Introduction
'Place' in Studies of Language Variation and Change

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Place has always been central to studies of language variation and change. Since the eighteenth century, dialectologists have been mapping language features according to boundaries – both physical (rivers, hills) and institutional (districts and regions). In the twentieth century, variationist sociolinguists developed techniques to correlate language use with speakers' alignment to place (considering the effects of social practice and identity processes on their orientations). Complimenting this work, perceptual dialectologists examined the cognitive and ideological processes involved in language–place correlations and began to consider how speakers mentally process space, and evaluate it in metalinguistic commentary.

Given the role that place has played in studies of language variation and change, this volume seeks to consider how place is being defined and utilised by sociolinguists in the twenty-first century. Our aim is not to present one unified approach to the study of language and place, but to consider the various approaches that have been taken, and to evaluate their utility in answering specific questions about the nature of language variation and change. As one of us has argued in collaborative work elsewhere (Moore and Carter 2015: 3–4), whilst it is tempting to prioritise one kind of approach to variationist research over others, different types of research bring their own drawbacks and benefits. For instance, in what Eckert (2012) has referred to as the 'first-wave' of variationist research, the emphasis is on studying the broad demographic patterns of language variation and change across a geographically bounded community. Whilst variationists working in this tradition use the concept of the 'speech community' to define their sampling universe, Coupland (2010: 101) notes that 'place' and 'speech community' have been conflated in this type of research. So although Labov (1972) theorises that speech community is more accurately defined as being about shared interpretative norms, the way in which communities have been delimited for the purposes of this kind of variationist analysis has been (and continues to be) geographical in practice. Coupland (2010: 101) terms this 'community-as-demography'. In this type of work, then, place has been defined straightforwardly as 'location', as

determined by the placement of boundaries upon a map. To put it another way, the individual regions, cities and towns studied in traditional variationist research have been 'largely reduced to that of a canvas onto which dialectological findings could be painted' (Britain 2009: 144).

It is easy to dismiss this kind of research for its essentialism and, indeed, within this volume, there are several chapters which engage in precisely this kind of critique. However, it is important to remember that a degree of essentialism can be beneficial to our understanding of broad-scale patterns of variation and change. By abstracting from complex sociocultural contexts, it is possible to provide a general overview of how language change progresses across time and space. The long-term trajectories of language variation and change can only really be observed using such a wide-angled lens. Furthermore, whilst we may critique definitions of place that are limited to demography and geography, there is also ample evidence that the ways in which places are defined institutionally have consequences on language use and perceptions of language variation. This has been shown by Llamas (2007) in a study of Middlesbrough, England, where the language behaviour of different generations of speakers correlates with the town's official designation as being in the counties of Yorkshire, Teeside or Cleveland, or as its own unitary authority. As Beal (2010: 225) has observed, we should not underestimate the effects of 'the stroke of a bureaucrat's pen' on a speaker's sense of place and, consequently, their experience and use, of language variation.

The chapters in Part I of our volume exemplify the best of first wave variationist research, which considers how language is affected by its use within a particular locale, as designated by 'the bureaucrat's pen'. By using a wide-angled lens, these kinds of studies are able to consider which aspects of language variation are locally specific and which reflect the 'remarkable uniformity' (Labov 2011: 374) of some kinds of language change. For instance, in Chapter 1, Tagliamonte demonstrates how the trajectories of three distinct morphosyntactic variables in the city of York, England, are affected by their status as local or universal markers of vernacular English. In this example, the sociolinguistic setting of York is key to understanding how and why some variables pattern as they do. Similarly, in Chapter 2, Stuart-Smith et al. show how phonological variables vary and change in the city of Glasgow, Scotland, in ways that reflect social changes within the city itself. Although some of the changes they observe could be interpreted as a consequence of the type of sweeping sound changes observed elsewhere, they hypothesise that the changes are not just the consequence of dialect contact and supralocal innovations. Rather, these changes are driven by linguistic constraints, but supported by social changes within the city itself, including the increasing need to mark out different forms of social meaning amongst the city's inhabitants.

