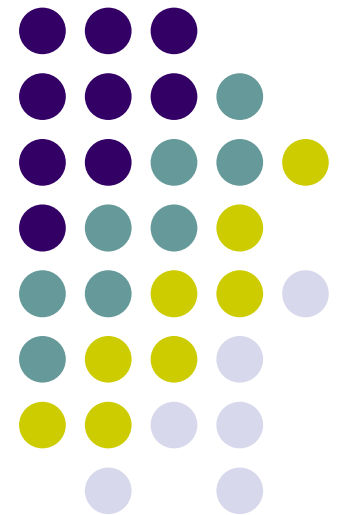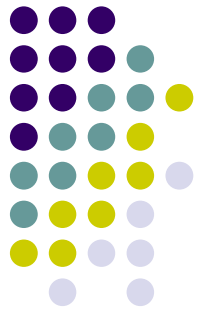# Accents in American Movies

Lucie Doležalová

Lenka Koudelková

General American

- This refers to the spectrum of 'standard' English spoken by newscasters, TV actors, and a large percentage of middle-class Americans.
- *Prominent Features:*
  - The *short-a* (as in *cat*) is raised and diphthongized before nasal consonants.
  - *Rhotic*
  - Words like *lot* and *rod* are pronounced with an *unrounded vowel*, as **lɑt** and **ɹɑd.**
  - The diphthong in words like *boat* and *rode* is pronounced relatively back: i.e. IPA **boʊt** and **roʊd**
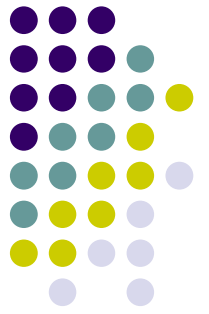
Eastern New England English

- This describes the classic "Boston Accent." It also refers to related accents in Eastern Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine, Eastern New Hampshire and Eastern Connecticut. The most important feature of this is *non-rhoticity:* unlike other American accents, New Englanders drop the "r" at the end of syllables. Hence the famous phrase "pahk yuh cahr in hahvuhd yahd" (Park your car in Harvard Yard).

- *Prominent Features:*

  - *Non-rhoticity*

  - Unlike most other American accents, the vowel in *lot* and *rod* is rounded as in most British dialects, pronounced **lɒt** and **ɹɒd.**
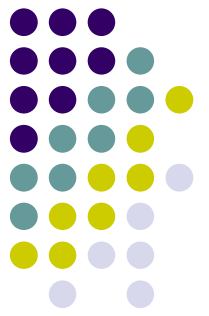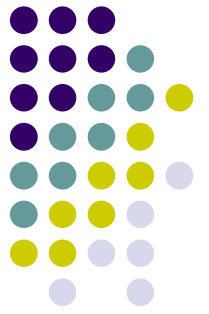
Eastern New England English

- Movies:
  - Good Will Hunting
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qM-gZintWDc
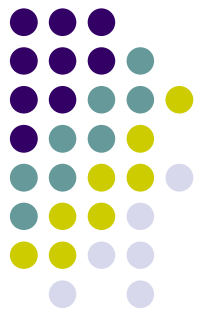 - The Town
  - Gone Baby Gone
  - Mystic River

New York City English

- *Prominent Features:*
  - *Non-rhoticity*
  - The *long-a* in words like *father* and *cart* is often pronounced back and sometimes rounded: i.e. IPA **fɒ:ðə** and **kɒ:t** ("fawthuh" and "kawt").
  - The vowel in words like *thought*, *north* and *dog* are pronounced is high and diphthongized, pronounced IPA **θʊət**, **nʊəθ**, and **dʊəg** ("thaw-uht," "naw-uht" and "daw-uhg").

