

EMORY UNIVERSITY, ATLANTA

North American Research Network in Historical Sociolinguistics

NARNiHS

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On the need for a North American Research Network in Historical Sociolinguistics

Madison, Wisconsin, USA – 01 October 2016

– Mark Richard Lauersdorf, Joseph Salmons, Fernando Tejedo-Herrero, Donald Tuten

What's historical sociolinguistics? (*Part 1 – Existence and visibility*)

Historical sociolinguistics has grown into a productive area of investigation within the field of general linguistics, but it has yet to achieve broad visibility within the North American linguistics community. As an anecdotal illustration of this: during a recent process to hire a new colleague into a linguistics department, there was an opportunity for a one-on-one professional conversation with each of the candidates. In the discussion of research interests and activities that occurred with one sociolinguistically well-versed candidate, the conversation turned to work in historical sociolinguistics and the candidate expressed delight at learning of the existence of such a field and listened eagerly as the nature of the work was described. Months after the interview, in another encounter, that former job candidate commented somewhat embarrassedly that he had been convinced after the interview discussion that he had lowered his chances of being hired by his lack of awareness of the field of historical sociolinguistics. *Historical sociolinguistics is a largely unknown field in North America.*

Who's a historical sociolinguist? (*Part 1 – Where are they all?*)

Regardless of the level of recognition of historical sociolinguistics in the broader linguistics community, it should be significant to us within the field (especially to those of us who have been practicing historical sociolinguistics for a while now) to realize that we don't really know each other. Much of the work we do involves language-specific datasets and many of us may have stronger affiliations with specialists in other linguistic subfields who work on the same language(s) – a historical sociolinguist working with Spanish datasets may tend to encounter a *semanticist* of Spanish before encountering another historical sociolinguist who works with *Croatian*. Specialists in other linguistic sub disciplines, morphologists or discourse analysts for example, enjoy opportunities for frequent interaction with each other regardless of the language of the datasets that they consider in their work. *The development of historical sociolinguistics as a field would benefit from closer professional contact between its practitioners in North America.*

Who's a historical sociolinguist? (*Part 2 – Are you one?*)

Many colleagues working in areas that one would readily consider historical sociolinguistics comment that they do not necessarily identify themselves as historical sociolinguists. For some, historical sociolinguistic work represents only a portion of their repertoire. Others started their professional careers in other areas before gradually finding their way into historical sociolinguistics. Still others consider that the nature of their work does not fit their understanding of historical sociolinguistics or is more appropriately placed under another disciplinary umbrella. Relatedly, given the relatively young age of the discipline, some (many?)

of us started our professional careers before there was significant movement toward an identified/identifiable field of historical sociolinguistics, and while we did work that was already historical sociolinguistic in nature, it was necessarily considered to be a part of another branch of linguistics. *Historical sociolinguists in North America come to the field from diverse linguistic backgrounds and are not readily identifiable to each other or do not readily identify with the field.*

What's historical sociolinguistics? (Part 2 – Scope)

Indeed, some of us come to historical sociolinguistics from the historical linguistics side and others from the sociolinguistics side. (Some with opportunity and foresight have married the historical and the sociolinguistic since the beginning of their professional work.) Some do qualitative field and archival work; some do quantitative corpus and statistical work. Some work mostly with the structural; others work mostly with the social. We are phonologists, syntacticians, dialectologists, pragmaticians, to name just a very few of the focal points of our work. If one takes as a baseline definition of historical sociolinguistics that it is the application of sociolinguistic theories and methods to the study of historical language variation and change over time, or more broadly, that it is the study of the interaction of language and society in historical periods, then all of these areas and directions easily find their place within the field. As a young field and as an underrepresented field in North American linguistics, there is much room for growth and development. *Historical sociolinguistics, as a relatively young field, continues to define itself, especially in the North American context.*

How is historical sociolinguistics done? (Part 1 – Interdisciplinary collaboration)

