

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

# **North American Research Network in Historical Sociolinguistics**

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NARNiHS

**Initial meeting, September 30 – October 2, 2016**

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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).

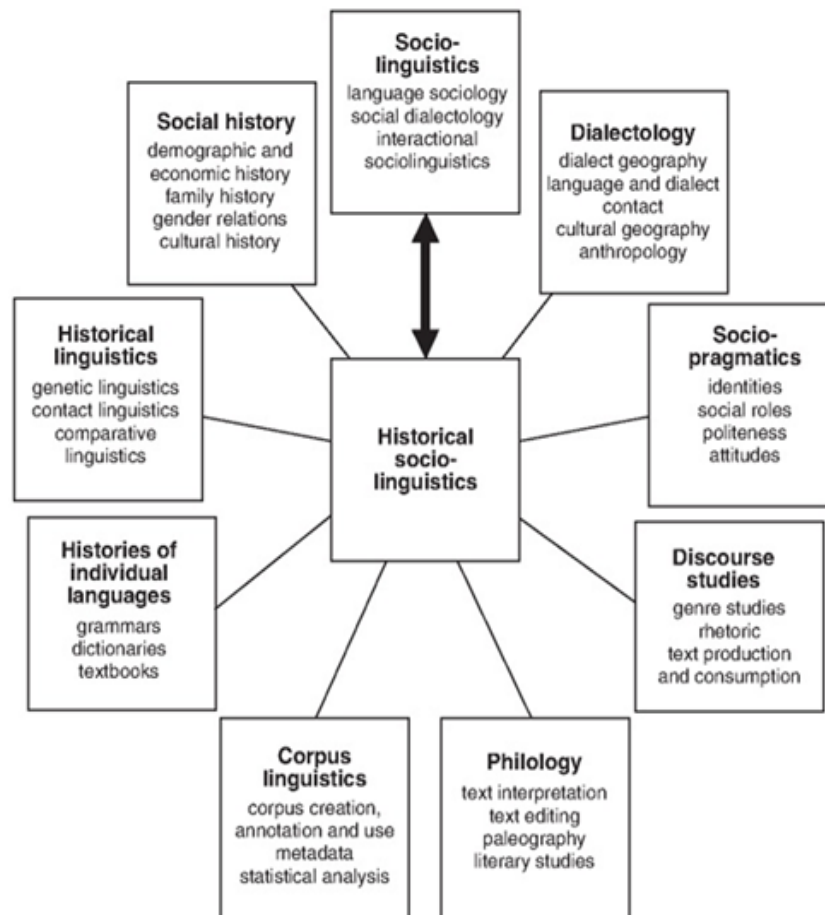


Figure 2.1. Historical sociolinguistics from a cross-disciplinary perspective

**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**

**LAUREL J. BRINTON – University of British Columbia**

Since the publication of my 1996 book, *Pragmatic Markers in English: Grammaticalization and Discourse Functions*, my area of research has been Historical Pragmatics. My work has examined the inventory of pragmatic markers in the history of the language, their lexical origins and the rise of pragmatic meanings, the processes of change accounting for their development (grammaticalization/pragmaticalization), and the syntactic pathways of development.

Historical Pragmatics, as Andreas Jucker notes, “studies historical language data by asking explicitly and systematically what the specific situation was in which the data was produced, who the writer was, and to what audience it was addressed” (1998: 3). This concern with language use in its historical context with a focus on the ways in which language is shaped and changed by its producers and recipients is shared with Historical Sociolinguistics, which has been seen as concerned with “charting the variation and change in language among and across communities and individual speakers (Grund forthc.). But here the two fields can be seen to diverge. Historical Pragmatics examines those aspects of language use “which can only be described by reference to their pragmatic function in specific communicative situation; and it offers pragmatic explanations for language change” (Jucker 1998: 3). These pragmatic features include expressions (e.g., discourse markers, interjections, address terms), utterances (e.g., speech acts), and genres and domains of discourse (e.g., the genre conventions of personal letters, medical recipes, or prayers, or the language of medical or legal discourse). These can be studied statically as they exist at a particular time in the past or dynamically as they change over time. In contrast, Historical Sociolinguistics “takes into consideration the effect of a range of social factors (among others, gender, age, community and network ties, and class/rank/status)” (Grund forthc.) on the form and use of language. Like Historical Pragmatics, Historical Sociolinguistics lends itself to either a synchronic approach focusing on the effects of sociolinguistic factors on language use during a particular historical period or a diachronic approach which seeks to connect language change with the presence of social factors.