New York City English

- Movies:
  - Goodfellas
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQhBfRDd6GM
  - Manhattan
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0o6QKpNK9Cc
  - Marty
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIah4s6ePQo
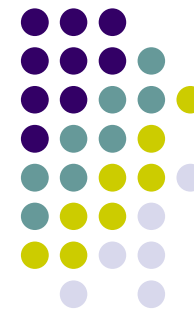 - Annie Hall
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrxlfvI17oY

Mid-Atlantic English

- Describes the old-fashioned British-sounding accents you hear in movies from the 1930s.
- The American accents spoken along the urban corridor from the Philadelphia area to Baltimore. It sounds slightly similar to New York City, but with a few major differences.
- *Prominent Features:*
  - *Rhotic*: unlike New York City, the *r* is pronounced at the end of *car*, *mother*, *fur*, etc.
  - The diphthong in words like *right* and *kite* is raised before *voiceless consonants* so that *kite* is pronounced something like IPA **kəit** (that is, "kuh-eet").
  - The diphthong in words like *goat* and *road* is pronounced fronter in the mouth than in General American accents: hence *coat* becomes IPA **kəʊt**.
  - The "oo" sounds in words like *goose* and *food* is pronounced more forward in the mouth than in General American: **gʉs** and **fʉd**.
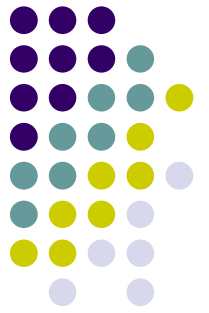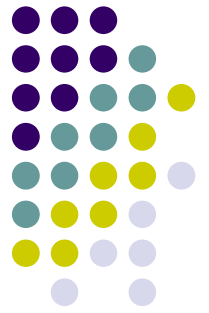
Mid-Atlantic English

- Movies:

  - Citizen Kane (Orson Welles + Joseph Cotten)

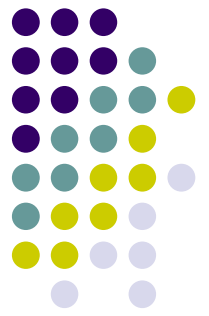 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YXIr1P9Fm5A

Coastal Lowland/Southern English

- This is the "classic southern" accent that you typically see in films about Civil War or Plantation life. In contemporary times, the accent is arguably dying out.
- *Prominent Features:*
  - *Non-rhotic,* but often no *linking r* between a final *r* and a vowel sound. So, for example, "better idea" would be pronounced "bettuh idea"
  - *Vowel breaking* - vowels can turn into diphthongs (or even triphthongs). So *cat* can become **kæjət** for example.
  - The diphthong in words like *ride* and *lime* tends to be pronounced as a monopthong: **ɹa:d** and **la:m**.
  - All vowels tend to be pronounced longer than in northern American accents.

Coastal Lowland/Southern English

- Forrest Gump
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPIEn0M8su0

- Gone with the Wind
  http://youtu.be/uYk-ggwMFMs

- The Help
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_ajv_6pUnI
  http://youtu.be/PeEEqUn0hfQ

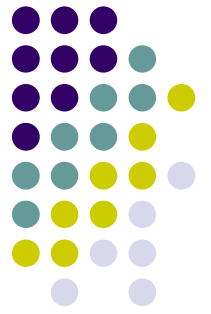- Driving Miss Daisy
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BR0oZ2pnhyg

Western American English/California
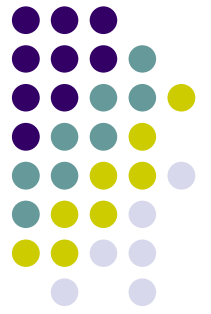
- *Prominent features:*
  - Cot-cauth merger
  - Not much distinguishable from Canadian English
- Clueless:

  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFR9TNsByLk

African American Vernacular English

- *Prominent features:*
  - Non-rhotic
  - Glottalization
  - Double negatives; ain't
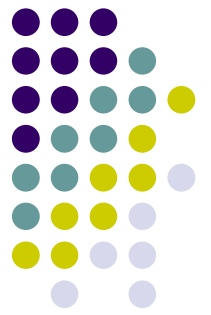 - 3rd person singular
- The Help:

  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZimx1wHYcs

  http://youtu.be/jSORaZSfoqg
- Clueless:

  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IW2JBJSaXUI

Foreign English Varieties in American Film

- **Italian – The Godfather**

    http://youtu.be/vMdVGS0O27o

- **Polish – Sophie's Choice**

    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmrEOTm0rOc

- **Russian – Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull**

    http://youtu.be/pSBqwN-4wlc?t=5m42s

Sources

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- http://youtube.com
- http://homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~cpercy/courses/eng6365-botticella.htm
- http://www.proz.com/translation-articles/articles/2461/1/Understanding-Polish-English-Pronunciation%3A-Tips-for-Interpreters-and-EFL-Teachers