Taking the broad definition that historical sociolinguistics is the study of the interaction of language and society in historical periods, the question arises: how does one study historical states of language or society, and the historical interaction of language and society? One draws on work of social historians, historical sociologists, social and cultural anthropologists, and others who can provide data on historical states of society and social interaction, as well as historical linguists for the historical states of language and sociolinguists and anthropological linguists for the interaction of language and society. In other words, historical sociolinguistics is an inherently collaborative undertaking that must draw on the expertise of a range of disciplinary specialists in order to successfully work toward answers to the scientific questions it poses. But do our colleagues in history, sociology, anthropology, etc. know us and our work, and do we know them and their work? Are all sides aware of the possible points of intersection and the potential for collaboration in the work that they do and the work that we do? *Historical sociolinguists in North America would benefit from active professional dialog with colleagues working in related areas across humanities and social science disciplines.*

How is historical sociolinguistics done? (Part 2 – Broad-based networking)

The health of a scientific field can, in part, be measured by the extent to which ideas and hypotheses, datasets and tools, research products and outcomes are developed and shared

collaboratively across the full range of professionals working in the field. Within European historical sociolinguistics this is already happening to a great degree through the 11-year-old Historical Sociolinguistics Network (HiSoN). However, face-to-face contact remains key to scholarly collaboration (even with the current potential for virtual professional networking and exchange); and with the physical barrier of the Atlantic Ocean, active North American participation in HiSoN and its activities is hampered. Direct connections that exist between individual North American and international colleagues in the field could be leveraged collectively toward greater collaboration and exchange. *Historical sociolinguists in North America would benefit from collective ties to colleagues and sister organizations across the globe to harness the collaborative energy of the discipline.*

Why a North American Research Network in Historical Sociolinguistics?

In order to strengthen and promote historical sociolinguistics in North America, we propose the creation of a North American Research Network in Historical Sociolinguistics (NARNiHS). The creation of this group responds to the current state of the field in the North American context in the following manner:

- Historical sociolinguistics is a relatively unknown field in North America.

NARNiHS will give the field an active professional presence in the landscape of North American linguistics.

- The development of historical sociolinguistics as a field would benefit from closer professional contact between its practitioners in North America.

NARNiHS will provide opportunities for North American linguists working in the field to come together.

- Historical sociolinguists in North America come to the field from diverse linguistic backgrounds and are not readily identifiable to each other or do not readily identify with the field.

NARNiHS will serve as a reference for the type of work done in the field and will thus help draw together a community of North American practitioners.

- Historical sociolinguistics, as a relatively young field, continues to define itself, especially in the North American context.

NARNiHS will help to shape the field as it matures beyond its disciplinary adolescence.

- Historical sociolinguists in North America would benefit from active professional dialog with colleagues working in related areas across humanities and social science disciplines.

NARNiHS will be an identifiable locus for North American colleagues from other disciplines to discover and join in the work of historical sociolinguistics.

- Historical sociolinguists in North America would benefit from collective ties to colleagues and sister organizations across the globe to harness the collaborative energy of the discipline.

NARNiHS will be a conduit for professional ties with HiSoN and other organizations thereby facilitating international connections and collaborations for North American historical sociolinguists.

A frame for discussion: “Historical Sociolinguistics: The state of the art”

We offer the following questions as a framework for group discussion on the “State of the Art”.

1. How should we define historical sociolinguistics? Are existing definitions/ understandings adequate, too narrow, or too broad?

This question clearly subsumes all of the following questions, and might be discussed both first and last, or accompanying each of the other questions. Here are two recent definitions that we might consider:

- Wikipedia: “the study of the relationship between language and society in its historical dimension”
- Auer et al. 2015: “...historical sociolinguistics...[studies] language use, as produced by individual language users, embedded in the social context in which these language users operate, and understood not only from the communicative angle but also as conscious or unconscious acts of identity and social distinction [analysis of which is informed by study of social and cultural history]”

2. How might we evaluate present theoretical orientations and the degree of theoretical sophistication within HSL? Are there significant “gaps” or weak points in present approaches? What are the fundamental questions that we seek to answer? How might or should they change?

