

Language Varieties' Influence on Phonological Awareness

We are committed to teaching all students to read. To better understand students' instructional needs, we recommend taking their language backgrounds into consideration. This includes students who may speak other languages (e.g., English language learners and dual language learners) as well as those who may speak other language varieties. Language variety is another term for dialect; each language variety follows complex, rule-governed phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and lexical systems. There are many different variations of the English language, which may be spoken by students in the classroom. The one used in mainstream print media, business, and education is General American English (GAE). Our goal is for students to decode and encode their oral system into a written system; by helping students extend their oral language knowledge to include GAE, they will be better prepared to learn the written system of GAE.

Phonological awareness in GAE can be influenced by the student's language variety.

Rhyming

Recognizing and producing rhyming words may be influenced by a child's language variety due to different rules in the phonology of non-GAE language variations. This can happen in the following cases:

	Final consonant clusters in other language varieties	Vowel and diphthong sound variations in other language varieties
Explanation	<p>In General American English (GAE), each sound in ending consonant clusters is pronounced, e.g., when we say the word <i>fast</i>, we distinctly hear and say /s/ and /t/ at the end of the word.</p> <p>In some other language varieties, only the first consonant (C1) of a two consonant (C1C2) cluster is pronounced, e.g., a person may say <i>fas</i> for the word <i>fast</i>. In such cases, children may have difficulty identifying whether or not <i>fast</i> and <i>glass</i> rhyme or producing appropriate rhyming words with certain CVCC (consonant-vowel-consonant-consonant) words.</p>	<p>In GAE, each of the five vowels has its own specific short and long sounds, and diphthongs have their unique sound, which comprise the 44 sounds of the English system.</p> <p>In some other language varieties, two different vowels may produce the same short vowel sound. This is typical of the short /i/ and short /e/ in certain words. It can also occur with r-controlled vowels, and diphthongs. In such cases, children may have difficulty identifying whether or not <i>pen</i> and <i>fin</i> rhyme, or they may produce words that rhyme in their language variety but not in GAE.</p>

Language Varieties' Influence on Phonological Awareness (continued)

	Final consonant clusters in other language varieties	Vowel and diphthong sound variations in other language varieties
Example – how does this affect rhyming recognition and production?	<p>Students may perceive that <i>test</i> and <i>desk</i> rhyme because <i>tes'</i> and <i>des'</i> rhyme.</p> <p>When asked to produce a word that rhymes with <i>mask</i>, students may say <i>fass'</i> (for <i>fast</i>), as they may say <i>mass'</i> for <i>mask</i> and <i>fass'</i> for <i>fast</i> in their language variety.</p>	<p>Students may perceive that <i>pen</i> and <i>win</i> rhyme because they pronounce the short /i/ and short /e/ the same way (e.g., <i>pen</i> and <i>pin</i> sound the same in their language variety).</p> <p>When asked to produce a word that rhymes with <i>fire</i>, students may say <i>tar</i>, as they may say <i>far</i> for <i>fire</i> or <i>war</i> for <i>wire</i> in their language variety.</p>
Applicable language varieties	<p>African American English (AAE)</p> <p>Mexican American English (MAE)</p> <p>Southern English (SoE)</p>	<p>African American English (AAE)</p> <p>Appalachian English (AppE)</p>
Instructional tips	<p>To determine whether or not students can recognize or produce rhyming words, choose words without ending consonant clusters, such as <i>fat</i> or <i>rabbit</i>.</p>	<p>To determine whether or not students can recognize or produce rhyming words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentionally choose words without similarly pronounced sounds, e.g., ask whether short /a/ and short /e/ words such as <i>fan</i> and <i>ten</i> rhyme rather than using short /i/ and short /e/ words such as <i>pin</i> and <i>pen</i>. • Familiarize yourself with your students' language varieties phonetic systems and focus on using words that have distinctly different vowel and diphthong sounds and words that are unaffected by a student's language variety. After you know that a child can rhyme, you can target words impacted by language variety, specifically to help students hear these rhymes.
More on...	Consonant cluster variations	Vowel and diphthong sound variations

Syllable segmentation

Syllable segmentation may be influenced by a child's language variety due to the different syntactic structures of non-GAE language variations. This can happen in the following cases:

