

Preface

TERESA FANEGO

Over the years, the Blackwell Handbooks in Linguistics Series has produced a number of volumes that represent important milestones in the development of linguistic theory and practice in such diverse fields as language variation and change (Chambers, Trudgill and Schilling-Estes 2002), historical linguistics (Joseph and Janda 2003), bilingualism (Bhatia and Ritchie 2005), pragmatics (Horn and Ward 2005), pidgin and creole studies (Kouwenberg and Singler 2008) and language contact (Hickey 2010), among others. The publication of a new volume in the series, devoted to historical sociolinguistics, testifies to the dynamism of this discipline, thirty years after the publication of Suzanne Romaine's groundbreaking work (1982) on the application of sociolinguistic models to historical data.

In the Preface to the proceedings from the first international workshop on historical sociolinguistics (or 'socio-historical linguistics', as it was styled at the time), held in Poznań in 1983 during the Sixth International Conference on Historical Linguistics, Romaine and Traugott (1985: 5) pointed out that the workshop aimed at "bringing together sociolinguists, historical linguists and historians [...], and combin[ing] the rich philological tradition with recent work on quantitative methods, discourse analysis, literacy, as well as with historical phonology, syntax, and pragmatics." This diversity and interdisciplinarity of historical sociolinguistics has no doubt contributed to its ever growing popularity, and has been further nourished and extended in recent times by a number of developments in related fields – corpus linguistics, grammaticalization studies, even Cognitive Linguistics – which have tended to blur the sharp distinction, prevalent during a great part of the twentieth century, between synchrony and diachrony, and between theoretical and applied linguistics.

As the editors of this volume point out in the Introduction, historical sociolinguistics – and historical linguistics in general – has been revolutionized by the emergence of computer-assisted data processing techniques. The compilation of huge historical corpora representing a broad range of genres, dialects, authors, and dates of composition has served to partly overcome the limitations posed by the

fragmentary, or otherwise incomplete, data available to historical sociolinguists, as famously noted by Labov (1994: 11). At the same time, from the time of Labov's pioneering research on sound change in Martha's Vineyard (1963) and New York City (1966), and the theoretical treatment of linguistic variation proposed by Weinreich *et al.* (1968), linguistic variation and linguistic change – synchrony and diachrony – have increasingly come to be seen as two different aspects of the same phenomenon. Their interaction is also a fundamental premise of studies involving grammaticalization, as noted by Aitchison (see Chapter 1 in this volume). Grammaticalization, like sociolinguistics itself, has both a synchronic and a diachronic dimension, though "its foundation is diachronic in nature" (Heine 2003: 575); it "focuses on the intersection of 'internal' grammar (structure) and 'external' grammar (use), and insists on gradience and process rather than product" (Traugott 2001: 127), and, being speaker-oriented and concerned with speaker–hearer interaction, touches directly on sociolinguistics, as reflected, for instance, in the wealth of studies exploring the extent to which tenets of grammaticalization can help to explain language change in situations of extreme language contact (see Plag 2002; Heine and Kuteva 2005; Bruyn 2008; also Chapter 24, 28 and 29 in this *Handbook*).

Likewise, interest in the social nature of language is growing among practitioners of Cognitive Linguistics, as might be expected from a linguistic paradigm that proclaims a usage-based approach to language and takes as the basis of its enquiry "language as it is actually used by real speakers in real situations in a specific historical moment" (Kristiansen and Dirven 2008: 3). The social aspects of language variation have thus begun to attract the attention of cognitive researchers, most notably with reference to lexical and lexical-semantic variation (e.g. Speelman, Grondelaers and Geeraerts 2008), but also in realms such as inflectional (Tummers, Speelman and Geeraerts 2005), constructional (Szmrecsanyi 2010), and phonetic variation (Kristiansen 2008). While such studies tend to have a primarily synchronic orientation, some of them (such as Coleman 2010; Robinson 2010) have also started to encompass general social factors involved in change and the interaction of these with cognitive factors, thus contributing to a better understanding of certain variationist phenomena.¹

To conclude, these and many other aspects of historical sociolinguistics, both theoretical and applied, are covered in this comprehensive and informative reference work. With a list of internationally renowned contributors from around the world, the *Blackwell Handbook of Historical Sociolinguistics* will prove required reading for researchers and advanced students in the fields of historical and non-historical sociolinguistics, language and dialect contact, and language change.