For instance, the five problems identified by Weinreich et al. (1968) as “Empirical Foundations for a Theory of Language Change” include constraints, transition, embedding, evaluation, and actuation. These are often seen as the foundational questions of HSL, but do they or should they define the field? Does their acceptance tie HSL too narrowly to variationism? Even accepting these problems as foundational, there is some difference of opinion about the relative importance of the problems identified by Weinreich et al., or at least, the feasibility of resolving them. Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg (2003) comment: “We now know a great deal about transmission, embedding and evaluation of changes, but...actuation appears to defy empirical investigation...” (Nevalainen 2015: 264 continues to voice skepticism about this). However, Jim Milroy (e.g., 1992) has been adamant about actuation being the primary goal and challenge of HSL. Is at least partial resolution of the actuation problem out of our reach? Is that where our focus should be?

3. Are present methodological orientations and sophistication sufficient for us to reach our empirical and interpretive goals? Are there significant “gaps” or weak points in present approaches? How might methods change or be improved?

Since Elspaß introduced the notion (e.g., 2005), a strong methodological orientation in historical sociolinguistics has been on “language history from below” and “ego documents”, attempting to come as close to representations of daily spoken language use in the historical record as possible. Are we fully exploiting all of the possible linguistic datasets available to

HSL? As we gather the datasets, is the development of large corpora of accurate transcribed documents, and even corpora such as the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (CEEC) with its tagging of detailed social information, leading to a privileging of quantitative analysis and a decline in the importance or value of qualitative analysis? That said, are we making sufficient and appropriate use of new types of statistical analysis and data visualization? As we attempt, through these methods, to reconstruct historical pictures of language in its social context, are we too reliant on the uniformitarian principle at the risk of engaging in overly anachronistic thinking? How do we consider the balance (and synergies) between macro- and micro- approaches?

4. What are the collaborative limits of our (inherently interdisciplinary) area of study? To the extent that they have been determined, can we or should we imagine other relations, foregrounding some and backgrounding others?

As a starting point, we might consider the following representation, taken from Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg (2012).

