

ENDNOTES

- ¹ The author uses the 2000 English version.
- ² The song belongs to the record *Arrotaste no meu olvido* (*You burped on my oblivion*, in Portuguese except the word 'oblivion,' which is in Spanish), 2002. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cuhf26BRBE> <https://www.facebook.com/Trabuco-Naranjero-154929844599491/>
- ³ This is not a transcription; the lyrics were taken from a web page that doesn't exist anymore, on 5 May 2002: <http://www.trabuconaranjero.hpg.ig.com.br/aguanteportunol/html> The writing choices show a Spanish pronunciation of a nonstandard variety of Portuguese.

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EXPLORING FUTURE PATHS FOR HISTORICAL SOCIOLINGUISTICS

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The field of historical sociolinguistics has come a long way since the seminal work carried out by Suzanne Romaine and Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade in the 1980s. While the main objective of studying language variation and real-time language change based on historical sources (rather than synchronic speech data) has remained over time, historical sociolinguistics has grown to become an independent discipline with its proper scientific goals, principles and methods. One of the particularities of the field, as opposed to the more traditional study of language history, is that it brings speakers, rather than languages themselves as abstract constructs, to the forefront of the study of linguistic change. Over the last decades, the field has certainly adopted a much wider variety of approaches and themes and integrated, as have other fields in linguistics, new methods based on the use of large, digitized text corpora. Each of the three major (synchronic) sociolinguistic paradigms identified by Allan Bell (2013) – sociolinguistics of multilingualism, variationist sociolinguistics and ethnographic-interactional sociolinguistics – has gradually made its way into the field. This has opened up the way history of languages is often portrayed and analyzed, as historical sociolinguistics increasingly takes

into account the social complexity in which linguistic change evolves. Analyzing language history 'from below', the field has also helped emphasize the use of sources that have often been discarded in more traditional approaches of language history, especially the use of *ego-documents* (such as diaries or personal letters) and of texts written by less educated writers. The study of such sources is very much needed in order to get a more comprehensive picture of linguistic change, something the mere study of official or literary documents cannot achieve, although they have long been prioritized by historical linguists.

Exploring Future Paths for Historical Sociolinguistics gives us insight into the most recent developments of the discipline. The 12 contributions it contains indeed explore some possible new ways of analyzing the history of languages, from a methodological as well as a theoretical point of view. More specifically, the goal of this book is to contribute to the reflection on the notion of 'layered simultaneity' proposed by Terttu Nevalainen (2015), to whom the book is dedicated. In line with Janda and Joseph's (2003) proposal of 'informational maximalism',¹ Nevalainen argues that research on linguistic practices from the past needs to take into account practices at the micro-level (for example, how did certain individuals use their language?) as well as at the macro-level (how did this individual's behavior affect long-term usage of language within his or her community and within other communities?). This means that the use of different, complementary methods (for instance, the combination of quantitative and statistical analyses of large corpora with in-depth qualitative work exploring smaller, individual data sets) is useful in order to obtain a more complete and coherent understanding of how and why languages undergo changes as they do in certain communities. In other words, embracing the idea of 'layered simultaneity' means linking the local and the global, the short-term and the long-term, the individual and the collective, the marked and the unmarked.

The chapters are divided into three parts relating to the nature of the innovation that is called for: Part 1 introduces 'Methodological innovations' used by some researchers in the field, Part 2 discusses 'New data for historical sociolinguistic research' and Part 3 deals with 'Theory: Bridging gaps, new challenges'. As highlighted by the editors in the first, introductory chapter of the book (Chapter 1: 'The future of historical sociolinguistics?'), some of the chapters deal with more than one aspect.

Concerning methods, the four chapters in the first part of the book propose the use of new methodological approaches and offer interesting perspectives about the use of combined methods drawing on different scientific disciplines. Such discussions are particularly interesting given the fact that historical sociolinguistics has traditionally been heavily influenced by quantitative, variationist methods. The propositions made concerning methodological innovations include the use of part-of-speech annotation in the study of textual genres (Chapter 2: 'Exploring part-of-speech frequencies in a socio-historical corpus of English'), the use of 'discursive concepts' (in this case *virginity*, studied within different co-occurrence clusters and compared to near-synonyms) in the study of semantic change (Chapter 3: 'Reading into the past: Materials and methods in historical semantics research'), the utility of new statistical and visualization techniques (like fluctuation analysis and sparklines) applied to historical sources (Chapter 4: 'Ireland in British parliamentary debates 1803–2005: Plotting changes in discourse in a large volume of time-series corpus data') and the use of cultural keywords (such as *discord*, *disgrace* and *disorder*) in the analysis of historical texts (Chapter 5: 'Discord in eighteenth century genteel correspondence'). Interestingly, some of the examples discussed in this part of the book apply new methods to corpora that have already been explored, thus showing how innovative techniques can be helpful in developing a deeper understanding of existing data.