Historical Pragmatics and Historical Sociolinguistics both use methods of analysis originally designed for the study of contemporary – specifically oral – data, i.e., naturally-occurring, spontaneous, face-to-face conversation and oral narrative. In their historical application, the fields thus share what Labov (1994: 11) has termed the “bad data” problem, that is, the lack of appropriate (oral) texts from the past capable of providing sufficient contextual information to undertake sociolinguistic or pragmatic analysis. This problem has been addressed in both fields by using speech-like data that exist from the past, including witness depositions, court records, and parliamentary proceeding, dramatic dialogue, represented speech in narrative fiction and poetry, didactic works in dialogic form, and personal letters. For some of these data (e.g., personal letters) we indeed have information concerning the sociolinguistic and pragmatic contexts in which the texts were produced and are able to undertake detailed sociolinguistic and pragmatic analysis.

Another problem faced by both Historical Pragmatics and Historical Sociolinguistics is the difficulty of understanding the contexts within which texts were produced in the past. In both fields, the “uniformitarian principle” is assumed to hold, that is, the view “that the linguistic forces which operated today and are observable around us today are not unlike those which have operated in the past” (Romaine 1982: 122). But a sensitivity to historical and social factors is necessary in both fields, as, for example, when Kohonen (2008) discovers that directive speech

acts are vastly different in form and function in the socially hierarchical society of Anglo-Saxon England based on reciprocity than they are in contemporary negative politeness-based society.

Historical Pragmatics and Historical Sociolinguistics can thus be seen as sister disciplines, both concerned with the way in which aspects of language use – its use by speakers and hearers whose forms of language are shaped by social determinants or by the pragmatic inferences arising in contexts of use – determine language use in the past or motivate changes over time.

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**JOSH BROWN – University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire**

I am interested in how languages and varieties are embedded historically in societies and manifest through multilingualism, language contact, and standardization as a result of power and legitimacy. I am especially interested in Pennsylvania High German, a variety of German used in nineteenth century America among pre-Revolutionary War immigrants from Central Europe. When the first immigrants from Central Europe arrived in Colonial America, they brought with them a variety of dialects which eventually levelled to create Pennsylvania Dutch. Among the most educated of Pennsylvania Dutch speakers, European German held strong literary appeal – it was the language of their books, their newspapers, and their schools. Yet the distance from the European homeland created a hegemonic shift in the linguistic lives of these early German Americans; indeed, they were adopting more of an American regional identity. Along with their shift in identities and in linguistic hegemony, structural aspects of the languages they used also changed. The European standard was in contact with English and with their spoken German dialect varieties. Moreover, the formal education in German at rural public schools was largely lacking to be able to develop a strong foundation in the productive expression of the European standard. Emphasis among most Pennsylvania Dutch was on the receptive knowledge of European German – to be able to read the Bible, hymnal, local newspaper and almanac, not on active and productive control of the language. In time, a variety of European German called Pennsylvania High German emerged in the publications, writings, and schools of Pennsylvania. It evolved as the variety that still held literary prestige, but was more easily understood by the Americans than European German.

