A COMPARISON OF M. BLOOMFIELD'S "WESTERN (SASKATCHEWAN)" DIALECT
AND
A DIALECT FROM THE REGINA AREA

P. Gullon

Bloomfield, in Southerland: (1973:31-32) presents a phonetic transcription for several dozen words in the "Western (Saskatchewan)" dialect of English. An analysis of this regional dialect shows a number of rather faulty generalizations in Bloomfield's treatment when compared with the dialects of five residents of the Regina area. Bloomfield's transcription may be accurate for some parts of Saskatchewan, but it should not be extended to the rest of the province. Several of the differences noted cannot be stated categorically as I did not use enough examples to support any generalizations. I will simply mention them as possible areas where more research might prove interesting. The first of these involves the optionality of [t] voicing in "beauty". Bloomfield's transcription indicates that [t] is unvoiced, [bjuti]. In my sample, however, the [t] is voiced by three of the five sources; [bjudi]. A second variation noted is that Bloomfield's transcription indicates that the /wh/ in 'what' is unvoiced; [hwɔt]. All of my sources voiced the [w]; [wʌt], but the /wh/ occurred in only one word, so I cannot come to any conclusion about it. In the article by Gregg (Southerland: 1973), on Vancouver dialects, there is a brief discussion (p. 42) of the apparent loss of the unvoiced [w] in that area. The article also points out the loss of [j] after alveolar consonants. This process may also be occurring in the Regina area, as only one of my sources has the [j] in "tune". Bloomfield's transcription also suggests that "hoof", [hʊf] is a geographic distinction. I find that both forms, [hʊf] and [huf] occur in the Regina area. In fact, [huf] seems to be predominant. A fifth variation is the [e] insertion in [pʊər] by two of my sources. I have noticed this insertion in other dialects as well.

As well as these minor variations between the dialects Bloomfield transcribed, and those of my sources, there are two somewhat more significant differences to be noted. The first of these differences involves the tendency of unstressed vowels to be reduced to [ə]. The second difference, an inaccurate distinction between certain back vowels, would appear to be a more serious miscalculation.

In the first case, Bloomfield's transcription indicates that, aside from "fatality" which can be either [fətælɪti] or [fetælɪti], all unstressed vowels become [ə]. According to my sources, this reduction of the vowel seems to be optional, except in "fatality" where the first vowel is a [ə] in all cases. For example, either [kæmfór] or [kæmfər], [čɔ̆klɪ̆t] or [čɔ̆klət], [sɪ̆rʌ̆p] or [sərʌ̆p] seem to be acceptable within this group. Similarly, Bloomfield shows a reduction to the vocalic consonant [ṇ] in "cushion", "coffin" and "latin", while I note an option in "coffin" of [kɒfṇ] or [kɒfɪn]. Thus, it would appear that, in this Regina area dialect, there is an option in that unstressed vowels may be reduced to a [ə] or to a vocalic consonant, but it is not obligatory.

The final difference noted between Bloomfield's "Western (Saskatchewan)" dialect, and that of my sources, is what appears to be an inaccurate distinction in Bloomfield's version among the back vowels [ɑ], [ɔ] and [ɒ]. In Bloomfield's transcription, they seem to contrast in all environments. According to my sources there appears to be considerable restriction as to their use. The vowels [ɑ] and [ɔ] contrast with each other, but only occur before [r], [w] and [y]. On the other hand, [ɒ] never occurs before [r, w, y], but does occur elsewhere. To clarify the

situation, I now present a phonetic description of the three vowels [a, ɔ,ɒ]
The [a] is the lowest, the least rounded, and is tense. The [ɔ] is the
most rounded of the three, is lax, and falls between the others in height. The [ɒ]
is the most open (it is a mid vowel) and is only slightly rounded.

	unround	slightly round	quite round
mid		ɒ	
mid to low			ɔ(-tense)
low	ɑ(+ tense)		

ɑ - only before [r].   [mɑrč]

ɔ - only before [r]   [hɔrɚ]   but option [horɚ]

                                  [gɔrd]   [gurd]

ɒ - everywhere, except before [r, w, y]. [bɒs], [čɒklɪt], [kɒfɪn], [dɒl],

                                  [mɒk], [mɒθ], [swɒθ], [wɒft], [wɒsp].