Clarke's contribution (Chapter 3) also considers how language marks social meaning within a region. Recent studies of dialect levelling have highlighted the loss of locally marked features, and this is explained as a consequence of increased mobility and the disruption of local networks (see, for instance, Kerswill 2003). However, Clarke demonstrates that whilst locally marked variants may be generally declining within a region, it does not necessarily follow that they are being lost altogether. Her work on Newfoundland English presents an instance where locally marked variants are decreasing over all, but not equally in all segments of the population. She explains this as a consequence of their shifting social associations over time, which result in there being different correlations with varied aspects of regional identity. Like the other chapters in Part I, Clarke's chapter emphasises the need to consider the social associations of features, not just their relative frequency, within a given locale.

First wave studies are particularly good at exposing the changing fortunes of language across time. Maguire's chapter (Chapter 4) is no exception. This study focuses on the small island community on Holy Island, off the north-east coast of England. The use of uvular /r/ (the 'Northumberland Burr') in this community does seem to represent a genuine case of dialect levelling. However, by carefully amassing a range of historical recordings, Maguire is able to interrogate the trajectory of this decline, exposing limitations in the methodological practices of earlier dialect surveys. He demonstrates that the loss of this feature is uneven across Holy Island speakers and hypothesises that the variability is, once again, linked to the local social meanings of the form and their distributions amongst islanders.

All of the studies in Part I offer longitudinal insights into processes of language variation and change – something that is not possible with more micro and nuanced analyses of individual locales. They present data from a range of communities (mainland cities and island populations) and, in doing so, demonstrate that processes of language variation and change operate in similar ways, irrespective of the precise logistics of the locations involved.

The studies in Part I also provide evidence of the benefits of working with archive data, which is enabling researchers to collate regional corpora in ways not previously available due to the time-depth involved. This is significantly changing our ability to study linguistic variation in specific locales by offering real-time data for studies of language change. Consideration of these methodological advances is addressed more specifically in Part II of the volume, which focuses on the methods and kinds of data available to researchers interested in the relationship between language and region. Corrigan's contribution (Chapter 5) explicitly demonstrates how we might apply, define, and organise regional corpora for sociolinguistic analyses. It provides practical advice on creating and using corpora (old and new) by discussing the nature

of data which might comprise a regional corpus, and comparing small-scale personal collections with larger institutionally amassed resources. The chapter addresses the utility of data sources, and the relevant aspects that might require coding and tagging to be of optimal use to a linguist, as well as providing case studies of this data in use.

In addition to providing a resource for the sociolinguist, archive data also offers opportunities to engage communities in the linguistic heritage of their regions. This, in turn, can be used to obtain metalinguistic commentary on place and history – a benefit considered in depth by Douglas in Chapter 6. This piece evaluates the advantages of collaborating with museums to disseminate archive materials and generate new language resources and research opportunities. It explores how, in engaging individuals in a particular locale, we can obtain a more richly informed account of the specific experiences of these individuals and their relationship to the language forms found within their region.

Whilst Corrigan and Douglas focus on the practical issues surrounding the creation and use of archive materials, the remaining two chapters in Part II consider how our methodological approaches lead us to interpret sociolinguistic patterns in regional data in particular ways. In Chapter 7, Montgomery provides an overview of how linguistic data has been related to space over the history of traditional dialectology and language perception studies. Drawing upon interdisciplinary resources, it outlines advances in mapping techniques which have enabled us to think in more sophisticated ways about how speakers experience geographical space. Using evidence from a case study investigating perceptions of language in locations around the Scottish–English border, this chapter demonstrates the benefits of using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and georeferenced data to interpret and understand patterns in linguistic data. More specifically, Montgomery's chapter shows how visualisation of data can enable sociolinguists to 'layer' social and linguistic information in ways which make the 'canvas' onto which we paint dialectological findings (described earlier) more three-dimensional.

The final chapter (Chapter 8) in Part II considers how our gaze as sociolinguists has been limited by our tendency to fetishise certain spatial domains over others. This, Britain argues, has had the consequence of us too narrowly defining the places in which certain processes of language variation and change can occur. More specifically, Britain's chapter considers how discourses around the 'urban' and the 'rural' have affected how we approach linguistic variation in particular locales. He argues that there has been a bias towards the 'urban' in variationist sociolinguistics, which has implied that regular and established processes of language variation and change do not occur in rural locations. Rather than assuming that different methodologies are required to study rural locations, Britain argues that it is necessary to consider

the typologies of language change and to evaluate the conditions required for different kinds of changes to occur. This allows us to evaluate whether the same processes of language variation and change occur in a diverse range of locations.