What makes Pennsylvania High German unique and stand out from the most recent scholarship is that its sociolinguistic history is one of “dismantling” a European standard language. In this instance, although the linguistic hegemony on an international scale and among the educated would have been the European German standard, the shift in domains of usage made Pennsylvania Dutch the only lasting remnant of their European linguistic history. For Pennsylvanians, the shift away from the European standard is informative to the creation of their New World identities and appreciation of the local and regional. The language was an important tool for formation of Pennsylvania Dutch identities in their new American homeland. It represented both a tenacious yet precarious hold on their European roots and a bridge to their new sociocultural and linguistic identities allowing them to maintain their rural schools, non-urban American identities, and still nod toward their European roots and promote their isolative American regionalism.

To date, though, most historical sociolinguistic studies using a macrolinguistic approach have focused on the creation of the standard language and the various ideologies at work in the social context. Pennsylvania High German – with its loans and morphosyntactic influences from Pennsylvania Dutch and influences from English – was a case of orality influencing literacy, not the opposite which is the process largely observed in other Western language learning situations. In North American contexts (highlighted by NARNiHS), the disconnect between civic literacies and oralities and political and economic power feature strongly in the American historical context. As a result, the contested linguistic identities of immigrants in historical settings warrant more attention.

**PETER J. GRUND – University of Kansas**

My work in historical sociolinguistics has focused on how social context/situation and various pragmatic concerns influence language choices. More specifically, I have worked on Early Modern English (1500-1700) court documents from both sides of the Atlantic, looking at how witnesses and the recorders of their statements frame testimony in order to accomplish various social and communicative goals. I am particularly interested in the notion of *stance* (the expression of attitude, evaluation, assessment, personal feelings, etc.). I've shown, for example, that, during the witch trials in Salem in 1692–1693, the witnesses and recorders made sophisticated use of stance resources to advance certain social agendas, such as positioning themselves as central members of the community of practice that developed during the trials, and enhancing their own credibility and standing in the larger community. I have a long-term interest in charting the development and changes in these stance resources in various communities, and I have ongoing projects on related features such as evidentials (or source marking structures, e.g., *I see, we're told, reportedly*) and pragmatic phenomena such as speech descriptors (as in *They said angrily*). I'm also interested in more general (theoretical) questions of how we reconstruct communities in historical periods, and how we use such community constructions (speech communities, discourse communities, communities of practice, text communities, social networks, etc.) to understand language use.

I'm very excited by the prospect of establishing NARNiHS. It clearly has the potential to bring more attention to our field, and hence to give it further legitimacy in North America. One of the particularly appealing aspects of the network for me is the opportunity of learning about and exchanging ideas with scholars in other languages working on similar issues. An obvious, but nonetheless very important, question for the network to address is how to define ourselves and how to keep the network distinct but also flexible enough to accommodate various approaches. I think there is much to be gained by making connections to scholars who work in related fields such as historical pragmatics and historical/diachronic corpus linguistics. Researchers in these fields often work with and appeal to social categories, even if they do not necessarily frame their research in historical sociolinguistic terms. Indeed, in my own work, I have found it difficult to draw a strict dividing line between pragmatics and sociolinguistics; much of my research underscores the complex intersection between pragmatic context and social situation/social categories, and I thus find myself often framing my work as “sociopragmatic.”

Along similar lines, it seems to me that historical sociolinguistics is sometimes simply taken to be the historical equivalent of modern variationist sociolinguistics. While such connections are of course helpful in pointing to issues that are worth pursuing in a historical context, it also seems beneficial for historical sociolinguistics to develop its own agendas and methods (as we indeed have in many respects, often out of necessity). That doesn't mean of course that we as scholars of historical sociolinguistics should distance ourselves from modern sociolinguistics – that would seem counterproductive in many ways – but, at the same time, it seems important to establish a separate profile. I see an opportunity here for a developing network to give serious thought to what the foundational methods and principles of the field are. I look forward to hearing other members' take on these and other issues!

## **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.*



**JOHN LIPSKI – Pennsylvania State University**

Is what I do “historical sociolinguistics”?