These inaccuracies in Bloomfield's transcription are significant as they
make faulty predictions; it predicts that all unstressed vowels will become [ə]
or a vocalic consonant; and it suggests that no predictions can be made as to
which of the vowels [a, ɔ,ɒ] will occur. According to my sources, these predictions
are almost exactly reversed. Rather, it appears that vowel reduction is quite
optional and the appearance of the three back vowels, [a, ɔ,ɒ] can be partially
predicted by an examination of the environment.

Appendix I

Vowel differences: Regina versus Bloomfield

	Regina Area	Bloomfield's "Western (Saskatchewan)	Variations
ɒ	boss	ɒ	ɒ, ɑ, ɔ·
	chocolate	ɑ	
	coffin	ɑ	
	doll	ɔ	
	mock	ɑ	
	moth	ɑ	
	swath	ɑ	
	waft	ɑ	
	wasp	ɑ	
ɔ	horror	ɔ	ɔ, ʊ
	gourd	ʊ	

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	Regina Area	Bloomfield's "Western (Saskatchewan)"	Variations
ɑ	march	ɑ	ɑ
o	joke	o	o, ɔ ʌ ɚ
	camphor	ɚ	
	horror	ɔ	
	romance	ʌ	
ʌ	hiccup	ə	ʌ ɔ
	sirup	ə	
	what	ɔ	

Column 1: shows some of the vowels used in the Regina area.
Column 2: gives the words each vowel appears in.
Column 3: gives the vowels Bloomfield finds in those words.
Column 4: gives the variety of vowels Bloomfield uses for each vowel used in the Regina area.

	Bloomfield's transcription	Regina Area	Variations
ɒ	boss	ɒ	ɒ
ɔ	doll	ɒ	ɔ ʌ ɔ
	what	ʌ	
	horror	ɔ	
ɑ	march	ɑ	ɑ ɒ
	chocolate	ɒ	
	coffin	ɒ	
	mock	ɒ	
	moth	ɒ	
	swath	ɒ	
	waft	ɒ	
	wasp	ɒ	
o	joke	o	o
ʌ	romance	o	ʌ o

Column 1: shows some of the vowels used in Bloomfield's transcription
Column 2: gives the words each vowel appears in.
Column 3: gives the vowels I find in the Regina area in those words.
Column 4: gives the variety of vowels I find used in the Regina area for each vowel used in Bloomfield's "Western (Saskatchewan):.

Appendix II: Phonetic transcription from five speakers of the Regina dialect, using Bloomfield's word list.