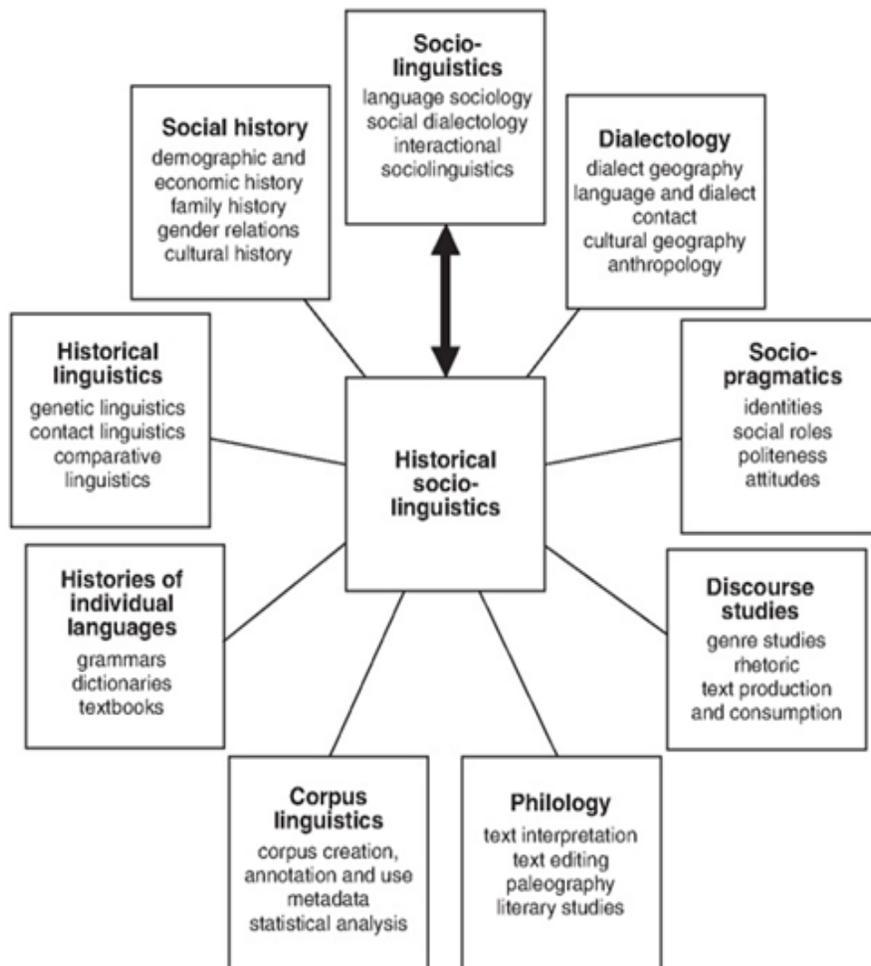


Figure 2.1. Historical sociolinguistics from a cross-disciplinary perspective

5. Are existing materials and resources adequate for our purposes? If not, what kinds of projects do we see as necessary for the continued development of HSL?

Here we can consider corpora and other forms of evidence for research, as well as textbooks and handbooks for use in teaching. Will further collaboration allow the development of more and larger corpora for different languages varieties and time periods? How can we secure financial support for such materials? In the rush for ever larger databases (the lure of “big data”), are there cases in which “small data” of various sorts are still to be valued? Are there areas in which a lack of resources inhibits the progress of the field? Are there areas where the lack of access to existing resources (privately managed datasets, proprietary tools, publishers’ and data providers’ paywalls, etc.) poses problems for our research? Do we have the necessary materials and resources to adequately train the next generation of historical sociolinguists?

6. How might we characterize (and inventory) the existing professional infrastructures of historical sociolinguistics? How might these be improved on the future?

Here we can consider professional organizations, conferences, summer schools, journals, book series, as well as other forms of collaboration and contact. With regard to these, it is worth noting that HSL has developed as a largely Europe-based and Europe-oriented field of study (particularly focused on English and the Germanic languages, and Spanish to a lesser extent). Why might this be the case? What can we (in North America and beyond) do to extend HSL in North America and other regions, and to extend historical sociolinguistic research to other languages? What can we do to provide HSL with more academic visibility, value, and relevance? With regard to curricula, is HSL even taught? If so, when and how? What should be the role (and goals) of NARNiHS in identifying, securing, and promoting the necessary infrastructures to ensure the development of the field into the future?

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Participants research profiles in connection with historical sociolinguistics

JOSHUA BOUSQUETTE – UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

From a theoretical perspective, I tend to follow Jespersen's assertion that “[T]he particular man is only what he is, and his language is only what it is, in virtue of his life in the community, and the community only exists in and in virtue of the particular beings who together constitute it” (Jespersen 1946: 3). As such, the grammar of any individual at any given time must be viewed both in context of the current community of speakers, as well as with knowledge of the previous generation(s) of speakers; historical sociolinguistics is thorough, responsible linguistics.

Broadly speaking, my research deals with contact varieties of Germanic, from both historical and contemporary perspectives. I have worked, mostly collaboratively, on heritage varieties spoken in Wisconsin, including Wisconsin West Frisian (WWF) and Wisconsin Heritage German (WHG), both in terms of modern fieldwork drawing from interviews that I and others conducted from 2009-2014; as well as in terms of historical data, including the Seifert Corpus of recorded interviews from 1948-1949.

