Summarize the origin of beliefs, practices, and traditions that represent various groups within North Carolina and the United States (e.g. Moravians, Scots-Irish, Highland Scots, Latino, Hmong, African, and American Indian)
- 8.C.1.3 - Summarize the contributions of particular groups to the development of North Carolina and the United States.

Essential Questions

- Why is language important?
- What can language tell us about North Carolina’s past, present and future?
- In what ways do the voices of North Carolina reflect the state’s diversity?
- What stereotypes exist or what assumptions are made based on a person’s language?
- How is language and dialect tied to geography?
- What specific geographical aspects of North Carolina may have shaped the ways people speak and why?
- What are some causes of dialects evolving and changing?
- What role has technology had on language over the years?
- Why is linguistic tolerance important?

Materials

- Excerpts from *Talkin’ Tar Heel: How Our Voices Tell the Story of North Carolina*, by Walt Wolfram and Jeffrey Reaser, attached
 - For information on purchasing the book *Talkin’ Tar Heel: How Our Voices Tell the Story of North Carolina*, as well as numerous audio and video features, go to <http://www.talkintarheel.com/>
- Optional: “Snapshot of NC Population by County” handout (attached) and access to <http://ciu.northcarolina.edu/global-heatmap/>
- North Carolina Pronunciations, attached
- Create a Personal Dictionary, assignment attached
- **Optional Resource:** For teachers interested in exploring North Carolina dialects further, a multimedia dialect awareness curriculum, *Voices of North Carolina*, is available for free. Download at http://www.ncsu.edu/linguistics/research_dialecteducation.php

Duration

- 1-2 class periods
- Lesson length will vary depending on each classroom’s level of discussion and use of optional activities.

Procedure

What is Language?

1. As a warm up, ask students to take a few minutes to respond to the question, “What is language?” Allow students to share their thoughts out loud, then discuss further:
 - Why is language important?
 - What might a person’s language tell us about him/her?
2. Discuss with students how we seldom really stop and consider language – both in terms of what language a person speaks, but also the *way* in which they speak. Yet, language, like appearance, is usually one of the first aspects that we notice about a person. Tell students that throughout today’s class, they are going to be focusing on language, voice, dialect and accent, and what our voices say about our past and present.
3. To get started, let students know you are going to play some audio (30 seconds) of a man speaking and that you want them to simply listen to his language and the sound of his voice and write down everything that comes to mind based on what they hear. Explain that there is no right or wrong; students should just list the words and phrases that come to mind regarding what they think based on the short clip. Play the audio of the clip at <http://www.talkintarheel.com/chapter/6/video6-10.php> (**While this clip is actually a video, do not let students view the clip. For the purposes of this activity, they should only be able to hear the man speak.) As students listen, ask questions that encourage student thinking, such as:
 - What first comes to mind when hearing this voice?
 - How would you describe the way he speaks?
 - Where might he be from?

