

Instructor Name: Kelsie Pattillo

Class Number and Name: Linguistics 210: Power of Words

Digital Humanities tools/methods: Google Docs, GPS Vizualizer, survey

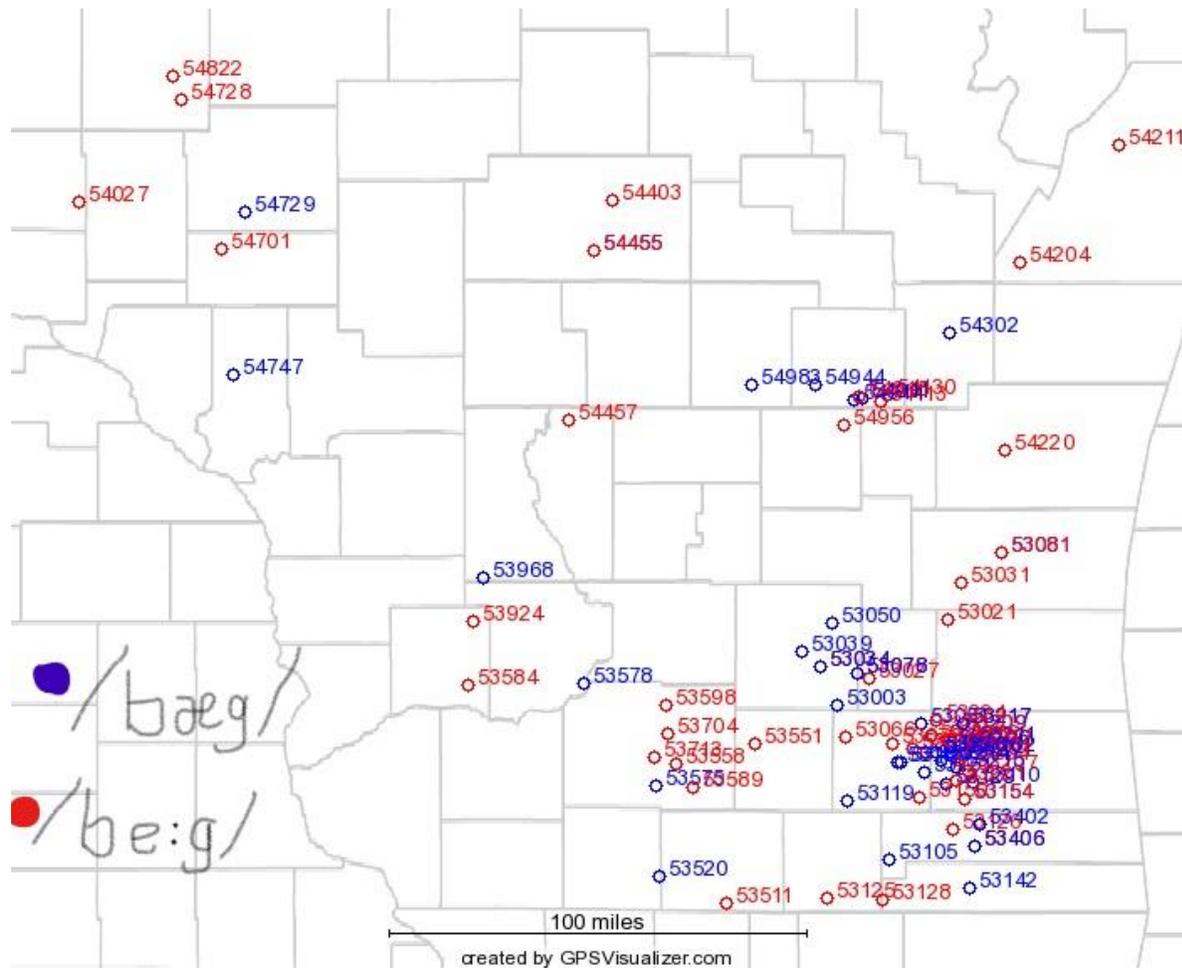
Description of assignment: Students learn field methods for collecting, interpreting, and presenting linguistic data by gathering and charting data to measure vowel shifts in North American English speakers. Each student in the course surveyed ten native English speakers to elicit the words bag and bagel then made notes to chart the speakers' vowels, ages, and hometown zip code. The assignment generated data from more than 900 English speakers with a majority of respondents coming from Wisconsin.