I would divide this work into two main areas of concentration, roughly categorized as diachronic language change, and community theoretic approaches to language shift. In the first category, I have worked on parasitic gapping, agreement, complementizer agreement, assumed identity constructions, non-standard case marking, and preposition stranding in WHG, and on loan words and code switching in WWF. In all such previous scholarship, I have worked to identify characteristics of the pre-immigration input varieties, to isolate influence of non-standard varieties from possible influence of English; and to identify aspects of a heritage grammar that appear to be enrichments, rather than simplifications, relative to the continental standard language(s). In the second category, I have worked to identify changes in community structure as cause for language shift from the heritage variety towards English monolingualism. Following Warren (1963) and Salmons (2005 a,b), the primary goal of such research is to measure the shift from locally-controlled, horizontal community structures, to externally-controlled, vertical community structures, and to correlate measurable changes in social institutions with changes in language use. Within a growing body of literature employing this approach, my current work focuses on the division of labor. I have argued that the transition from an agrarian model to a specialized labor force expands the social network of an individual, which simultaneously increases variation in linguistic input, while weakening multiplex social ties that (re-)inforce social norms, such as language use. In short, labor specialization hastens shift to English monolingualism. In terms of advancing the theory, such an approach removes anecdotal questions of individual agency, and describes the issue of language shift at an institutional or systemic level.

As the field of linguistics moves forward, I feel it is of utmost importance that we continue to employ thorough, descriptive work, applying methodologies from historical, comparative, and dialect linguistics; while also expanding our skill set further into the realms of other social sciences, including economics and statistics.

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BENJAMIN E. FREY – UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

My work at the moment vacillates rapidly between the topics of language shift and language revitalization, largely because I view them as two sides of the same coin. Understanding the factors that drive language shift in one direction allows us to leverage that knowledge toward promoting shift in the other. Following the Warren-based model of language shift¹, I study the historical changes that drove shift toward English in German-speaking Wisconsin and Cherokee-speaking western North Carolina.

The bulk of changes that occurred orient themselves around social network structure change, which in turn linked to macro patterns of socioeconomics and political structures. As both communities oriented themselves increasingly toward the external society, domains in which the community language was spoken declined. Both communities ultimately ceased intergenerational transmission in the home. Given this understanding, I am working toward community-based revitalization of Eastern Cherokee, the endangered variety spoken by my kinfolk among the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Currently I am reverse-engineering the process of shift from Cherokee to English in order to protect and uphold tribal sovereignty.

Before I became aware of HiSON and NARNiHS, I did not realize that historical sociolinguistics was a cohesive field. I understood my own work to be a bit of an interesting hybrid of disciplines, more or less cobbled together with bailing wire and twine. I knew there were others who operated in similar ways, but I had not entertained the possibility of coalescing into an organization. This strikes me as one challenge for the field – the general lack of knowledge of it as a viable descriptor for some very important work.

NARNiHS will provide a venue for just that purpose, as well as the momentum that such gatherings inevitably produce. I look forward to being able with speak to other practitioners and I am curious to see other approaches. NARNiHS's biggest strength will likely be in its ability to foster connection and relationships so that historical sociolinguists can share resources and ideas that will further innovations in the field.

¹ Salmons 1992, Lucht 2007, Lucht, Frey & Salmons 2011, Frey 2013, among others

ROB HOWELL – UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

Early Modern European Urban Vernaculars

It has long struck me that traditional histories of European languages become histories of standardization as they move into the Early Modern period. While standardization is a worthwhile object of investigation, it seems obvious that language change is located in the linguistic experience of actual speakers. My work and that of my current and former students seeks to trace the effects of immigration and urbanization on the development of German and Dutch urban vernaculars from 1500-1700. This time period is particularly well suited for historical sociolinguistic research for several reasons. First of all, rapidly expanding literacy leaves us with a wealth of vernacular texts (personal letters, diaries, travel logs, vernacular farces) from a broad swath of society. Second, the development of a standard language ideology is in its infancy, so the available texts tend to replicate features of the spoken language to a greater degree than texts written in more recent centuries. Finally, we have rich sources of data on the social history of early modern urban dwellers such as marriage records, church records, tax rosters, birth and death ledgers and citizenship rosters. This allows us to reconstruct the social history of the authors of our texts on a micro and macro level and to form a picture of the linguistic influences that played a role in their own linguistic behavior.

