You Say Tomato, I Say Tomato
Language is Culture

• **Language**: symbolic system of communication common to all human societies
• Some rely on symbols (alphabet) for oral and written communication
• Others rely only on spoken or bodily communication/body language
Rules?

- Rules for speaking and writing switch up between cultures, region
  - America: Do you drink soda, pop, or Coke?
- Language that is totally isolated from all others will change
- Languages are alive and evolve
- **Dialect**: a different version of the same language where only some aspects are different (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary)
Language as ID

• The way people speak can say a lot where they come from
• How would you address a group of two or more people? Take the QUIZ!
  • You all
  • Yous/youse
  • You lot
  • You guys
• Isoglosses: lines on a map that indicate differences in vocabulary or pronunciation
Tangier Island

• Island located in Chesapeake Bay between Virginia and Maryland
• Fairly isolated
• People share unique dialect similar to 17th century English!
Toponymy

- **Toponym:** place-names
- **Place:** physical and human characteristics that make a location what it is
- May determine how people interpret history of a place:
  - Mount Prospect
  - Mount Misery
10 Toponyms

• Who named it + how name was chosen = understanding place’s uniqueness
• Stories of toponyms often have roots in migration, movement, interaction among people
• Classification scheme developed by English Professor George Stewart
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Toponym</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Rocky Mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associative</td>
<td>Mill Valley, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commemorative</td>
<td>San Francisco, California</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commendatory</td>
<td>Paradise Valley, Arizona</td>
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<td>Incidents</td>
<td>Battle Creek, Michigan</td>
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<td>Possession</td>
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<td>Folk</td>
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<td>Manufactured</td>
<td>Truth or Consequences, New Mexico</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mistakes</td>
<td>Lasker, North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift</td>
<td>Lancaster, Pennsylvania</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Toponyms and Globalization

• Brazil: case study of migration flows and toponyms
  • Most are Portuguese, reflective of colonization
  • Clusters of German toponyms — “Blum”

• The toponyms we see on a map depend in large part on who produced the map

• Some embattled locales have more than one name at the same time

• Ex.: Argentineans refer to a small cluster (archipelago) of islands off the southeast coast of South America as the Malvinas, but the British call the same cluster of islands the Falkland Islands
Changing Toponyms

• Yi-Fu Tuan: When people change the toponym of a place, they have the power to “wipe out the past and call forth the new.”

• Ex: small town in Wales feared loss of Welsh language and despised English for their role in that loss. Also wanted to attract tourists. Solution = renamed their town to an unpronounceable Welsh word
Reputedly known as the longest place name in the world

TAUMATAWHAKATANGI
HANGAKOAUAUOTAMATEA
TURIPUKAKAPIKIMAUNGA
HORONUKUPOKAIWEN
UAKITANATAHU

THE PLACE WHERE TAMATEA, THE MAN WITH
THE BIG KNEES, WHO SLID, CLIMBED, AND
SHADOWED MOUNTAINS, KNOWN AS LANEATER,
DED HIS FLUTE TO HIS LOVED ONE.

Guinness Book of Records
Changing Toponyms cont’d

• **Postcolonial Toponyms:** New governments renamed several countries and newly independent countries also changed the names of cities and towns to reflect their independence.
  • Ex: Gold coast became Ghana

• **Postrevolution Toponyms:** Changes in power through coups and revolutions prompt name changes.
  • Ex: St. Petersburg, Leningrad, Stalingrad

• **Memorial Toponyms:** People change a toponym to memorialize an important person or event.
  • Ex: MLK streets