

REVIEWS

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Isabelle Buchstaller & Beat Siebenhaar (eds.), *Language Variation – European Perspectives VI: Selected papers from the Eighth International Conference on Language Variation in Europe (ICLaVE 8), Leipzig, May 2015* (Studies in Language Variation 19). Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2017. Pp. xvi + 237.

Reviewed by EVAN HAZENBERG, University of Sussex

Conference proceedings can be a bit of a mixed bag: sometimes they're so tightly focused on a narrowly-defined patch of scholarly ground that it's easy to get lost in the minutiae, while at other times they're so far-reaching that it's not immediately obvious how the various papers relate to one another. Isabelle Buchstaller & Beat Siebenhaar's volume strikes a nice balance between the two extremes, curating a well-rounded collection of ongoing research in the field of European variation studies, with an appropriately-scaled depth of focus threaded through with common themes and questions. The ICLaVE conference series is one of the main exchanges for variationist research outside of North America, and includes work that touches on several domains of linguistics: the papers in this book cover lexical, phonological, morphosyntactic, and attitudinal variation in different language situations across European languages, and engage with numerous linguistic processes using diverse methodologies and analytical frameworks. It is an exciting snapshot of the research going on beyond the realm of English language linguistics, which often seems to dominate the field more than it ought to. As someone who works with varieties of English, it's genuinely invigorating to be reminded of the scope of research beyond my narrow specialism.

The first chapter is an introduction to the book by the editors, who give an overview of the conference and present the structure of the book. They provide a precis for each of the ensuing chapters, signposting the key details (languages, main research focus) and methodologies for each. The next three chapters cover the plenary papers from the conference, each of which helps to set up some of the big questions that resonate throughout the rest of the book: how we think about language change, and how that perspective impacts the kinds of questions that we ask and the data that we interrogate in pursuit of answers. The first plenary is Martin Haspelmath & Susanne Maria Michaelis' 'Analytic and synthetic: Typological change in varieties of European languages', which addresses the synchronic problems inherent in trying to classify languages as either analytic or synthetic. They argue that a diachronic perspective shows that

these differences are better thought of in terms of a diachronic process – which they call ‘analyticization’ – where analytic patterns develop in competition with older (more classically synthetic) forms. The second plenary is from Miriam Meyerhoff & Steffen Klaere, ‘A case for clustering speakers and linguistic variables: Big issues with smaller samples in language variation’. This paper explores the relationship between small-scale language variation (of the sort that variationists study) and large-scale phenomena of language change (as addressed in language evolution studies), asking whether the insights of one can inform the questions of the other. They use a handful of modelling techniques – principal component analysis and constrained correspondence analysis in particular – to explore data from Bequia (Meyerhoff & Walker 2007), and to highlight avenues towards what they see as one of the questions central to the variationist enterprise: ‘how the variation in language that is a property of the individual speaker is amplified across speakers to become recognizable as the characteristics of a group, and eventually to differentiate entirely distinct languages’ (43–44)? The third plenary – Jürgen Erich Schmidt’s ‘Dynamics, variation and the brain’ – tackles a very similar question from a neurolinguistic perspective: how do observations of sound change and sound stability map onto our brains’ perceptions of the sound systems that we encounter? Working with neurolinguistic research techniques and German dialects, Schmidt argues that there is a synchronization feedback process in interaction that provides feedback on intelligibility (Schmidt 2010), which scales up from the individual to the collective linguistic community, and which is ‘crucial for whether there is stability or linguistic change’ (64) over time.

With the big questions fleshed out, the book moves on to the selection of individual papers from the conference. The first two focus on lexical variation in one form or another, and touch on methodological concerns. Xulio Sousa’s ‘Aggregate analysis of lexical variation in Galician’ applies various statistical and modelling methods to lexical variation, contrasting these approaches to both traditional phonetic studies and the more classically dialectological approaches to lexical variation. The next paper, ‘Inter-individual variation among youth growing up in a bidialectal community: The acquisition of dialect and standard Dutch vocabulary’, by R. J. Francot, K. Van den Heuij, E. Blom, W. Heeringa & L. Cornips, notes that the classification of children as straightforwardly monolingual or bidialectal is problematic in the context of Limbourg. Their study finds that children demonstrate highly idiosyncratic patterns of acquisition, including the production of intermediate forms between standard Dutch and the local dialect, likely related to high degrees of metalinguistic awareness in the community.

The next few papers mark a shift away from the lexical and towards phonological concerns. Jenny Nilsson & Lena Wenner’s ‘The unruly dialect variant [a]: The case of the opening of (ɛ) in the traditional Torsby dialect’ looks at the [+local] indexical meaning of the lowering short vowel /ɛ/ which contrasts with the more regional [+urban] meaning indexed by the lowering of the long /ɛ:/. Although they lack the data to account for why /ɛ/ in particular has come to signal local affiliation (as in Labov’s 1963 work in Martha’s Vineyard), they

speculate that its high frequency can account for the rapidity of its spread once it became enregistered (i.e. Agha 2003). Panayiotis A. Pappas' 'Vowel raising and vowel deletion as sociolinguistic variables in Northern Greek' also investigates phonological encoding of localness, this time in the face of de-urbanization in Northern Greece. This paper, an early report from a longitudinal study, notes that (re-)adoption of the local variants by in-migrants is related to gender and education, as well as to evaluative assessments (i.e. stigma) of particular variants. The third phonological paper is Juan-Andrés Villena-Ponsoda & Matilde Vida-Castro's 'Between local and standard varieties: Horizontal and vertical convergence and divergence of dialects in Southern Spain'. The authors present evidence for an emerging intermediate regional variety forming between the standard variety and southern dialects that is disrupting the 'long-established diglossic constellation between Madrid and Seville' (127), via processes of levelling and koineisation, which are eliminating some of the more strongly vernacular features.