Rapidly growing urban areas are particularly interesting because the maintenance and growth of urban populations is entirely dependent on immigration. The presence of very large numbers of immigrants (in many cases 80-90% of an urban population) means that speakers of a wide array of languages and dialects come into close and extended contact. This language and dialect contact results in the rapid morphing of urban dialects as speakers construct new grammars from derived from highly heterogeneous input. While the focus of this research program is on linguistic outcomes, detailed work on the social history of these speakers lies at the very heart of my work.

MARK RICHARD LAUERSDORF – UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

The “elevator version” of the orientation of my research program is:

Data-driven corpus-based sociolinguistic investigation of historical processes of language normalization/standardization in areas of high language variation and language contact with complex socio-political and socio-historical borders, using statistical and visualization methods to aid data analysis.

[my office is on the 14th floor, so I usually have a few extra “elevator seconds” to fit all of that in]

In expanded form . . .

My work focuses on the use of large textual corpora from historical periods to investigate language varieties in contact and patterns of language normalization/standardization that arise in the context of that contact. On the theoretical side I work with refining our understanding and conceptualization of the interaction of languages and borders in situations of intensive historical contact, attempting to provide a historical sociolinguistic model for the interpretation of both the socio-historical contexts and the linguistic data from those contexts. My mantra in all of this is that we should strive to “use all the data” which, of course, can very quickly lead to intricately dense datasets in which we struggle to tease out the meaningful patterns in the data. Thus, on the methodological side, my interest is in the use of statistical and data visualization as analytical methods, with the hopes that we can refine our methodologies and our tools and thereby enhance our ability to perform finer-grained analyses in historical sociolinguistics.

The number of “moving parts” involved in the research paradigm sketched above (and, indeed, in much of the work undertaken in historical sociolinguistics) essentially *requires* me to engage in interdisciplinary conversations and collaborations to make progress in its implementation. I feel myself to be firmly representative of a “jack of *some* trades, master of *even fewer*” profile, given that the work outlined above requires specialization in data digitization, corpus construction, and data visualization, as well as corpus investigation, statistical data analysis, and visual data analysis, not to mention social history, historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, and whatever language varieties happen to be interacting in the contact zone under investigation. But this, for me, is the great part of the enterprise of historical sociolinguistics – going to new places to interact with interesting colleagues and work on shared datasets and collaborative projects.

And this is where NARNiHS comes in. Finding new friends in new places with interest in sharing collaborative research experiences can take a lot of time and energy, and having an organization designed to facilitate exactly that will enrich our individual work and that of the field. It will also bring historical sociolinguistics to the attention of the broader field of linguistics. An active awareness among our other colleagues of the work that we do, and engagement with colleagues who work with historical data, social data, corpus data, statistics, visualization in other linguistic areas, will serve to cross-pollinate our work in historical sociolinguistics – and such cross pollination is necessary for the health and growth of any field.

Footnote: I originally wanted to be an Indo-Europeanist when I grew up, but when the specialists in Indo-European languages kept retiring and not being replaced during my graduate studies, I became a comparative-historical Slavist looking at Balto-Slavic reconstruction . . . until (not finding a dissertation topic) I was pointed to younger periods of historical linguistic work, and I realized it was more interesting to consider “who was using what language variety with whom and when”, and from then on I have brought in the socio- to help explain the historical in my linguistic work. In the process, the training in Central and East European languages has served me well, providing a wealth of complex historical sociolinguistic contexts for discussion and testing of frameworks.