Britain's chapter links back to an issue we raised at the beginning of this chapter – the tendency in certain kinds of language variation and change work to narrowly define 'community-as-demography'. Britain's work suggests that this model has been considered to work best in urban locations, due to their generally increased population sizes and, thus, their increased potential to generate sufficient data upon which to test statistical correlations between language use and demographic factors such as gender, ethnicity, and age. The ability to make statistical correlations between language use and demographic categories is beneficial to our understanding of the spread of language change across space (as we have argued earlier, and as evidenced by the chapters in the first part of our volume), but it is also true that this approach limits our ability to understand the more local, interactionally relevant, and diverse social meanings that linguistic features can acquire. Therefore, where a sociolinguist's goal is not to define the long-term trajectory of a language change, but to understand how speakers use language to construct and create social meanings around place at a particular point in time (as in the second- and third-wave variationist work, described by Eckert 2012), it is necessary to develop a more nuanced appreciation of the social and cultural meanings of place. The chapters in the second half of our volume demonstrate the benefits of this type of research.

The techniques used in these chapters tend to build upon interdisciplinary methods and techniques because, as observed by Johnstone (2004) and Coupland (2010), outside sociolinguistics, community is rarely defined in the narrow terms utilised in first wave variationist research. For instance, contemporary work in human geography or anthropology tends to align definitions of place with social and moral values 'as well as with more material and pragmatic considerations of people occupying a defined space and taking part in conjoined activity' (Coupland 2010: 101). Therefore, to gain a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between language and place, sociolinguists need to consider place to be symbolic, socially constructed, and culturally defined, as much as it is physically delimited. That is to say, to begin to develop more nuanced studies of regional dialect, we need to be more carefully attuned to the possibility that terminology referring to regions and localities is ideologically loaded and, as such, differentially understood and experienced by different people. This means we need to take care in applying regional labels to the communities we study. As Beal (2010: 266) has noted '"place" is not a given, to be taken for granted in our research designs; what appears to be a town or a city delimited by boundaries on a

map may actually be several different places to different groups of speakers, whose allegiances to these "places" may be indexed by linguistic variables.' The notion of *indexicality* is key here. The term is utilised and contextualised in many of the chapters in this volume, so we do not consider it in depth here. But, put simply, it refers to an ideological association between a linguistic feature and a socially defined stance, alignment, persona or identity type (see Ochs 1992; Silverstein 2003; Eckert 2008; Moore and Podesva 2009). If linguistic variants can index alternative senses of place for different speakers, then we must be cautious in how we identify features with places. We are often encouraged to think about variants as exclusively 'belonging to' certain regions (see for instance, the British phenomena of the 'Bristol /l/' (Trudgill 1999: 76), or, even, the 'Northumberland Burr' (Maguire, this volume's Chapter 4)), but the reality is that the features may nominally index a place that is conceptually ambiguous to those living in it. The features may have no indexical value for some residents, despite those individuals having a strong orientation to the locale that the features are labelled as reifying (see, in particular, Johnstone and Kiesling 2008, on the variable social meanings associated with /aw/ by users and non-users in Pittsburgh). This suggests that serious consideration needs to be given to which speakers (and, indeed, what variables) are considered by linguists. Put another way, 'a study of regional dialect that is open to the possibility that vernacular conceptions of place and localness may help explain patterns of variation has to be attuned from the start to how the region in question is locally understood and talked about' (Johnstone 2004: 76).