- How old do you think he might be?
What do you imagine he looks like?
 - Does his voice give you any hints regarding how he might spend each day and/or what he does for a living?
4. Provide an additional few moments after viewing for students to note thoughts on paper then discuss their reactions:
- What are some of the words and phrases you jotted down regarding this man’s voice? (Note student comments in a list on the board. Ask follow up questions as needed, and once a substantial list of assumptions is compiled, continue the discussion.)
 - How would you characterize the way this man spoke?
 - Where do you think he is from and why? Have you heard anyone talk similarly?
 - At this point you can let students know that the man they heard talking is a man named Jim Tom Hedrick, who lives in the mountains in Western North Carolina.
 - Of the class’s comments, which would you characterize as negative? As positive? (Teachers can put a + or – symbol to categorize the comments. If it looks like the comments were predominantly negative, point this out and discuss why students think this is the case.)
 - What assumptions did class members make about this man based on his language and way of speaking, and why do you think they made these assumptions in particular?
 - How would you compare the way that you personally speak to the way he speaks?
 - Have you ever really thought about how you speak and sound to others? Do you speak with a Southern accent? Another type of accent? Have you ever been teased based on the way you sound?
5. Tell students they are going to read some excerpts from the book *Talkin’ Tar Heel: How Our Voices Tell the Story of North Carolina*. Share the following quote with students (available at the beginning of the attached handout as Excerpt 1), read it together and further discuss:
- “Language reflects where people come from, how they have developed, and how they identify themselves regionally and socially. In some respects, language is simply another artifact of history and culture, but language variation is unlike other cultural and historical landmarks. We don’t need to visit a historical monument, go to an exhibit, view an artist’s gallery, or attend an athletic event to witness it firsthand; language resonates in the sounds of ordinary speakers in everyday conversation. Other landmarks recount the past; language simultaneously indexes the past, present, and future of the state and its residents. The voices of North Carolinians reflect the diversity of its people. They came to this region in different eras from different places under varied conditions and established diverse communities based on the natural resources of the land and waterways. The range of settlers extends from the first American Indians who arrived here at least a couple of thousand years ago from Central and South America in the late twentieth century. The diverse origins and the migratory routes that brought people to North Carolina have led to a diffuse, multilayered cultural and linguistic panorama that continues to evolve along with the ever-changing profiles of its people.” (*Talkin’ Tar Heel*, p. 2)
 - What do you think the authors mean when they say that “language is simply another artifact of history and culture?”
 - In what ways do the voices of North Carolina reflect the state’s diversity?
 - What can language tell us about North Carolina’s past?
 - The authors say that “language reflects where people come from, how they have developed, and how they identify themselves regionally and socially.” Reconsider Jim Tom Hedrick from Western North Carolina. In what way do you think his language reflects these things?

Dialect and Accent

6. Next, point out to students that when listening to a person, we can often hear a particular **dialect** and **accent**. Ask students if they can share their understanding of the meaning of the words dialect and accent and ensure they understand the correct definition of both:

- Dialect - A form of a language spoken by a group of people from the same regional or cultural background. Everyone speaks a dialect, even though some dialects are more noticeable than others.
- Accent (also referred to as dialect pronunciation) – The particular pronunciation or voice quality that makes a language sound different. For example, people from certain regions or cultural backgrounds (i.e., a Northern city versus a Southern rural area) often will pronounce the same words very differently. It is also used to refer to speakers of English as a second language who retain traits from their first language.

7. Continue the discussion:

- Do you and/or people in your community have an accent and if so, how would you describe it? What does it mean to “sound like you are from North Carolina?”
- Why do you think you talk the way that you do? (While this is a difficult question to pinpoint an answer to, get students to be considering what factors may have influenced the way they speak.) What determines the words you use and how you pronounce them, the accent you speak with, etc.? What role does culture play in your language and the way you speak it?
- In what specific ways do people in the South (i.e., North Carolina) speak differently than people in the North (i.e., New York)? Explain. Why do you think this is the case?
- What are some words and phrases that you would consider “Southern”? (i.e., y’all, bless your heart, etc.)
- What assumptions might you make about someone with a Northern accent and someone with a Southern accent?
 - To further this discussion, show the video clip (36 seconds) of Martha Pearl Villas - <http://www.talkintarheel.com/chapter/4/video4-6.php> and further discuss:
 - What is Martha’s opinion of the differences in Southerners and Northerners and the way they speak?
 - How would you characterize her opinion? Is it fair? Stereotypical? Something else?
- Do you notice any common differences between the ways older North Carolinians speak and those who are younger? Explain.
- What is “slang?” What role does slang play in our language? How does slang both shape and reflect culture?
- Do people in the city speak differently than people in the country in North Carolina? Explain.
 - Point out to students that Martha Pearl Villas lives in the Charlotte area, whereas Jim Tom Hedrick (who they heard at the start of the lesson), lives in the rural mountains. Get students to discuss any differences, or similarities, they heard in these two voices.
 - Explain and discuss with students that “Historically, North Carolina was by design a predominantly rural state, dominated by small incorporated towns rather than cities. In fact, it still has more than 200 towns with populations totaling fewer than 1,000 residents and about 500 towns with fewer than 6,000 residents, and these towns are a significant part of its sociohistorical heritage. However, the clear trend in North Carolina has been toward urbanization...however, even with the steady increase of the urban population over the century, North Carolina still ranks as the tenth most rural state in the United States, and its rural population remains quite traditional in many ways, both culturally and linguistically.” (*Talkin’ Tar Heel*, p. 77)
 - What do the authors mean when they say that “North Carolina was by design a predominantly rural state?”
 - The excerpt claims that the recent trend has been toward urbanization - what kind of factors possibly pull people to more urban environments? Likewise, what kind of push factors may contribute to more people leaving rural environments?
 - The excerpt states that rural environments remain fairly traditional in the way they talk. Why do you think that is?
 - What do you think happens to language in a more urban environment?

