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### محتوى المحاضرة

## Regional Variation and Language (2)

### Isoglosses

**Isoglosses** are geographic boundaries that separate areas where different linguistic features (such as vocabulary, pronunciation, or grammar) are used. Essentially, an **isogloss** marks the boundary between regions that use different forms of language for the same concept or linguistic element.

The term "isogloss" comes from Greek, where "iso-" means "equal" and "gloss" refers to "tongue" or "language," so it literally means "equal language boundary."

#### Key Points About Isoglosses:

1. **Isoglosses represent linguistic variation:** They show where speakers in different geographic regions use different words, pronunciations, or grammatical forms. For example, a particular word might be used in one area, while a different word is used in a neighboring area.
2. **Can apply to multiple linguistic features:** Isoglosses can separate areas based on:
  - Pronunciation** (accent differences),
  - Vocabulary** (different words for the same thing),
  - Grammar** (variations in verb forms or sentence structure),
  - Word meanings** (how the same word may mean different things in different places).
3. **Isoglosses are not always perfectly clear:** The boundaries marked by isoglosses can be fuzzy, with gradual transitions between linguistic features. This is why dialects often form a **continuum** rather than being sharply divided.
4. **Can be mapped:** Isoglosses are often represented on linguistic maps to show the distribution of specific linguistic features in different regions. These maps can help linguists visualize how language varies geographically.

### **Examples of Isoglosses:**

#### 1. **Pronunciation differences:**

In the U.S., the word "car" is pronounced with a broad "a" in some areas (like parts of the Northeast), while in others (like the South), it might be pronounced with a more nasal or flat "a" sound.

An isogloss could mark the boundary between areas where these two pronunciations occur.

#### 2. **Lexical differences:**

The word for a carbonated beverage varies widely across regions. In the U.S., people in the Midwest might say "pop," while those in the South may say "Coke," and people on the East Coast may use "soda."

An isogloss would mark the boundary between regions that use these different terms.

#### 3. **Grammar differences:**

In some British dialects, people use the present perfect tense more frequently than Americans, where they might opt for the simple past.

An isogloss might mark the boundary between areas that favor the present perfect and those that don't.

### **Isoglosses and Dialect Boundaries**

Isoglosses help linguists define and understand dialect boundaries. They are useful for identifying where different dialects or varieties of a language meet or overlap. However, it's important to note that isoglosses don't always coincide perfectly with political or

administrative boundaries like state lines—they are often more reflective of natural linguistic communities.

For example, in the UK, there might be an isogloss separating areas where people say "football" from areas where they say "soccer," but this isogloss would not align with a state or county boundary. Instead, it reflects historical, social, and cultural factors influencing how language is used in different regions.

In short, **isoglosses** are linguistic "borders" that mark the geographic distribution of different language features, helping linguists map and analyze how language varies across regions. While they offer a useful tool for studying dialects, isoglosses also highlight how fluid and complex language variation can be, with many overlaps and transitions between dialects.

### **Examples of isoglosses**

**Examples of isoglosses** that illustrate how linguistic features differ across regions. These can be found in various aspects of language, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.

### **Pronunciation Differences (Accent)**

#### **The "r" sound in American English:**

In some parts of the U.S., like New England, speakers pronounce the "r" sound strongly (rhotic accents), as in the word "car."

In other areas, like parts of the Northeast (e.g., Boston), speakers might drop the "r" sound (non-rhotic accents), saying "cah" instead of "car."

**Isogloss:** There is an isogloss that divides rhotic and non-rhotic areas in the U.S., often referred to as the "r-dropping" boundary.

#### **Vowel shifts in the Midwest (Northern Cities Vowel Shift):**

In parts of the American Midwest, speakers might have a distinctive pronunciation for vowels. For example, the "a" in "cat" may sound like "ae" or "æ," and the "o" in "hot" may be pronounced like "ah."

**Isogloss:** This is a vowel shift isogloss that marks the boundary where this pronunciation shift happens, particularly around the Great Lakes area.

## Vocabulary Differences (Lexical Variation)

### Different words for a carbonated beverage in the U.S.:

In the Midwest, people say "pop" for a soft drink.

In the South, people say "Coke," regardless of the brand (e.g., "I'll have a Coke" could mean any soda).

On the East Coast, people generally say "soda."

**Isogloss:** There's an isogloss that separates areas where "pop," "Coke," and "soda" are used, and these areas tend to align with regional dialects and cultural preferences.

### Regional variation in names for a sandwich:

In the Northeastern U.S., particularly New York, the word "hero" is used to refer to a sandwich made with a long roll and filled with various ingredients like meat, cheese, and vegetables.

In Philadelphia, a similar sandwich might be called a "hoagie."

In New England, it's often called a "sub," short for "submarine sandwich."

**Isogloss:** There's an isogloss that separates the regions where these words are used. A person in New York might look confused if you ask for a "hoagie"!

## Grammar and Syntax Differences

### Use of "y'all" vs. "you guys":

In the Southern United States, "y'all" is used as the plural form of "you"

In the North, people are more likely to say "you guys" to refer to a group of people.

**Isogloss:** There's an isogloss between the South, where "y'all" is common, and the rest of the U.S., where "you guys" or other forms are used.

### Double negatives:

In some dialects of English, especially in African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and some regional dialects in the U.S., double negatives are used for emphasis. For example, "I don't know nothing about that" (meaning "I don't know anything about that").

In Standard English, double negatives are considered ungrammatical, but in these dialects, they are part of the grammar.

**Isogloss:** There's an isogloss that marks the boundary between areas where double negatives are commonly used as part of the local dialect and areas where they are avoided.

## Word Meaning Differences

### "Chips" vs. "Fries":

In the U.S., "**chips**" refers to thin slices of potato that are fried and sold as a snack (like Lay's potato chips).

In the UK, "**chips**" refers to what Americans call