The chapters in Part III of our volume explore how speakers use language to construct social meanings which are tied to locations where identities, and the linguistic features associated with them, are contested. In Chapter 9, Watt and Llamas consider how a state boundary (that between England and Scotland) affects the way that speakers orient towards and experience competing national identities, as evidenced by their language production and perceptions. They examine locations that are in close proximity to the border (and each other), and demonstrate that speakers make use of a linguistic feature (Voice Onset Time (VOT) of the stop consonants /p t k b d g/) in ways which reflect their regional affiliations (as evidenced by use of national identity labels in a self-identification exercise). They also find differences in identity perceptions on the basis of age, and predict that, over the course of time, these might lead to differences in pronunciation, even in a variable as subtle as VOT. Llamas and Watt's chapter shows that proximity to the border or to surrounding areas is not the only factor to determine language use; how speakers understand and orient towards the border is key to their language use. They find that younger and older speakers identify themselves differently, suggesting that shifts are occurring in the 'sense of place' assigned to border locations.

In Chapter 10, Krause and Smith also consider the notion of national identity, but focus solely on the Scottish side of the border considered by Llamas and Watt. They explore how the language used in popular music can be manipulated to demonstrate variable kinds of Scottish identity by Glaswegian artists. More specifically, they show how rhoticity has fluctuated as a marker of Scots, and how this fluidity has led to variability in its use in performative contexts. Whilst rhoticity may be traditionally perceived as a prototypical feature of Scots English, Krause and Smith show that this linguistic form encodes variable social meanings, dependent on speaker and context. So, whilst the form may continue to be emblematic of Scots, it can also be used to articulate different values and attitudes towards place and social identity in the evolving Scottish music industry.

Burland's work (Chapter 11) also focuses on the subtle nuances of meaning associated with particular linguistic features. Her research shows how different generations within the same ex-mining town, Royston in South Yorkshire, England, attribute different social explanations to the variants of FACE and GOAT vowels that are shown (via production analysis and comparison with nearby dialects) to uniquely identify town residents. Her work demonstrates that the older generation perceive these features as unique because of dialect contact caused by the in-migration of miners, whereas the younger generation, who grew up after mine closures, consider the features to be unique because of the town's semi-isolated location. This shows how the associations and definitions of a place can shift over time, even if the use of linguistic features remains stable across a community. Burland's work also reveals that, where features are strongly associated with place, they may resist the processes of dialect levelling found elsewhere: there is no evidence of attrition in the uniquely Royston dialect forms in her study, despite pan-regional levelling of FACE and GOAT vowels in Yorkshire more generally.

The last chapter (Chapter 12) in Part III also considers the potential effects of dialect contact on the social meanings allocated to linguistic features. Moore and Carter's work, which considers language variation in the Isles of Scilly (a group of islands off the south-west coast of England), also demonstrates that bounded communities do not necessarily have one homogeneous identity to which all speakers orient. They consider how variants of the TRAP and BATH vowels are used to index subtly different identities associated with certain ways of being 'Scillonian', and how life trajectory and gender interact with the styles adopted by certain groups on the island. Whereas other chapters in this part tend to focus on features which are considered to be distinctly local, Moore and Carter show that it is not necessarily the case that only vernacular features can index place. Some Scillonians use more standard-like pronunciations to index a particular kind of Scillonian identity, and this is explained as a

consequence of the islands' unique sociocultural history and the ideology of Scillonian privilege, compared with mainland locales.

Taken together, the chapters in Part III demonstrate how context-dependent identity can be, and how language may do different kinds of identity work dependent upon the specific location in which it occurs. Questions still remain, however, about how the social meanings linking language to place are ideologically encoded amongst populations. These issues are considered in Part IV of our volume, which focuses on the enregisterment of language features. As discussed in these papers, Agha's (2003) term *enregisterment* is used to refer to the process by which linguistic features become associated and assigned to particular modes of speech (for our purposes, those associated with particular locales). In Chapter 13, Johnstone shows how particular, iconic representations of personae, or 'characterological figures' (in the form of speaking, plush toy dolls), are used to reflect and construct these associations in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (USA). Her chapter shows how place and social class can interact in the enregisterment of certain forms over others. This can result in a mismatch between what speakers actually do in their production of a particular form within a region, and what is perceived to be stereotypically meaningful linguistic practice within that region. In this way, Johnstone exposes the ideological nature of enregisterment, such that the 'concept' of a variety may be more pervasive than the reality of that variety in use.