	Past tense, plurals, and third person singular present rules in other language varieties	a-prefix rule in other language varieties
<p>Explanation</p>	<p>In General American English (GAE):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past tense is grammatically marked with an <i>-ed</i> ending and pronounced with the sound /d/, /id/, or /t/ at the end of words, e.g., <i>I wanted to take a nap</i>. • Plurals are marked by adding an <i>-s</i> or <i>-es</i> at the end of words and by reading and pronouncing words with the added suffix, e.g., <i>two races</i>. • Third person singular may be marked and pronounced with an <i>-s</i> or <i>-es</i> at the end of verbs, e.g., <i>she watches</i>. <p>In some other language varieties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past tense may be marked by context or inflection (e.g., by using words like <i>yesterday</i> or <i>last week</i>). • Plurals may be marked by a numeral or quantifier preceding the noun. • Third person singular present form may retain the same form in person and number. <p>Each of these instances can add a syllable to a word in GAE. For example, a teacher may expect two syllables for the past tense of <i>want</i> (i.e., <i>wanted</i>), the plural of <i>race</i> (i.e., <i>rac-es</i> for <i>races</i>), and the third person singular of <i>watch</i> (i.e., <i>watch-es</i> for <i>watches</i>). In the case in which the word remains unchanged in other language varieties, syllable segmentation will match how the word is read or spoken, i.e., each word mentioned previously (<i>want</i>, <i>race</i>, and <i>watch</i>) may be pronounced as a one-syllable word.</p>	<p>In some language varieties, some verbs ending in <i>-ing</i> will include the <i>a</i>-prefix, pronounced as a schwa. This occurs most commonly with progressives. For example, a student might say <i>My aunt had a horse and we was a-ridin' it one day</i>.</p> <p>Common contexts also include where the participle form functions as an adverbial complement, such as after movement verbs (<i>come</i>, <i>go</i>, <i>take off</i>, etc.), e.g., <i>All of a sudden a bear come a-runnin'</i>, and with verbs for continuing or starting (<i>keep</i>, <i>start</i>, <i>get to</i>, etc.), e.g., <i>He just kep' a-beggin'</i>.</p>

Language Varieties' Influence on Phonological Awareness (continued)

	Past tense, plurals, and third person singular present rules in other language varieties	a-prefix rule in other language varieties
Example – how does this affect syllable segmentation?	<p>Students may say that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wanted</i> has one syllable because they say and read <i>I want to take a nap</i> for <i>I wanted to take a nap</i> in the past tense in their language variety. • <i>Races</i> has one syllable because they say and read <i>They ran two race</i> for <i>They ran two races</i> in the plural form in their language variety. • <i>Watches</i> has one syllable because they say and read <i>She watch the birds</i> for <i>She watches the birds</i> in the third person singular present form in their language variety. 	<p>Students may count the a-prefix, pronounced as a schwa, as an additional syllable and say that <i>running</i> in the context cited previously (pronounced <i>a-runnin'</i>) has three syllables.</p>
Applicable language variety	African American English (AAE)	Appalachian English (AppE)
Instructional tips	<p>To determine whether or not students can segment syllables, provide words that are less likely to be influenced by language varieties, e.g., ask the students to count and identify syllables in <i>puppy</i> or <i>yesterday</i>. That is, avoid verb forms showing past tense (-ed) or third person singular (-s), and avoid nouns showing plurality (-es).</p>	<p>To determine whether or not students can segment syllables, provide words that are less likely to be influenced by language varieties, e.g., ask the students to count and identify syllables in <i>puppy</i> or <i>yesterday</i>. That is, avoid verb forms ending in <i>-ing</i>, especially in the contexts cited in the previous explanation section.</p>
More on...	<p>Past tense rules</p> <p>Plural rules</p> <p>Third person singular present rules</p>	<p>a-prefix rule</p>

Phoneme segmentation

Phoneme segmentation may be influenced by a child's language variety due to different rules in the phonology and syntactic structures of non-GAE language variations.

	Final consonant clusters in other language varieties	Vowel and diphthong sound variations in other language varieties	Consonant and consonant digraph sound variations in other language varieties	Past tense, plurals, and third person singular present rules in other language varieties
Explanation	<p>In General American English (GAE), each sound in ending consonant clusters is pronounced, e.g., when we say the word <i>fast</i>, we distinctly hear and say /s/ and /t/ at the end of the word.</p> <p>In some other language varieties, only the first consonant (C1) of a two consonant (C1C2) cluster is pronounced, e.g., a person may say <i>fas</i> for the word <i>fast</i>. In such cases, children may say /f/ /a/ /s/ when asked to segment <i>fast</i> and have difficulty segmenting each individual phoneme in certain CVCC (consonant-vowel-consonant-consonant) words.</p>	<p>In GAE, each of the five vowels has its own specific short and long sounds, and diphthongs have their unique sounds, which comprise the 44 sounds of the English system.</p> <p>In some other language varieties, two different vowels may produce the same short vowel sound. This is typical of the short /i/ and short /e/ in certain words. It can also occur with r-controlled vowels and other diphthongs. In such cases, children may use the phoneme pronunciation used in their speech when they segment words.</p>	<p>In GAE, there are 44 sounds, and most consonants (aside from c and g, which have a soft and hard sound) and consonant digraphs (e.g., /th/, /sh/, /ch/, etc.) have only one sound.</p> <p>In some other language varieties, a consonant or consonant digraph may be pronounced differently, based on its position in the word. For example, <i>th</i> may be pronounced as /f/ at the end of a word (e.g., a person may say <i>maf</i> for the word <i>math</i>) or as /d/ at the beginning of a word (e.g., a person may say <i>dis</i> for the word <i>this</i>). In such cases, children may use the phoneme pronunciation similar to their speech when they segment words.</p>	<p>In GAE:</p> <p>Past tense is grammatically marked with an <i>-ed</i> ending and pronounced with the sound /d/, /id/, or /t/ at the end of words, e.g., <i>Yesterday, I waited for you.</i></p> <p>Plurals are marked by adding an <i>-s</i> or <i>-es</i> at the end of words and by reading and pronouncing words with the added suffix, e.g., <i>two dogs.</i></p> <p>Third person singular may be marked and pronounced with an <i>-s</i> or <i>-es</i> at the end of verbs, e.g., <i>he sleeps.</i></p> <p>In some other language varieties:</p> <p>Past tense may be marked by context or inflection (e.g., by using words like <i>yesterday</i> or <i>last week</i>).</p> <p>Plurals may be marked by a numeral or quantifier preceding the noun.</p> <p>Third person singular present form may retain the same form in person and number.</p> <p>Each of these instances can add phonemes to a word in GAE. For example, a teacher may expect an additional one to two phonemes for the past tense of <i>wait</i> (i.e., /w/ /ay/ /t/ /i/ /d/ for <i>waited</i>), the plural of <i>dog</i> (i.e., /d/ /o/ /g/ /z/ for <i>dogs</i>), and the third person singular of <i>sleep</i> (i.e., /s/ /l/ /E/ /p/ /s/ for <i>sleeps</i>). In the case in which the word remains unchanged in other language varieties, phoneme segmentation will match how the word is read or spoken.</p>

