The results of the variable rule analysis show that:
- Women (.55) preferred contracted forms more than men (.46).
- When the VP was focused, contraction was dispreferred (.17 vs. .51).
- Auxiliaries in negated phrases were unlikely to contract, because
  negation particles often cliticize to the auxiliary, blocking contraction.
  This is reflected in the .05 factor weight of negated phrases in contrast to
  the .56 factor weight in positive sentences.

Below are the factor weights of dialect and education level, which
were non-significant factors for auxiliary contraction.
- Northern: .49
- Midland: .51
- Southern: .44
- Eastern: .56
- Western: .51

Discussion

Linguistic Factors

Syntactic constraints reflect prosodic and focus considerations.
- Pronominal subject strongly favors contraction over NPs, with some gradation of other
categories; this is consistent with work on copula contraction.
- Negation strongly disfavors Aux contraction: rather than contract the Aux to the
subject (He's not here; She'd not eaten) speakers prefer to contract the Neg (He
isn't here, She hadn't eaten), perhaps for prosodic reasons.
- VP focus strongly disfavors contraction, which de-emphasizes rather than
focusing the Aux.
- Substantial parallels with constraints on copula contraction found in previous
studies point to common processes affecting all verbal contraction.

Phonological factors reflect English phonotactic constraints.
- Auxiliaries ending in continuants (has, will, have) contract much more than those
that end in a stop (bad, would). This reflects the fact that (a) continuant forms can
be syllabic (what'll), while stops cannot (what'd), and (b) English /s/ can append
as a syllabic coda to virtually any preceding segment.
- Preceding vowels favor contraction, reflecting the universal preference for simpler
codas. Since this factor overlaps strongly with personal pronoun subjects, the
Goldvarb factor weight may actually underestimate this effect. Preceding fricatives
and liquids disfavor contraction, perhaps reflecting avoidance of constructions like
Rachel'll, staff're. Stops and nasals have an apparent favoring effect, perhaps due
to frequent contraction with has.

Social Factors
- Although English speakers clearly consider full forms to be more correct and formal,
no stigma is associated with use of contractions in anything less than extremely formal speech. Thus we find no significant variation in our sample by level of education or geographic region.
- The curvilinear pattern for age seems unlikely to represent a life-course effect. It
may indicate differing responses to the recording setting, producing more careful
speech among the oldest and youngest speakers.