I think so, at least as represented in the following current research projects  
([www.personal.psu.edu/jml34/](http://www.personal.psu.edu/jml34/))

- (1) Tracing the African contribution to the diversification of Spanish in the Americas. In assessing current Afro-Hispanic speech communities and the possible role of earlier contact varieties, it is necessary to reconstruct the sociolinguistic matrices in which Africans’ and Afro-descendants’ Spanish were embedded during colonial times. Comparisons with contemporary non-diasporic contacts between Spanish and African languages (e.g. in Equatorial Guinea) shed light on some of the sociolinguistic variables that were in play. Analysis of the ritual speech of the *Negros Congos* of Panama, whose Carnival-season reenactment of colonial events is reflected in their language, provides another window into the language(s) of resistance during the enslavement period.
- (2) The Afro-Colombian creole language Palenquero contains some Spanish morphosyntactic incursions that some have regarded as code-switching, others as partial decreolization, and still others as dating back to the formation of this language during the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. My ongoing experimental research with Palenquero-Spanish bilinguals of varying levels of proficiency provides empirical parameters against which theories of historical origins can be compared.
- (3) Andean Spanish, e.g. as spoken as L1 or L2 by Quechua speakers and their descendants, has been documented since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Research in contemporary AS speech communities—especially where contemporary non-ethnic Spanish is now taking over—provide sociolinguistic vignettes that can inform models of contact zones in previous centuries.
- (4) Ecuadoran “Media Lengua,” consisting of Quichua morphosyntax and Spanish-relexified roots for all nouns, verbs, adjectives, and other lexical categories, appears to be an early 20<sup>th</sup> century development, and yet conclusive models of its formation remain elusive. My ongoing interactive (psycholinguistic) research in contemporary ML-speaking communities suggests a combination of internal linguistic and external socio-cultural factors that contributed to this relexification.
- (5) Spanish-Portuguese hybridization in northeastern Argentina (Misiones province) provides a window into the under-studied formation of “fronterizo” dialects in northern Uruguay. My contemporary research with Misiones “portuñol,” and comparisons with other Spanish-Portuguese border areas along the perimeter of Brazil allow for extrapolation to the likely sociolinguistic environment in 19<sup>th</sup> century Uruguay.
- (6) Philippine Creole Spanish (Chabacano) of Zamboanga (Mindanao) may have been formed as early as the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century or as late as the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, either in Zamboanga itself or in the greater Manila area. A combination of research with widely scattered written documents and work with contemporary Chabacano-speaking communities is contributing to the reconstruction of probable scenarios for the formation and diversification of Chabacano varieties.

**THOMAS PURNELL – University of Wisconsin–Madison**

NARNiHS and archival recording in the United States.

The term historical sociolinguistics—loosely defined as ‘the relation of language to society over time’—suggests that temporal language variation reflects the changes that occur to group affiliations of speakers in the past. Generally, changes to actual and perceived group membership through boundary work by insiders and outsiders often results from contact between groups. Contextualizing contemporary contact with examinations of deep or shallow past contact leads to a better understanding of language change.

A large portion of research that I have been a part of with others—from Purnell, Tepeli & Salmons 2005 to Purnell, Raimy & Salmons 2016 and Abram & Purnell 2016—highlights relatively shallow historical time depth, that is, changes to dialects occurring within the last 150 years. Our primary data comes from archival field notes and audio recordings such as those collected through the Linguistic Atlas of the US project (LAUS), the Wisconsin English Language Study (WELS), and the Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE). Present work examines recordings of regional US dialects from WI and MD and states surrounding both WI and MD. Both states are central to larger regions (Upper Midwest and the Mid-Atlantic region, respectively) with varying contact between groups of speakers: in the Upper Midwest, change includes immigrant group substrate effects; in the Mid Atlantic region, transportation contact patterns (or lack of contact) accounts for some linguistic change. Over the last few years, we have been transcribing the free conversation of LAUM, WELS and DARE recordings in order to test specific sociohistorical claims about language change. For example, preliminary work shows that speakers with the low back merger (COT, CAUGHT) during the first half of the 20th century were living side by side with speakers without the merger in the Upper Midwest. It is no longer clear whether the merger 'swept' through Minnesota as is a standard story; instead, LAUM recordings suggest that the merger was a more stable variant.

