# Dialects

first, a metaphor...

I didn't see anything

I didn't see anything \* I saw anything

### I didn't see anything \* I saw anything

-What did you see?

- \*Anything

### I didn't see anything \* I saw anything

- -What did you see?
- \* Anything
   √ Nothing

I didn't see anything \* I saw anything

-What did you see?
- \* Anything
- √ Nothing

**Dhen** idhe tipota(Greek)notsaw anything'He/she didn't see anything'

\* Idhe **tipota** saw anything '\*He/she saw anything'

# Now, there is another kind of system...Negative Concord

( <i>Negative Polarity</i> ) I did <b>n't</b> see <b>anything</b> I saw <b>anything</b>	(Negative Concord)			
<ul> <li>What did you see?</li> <li>- * Anything</li> <li>- √ Nothing</li> </ul>	Komu who <b>Nikomu</b> 'nobody'	•	rozpoviv? told	(Ukrainian)

\*

#### Now, there is another kind of system...Negative Concord

(*Negative Polarity*) I did**n't** see **anything** \* I saw **anything** 

-What did you see?
- \* Anything
- √ Nothing

(Negative Concord) Ja nikomu ne rozpovidala (Ukrainian) I nobody not told 'I didn't tell anybody' Komu ty rozpoviv? who you told Nikomu 'nobody'

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(Italian)

Non hovisto nientenotI.have seen nothing'I didn't see anything'

Cosa hai visto? what you.have seen

-Niente 'Nothing' Why is it called "negative concord"?

Concord:

quest-afarfall-abell-a(Italian)this-FEM.SGbutterfly-FEM.SGbeautiful-FEM.SG'this beautiful butterfly'

diin-i mutha-n barnga-n this-ACC big-ACC rock-ACC 'this big rock (accusative)' (Lardil)

fjór-ir litl-ir snigl-ar (*Icelandic\**) four-NOM.MASC.PL little-NOM.MASC.PL snails-NOM.MASC.PL 'four little snails (nominative)'

(\*Icelandic data from Norris 2012)

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"*concord*" $\rightarrow$  some property (like gender, case, or number) is realized morphologically in as many places as possible.

Concord...

fjór-ir litl-ir snigl-ar (*Icelandic*) four-NOM.MASC.PL little-NOM.MASC.PL snails-NOM.MASC.PL 'four little snails (nominative)' Concord...

fjór-ir litl-ir snigl-ar (*Icelandic*) four-NOM.MASC.PL little-NOM.MASC.PL snails-NOM.MASC.PL 'four little snails (nominative)'

...and "negative concord":

Non ho visto niente not I.have seen nothing 'I didn't see anything' (Italian)

Now, we have talked about English Negative Polarity Items...

I didn't see anything

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### I didn't see anything

...but there are varieties of English with Negative Concord!

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...but there are varieties of English with Negative Concord!

### I didn't see nothing

both of these systems are well-attested cross-linguistically...

• %I used to walk to work, but **anymore**, I take the T.

- %I used to walk to work, but **anymore**, I take the T.
- Mary=merry=marry?

- %I used to walk to work, but **anymore**, I take the T.
- Mary=merry=marry? pen=pin?
- pop? soda? Coke?

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- "you, plural"

=you? y'all? you guys? y'unz? ...

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Ever heard a speaker of "English" that you had a hard time understanding?

https://ygdp.yale.edu/

https://scotssyntaxatlas.ac.uk/

So where should we draw the line? What counts as "English"?

(or "Japanese"? "German"? etc, etc.)

How do we know when two people speak "the same language"?

(or, at least, not a linguistic question)

"Deciding whether BBC newsreaders and Lynchburg, VA radio evangelists speak different dialects of the same language or different languages in the same language family is on the level of deciding whether Greenland is a small continent or a large island"

--Charles Fillmore, UC Berkeley linguist

"A language is a dialect with an army and a navy"

--Max Weinreich

("a shprakh iz a dialekt mit an armey un a flot")

- Danish, Norwegian, Swedish
- Mandarin, Cantonese
- Portuguese, Spanish
- Serbo-Croatian >

Serbian, Croatian

Chomsky (1996):

*i-language*: a mental grammar of an individual.

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*i-language*: a mental grammar of an individual.

*e-language*: a mythical object composed of many i-languages connected by some kind of mystic bond. African American English (AAE) African American Vernacular English (AAVE) "Ebonics" (Oakland School Board, 1996)

"...a language that has no right or wrong expressions, no consistent spellings or pronunciations and **no discernible rules**."

--William Raspberry

"...the patois of America's meanest streets." --George Will

• negative concord ("double negatives")

I ain't seen <u>nothin</u> AAE

- negative concord ("double negatives")
- rich tense/aspect system:

They usually **be** tired when they come home. They tired right now. [habitual] [present]

- negative concord ("double negatives")
- rich tense/aspect system:

They usually be tired when they come home.[haThey (\*be) tired right now.[ph

[habitual] [present]

- negative concord ("double negatives")
- rich tense/aspect system:

They usually **be** tired when they come home. They (**\*be**) tired right now. [habitual] [present]

*compare Spanish:* Soy norteamericano I.am north.american

Estoy cansado I.am tired [estar]

[ser]

- negative concord ("double negatives")
- rich tense/aspect system
- rule-governed copula drop:

He is rich — He rich

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- rich tense/aspect system
- rule-governed copula drop:

He is rich — He rich I don't know how rich he is — He rich (*sentence-final*)

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- rich tense/aspect system
- rule-governed copula drop:

He is rich  $\longrightarrow$  He rich I don't know how rich he is  $\xrightarrow{}$  ...how rich he (*sentence-final*) I want to be rich  $\xrightarrow{}$  I want to rich (*inf.*)

- negative concord ("double negatives")
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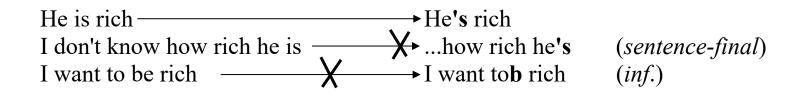
He is rich  $\longrightarrow$  He rich I don't know how rich he is  $\longrightarrow$  ...how rich he (sentence-final) I want to be rich  $\longrightarrow$  I want to rich (inf.) He was rich  $\longrightarrow$  He rich (past tense)

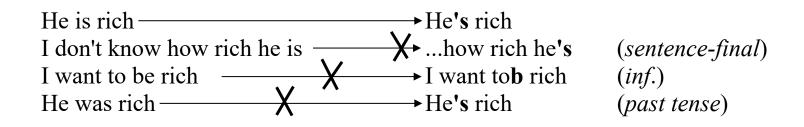
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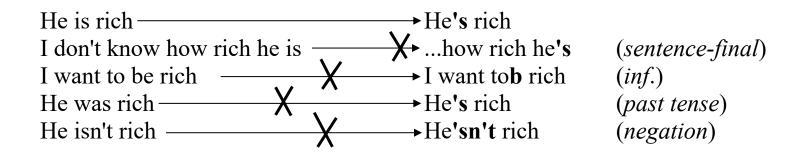
He is rich  $\longrightarrow$  He rich I don't know how rich he is  $\longrightarrow$  ...how rich he (sentence-final) I want to be rich  $\longrightarrow$  I want to rich (inf.) He was rich  $\xrightarrow{X}$  He rich (past tense) He ain't rich  $\xrightarrow{X}$  He not rich (negation)

He is rich — He's rich

He is rich I don't know how rich he is — He's rich ...how rich he's (sentence-final)







(did anybody have a chance to look at the optional reading?)

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