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Sociolinguistics around the world: A Handbook[*]

Chapter 26

The British Isles

1. Introduction

In the space afforded us for this chapter, it is impossible to do justice to the wealth of sociolinguistic research on the British Isles over the past ten years. The UK has been a major centre for research in different areas of sociolinguistics over the last half-century, and the volume and breadth of work focusing on sociolinguistic issues in the British Isles only approaches that for the US. This chapter is therefore intended as a summary and guide to a small portion of the widely-expanding themes within British sociolinguistics. Omission reflects the practical constraints of the chapter, and the inevitable bias of the authors. Here we focus on sociolinguistic research which we gather under two main headings – though they are not, of course, mutually exclusive: *quantitative sociolinguistics,* mainly variationist analyses of regional and urban dialects, particularly within a dialect contact framework; and *bilingualism, ethnicity and code choice* including work ranging from investigations into ethnic accents, to research focussing on the linguistic consequences of languages in contact.

1.1 Geography and demography

The British Isles are an archipelago off the northwest coast of continental Europe divided between two states—the Republic of Ireland and The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK). The latter of these consist of four constituent countries: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

The archipelago is made up of over 6000 islands, covering 315,134 square kilometres. The 2006 population of the Republic of Ireland was 4,239,848 (Central Statistics Office of Ireland 2008). The 2006 UK population was 60,597,300: 50,762,900 in England; 1,741,900 in Northern Ireland; 5,116,900 in Scotland and 2,965,900 in Wales (UK Census 2008).

The changing demographics of the British Isles can be linked with current and/or developing themes within sociolinguistic research:

1. The population of the British Isles is increasingly urban. Nearly 80% of the UK population and just over 60% of the Republic of Ireland population now live in urban areas. The population is particularly concentrated in large and increasing urban conurbations such as those surrounding London, Birmingham and the West Midlands, and the sprawling interconnecting cities of Yorkshire. Much recent quantitative sociolinguistic research has looked at urban accents, and at the consequences of migration for linguistic variation and change (e.g. Williams and Kerswill 1999, Watt 2002). There is also a counter tendency to start thinking about language variation in ultra rural communities (e.g. Smith 2007-8; Corrigan to appear).

2. The proportion of the English and Welsh populations reported as 'minority ethnic' has increased by 53% since the 1991 UK Census, from 3million in 1991 to 4.6million in 2001 (similar data were not collected for Northern Ireland in 1991). It is difficult to assess the actual implications of the increase of the 'minority ethnic' population for minority ethnic language speaking and/or survival (and the number is inflated by the introduction of the novel

category 'mixed'), but we might expect ethnicity and language to become increasingly important for British sociolinguistics – and this is also reflected in what is presented here.

3. Recent census data on proficiency in, and use of, indigenous minority languages in the British Isles (Welsh, Irish, Scottish Gaelic) indicates substantial variation in patterns of change across contexts. On the one hand, Welsh speakers are increasing. In 2001 census data, 21% of Welsh residents aged 3 and over were reported to be able to speak Welsh, an increase from 19% in 1981 and 1991 census data (UK Census 2008). The situation of Irish is stable. In 2006 Republic of Ireland census data, 1,656,790 Irish respondents (40% of all respondents) reported knowing Irish, a slight increase from 1,430,205 in 1996 data. The outlook is less encouraging for Scots Gaelic. In 2001 census data, 58,652 respondents aged three and over were reported able to speak Gaelic, an 11% decrease from 1991 census data (General Register Office for Scotland 2005). Reversing language shift in these languages, along with trying to understand better the position of these languages for contemporary speakers, is an issue for British sociolinguistic research, though not one which can be pursued further here.

1.2 Previous sociolinguistic work

The research that we present in this schematic survey has its roots in a long-standing tradition of sociolinguistics in Britain. The methods of quantitative sociolinguistics formulated and established in America by Labov, e.g. (1966, 1972), were quickly transposed into a British context. The first variationist studies appear to be Houck's (1968) study of language variation in Leeds, and the Tyneside Linguistic Survey

(Strang 1968, Allen et al 2007) of Newcastle; in southern England we have Trudgill's seminal study of Norwich (e.g. 1974), and shortly afterwards, in Scotland, Macaulay's important contribution for Glasgow (e.g. 1977). Research in other locations and with other communities, mainly urban, quickly followed, some also extending the focus from phonological to morpho-syntactic variation (e.g. Cheshire 1982). This is represented in the useful collections gathered by e.g. Trudgill (1978), Romaine (1982), Trudgill (1984), amongst others.