NOTE

- 1 Note that, interestingly enough, volume 3 (2010) of Labov's *Principles of linguistic change* carries the subtitle *Cognitive and cultural factors*.

REFERENCES

- Bhatia, T.K. and Ritchie, W.C. (eds.) (2005) *The Handbook of Bilingualism*, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford.
- Bruyn, A. (2008) Grammaticalization in pidgins and creoles. In S. Kouwenberg and J.V. Singler (eds.), *The Handbook of Pidgin and Creole Studies*, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, pp. 383–410.
- Chambers, J.K., Trudgill, P., and Schilling-Estes, N. (eds.) (2002) *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Colleman, T. (2010) Lectal variation in constructional semantics: 'Benefactive' ditransitives in Dutch. In D. Geeraerts, G. Kristiansen, and Y. Peirsman (eds.), pp. 191–222.
- Geeraerts, D., Kristiansen, G., and Peirsman, Y. (eds.) (2010) *Advances in Cognitive Sociolinguistics*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin.
- Heine, B. (2003) Grammaticalization. In B.D. Joseph and R.D. Janda (eds.), pp. 575–601.
- Heine, B. and Kuteva, T. (2005) *Language Contact and Grammatical Change*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Hickey, R. (ed.) (2010) *The Handbook of Language Contact*, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford.
- Horn, L., and Ward, G. (eds.) (2005) *The Handbook of Pragmatics*, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Joseph, B.D. and Janda, R.D. (eds.) (2003) *The Handbook of Historical Linguistics*, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Kouwenberg, S. and Singler, J.V. (eds.) (2008) *The Handbook of Pidgin and Creole Studies*, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford.
- Kristiansen, G. 2008. Style-shifting and shifting styles: A socio-cognitive approach to lectal variation. In G. Kristiansen and R. Dirven (eds.), pp. 45–88.
- Kristiansen, G. and Dirven, R. (eds.) (2008) *Cognitive Sociolinguistics. Language Variation, Cultural Models, Social Systems*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin.
- Kristiansen, G. and Dirven, R. (2008) Cognitive sociolinguistics: Rationale, methods and scope. In G. Kristiansen and R. Dirven (eds.), pp. 1–17.
- Labov, W. (1963) The social motivation of a sound change. *Word* 19(3): 273–309.
- Labov, W. (1966) *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*, Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, DC.
- Labov, W. (1994) *Principles of Linguistic Change: Internal Factors*, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Labov, W. (2010) *Principles of Linguistic Change: Cognitive and Cultural Factors*, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford.
- Plag, I. (2002) On the role of grammaticalization in creolization. A reassessment. In G. Gilbert (ed.), *Pidgin and Creole Linguistics in the 21st century. Essays at Millennium's End*, Lang, New York, pp. 229–46.
- Robinson, J. (2010) *Awesome insights into semantic variation*. In D. Geeraerts, G. Kristiansen, and Y. Peirsman (eds.), pp. 85–110.
- Romaine, S. (1982) *Socio-historical Linguistics: Its Status and Methodology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Romaine, S. and Traugott, E.C. (eds.) (1985) *Papers from the Workshop on Socio-historical Linguistics*. Special issue of *Folia Linguistica Historica* 6(1): 5–180.
- Speelman, D., Grondelaers, S., and Geeraerts, D. (2008) Variation in the choice of adjectives in the two main national varieties of Dutch. In G. Kristiansen and R. Dirven (eds.), pp. 205–33.
- Szmrecsanyi, B. (2010) The English genitive alternation in a cognitive sociolinguistics perspective. In D. Geeraerts, G. Kristiansen, and Y. Peirsman (eds.), pp. 139–66.
- Traugott, E.C. (2001) Zeroing in on multifunctionality and style. In P. Eckert and J.R. Rickford (eds.), *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 127–37.

Tummers, J., Speelman, D., and Geeraerts, D. (2005) Inflectional variation in Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch: A usage-based account of the adjectival inflection. In N. Delbecque, J. van der Auwera, and D. Geeraerts (eds.), *Perspectives on Variation. Sociolinguistic, Historical, Comparative*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, pp. 93–110.

Weinreich, U., Labov, W., and Herzog, M.I. (1968) Empirical foundations for a theory of language change. In W.P. Lehmann and Y. Malkiel (eds.), *Directions for Historical Linguistics: A Symposium*, University of Texas Press, Austin, pp. 95–195.