The present challenges I face are those that others have encountered for quite some time, ranging from the practical (the overwhelming weight of data collection; dependency on past protocols) to generalizability. As the task of analyzing archival historical sociolinguistic records requires interaction with fields such as sociology, history, folklore and cultural studies under the larger rubric of Digital Studies, the challenge is, first, to keep one’s eye on the goal of linguistic analysis without appear uncooperative to other specialists, and, second, sharing the burden of the perpetual weight of data. This latter point has always been an infliction of sociolinguists and dialectologists. For example, Wenker and Gilliéron both dealt with this problem with their respective atlas projects, as did Kurath and his LAUS colleagues as did Cassidy with WELS and DARE.

NARNiHS can help by providing a forum for feedback in crowdsourcing and in generalizing. Before WELS and DARE data was ever collected, Cassidy had multiple conversations with members of the American Dialect Society regarding methodology; after data collection, many of those same ADS members contributed time in the editing of entries. We use crowdsourcing in our classes by having students transcribe a speaker at a time to learn more about sociohistorical change and variation in the US. There is a larger benefit for the field if more individuals were involved in transcribing historical recordings of their region.

## 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.

**ISRAEL SANZ-SÁNCHEZ – West Chester University**

My area of focus is the Spanish of the US Southwest, as well as dialect contact and change in early colonial Spanish America, which I approach both as a linguist and as a social historian. In the area of Southwest Spanish, I have studied contact between English and Spanish in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as the diachronic evolution of second-person forms of address in New Mexican Spanish. In the second area, I have studied dialect contact in colonial New Mexico and morphological change in Latin American Spanish cross-dialectally. In more recent work, I have become increasingly interested in the application of an ecological approach to the study of contact and change in the Spanish colonial setting, for two reasons: first, from a sociohistorical point of view, it allows us to go beyond the traditional “Iberians-only” narrative of dialect contact in early colonial Spanish America; second, from a linguistic point of view, it provides us with a theoretical framework from which to reanalyze the evolution of colonial Spanish in a truly diachronic manner, i.e., not just to explain the linguistic profile of present-day varieties, but also to reconstruct how different demographic combinations resulted in different linguistic pools throughout the colonial period. In this respect, I am currently compiling a corpus of 16<sup>th</sup>-century autographed colonial texts in order to document language uses by region of provenance and to study this linguistic evidence quantitatively (a basic component of dialect contact studies that has been largely bypassed in the previous literature).

Since Suzanne Romaine’s first explicit application of sociolinguistic theory and methodology to the study of historical corpora, the field of Historical Sociolinguistics has become a lot more diverse and has benefitted from contributions from other fields like sociology, language acquisition studies, corpus linguistics and statistics. I believe that it is precisely in the area of continued interdisciplinary collaboration that some of the biggest opportunities for our field may still emerge. One example is the development of large searchable corpora of archival materials that can provide language history researchers with sizeable bodies of data – although many historical textual corpora exist, most are collected for purposes other than historical linguistic research, contain limited social information about the context that the texts were produced in or do not follow reliable philological criteria, and are thus of only limited use to historical sociolinguists. A notable exception in the field of Spanish in Latin America is *CORDIAM* (*Corpus Diacrónico y Diatópico del Español de América*: <http://www.cordiam.org/>), a database of transcribed colonial archival materials from different areas of Latin America launched in 2014 that comprises materials contributed by over forty language history researchers in Latin America, the United States and Europe.