Language Varieties' Influence on Phonological Awareness (continued)

	Final consonant clusters in other language varieties	Vowel and diphthong sound variations in other language varieties	Consonant and consonant digraph sound variations in other language varieties	Past tense, plurals, and third person singular present rules in other language varieties
Example – how does this affect phoneme segmentation?	<p>Students may say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • /t/ /e/ /s/ when asked to segment <i>test</i>, • /k/ /O/ /I/ when asked to segment <i>cold</i>, or • /d/ /e/ /s/ when asked to segment <i>desk</i>, <p>if they only pronounce C1 of a C1C2 consonant cluster.</p>	<p>Students may say /p/ /i/ /n/ when asked to segment <i>pen</i> because they pronounce the short /i/ and short /e/ the same way (e.g., <i>pen</i> and <i>pin</i> sound the same in their language variety).</p> <p>Students may say /f/ /ar/ when asked to segment <i>fire</i> because they pronounce r-controlled vowels differently in their language variety.</p>	<p>Students may say <i>maf</i> for <i>math</i> in their language variety and say /m/ /a/ f/ when asked to segment <i>math</i>, or say <i>dis</i> for <i>this</i> in their language variety and say /d/ /i/ /s/ when asked to segment <i>this</i>.</p>	<p>Students may say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • /w/ /A/ /t/ when segmenting <i>waited</i> because they say and read <i>Yesterday, I wait for you</i> in the past tense in their language variety. • /d/ /o/ /g/ when segmenting <i>dogs</i> because they say and read <i>I have two dog</i> in the plural form in their language variety. • /s/ /I/ /E/ /p/ when segmenting <i>sleep</i> because they say and read <i>She sleep</i> in the third person singular present form in their language variety.
Applicable language varieties	<p>African American English (AAE)</p> <p>Mexican American English (MAE)</p> <p>Southern English (SoE)</p>	<p>African American English (AAE)</p> <p>Appalachian English (AppE)</p>	<p>African American English (AAE)</p> <p>Mexican American English (MAE)</p>	<p>African American English (AAE)</p>

Language Varieties' Influence on Phonological Awareness (continued)

	Final consonant clusters in other language varieties	Vowel and diphthong sound variations in other language varieties	Consonant and consonant digraph sound variations in other language varieties	Past tense, plurals, and third person singular present rules in other language varieties
Instructional tips	To determine whether or not students can segment words with four or more phonemes, intentionally choose words without ending consonant clusters, such as <i>flip</i> (/f/ /l/ /i/ /p/), <i>splash</i> (/s/ /p/ /l/ /a/ /sh/), or <i>rabbit</i> (/r/ /a/ /b/ /i/ /t/).	To determine whether or not students can segment all phonemes in words in GAE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intentionally choose words for which the pronunciation is not affected by language varieties, such as words containing the short e and short i sounds, or certain r-controlled vowels. Familiarize yourself with your students' language varieties phonetic systems and focus on using words that have distinctly different vowel and diphthong sounds. 	To determine whether or not students can segment words with specific consonants or consonant digraphs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intentionally choose words for which the pronunciation is not affected by language varieties, especially those with <i>th</i>. Familiarize yourself with your students' language varieties phonetic systems and focus on using words that have distinctly different consonant and consonant digraph sounds. 	To determine whether or not students can segment syllables, provide words that are less likely to be influenced by language varieties, e.g., ask the students to count and identify syllables in <i>puppy</i> or <i>yesterday</i> . That is, avoid verb forms showing past tense (-ed) or third person singular (-s), and avoid nouns showing plurality (-es).
More on...	Final consonant cluster variations	Vowel and diphthong sound variations	Consonant and consonant digraph sound variations	Past tense rules Plural rules Third person singular present rules