2. Quantitative sociolinguistics

2.1 Dialect change and contact

The study of British accents received a new focus in Foulkes and Docherty's (1999) important summary of recent descriptions of urban accents, *Urban Voices*, updating and extending Wells' (1982) invaluable, *Accents of English*. Key themes identified in their introduction included the influence of non-standard varieties on variation and change, for example in the rapid emergence of features such as TH-fronting (using [f] for [θ] in e.g. *think*) across the UK, and the processes underlying such changes, such dialect levelling (subject to many definitions, and well discussed alongside 'diffusion' by Kerswill 2003).

The modelling and explanation of variation and change starting from the kind of dialect contact model set out by Trudgill (1986) is at the core of much variationist

sociolinguistic work of the past decade. A good illustration is provided by the special issue of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics* (2002), with Lesley Milroy's introduction laying out the theoretical context, and noting three recurring themes (p 4): the linguistic consequences of mobility, the impact of language attitudes and ideologies, and the cognitive constraints on the possible outcomes of dialect contact.

Much interesting research has been conducted within this framework: see, e.g. Watt and Milroy (1999) who discuss levelling in Newcastle vowels and argue for the importance of recognizing local vs supra-local as more relevant sociolinguistic distinctions for speakers than 'standard'/'non-standard'; or Dyer's (2002) study of the west midlands town of Corby, whose population was swelled by the influx of Scottish steelworkers, and whose young male speakers have now reallocated former Scottish variants like [o] in the GOAT vowel to 'Corby' speech, as opposed to that of nearby Kettering; or more recently, Llamas' (2007) discussion of sociolinguistic identity and phonetic variation in speakers from the north-eastern town of Middlesborough, which concludes that linguistic variation is best interpreted in the context of speakers' own 'local knowledge, orientation, and language variation' (p.602). In connection with work on language and identity, we can also note that the 'third wave' has now broken on British shores, notably in Moore's study of Bolton adolescents (2006), and Lawson's ongoing research into language and violence in young Glaswegian males (e.g. Lawson 2008).

Important in developing theoretical perspectives for dealing with data from British dialect contact situations have been three large ESRC-funded projects:

1. The first (Kerswill and Williams 1994) looked at the formation of an urban koine, in the new town, Milton Keynes, in the speech of 48 children, aged 4, 8, and 12, and their caregivers, and some elderly locally-born residents. Kerswill and Williams (2000) set out a series of 8 principles for koineization in progress; noteworthy are the roles of age and social networks, with the oldest children, young adolescents, showing most focussing. See, for example, the variation for the GOAT vowel across the three age groups in Table 1.

2. The second project (Williams, Kerswill and Cheshire 1998) intensified interest on adolescents, looking hard at potential social and demographic factors which might have an impact on dialect levelling in three towns with differing profiles: Milton Keynes and Reading, both in the southeast of England but one a new town, the other well-established, and Hull on the northeast coast of Yorkshire, suffering from the blight of a declining industrial base. A further dimension was achieved by working across linguistic levels: phonology, morphosyntax, syntax and discourse. Cheshire et al (2005) provide a nice summary: evidence was found for phonological and morphosyntactic convergence, especially towards more typically non-standard variation (e.g. TH-fronting; negative concord, 'we haven't got no diseases') in working-class adolescents (gender appears to be less important); but divergence is also observed (e.g. in Hull phonology). Apart from the discourse marker *like,* as in 'we were like rushing home', which occurred across the three towns, variation in syntax and discourse forms proved more difficult to analyse; interactional context appears to be crucial for understanding the extent to which a feature might be converging or diverging for a specific community of speakers.

3. The third study (Kerswill and Cheshire 2007) turned to the often-named source of accent innovations, London. The sample was composed of older and younger speakers in an inner and outer London borough (Hackney and Havering respectively), also taking account of ethnicity and social network relationships. Interestingly, the findings for vowels (e.g. Torgersen et al 2006) reveal innovation and divergence in the speech of young innercity Londoners, not dialect levelling, with contact with non-native forms of English, as well as specific ethnolects seeming to play an important role in such patterning.

Overall, these studies demonstrate that British urban dialect changes currently in progress are characterised by both dialect levelling (or 'supralocalization', Torgersen et al 2006) and dialect divergence; the challenge is how to deal theoretically with such complexity, and the motivating factors underlying it.

2.2 Sociophonetics

At times an integral part of recent work on accent change, intensive scrutiny has been applied to the nature of phonological variation. Good summaries of recent sociophonetic research in the British Isles may be found in Foulkes and Docherty (2006, 2007), at least in part grounded in the important results of an earlier ESRC-funded project, *Phonological Variation and Change in Contemporary Spoken British English* (see Docherty et al 1997). Most research has concentrated on sound segments, though see the cross-dialectal work on intonation based on the *IViE* corpus (e.g. Grabe 2004), or Stuart-Smith's (1999) analysis of voice quality in Glaswegian.