	Speaker 1	Speaker 2	Speaker 3	Speaker 4	Speaker 5	
aseptic	---	əsɛptɪk	eisɛptɪk	əsɛptɪk	əsɛptɪk	unfamiliar
aunt	---	ænt	ænt	ænt	ænt	same
beauty	bjuti	bjuti	bjudi	bjudi	bjudi	optional t voic,
boss	bɒs	bɒs	bɒs	bɒs	bɒs	same
brewed	brud	brud	brud	brud	brud	same
camphor	kæmfor	kæmfər	kæmfor	kæmfər	kæmfər	[ə] optional
caterpillar	kætəpɪlɚ	kætəpɪlɚ	kætəpɪlɚ	kætəpɪlɚ	kætəpɪlɚ	---
chocolate	čɒklət	čɒklɪt	čɒklɪt	čɒklɪt	čɒklɪt	[ə] optional
choose	čuz	čuz	čuz	čuz	čuz	same
coffin	kɒfn̩	kɒfn̩	kɒfn̩	kɒfɪn	kɒfɪn	V.reduction option
cushion	kušn̩	kušn̩	kušn̩	kušn̩	kušn̩	same
doll	dɒl	dɒl	dɒl	dɒl	dɒl	V. Difference
fatality	fətæliti	fətælɪti	fətælɪti	fətælɪti	fətæliti	[ə] not optional
food	fud	fud	fud	fud	fud	same
feud	fjud	fjud	fjud	fjud	fjud	same
gooseberry	gusbɛri	gusbɛri	gusbɛri	gusbɛri	gusbɛri	same
gourd	gɔrd	gurd/gɔrd	gɔrd	gɔrd	gɔrd	difference in V.
grease	gris	gris	gris	gris	gris	same
greasy	grisi	grisi	grisi	grisi	grisi	same
hew	hju	hju	hju	hju	hju	same
hiccup	hɪkʌp	hɪkʌp	hɪkʌp	hɪkʌp	hɪkʌp	V. difference
hoof	huf	huf	huf	huf	huf	not geographic
horror	hɔr̩	hɔrɚ	hɔr̩	hɔrɚ	hɔrɚ	V.reduction option
house	hʌws	hʌws	hʌws	hʌws	hʌws	same
Latin	lætn̩	lætn̩	lætn̩	lætn̩	lætn̩	same
march	mɑrč	mɑrč	mɑrč	mɑrč	mɑrč	same
miracle	mɪrəkl	mɪrkl	mɪrɪkl	mɪrəkl	mɪrəkl	[r] variations
mock	mɒk	mɒk	mɒk	mɒk	mɒk	V. difference
moth	mɒθ	mɒθ	mɒθ	mɒθ	mɒθ	V.difference
nausea	nɒziə	nɒzja	naziə	nɒsiə	nɒsiə	---
nominative	---	nɒmənɪtɪv	nɒmɪnətɪv	nɒmnɪtɪv	nɒmɪnɪtɪv	unfamiliar
of	ɒv	əv	əv	əv	əv	---
persist	pr̩sist	pr̩sist	pr̩sist	pr̩sist	pr̩sist	same

	Speaker 1	Speaker 2	Speaker 3	Speaker 4	Speaker 5	
poor	pʊr 1 2	pʊər 1 2	pʊər 1 2	pʊr 1 2	pʊr 1 2	internal variatio
romnace	romæns 1	romæns 1	romæns 1	romæns 1 2	romæns 1	V. difference
sirup	sərʌp	sʌrʌp	sərʌp	sɪrʌp	sərʌp	[ə] optional V. difference
swath	swɒð	swɒθ	swɒθ	swɒθ/swɒð	swɒθ	V. difference
tune	tun	tun	tun	tun	tjun	same internal variation
waft	wɒft	wɒft	wɒft	wɒft	wɒft	V. difference
wasp	wɒsp	wɒsp	wɒsp	wɒsp	wɒsp	V. Difference
what	wʌt	wʌt	wʌt	wʌt	wʌt	V. difference [w] voiced
wife	wʌyf	wʌyf	wʌyf	wʌyf	wʌyf	same
wives	wɑyvz	wɑyvz	wɑyvz	wɑyvz	wɑyvz	same
yoke	jok	jok	jok	jok	jok	same

Phonetic Key

ɪ	as in	pit, big, give, think
i	"	peat, speed, sorry
ɛ	"	pet, ten, Barry
æ	"	pat, happy, ant
ɑ	"	car, part
ɒ	"	pot, block, lost, bomb
ɔ	"	port, horrible, horse.
ʊ	"	put, good, pull, poor
u	"	pool, food, glue
ʌ	"	putt, lunch, funny
ə	"	above, villa, beacon
ei	"	bay, late, paint
o	"	boat, lope, below
ay	"	ride, dive, lie
ʌy	"	write, light
ʌw	"	out, house
ṛ	"	fir, fur, sir
n	"	satin, flatten
j	"	yellow, yes, due (in some dialects)
ɚ	"	not quite a [ə] and not quite an [r].