Our field also faces practical and cultural challenges. From the practical point of view, interdisciplinary or cross-institutional collaborations always require resources, and these are increasingly harder to come by in the current landscape of decreasing funding across institutions of higher education in the United States. These practical concerns are also connected to a larger cultural environment where historical studies (and humanistic studies, in general) are not seen as a priority, and where higher education is increasingly expected by the public (and many university administrators) to prioritize other fields that are perceived to be more urgent for collective interests, such as the sciences, technology, or other so-called “applied” areas.

Within this larger context, I see NARNiHS as a necessary initiative that can have a positive impact on several fronts: (1) perhaps in a most obvious or direct way, it can be a forum for the exchange of ideas and the initiation of collaboration initiatives among members of the network, not only in terms of research projects, but also in the area of resource procurement; (2)

it can serve as an active source of advocacy about our field, both at the level of our individual institutions (by organizing symposia, conferences, etc.) and of larger society (organizing events open to the public, and having as much of a presence in the media as possible). Regardless of how active the network is in these areas, however, the most urgent task of NARNiHS is to contribute to the establishment of Historical Sociolinguistics as a field in its own right in a way that makes sense to the current academic and social context – i.e., why does it mean to do Historical Sociolinguistics in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, why do we think it is important, and what do we need to move forward as a field.

I look forward to the start of this conversation at our upcoming meeting in Madison.

**FERNANDO TEJEDO-HERRERO – University of Wisconsin–Madison**

My research in historical sociolinguistics is rooted in my work in Spanish philology during my formative years as a graduate student. Philological research relies heavily on hands-on work with *all* available textual evidence, as well as an understanding of the socio-historical context and the cultural and linguistic environments in which a text was produced. From this lens, my interest in historical linguistics has always been molded by approaches that integrate (or are perceived as integrating) the study of language in society. My ongoing research on language variation in the transmission of texts from manuscript to print developed into research topics concerned with the emergence of Spanish as a national standard. More specifically, my work has focused on studying standardization processes of variation reduction in late 15th-century Spanish and the linguistic ideologies that guided the promotion and reallocation of linguistic variants as a result of those processes (or processes of koineization) in Court and elite circles of Early Modern Spain.

In the last few years, my interest in standardization has developed into two related lines of research. The first one is the creation of a corpus of personal correspondence of Early Modern Castilian, one of the main vernacular varieties that served as the basis for the development of the standard variety. My interest in private letters, beyond simply gaining access to potential examples of closer-to-speech vernacular usage, is to understand the relationship of the standard variety (Castilian/Spanish) with the dialect(s) used in different geographical areas, and to examine the development of ideologies that promoted the acceptance of some features of the vernacular while, in turn, demoting others as dialectal.

More recently, I have begun a second line of research that seeks to explore different aspects of the history of Spanish from the standpoint of linguistic ecology. This approach highlights the importance of the social environment in which language variation and change occurs by bringing to the forefront the significant role played by factors such as speakers' use of other languages and dialects, linguistic demography, domains of use, attitudes towards the varieties in question, and degrees of language and dialect contact that may have contributed to the linguistic speciation of Spanish.

Considering the focal areas of my research (standardization, historical dialectology, and language and dialect contact), an initiative such as NARNiHS is highly appealing and important to pursue. What I hope NARNiHS will accomplish is not only the most obvious goal of facilitating the cross-fertilization of ideas among colleagues working on historical sociolinguistics, but also that of providing a platform that increases the visibility of the field, helps advance the discipline (regarding methods, theories, and analyses), and promotes interest in historical sociolinguistics among colleagues (*and* students) in related fields. I believe the potential challenges (e.g., sustaining effort and intensity, finding common goals among a wide range of scholars from various fields of study, funding for organizing activities) can easily be overcome, and are offset by the number of opportunities this endeavor will bring to the community of historical sociolinguists and scholars in related fields alike. Historical sociolinguistics is an emerging field with immense potential for expansion, and I look forward to being part of this joint effort.

**DON TUTEN – Emory University**

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 17<sup>th</sup> 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 13<sup>th</sup>-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.