“Is Country the same as Southern?”
Characterizing the Oklahoma Country accent via imitations

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**Oklahoma Vowels**
- Mix of Southern & Midland
- *pin*=pen, *cot*=caught [1, 3, 7]
- Some ay-monophthongization [1]
- Fronted /ʌ/, slightly fronted /ɔ/ [1, 3]
- Centralized /ɪ/, /ʊ/

**Stimuli: Imitations**
- Reveal salient folk features, dialect knowledge [4, 6]
- Read passage
  - Natural voice
  - Imitations: Country, Southern
    - Fillers: British, Foreign, Northeast, California
- 4 female Oklahomans
  - 2 rural, 2 urban; age 18-24

**Vowels: No consistent difference**

**Folk Descriptions**
- Country, hick, redneck, friendly, Southern, Midwestern, [1, 5]
- Focus groups (n=12)
  - 2x 4 college students
  - 1x 4 middle-aged
- Imitator interviews (n=27) [2]
  - “Country accent = Southern?”
- A: Hard to say
  - Disagree: which is more…
  - Drawlled, slower, thicker, rural, uneducated…

**Responses: Descriptions**
- Online survey
- 28 Oklahomans age 19-59
- Described each speaker (guise)
- Natural readings:
  - Normal American
  - Midwestern
  - Urban, central/north Okla.
- Country & Southern imitations:
  - Southern
  - “Little Dixie” (rural SE Okla.)
  - Country, redneck

**Responses: Ratings**
- Same survey, 27 Oklahomans
- Rated each speaker (guise)
  - 3-point rating
  - “This person sounds very, somewhat, or not at all ____”

**Summary**
- Ratings: Country = Southern
- Folk attitudes of Southern US
- Imitations are identifiable as intended
- “Standard Midwestern” & “Country Redneck” are equally “Oklahoman”

**References**

**Future Work**
- Phonetic analysis: How do imitations differ from natural?
- Compare by age, rurality

**Means across 4 speakers & 27 raters**