- As an optional extension into exploring urban v. rural dialects, play the following two clips for students to compare and discuss:
 - <http://www.talkintarheel.com/chapter/4/audio4-2.php> (24 second clip from speaker with a city/urban accent)
 - <http://www.talkintarheel.com/chapter/4/audio4-3.php> (rural/country accent)

➤ **Optional activity for further exploring urban v. rural:** Distribute the attached “Snapshot of NC Population by County” handout. Explain to students that they are going to use the interactive map of North Carolina from the Center for International Understanding (<http://ciu.northcarolina.edu/global-heatmap/>) to explore the makeup of North Carolina counties and how “global” they are. The map uses a variety of metrics to determine how global a county is; however, students will be looking at five statistics (defined on the attached handout) for 3 counties of their choice that may indicate the variety of languages influencing the area. (It is important to note that groups will need access to some type of technology such as laptops or smartphones in order to complete this activity. If access to such devices is not possible, this activity can be modified so that the teacher can project the map and guide the whole group through the necessary data.) If access to devices is available, have students complete their data collection and share their findings, including the names of the additional two counties they selected and why they selected them. Based on the data collected, ask students to think about whether the counties they selected are predominantly urban, suburban or rural. After providing their answer, ask them to explain why they think that’s the case based on the data collected. Additionally, ask students to think about how the data they collected might affect the dialect or accent in the counties they selected.

8. Tell students to read Excerpt 2 on their handout. (This can be done individually or in reading partners. Teachers should note that some of the vocabulary in the text is fairly advanced.) Once students have finished, discuss:
- The authors write that “...many North Carolinians have grown up ashamed of their dialect rather than proud of it.” Do you think this is true and if so, why do you think this is the case? If you disagree, explain why.
 - Why might a teacher or parent encourage someone to change the way they speak in order to “succeed?” In which particular situations might this be bad advice? In which particular situations might this be good advice? Do you ever change the way that you speak and if so, in what situations and why?
 - What do the authors mean when they say that attitudes about language are tied to attitudes about people?
 - According to the authors, what historical event led to Southern speech being considered “inferior?” In what ways did the divide in the country after the war contribute to an even more distinct way of speaking in the South?
 - Do you agree that mainstream America views southern language as negative? Why or why not? What negative language attitudes can you pinpoint that do exist about southern speech? What positive language attitudes likewise exist?
 - The authors discuss how southern speech is often used on television, particularly in advertisements. Why is this the case? Have you ever thought about why a commercial utilizes particular people (i.e., how they look and sound)? In addition to ads trying to sell you something, what other types of television commercials rely heavily on how a person sounds? (Try and get a student to bring up political ads and discuss the ways in which these ads use particular types of strategies to reach particular audiences.)
 - According to the reading, and/or your own experiences, how can you use language and the way you speak to your advantage?

North Carolina’s Linguistic Diversity

9. Next, ask students to think about North Carolina as a whole and ask: Does everyone within North Carolina speak with the same dialect and accent and why is this the case? To illustrate this issue, tell students you

are going to play another clip of a North Carolinian speaking. Tell students you want them to listen to the 1 minute clip and see if they can pinpoint where this man may live:

<http://www.talkintarheel.com/chapter/5/audio5-7.php>. Discuss:

- Where do you think this man is from and what makes you think this?
 - Let students know that they just listened to Rex O’Neal, a lifelong Outer Banks resident.
- Consider the way Rex speaks compared to the way Jim Tom Hedrick (from the mountains) speaks, or Martha Pearl Villas (from Charlotte) speaks. Why do you think they speak so differently even though they are residents of the same state? What factors do you think influenced their speech? (Lead students to consider the role of history and geography as they discuss.)
- Does language change (meaning, is it static or constantly evolving)? Do you think people speak the same today as they did 100 years ago? 500 years ago? Why or why not?