After collecting data as individuals, students entered their data into a spreadsheet using Google Docs during their discussion sections. I then sorted their data and showed students how to plot their results on maps using the open source program, GPS Vizualizer. With these maps, students then looked for correspondences between geography, age, and vowel shifts. With this data, students could test whether age or Wisconsin's geography contribute to a current vowel shift occurring in North American English. Milwaukee and Wisconsin are at the edge of this vowel shift, known as prevelar raising, and this assignment gave students hands on experience collecting and interpreting linguistic data using digital tools.

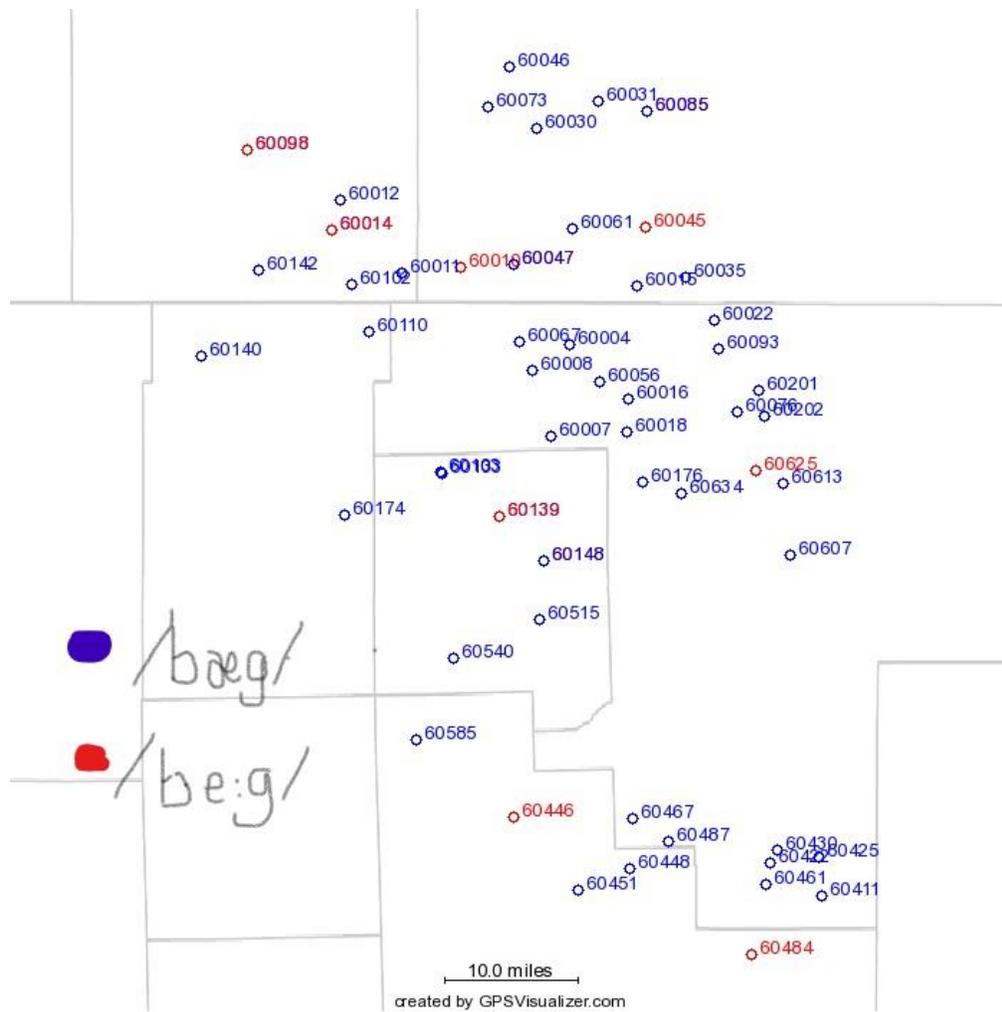
Outcomes: With the completion of this assignment, student will be able to:

- Independently collect linguistic data with human subjects
- Organize metadata
- Understand the complexities involved in describing dialectical variation
- Describe current changes in American English
- Explain how geography influences vowel production in American English
- Explain how age influences vowel production in American English
- Conduct linguistic interviews
- Work collaboratively with a partner and their discussion section classmates
- Plot data on a map using GPS software, such as GPS Visualizer

Sample assignments:



Pronunciation of 'bag' in Wisconsin



Pronunciation of 'bag' in and around Chicago