PAUL T. ROBERGE – UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

The major thread in my sociohistorical-linguistic research program deals with a variety of issues in creolistic theory and in the history of a particular language. It is concerned specifically with how Afrikaans came into being and how it developed over time. In addition to the language-specific concern, there is a general-linguistic concern, the central objective of which is how human beings create new ways of speaking in circumstances that, sadly, have been central to human social and economic development for the greater part of recorded history. I pursue this objective by examining the formation and expansion of a speech community at the Cape of Good Hope during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, which can establish the well-foundedness of a theory that views most instances of creole formation as deliberate acts of language construction rather than as outcomes of targeted, but imperfect, partial, or even failed second-language (L2) acquisition.

In the present research program *creole* is a sociohistorical, not a linguistic concept. Following Mufwene (2000:78), I regard creole languages as a group of vernaculars that emerged from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries under similar geographic, demographic, and economic conditions, viz. in (usually) tropical colonies settled by Europeans who typically spoke nonstandard varieties of their metropolitan languages and who put in place economies that utilized nonindigenous slave (in some cases indentured) labor.

If one looks mainly at the contemporary standard dialect of Afrikaans, one could reasonably believe that one is dealing with a case of partial restructuring of vernacular Early Modern Dutch due to imposition on the part of nonnative users rather than actual language creation. Afrikaans would appear to be an extraterritorial variety of a preexisting language that by the end of the nineteenth century had become recognized as a distinct language. But there is, as Mühlhäusler (1999:128) presciently concluded, “considerable scope for a reexamination of both the situational context and the divergent developments in the history of this language, for its history can certainly not be conceived of as a conspiracy to yield Standard Afrikaans.” In order to license the general-linguistic objective of my research program, I proceed from two facts that are wholly uncontroversial.

(i) With the formal introduction of slavery in 1658, the Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope became a creole society. Both the Dutch East India Company, as a corporate commercial enterprise, and individual European settlers made extensive use of slave labor imported from other parts of Africa and the eastern side of the Indian Ocean, alongside of indigenous wage and coerced labor. At the heart of the definition of creole languages adopted here is the idea of linguistic accommodation to new circumstances, an exigency that is created *in extremis* by the establishment of a colonial economy based on imported slave labor. This is precisely what happened in the Cape Colony.

(ii) Present-day Afrikaans “is a very loose cover term for 200 years of a great variety of ways of speaking. It is the outcome of a great deal of deliberate standardizing and planning and not a ‘natural language’ in the sense of ‘not interfered with’” (Mühlhäusler 1999:128). A longstanding tenet of historical linguistics holds that the oldest forms of language may be preserved in and therefore retrievable from peripheral, isolated dialects. The witness of

vernacular dialects of Afrikaans spoken by people of color has not been fully mined for diachronic analysis, nor its heuristic potential wholly apprehended.

The Cape Colony presents a case that warrants serious creolist attention, notwithstanding the fact that the standard dialect does not resemble what are regarded as canonical creoles. The relevant question is not one of contact language taxonomy — Is Afrikaans a creole? A semicreole? A creoloid? Some other type of high-contact language variety? — but whether longitudinal processes that gave rise to creoles elsewhere were characteristic of the linguistic ecology of the Cape Colony; and my fundamental claim is that they were.

Once created, creole languages do not differ in fundamental ways from other languages. It is their sociohistory that defines them as a class, for investigative purposes, and simultaneously brings them within the scope of NARNiHS. Language contact and resultant restructuring are the norm, not the exception, in language history. The creation this network should enable a productive exchange of ideas between historical sociolinguists and creolists on this side of the Atlantic.

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JOE SALMONS – UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

When I was early in my graduate school career, I started talking to Edgar C. Polomé, eventually my dissertation advisor and mentor in many ways, about working on Proto-Germanic. He immediately said, basically this:

That's fine but if you're going to work at such time depths, I insist you do real fieldwork with living languages. So many people work on constructs like Indo-European without that kind of experience and if you don't have a concrete sense of how language works in context, how people are using it and what's happening in the community, you're not anchored to a realistic way of thinking about it in the past, where you have fragmentary or no direct evidence.