➤ **Optional activity:** To illustrate the concept of the evolution and diversity of language itself, break students into small groups (i.e., 3-5) and provide each group with 10 Post-It notes. Ask the groups to come up with five words or expressions that are considered to be “trendy,” or popular today. Also, ask the groups to come up with five words that are considered out-of-date. (For example, trendy might be “bae,” whereas out-of-date might be “dope.” See 2015 examples at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/12/slang-words-2015-approved- n_6288546.html.) It is important to remind students to only list words and phrases that are appropriate for the classroom. Create a large “T” chart up at the front on the classroom with one side labeled Trendy and the other Out-of-Date. Instruct groups to place their Post-Its in the corresponding column once finished. After all groups have placed their Post-Its under the appropriate heading (only around 5-6 minutes should be needed), debrief the chart together, noting any repeated words as well as any outliers. Discuss:

- How do words/expressions become “trendy?”
- What do you think makes a word or expression become “out-of-date?”
 - Teachers may also want to encourage students how sometimes “out-of-date” words or phrases can come back into use again.
- Why does change in the way we speak and the words we use occur? And, why does such change perhaps occur more slowly in some areas than others (i.e., in the Outer Banks than in Charlotte)?

10. Instruct students to read Excerpt 3 (individually or in partners) and discuss:

- Why is language and dialect tied to geography/topography?
- While language and dialect is tied to geography/topography, it isn’t confined to state boundaries. Why is this the case?
- What specific geography/topography in North Carolina likely shaped the ways people speak and why?
- What role do you think various technologies (i.e., radio, TV, radio, internet, advances in transportation allowing people to travel and interact more, etc.) have had on language over the years?

11. Point out to students that the language diversity in North Carolina is incredibly rich. While the majority of the population may speak various dialects of English, many residents speak Spanish or any of more than 25 other languages. The linguistic diversity in North Carolina is incredible. Share with students:

- “North Carolina has a remarkable, living history that lingers on the tongues of its citizenry. In this book, we examine these voices to discover where they came from and how they came to be. Our aim is to preserve a cultural past while simultaneously looking toward the future. We concentrate more on dialects of English than other languages, in part because the vast majority of the population still speaks only English in the home. But growing populations now speak other languages. Most visible are Spanish speakers, whose recent immigration to North Carolina has made it one of the top states in the United States over the past two decades in the growth of Spanish speakers – with the highest percentage of monolingual Spanish speakers. There are also communities of Hmong (7,500) and Vietnamese (about 16,000), including subgroups such as the Montagnards (5,000) from the central mountains of Vietnam for whom Vietnamese is not their first language (Bahnar, Koho, Mnong, etc.)

and who first started coming to the state about three decades ago. These complement more dispersed communities of Hungarian (1,000) and Polish (2,000) speakers. Speakers of Arabic varieties such as Lebanese Arabic (15,000) have been present in North Carolina for more than a century, and of course German speakers (28,000) have resided in North Carolina since before it was officially a state. In addition to its dialect varieties, over twenty-five different languages are part of the language legacy of North Carolina.” (*Talkin’ Tar Heel*, p. 21)

- Discuss:
 - Why is North Carolina’s language heritage so diverse? While many people may debate issues of language, what are the positive aspects of such diversity for our state?
 - Do any of you speak any of the languages mentioned in the shared passage? Why is speaking more than one language something to be proud of?
 - Does it surprise you to know that over 25 languages are part of North Carolina’s language legacy?
 - We’ve talked some throughout this lesson about the assumptions we often make about people based on the way they speak. In what ways are people sometimes discriminated against based on their accent and language?
 - Have you ever heard of linguistic profiling or linguistic discrimination? (If students are familiar with these terms, allow them to share what they think the terms may refer to.)

12. Play the “Linguistic Profiling” PSA (1 minute long) at <http://www.talkintarheel.com/chapter/11/video11-6.php> and discuss:

- What happened in this clip?
- In what ways did you see discrimination at play?
- Why do you think this PSA was created? What is its purpose?
- Are you surprised to hear that people will make assumptions about the race, ethnicity, background, etc. of a person on the phone, then act on those assumptions in negative ways (i.e., such as not giving the person an available apartment, job, or other opportunity?)
- What negative impact can unjust treatment have on the person being discriminated against?