As for the new materials and data analyzed in this book, they include rural newsletters from Finland (Chapter 6: 'Competing norms and standards: Methodological triangulation in the study of language planning in nineteenth-century Finland'), comparative analysis of Dutch private letters and newspapers (Chapter 7: 'Relativisation in Dutch diaries, private letters and newspapers [1770–1840]: A

genre-specific national language?') and the use of large corpora initially designed for morphological research for the analysis of orthographic change (Chapter 8: 'A graphic system which leads its own linguistic life? Epistolary spelling in English, 1400–1800'). Chapters 6 and 7 interestingly combine the analysis of different types of linguistic data that can be found in various genres that provide access to more spontaneous and less standardized written documents on the one hand and firmly standardized articles on the other hand. Such endeavors shed new light on the standardization processes and especially on the crucial role played by genre variation, a recurring theme in historical sociolinguistics. As for Chapter 8, it raises an important question we should all reflect on: How can existing corpora that have been designed for specific research purposes be used to address other questions regarding linguistic change? In some cases, this can spark new interest in corpora that have been carefully built and then somehow left underexploited.

The theoretical discussions proposed in the last part of the book are different in nature. Chapter 9 ('Historical sociolinguistics and construction grammar: From mutual challenges to mutual benefits') makes a convincing case for the cross-fertilization between social and cognitive approaches to the study of language history. The case studies presented in the other chapters provide interesting data which help to better understand different theoretical concepts that are useful in the study of the history of languages. Chapter 10 ('A lost Canadian dialect: The Ottawa Valley 1975–2013') focuses on the concepts of dialect dissipation and concentration in rural areas, where the use of some marginal variants is stable and even in progress with older speakers. The role of prescriptivism or purism and their relation to language use is studied in Chapter 11 ('Vernacular universals in nineteenth-century grammar writing'), which draws on nineteenth-century grammar books published in the U.S. and the U.K. Finally, the complexities and linguistic consequences of loose-knit networks are discussed in Chapter 12 ('Revisiting weak ties: Using present-day social media in variationist studies').

By and large, various methods, sources and concepts that are discussed in *Exploring Future Paths for Historical Sociolinguistics* are informative for historical researchers as well as for sociolinguists that are working on synchronic speech data because of their innovative character. Without necessarily putting forward the concept, several of the chapters published in this book indirectly point towards the need for triangulation² as a way to confirm and validate observations made about the history of languages – for instance, when new sources arise and clarify the interpretation of already existing data or when sources that have already been analyzed are submitted to new, innovative methods. Combined with the idea of 'layered simultaneity', the notion of 'triangulation' could become a powerful tool for historical sociolinguistics, considering the need to '[make] the best use of bad data' (Labov 1994: 11) when working on historical documents. Although the book clearly targets scholars who are already familiar with historical sociolinguistics, it is accessible enough to provide an interesting read for advanced students in the field as well as for scholars who are not used to working with linguistic data, but who are interested in the ways language has shaped our society (and continues to do so), like historians, sociologists or anthropologists.

On a more critical note, some of the analyses presented in the book do not insist on the social dimensions of language history as much as one might hope. The development of large corpora and new technologies offer great opportunities to obtain new insights, but it should not move us away from our goal as historical sociolinguists to link patterns and manifestations of linguistic variation and change to social elements whenever possible. Indeed statistical data should always be contextualized and socially interpreted. This is possible even when studying big data – for example, by using genre as a social variable, as has often been done by historical sociolinguists. Additionally, the lack of diversity of the languages covered by this book is, in my opinion, one of its shortcomings. As a field, historical sociolinguistics has a long tradition of research on Germanic languages (especially English, German and Dutch) and this is the case for most of the articles presented in the book

(most of them dealing with English; the only exception being some texts on the history of Dutch and Finnish). One of the challenges of historical sociolinguistics seems to be not only to innovate methods or to renew theoretical orientations, but also to attract researchers from various parts of the world that are working on different languages, like other Indo-European languages that have a rich tradition of historical texts and data (the Romance languages, for example) but also from linguistic areas beyond European languages. In this regard, I could not agree more with the editors themselves when they call for ‘further cross-linguistic and typological studies [in order to] advance the field’ (p. 15). In my opinion, this can only be achieved when studies from more diverse backgrounds are brought together in these kinds of publications.

ENDNOTES

¹ The idea of *informational maximalism* refers to the ‘utilization of all reasonable means to extend our knowledge of what might have been going on in the past, even though it is not directly observable’ (Janda and Joseph 2003: 37).

² The concept is mentioned in the title of Chapter 6, but never discussed.

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BETWEEN THE ANDES AND THE AMAZON. LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL MEANING IN BOLIVIA

Anna M. Babel

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Between the Andes and the Amazon constitutes a long-term ethnography of Saipina, a town located on the border of the Cochabamba and Santa Cruz departments of Bolivia, where many people are bilingual in Spanish and Quechua. The way people in Saipina understand themselves and others challenges historical