From the beginning, thanks to this advice, I balanced traditional historical linguistics research with fieldwork, especially on heritage German in the United States. Almost 40 years later, that simple lesson about 'using the present to understand the past' still shapes my thinking.

I'm mostly working to understand how language changes over time, especially speech sounds, but also on understanding language shift. We have excellent pieces of theories and methodologies but NARNiHS should help us to get at the bigger picture. Essentially all of my work is in collaboration with colleagues and students and that's necessary in order to have any chance of grasping the key issues, evidence and context involved. Fostering new and new kinds of collaboration is a challenge and another reason NARNiHS can be so valuable. At the meeting, I'll explore two settings that our research groups are working on and how they connect with NARNiHS. Both are in a kind of 'sweet spot' historically, deep enough that we can see how things evolve over many generations, but shallow enough that we have rich information, socially and structurally.

- **The (pre-)history of Upper Midwestern English.** We've tracked in recent years the rise of 'Wisconsin English', in terms of patterns of speech, the perception of distinct varieties and the enregisterment of those varieties. We're currently looking into how people talked about 'dialect' and 'accent' before distinct local varieties had emerged.
- **German-English contact in Wisconsin.** German has been spoken in Wisconsin almost as long as English and we have vast written documentation — from personal letters to literary works — and audio recordings of speakers born back to the Civil War era, in addition to excellent social history and demographic research. We're working to trace patterns of variation and change, the role of standard language(s) and standard language ideology.

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My work in historical sociolinguistics has focused on the history of dialect contact/mixing and new dialect formation (koineization) in Spanish. Given the particular history of Castilian/Spanish, which has its origins in dialect mixing in early Castile and then undergoes repeated series of expansions and koineizations until the 17th century, this is no minor or peripheral issue. I have been especially interested in exploring questions of actuation: how and why certain phonological and grammatical changes occurred in medieval Castilian, at particular times and places, and how these can be understood (at least in part) as the results of the mixing and simplification that accompany the quasi-predictable process of koineization (modeling of which I have also explored). I have sometimes aimed to tease apart the impact of dialect mixing (traditionally overlooked in language history) from other more evident forms of language contact (e.g., “substrates”, contact with other prestige varieties) to which a number of well-known changes in Spanish have been primarily attributed in the past. I have also extended my concern for explaining change to a complementary concern for explaining variation in medieval texts. These include the great corpus of texts produced under the patronage of King Alfonso X (1252-1284), the language of which, I believe, was influenced by the results of contemporary koineization as well as accommodation/alignment to local dialects by royal scribes who traveled with the itinerant court.

In recent years, I have become increasingly interested in how cultural change, in terms of attitudes and ideologies, have contributed to change and variation. For instance, I am exploring how Latin-Romance hybridity in the language of early 13th-century local legal documents was shaped by individual scribes’ metalinguistic understandings of variation as well as aesthetic/rhetorical principles such as *variatio*. On the other hand, I am re-examining chancery documents produced under Alfonso X for evidence of the impact of an incipient vernacular standardization (codification), which in recent years has been largely discounted in the face of the massive variation which is found in the most well-known texts. Finally, I have also begun to explore how early modern koineization (e.g., in London and Seville/Madrid) combined with different social ideologies to lead to very different effects on the system of address pronouns of English and Spanish.

I am interested in the creation of NARNiHS for several reasons. First, and despite my long-standing interest in historical sociolinguistics, I have tended to interact primarily with other historians of Spanish, who are certainly more aware of the particularities of the history of Spanish but not always as informed about or as interested in historical sociolinguistics. I look forward to the creation of this North American network precisely because it will facilitate more frequent interaction between historical sociolinguists on this side of Atlantic (though as complement, not competitor, to HiSoN), and promote dialogue about common issues of theory and method. In addition, by helping to put into circulation a recognizable rubric, it may also attract more present and future scholars to our study of language, society, and history. I anticipate that one of the first questions we will need to discuss is precisely what ‘historical sociolinguistics’ should be understood to encompass.