13. Explain to students that linguistic discrimination is the unfair treatment of an individual based solely on their use of language. John Baugh, Ph.D., coined the term “linguistic profiling,” noting that when a voice on the phone sounds African-American or Latino, racial discrimination might follow. In a study that involved hundreds of test phone calls, Dr. Baugh found that many people made racist, snap judgments about callers with diverse dialects. Some potential employers, real estate agents, loan officers and service providers did it repeatedly, says Baugh. Long before they could evaluate callers’ abilities, accomplishments, credit rating, work ethic or good works, they blocked callers based solely on linguistics. Such racist reactions frequently break federal and state fair housing and equal employment opportunity laws. (Source: <http://news.wustl.edu/news/Pages/6500.aspx>.)

What’s in a Name?

14. Next, transition students into thinking about something we often overlook as a source of history - North Carolina’s place names (cities, counties, rivers, etc.) Discuss:

- Are there any names you’ve seen and wondered where they come from?
- Are there any that you are unsure how to pronounce, or know that people often pronounce incorrectly?
- Where might you guess some of these names originate from?

15. Let students know that many of North Carolina’s place names “...can be traced to the different languages that have contributed to the state’s cultural and linguistic diversity. A number of place names derive from American Indian inhabitants of the region” (p. 12). Further, “As pronunciation would have it, the names of counties, towns, rivers, and other landmarks in North Carolina can serve effectively to distinguish locals from outsiders.” (p. 11) Offer a linguistic challenge to the class, asking for a student volunteer who thinks

they can read out loud a list of North Carolina place names correctly. Provide the volunteer with a copy of the attached list to read from; teachers should also project the list for the rest of the class to follow along. As the volunteer reads, tell the rest of the students to raise their hands if they believe a word has been mispronounced. Allow various students to have some fun with the pronunciations, then when ready, play the recording of the correct pronunciations located at <http://www.talkintarheel.com/chapter/1/audio1-1.php>.

- A recording of North Carolinians pronouncing the names incorrectly is also available at <http://www.talkintarheel.com/chapter/1/audio1-2.php>
- An additional source for North Carolina place names pronunciation is <http://library.unc.edu/wilson/ncc/talk-like-a-tar-heel/>

16. Next, instruct student to read Excerpt 4 with a partner and to discuss it together. After students have had approximately 5 minutes to discuss, bring the class back together to share some of their thoughts.

- “Nothing is more intrinsic to culture, identity, and community than language. At the same time, language is also among our most indispensable tools. We use language to teach, learn, console, love, harm, and create. Despite the incredible utility of our words, sometimes what we say is less revealing than how we say it... Our voice offers a glimpse into our inherited past – who we are – but even more so, a glimpse of our imagined future – who we wish to be.” (p. 20)
- Partner discussion:
 - Why is language important?
 - What do the authors mean when they say that our voice represents our past, but also our future?

Culminating Activity: Create a Personal Dictionary

17. As a culminating project, hand out the “Create a Personal Dictionary” assignment and go over it with the class. Point out to students that a dictionary lists the words of a language (typically in alphabetical order), explains their meaning, and provides information about pronunciation, origin, and usage. Considering the vast differences in language and dialects (old vs. young, city vs. country, North vs. South, differences between states, NC regional differences, etc.), remind students that it is likely that they use particular words or phrases in ways that other people may not (i.e., people who are older; from another city, county or region; from another state; from the North, etc. Play a few examples for students, such as

- “Bless Your Heart” - <http://www.talkintarheel.com/chapter/4/video4-5.php>
- “Jasper & Peckerwood” - <http://www.talkintarheel.com/chapter/6/video6-7.php>

18. Tell students that for this assignment, they will brainstorm and choose 15-20 words or phrases that they think other people (outside their family, circle of friends, community, region, state, etc.) may not know, or may use differently. Review the assignment sheet, let students know the due date, and accept any questions students may have. Remind students that all words and phrases must be classroom appropriate.