The discussion of morphosyntactic studies begins with Aurore Tirard's paper, 'Syntactic doubling and variation: The case of Romani', which looks at an ongoing structural change in Albanian Romani NPs, involving an innovative polydefinite Det–N–Det–Adj form. The author notes an interaction between age, gender, and education, and observes that '[p]olydefiniteness in Romani is a case of pattern replication from Greek that then enabled a second pattern replication from Albanian' (154). Aria Adli's 'Variation in style: Register and lifestyle in Parisian French' bridges syntactic and social structures, using the analysis of two linguistic innovations – subject–verb inversion in WH-questions and subject doubling – to interrogate the operationalization of lifestyle (Bourdieu 1979) as a viable alternative to more traditional sociolinguistic approaches to questions of class and social status. Ole Schützler's paper, 'A corpus-based study of concessive conjunctions in three L1-varieties of English', reports on variation in Canadian, British and New Zealand Englishes and finds no strong patterns of difference in usage of concessive conjunctions (*although*, *though* and *even though*) in either distribution or semantic types between the varieties. In contrast, in 'Variation in the structure of conjunctions in Luxembourgish German in the 19th century: An interplay of language-internal and contact-induced variation', Rahel Beyer examines bilingual public notices from Luxembourg (French and German) during a period of French dominance, and notes that '[t]he French original . . . seems to provoke calquing that results in convergent structures' (193). This is attributed to the relative dominance of French over German at the time, leading to a convergence in forms through exploitation of structural similarities.

The final two papers are somewhat harder to classify by linguistic domain, but are a nice note to end on as they zoom out in a sense from the micro-linguistic variation that characterizes the previous chapters. In 'Geolinguistic documentation of multilingual areas: Verba Alpina and the challenges of digital humanities (DH)', Susanne Oberholzer & Markus Kunzmann look at methodologies for bridging the technological gap between traditional dialect atlases and more modern geolinguistic data. As well as presenting an overview of some

technological obstacles, Oberholzer & Kunzmann note that such databases are useful analytically as they offer researchers ‘a concise overview of missing data . . . which can either be supplied by information from other atlases or dictionaries from the area under investigation or, at a later stage, by the new crowd-sourcing based data collection’ (211). Finally, Ivana Škevin’s ‘Variation in Croatian: The verbal behaviour of rural speakers in an urban speech community’ explores social patterns of accommodation towards speakers of standard Croatian by speakers of rural varieties. Škevin notes that geographical variation maps to social variation via identification with local communities (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985), on the basis of perceived prestige of the dialects in question. This study uses self-reported data, and in a sense brings us back to the questions raised by the plenaries: how does inter- and intra-speaker variation give rise to language varieties and, ultimately, to distinct languages?

There are no concluding remarks from the editors of this volume to explicitly refocus the reader’s attention on these central questions, but the conceptual overlap between the papers creates an overall effect of resonance between the various authors and their respective projects. Although all of us engaged in sociolinguistic research use disparate methodologies to interrogate different types of data and draw on a range of analytical tools to bear on our particular research questions, for the most part we actually are trying to chip away at the same central questions of language variation and change: Where does language change come from (Weinreich, Labov & Herzog’s actuation problem), and how does it then move through the speech community? The emergence of intermediate forms, as addressed in several of these studies, suggests some of the mechanisms by which variation gets introduced, and the mix of diachronic and synchronic observations may help narrow down the possible constraints on which patterns of variation may endure long enough to lead to real change. The answers aren’t fully fleshed out yet, but perhaps we can begin to make out their shapes.

What this volume does particularly well is to showcase how the bigger-scale intellectual undertaking of variation study works in practice, with small pieces of seemingly unconnected data giving us some solid starting points. Of course, we’re not there yet, but this is an exciting time in variationist sociolinguistics: new data sets open up new avenues to map patterns of variation, and new analytical and statistical tools allow us to reconsider those data sets we already have. This book will be of interest to anyone whose work aligns with any of the papers included – whether a particular language, linguistic variable or methodological approach – but also to anyone who wants a reminder of the scale and scope of what we are trying to accomplish, and the sheer variety of research that we are collectively undertaking.

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Rob Drummond, *Researching urban youth language and identity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. Pp. vii + 286.

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This monograph recounts Rob Drummond's experiences conducting a sociolinguistic, ethnographic study in two Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) in Manchester, England. PRUs are educational centres for children who cannot attend mainstream school – most often because they have been excluded for poor behaviour. It is important to note that the ethnographic fieldwork detailed in the book was carried out by Rob Drummond and Susan Dray, his Research Associate (RA). Drummond is the sole author, as the Principal Investigator on the project, but he clearly acknowledges the crucial role that Dray played. Indeed, he is explicit throughout about how the research project progressed in ways uniquely informed by his collaboration with her.

The original aim of Drummond's research was to identify a distinctly 'urban' variety of English – or the Manchester equivalent of Multicultural London English (Cheshire et al. 2011). However, the data he collected did not, in the end, lead him to the clearest of conclusions. Rather than presenting a wealth of data or in-depth theorisation, 'the overall focus of the book is on the context of the research and the process of carrying it out' (1). The book is focused primarily on the practical aspects of doing ethnography in this setting and, as a result, is an enormously useful resource for other linguistic ethnographers taking a variety of approaches.

In Chapter 1, 'Introduction', Drummond gives a candid account of his experiences trying to locate participants for a pilot project. He describes his attempts to meet likely users of 'urban' Manchester English, and writes honestly about the impact of him being a white, middle-class researcher entering spaces reserved for