Most of Ohio—in fact, nearly all of the state except the northern fourth—can legitimately be considered part of the North Midland (Lower North) dialect area. Furthermore, most of the currently vigorous vowel changes occurring in the state are strongly identified with the North Midland. These two assertions may seem unlikely based on some recent publications. However, a careful reading of older dialect geography literature, combined with modern acoustic and dialectometric analysis, corroborates both of them.

The notion that the South Midland extends well into Ohio (Flanigan and Norris, 2000) is contradicted by several facts. First, Hans Kurath (e.g., Kurath, 1949; Kurath and McDavid, 1961) consistently associated the term “South Midland” with the southern Appalachians. While lexical studies (particularly Carver, 1987) have disputed the extension South Midland (or Upper South) into even southern Ohio, phonetic evidence also provides little support for it. Southern Appalachian vocalic features such as unconditioned glide weakening of /æj/ and the Southern Shift of vowels, in fact, have little currency in Ohio. Flanigan and Norris (2000) listed seven “South Midland” features as defining southeastern Ohio, but all of those features occur in North Midland western Pennsylvania (which they then move to the South Midland), and six of the seven actually range to the northern edge of the Midland in Ohio. Their approach, then, results in a *reductio ad nihilum* of the North Midland.

Much recent literature has portrayed the Northern Cities Shift, associated with the Northern (Upper North) dialect region, as the most active set of vowel changes in the Midwest. However, acoustic analysis of the oldest and youngest generations available, including over forty young speakers interviewed by the author, shows that most of the actively spreading vowel shifts in Ohio stem from the Midland. These shifts include fronting of /ow/; retraction of /æ/, /A/, and /Ar/; and several mergers. Dialectometric analysis of the data that employs Principle Components Analysis and dendrogram construction together with geographical mapping shows a continuing encroachment of Midland features on the Northern area. Meanwhile, Northern Cities Shift features have failed to spread southward. Dialectometry also shows the Northern/Midland boundary, which still follows old settlement patterns and coincides closely to the boundary drawn decades ago by Davis (1951), to be the only clearly demarcated boundary in the state.