19. On the dictionary due date, allow students to explore how many of their words were unique, and how many are actually words that are utilized by others in the class as well. Teachers can post signs around the room for each letter of the alphabet. Provide students with 15-20 Post-It-Notes and instruct them to write each of their words/phrases on each Post It. Students should then post their words/phrases under the appropriate letter. Instruct students that if they already see their word/phrase posted, to put their Post-It directly beside the other(s) that are the same. Once all students have posted their words, the teacher should lead the class to explore which words/phrases were posted more than once. In this case, start with one student sharing their definition, and discuss whether all students who posted that word interpret it the same way. Also allow students to ask questions about words or phrases that are unfamiliar to them; let the student posting that word/phrase respond with its definition.

Name: _____

Excerpts from *Talkin' Tar Heel: How Our Voices Tell the Story of North Carolina*

Excerpt 1

Language reflects where people come from, how they have developed, and how they identify themselves regionally and socially. In some respects, language is simply another artifact of history and culture, but language variation is unlike other cultural and historical landmarks. We don't need to visit a historical monument, go to an exhibit, view an artist's gallery, or attend an athletic event to witness it firsthand; language resonates in the sounds of ordinary speakers in everyday conversation. Other landmarks recount the past; language simultaneously indexes the past, present, and future of the state and its residents. The voices of North Carolinians reflect the diversity of its people. They came to this region in different eras from different places under varied conditions and established diverse communities based on the natural resources of the land and waterways. The range of settlers extends from the first American Indians who arrived here at least a couple of thousand years ago from Central and South America in the late twentieth century. The diverse origins and the migratory routes that brought people to North Carolina have led to a diffuse, multilayered cultural and linguistic panorama that continues to evolve along with the ever-changing profiles of its people. (p. 2)

Excerpt 2

Perhaps North Carolina has never touted its language and dialect heritage as one of its cultural commodities because many North Carolinians have grown up ashamed of their dialect rather than proud of it, viewing their dialect as a cultural liability to be overcome rather than a cultural resource to embrace. We have interviewed numerous people who report that they were told by teachers, parents, and others – that their southern-based dialect needed to be replaced by a less regional, more neutral one if they ever wanted to “succeed” in life.

Attitudes about language can be complex and nuanced, but ultimately they are tied to attitudes about people. The attitudes of the language spoken by politically and/or socially subordinate groups will naturally take on the descriptors of that group. Since at least the Civil War, Southern dialect has been viewed as “inferior” speech. If the outcome of the war had been different, of course, the dialect would have been considered “Standard English” and other Englishes considered inferior. Southern speech was already somewhat different from northern speech before the Civil War, but it started diverging much more substantially after the war. The rate and direction of language change is often connected to major historical and cultural events, so change following the Civil War is not unusual. The post-Civil War cultural divide, the regional entrenchment, and the oppositional feelings toward the North offered a fertile environment for the independent development of southern speech. As southern speech diverged from northern speech, it became more symbolically regional and strongly associated with southern lifestyles. This may have been good for

southern regional identity, but the speech of the South was not highly valued outside of the region. The politically and socially dominate North, then, simply ascribed attributes associated with their stereotypes of the South to its speech – rural, slow, and ignorant. Over a century and a half after the Civil War, this ideology still lingers, and educated parents in the South still attempt to eliminate the “southern drawl” in their children so that they won’t sound like *country bumpkins*, *yokels*, or *hicks*, derogatory terms that evoke *The Beverly Hillbillies* stereotypes, of uneducated, impoverished rural people.

A closer examination of how southern speech is viewed in different situations suggests that the story is more complicated than the simple categorization of good and bad speech. In reality, both southern and non-southern listeners show a somewhat schizoid reaction to southern speech. At the same time that this speech can be viewed as inferior, it is also perceived as genteel and charming. North Carolinians, especially women, are told that their speech is attractive, sweet – part of gendered southern charm. People “just love to hear you talk!” Further, southern speech is viewed as more polite than northern talk, which is often interpreted as direct and rude by comparison. The collection of stereotypes results in an odd image of what a southerner must be: rustic, slow, and ignorant, yet genteel, kind, and pleasant.