Snell's analysis (Chapter 14) also considers the complicated relationship that language has to region and class. Her chapter explores how these two factors interact in the production and perception of the emblematic dialect term 'howay', found in Middlesbrough, in the north-east of England. Snell compares metalinguistic commentary about 'howay' with the distribution and use of the form in day-to-day interaction within the region. Like Johnstone's chapter, Snell's work highlights the difference between how a place-feature indexical link functions for those both outside and within the region in question. An analysis of *howay*'s commodification in novelty items like mugs and greetings cards, and its links to a particular social persona found in UK newspapers, suggests that the form has general social meanings linked to working-class culture. However, her micro-level discourse analysis demonstrates that, in local interactions, the form takes on much more subtle pragmatic functions. In this way, Snell suggests that the enregisterment of a form in one context does not prevent that form from acquiring and contributing to more nuanced meanings when it is used in spoken interaction within the region in which it is found.

Of course, the relationship between language and place is not restricted to English, and in Chapter 15 King focuses on Acadian French, the variety traditionally spoken in eastern Canada (in the four Atlantic Provinces and in parts of eastern Quebec). She considers how the trajectories of enregistered

features may fluctuate over time, examining how features of the variety have persisted or changed, and considers what these changes suggest about the indexical and ideological value of the variety across time. Like other chapters in our volume, King's work suggests that different generations of speakers attach different social meanings to the same linguistic features, with younger speakers re-configuring social meanings in line with the changing social and demographic status of Acadian communities. Of particular importance here are the ways in which contemporary artistic and media representations of the variety facilitate these reconfigurations, as in Johnstone's chapter earlier in the volume.

King's chapter considers a range of texts in her longitudinal account of Acadian French, and the matter of which texts can be utilised to investigate the enregisterment of linguistic forms is also considered in our final chapter in Part IV. Cooper's chapter (Chapter 16), which focuses on the variety of English associated with the English region of Yorkshire, utilises dialect literature, dialect representation in written texts, and metalinguistic commentary in an online survey to explore how indexical links between language forms and the Yorkshire dialect emerge and change over time. This chapter shows how certain features are used to enregister 'Yorkshire' across different historical periods. Like Johnstone's chapter, Cooper's work examines the role of particular emblematic features used in products and advertising, and considers the commodification of language as an identifier of place (for a discussion of dialect commodification, see Beal 2009). Cooper's work also provides evidence of ongoing change in the enregisterment of Yorkshire English, by focusing on the feature of GOAT-fronting (a particularly fronted pronunciation of the vowels in the GOAT lexical set), and considering how this change corresponds with other variationist research into the changing distribution of this feature.

The chapters in Parts III and IV of our volume show that, whilst some associations may govern how we think about the correlation between language and place, there are often fluctuating and ambiguous social meanings associated with linguistic features and their relationship with particular locales. In order to uncover the range of potential meanings (if, indeed, that is our research goal), it is necessary to go beyond broad demographic correlations. As suggested earlier, the idea that we might want to focus on different kinds of speakers and their diffuse experiences of place is antithetical to many of the practices that have been typically employed in traditional variationist research. Whereas longitudinal surveys have tended to focus primarily on prototypical or 'central' inhabitants of a place (rejecting data from speakers considered to be 'lames' (Labov 1973) in relation to an abstract notion of the 'vernacular culture'), the studies in the second half of our volume demonstrate the value of exploring liminal or atypical spaces. This has important consequences, not just

in terms of representativeness, but also for our ability to explain how and why language change occurs. As Eckert (2004: 109) has observed, '[d]ifferent people in a given community view the boundaries differently, use different parts of the community, and participate in the surroundings differently. These differences will result in different patterns of contact, which have implications for linguistic influence'. Thus, whilst large-scale survey studies, exemplified by the work in Part I, inform us of diachronic patterns of language change, the smaller-scale studies of Parts III and IV provide clues about the diversity within a locale, which may help to explain why and how changes may be activated. Both types of work are key to the full understanding of the linguistic histories of specific locales. We hope that, alongside the methodological insights offered in Part II, the full range of work in this volume demonstrates the utility of taking multiple approaches to the study of language and place and, in doing so, provides a useful and well-rounded account of the current state of the field.

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