

*The Sounds of Southern Alberta English*

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The study of Canadian English has focused almost entirely on urban varieties of Eastern Canada (Chambers, Boberg, Roeder, Tagliamonte, Walker) and British Columbia (Gregg, D'Arcy). Recently, Tagliamonte has been compiling a corpus of rural Ontario English, but there is little work available on Prairies English (though see Nylvek 1993, Hagiwara 2006). This is not surprising, given that sociolinguists tend to focus on readily available data, i.e. where they live, which tends to be in urban centres. Following this build-a-corpus-where-you-live tradition, I will discuss the building of the Southern Alberta Corpus of English (SACE), as well as some findings coming out of the work. Focusing on phonological and phonetic data coming out of the SACE, I investigate questions of how rurality, socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity and religion play an important role in subconscious speech patterns in the region. Ethnicity is shown to be a variable in prosodic rhythm, between ethnically Blackfoot versus ethnically European speakers. Mormon speakers, and especially women, are shown to not be following the Southern Albertan pattern of raising /æ/ before g, as well as shown not to be participating in Canadian Raising in the same way as other Southern Albertans. Lastly, differing patterns between rural and urban speakers in the phonetic realization of '-ing' will be discussed. This work aims to begin the placement of Southern Alberta English speakers within the matrix of Canadian (and North American) English speakers.