Southern dialect may also serve to indicate sincerity and authenticity. Every night, the late-night news in North Carolina is sponsored by auto dealerships whose sales representatives – even the owner – use a local southern dialect to offer the best deal for the latest model car. The character is transformed from stereotype to authentic through the use of dialect – because local speakers are considered by their viewers to be trustworthy, friendly, and honest. Marketing specialists rely on this speech as part of their presentation of sincerity and authenticity.

In some situations, speaking southern is clearly an advantage rather than a liability – and of course in other situations, the opposite is true. (*Edited excerpt, p. 13-16*)

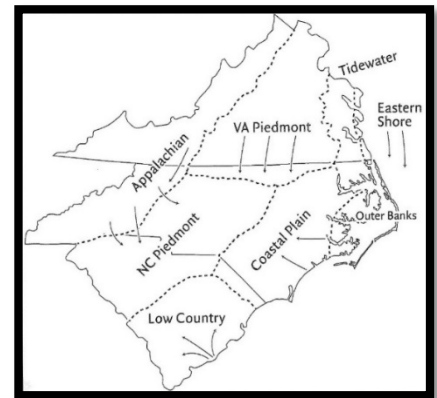
Excerpt 3

The conditions for dialect and language diversity are tied closely to physical geography and the human ecology of the region that eventually became known as North Carolina. From the eastern estuaries along the Atlantic Ocean, the terrain transitions into the Coastal Plain, the Piedmont, and the mountains of southern Appalachia – from sand to rich loam, to red clay, to mixed rock and dirt. The varied soils and climates contribute to diverse vegetation, wildlife, natural resources, and cultural economies. Waves of migration at different periods originating from different locations here and abroad have helped establish communities in both convenient and out-of-the-way areas that still reveal a distinct “founder effect” in language even centuries after settlement. (Founder effect is the term linguists use for a lasting influence from the language variety of the first dominant group of speakers to occupy an area.) So, the western mountains of North Carolina still bear the imprint of Scots-Irish English, brought by the many settlers who came from their homeland to Philadelphia before traveling west and south on the Great Wagon Road in the early 1800s.

Similarly, the coastal region and the Outer Banks still echo the dialect influence of those who journeyed south by water from the coastal areas of Virginia. The interconnected waterways and the settlement history help explain why speakers from North Carolina Outer banks communities, such as Ocracoke and Harkers Island, sound much more like the speakers of Virginia's Tangier Island and Maryland's Smith Island in the Chesapeake Bay than they do the speakers of inland North Carolina. Mix in the contributions of American Indian languages; the remnants of African languages; and Europeans speaking Gaelic, German, French, and other languages, and the result is a regional and ethnic language ecology as varied as North Carolina's physical topography and climate – the most varied of any state east of the Mississippi River. (p.3)

Some dialect words, pronunciations, and sayings are heavily concentrated in North Carolina, but dialects don't pay much attention to state boundaries. The lack of extensive natural boundaries separating North Carolina from South Carolina to the south and from Virginia to the north allow the dialects to spill over the state line, and the mountains in the western part of North Carolina are shared by eastern Tennessee so that the state line arbitrarily cuts across the mountain range. The dialect map given below...depicts how the major dialect areas disregard the state boundary. The lines separating the dialect areas...are idealized rather than absolute boundaries. Linguistic transitions tend to be gradual rather than abrupt. Even where natural boundaries of water may appear to set off one dialect region from another, there is often a transitional zone. For example, the Outer Banks islands are discretely separated from the mainland by the sounds but still show a transition area.

The map reflects the influence of early migration and European settlement on the major dialects of North Carolina, mostly southward through Virginia and inland from the coastal area. It also captures how North Carolina dialects have spread into South Carolina. At the same time, dialects diffused inland from Charleston, a major port of entry for some of the early population of the Palmetto State. It also illustrates the relative insignificance of the state boundary in the development of dialects. (p. 9)



Excerpt 4

Nothing is more intrinsic to culture, identity, and community than language. At the same time, language is also among our most indispensable tools. We use language to teach, learn, console, love, harm, and create. Despite the incredible utility of our words, sometimes what we say is less revealing than how we say it... Our voice offers a glimpse into our inherited past – who we are – but even more so, a glimpse of our imagined future – who we wish to be. (p. 20)

Name: _____

Snapshot of NC Population by Count

<http://ciu.northcarolina.edu/global-heatmap/>

1.) County: _____

- a. 2010 Total Population: _____
- b. 2000-2010 % Change in Population: _____
- c. 2006-2010 Foreign Born Population: _____
- d. % Change in Foreign Born from 2000: _____
- e. % of Pop. 5 and Older Speaking Language other than English: _____

Based on the information above, do you think this county is primarily (circle one):

Urban

Suburban

Rural

Explain your choice:

2.) County: _____

- a. 2010 Total Population: _____
- b. 2000-2010 % Change in Population: _____
- c. 2006-2010 Foreign Born Population: _____
- d. % Change in Foreign Born from 2000: _____
- e. % of Pop. 5 and Older Speaking Language other than English: _____

Based on the information above, do you think this county is primarily (circle one):

Urban

Suburban

Rural

Explain your choice:

3.) County: _____

- a. 2010 Total Population: _____
- b. 2000-2010 % Change in Population: _____
- c. 2006-2010 Foreign Born Population: _____
- d. % Change in Foreign Born from 2000: _____
- e. % of Pop. 5 and Older Speaking Language other than English: _____

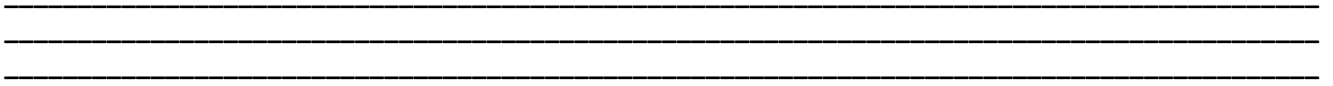
Based on the information above, do you think this county is primarily (circle one):

Urban

Suburban

Rural

Explain your choice:



North Carolina Pronunciations

Manteo
Buies Creek
Ahoskie
Pasquotank
Tuckasegee
Corolla
Bodie Lighthouse
Conetoe
Fuquay-Varina
Robeson County
Bertie
Rowan
Kerr Lake
Chowan
Tyrrell County
Rodanthe
Lake Waccamaw
Hatteras
Rhodhiss
Ocracoke
Nantahala
Albemarle
Duraleigh
Sauratown
Bethabara
Chicamacomico
Cabarrus
Cashie River
Iredell
Uwharrie
Saxapahaw

Talkin' Tar Heel

Create a Personal Dictionary

A dictionary lists the words of a language (typically in alphabetical order), explains their meaning, and provides information about pronunciation, origin, and usage. Considering our class discussion about language and dialect and their vast differences (old vs. young, city vs. country, North vs. South, differences between states, NC regional differences, etc.), it is likely that you use particular words or phrases in ways that other people may not. In this assignment, you will create your own "personal dictionary," where you **list and define words and/or phrases** that people outside your family, people outside of your circle of friends, older people, and people from other geographical areas would need help understanding.

1. Begin by having some fun and brainstorming.

- What are the various words or phrases that you think are unique to your life in some way? For example, does your grandfather call you a "knucklehead?" Do you and your friends use slang words (just chillin') or shorthand (OMG!) when texting? Are there particular things people say in the South ("bless his heart") that they don't typically say other places?
- Rack your brain and start a list. Ask your family and friends for ideas. Be as comprehensive and as creative as you can be!

2. Select what you think are your top 15-20 words/phrases and create a dictionary. Your dictionary should follow a standard format of:

- Spell out the word/phrase
 - If the pronunciation is not obvious, additionally provide a phonetic spelling (write the word out in such a way that it shows how to say it)
- Define it; some words/phrases may have more than one definition or use, so make sure to include all definitions
- For words, note its part(s) of speech
- Provide a sentence that utilizes the word or phrase to show how it is used in context
- For at least 5 of your dictionary entries, provide an illustration
- Entries should be listed in alphabetical order
- You can be creative in the artistic design of your dictionary

3. A final entry might look something like this:

Bless your heart – 1.) a phrase used by people in the South to express that someone isn't very intelligent without using harsh words 2) a term of endearment

"That poor child said that two plus two is eight, bless his heart."

"You mowed my yard for me? Well, bless your heart!"