Acoustic analysis is generally used (with normalization procedures) for vowel description in sociolinguistics. Instrumental phonetic analysis of consonants has

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typically been less common, but close examination of, for example, the variability in glottal stops in Newcastle and Derby, or final released /t/ in the same cities (e.g. Docherty and Foulkes 1999), reveals far more complexity than auditory transcriptions such as [ʔ] or [t] for /t/, might imply. Moreover, fine-grained phonetic variation patterns significantly with social factors, showing that speakers have very subtle sociophonetic control over their speech production.

The gradient nature of such variation also requires us to acknowledge the same in our auditory categories; for example, a recent study of phonetic variation of 8 consonant variables in Glasgow revealed phonetically 'intermediate' variant categories for 5 variables, including (x), in e.g. *loch* whose final consonant is merging with /k/ (*lock*) in working-class adolescents (cf Lawson and Stuart-Smith 1999). Auditorily and acoustically we find: [x], voiceless guttural fricatives; [k], voiceless velar plosives; *and* what we represent with the label '[kx]', reflecting the identification of variants showing features of plosives and fricatives together; see Figure 1; Stuart-Smith *et al* (2007). Such research clearly deepens our sociolinguistic descriptions, and refines our accounts of phonetic change, but it also enriches and challenges phonetic and phonological theory, and in particular how speakers acquire, store, access and abstract across such variability (e.g. Foulkes and Docherty 2006).

2.3 Language acquisition

Fundamental to our understanding of patterns of sociolinguistic variation is how and when they are acquired by children. Kerswill (1996) observes that key factors in the acquisition of dialect features seem to be: linguistic level, complexity of the linguistic feature, and age; his own data from Milton Keynes show clearly that young (=4 year

old) children's variation is more closely related to that of their caregivers, whilst older children orient more to their peers. This decade has seen an important shift to working with much younger children, in two partly complementary studies.

The *Emergence of Structured Variation*, reported in e.g. Docherty et al (2005), Foulkes et al (2005) and carried out in Newcastle, looked at fine-grained phonetic variation in 40 children aged 2;0-4;0 and their caregivers. Even such young children show variation in their speech production (e.g. in the realization of /t/ in e.g. *water*) which correlates with that of their mothers. At the same time, mothers provide their children with socio-indexical input relevant for their community: the speech directed to their children is quantitatively and qualitatively different from that to their adult contemporaries. Less vernacular variants are addressed to their children, but within that, young girls receive more standard variants, boys more vernacular ones, with this pattern clearest for the youngest children (see Figure 2).

Smith et al (2007)'s study of acquisition in the Scottish northeastern town of Buckie, from 11 children aged 2;10-3;6 and their caregivers, also found that speech addressed to children is more standard than that towards adults; there was also close linguistic and stylistic matching between children's and caregivers' variation. But interestingly this pattern was found only for the phonological/lexical variable *hoose* (use of /u/ in a restricted set of words in place of /ʌu/), but not for the morpho-syntactic variable –*s* in 3rd person plural contexts (e.g. 'my trousers is fa'in doon'); see, for example, Figures 3 and 4. An additional factor in the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation may also be the level of social awareness carried by particular features.

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2.4 The influence of television

Another possible factor for dialect change in the UK, which has been frequently

mentioned in the literature over the past decade, is the role of the broadcast media,

and especially television (e.g. Stuart-Smith 2006). Empirical support for engagement

with television as a factor in language change has now emerged from Glasgow (e.g.

Stuart-Smith 2005; Stuart-Smith et al, in progress). But it is important to note that the

statistical evidence, based on a large-scale multifactorial model, also argues for the

integration of theoretical approaches. Amongst others, factors representing dialect

contact, social practices and identity construction, and engagement with the television

are all required *together* to explain the variation satisfactorily.

2.5 Comparative sociolinguistics

Several different groups of researchers in British sociolinguistics over the past decade

have used innovative comparative techniques in approaching problems in current

sociolinguistics literature. In particular, since the late 1990s, Tagliamonte, Smith and

colleagues have reported on a series of studies addressing different problems in the

language variation and change literature by comparing the effect of internal

constraints on variation within and across corpora from different varieties.

Particularly influential in this line of research has been work on the history of African

American English (AAE) and its kinship to British English dialects. Based on

comparisons of constraint effects across different African American and White

dialectal English corpora, Poplack and Tagliamonte have proposed that many

distinctive features of contemporary African American English (AAE) are not

attributable to creolisation or contact with creoles contrary to much previous literature

(Singler 1991, Rickford 1998), but rather are traceable to English dialects

(Tagliamonte 2001; Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001, Tagliamonte and Smith 2000b).

> Comment [M1]: 2000a or 200b?

Using similar comparative techniques, Tagliamonte, Smith and collaborators have

explored grammaticalisation and other kinds of language change in several features of

contemporary British and Irish Englishes including variation in deontic modality

marking (*have to* vs. *have got to* vs. *must*) (Tagliamonte and Smith 2006),

complementiser deletion (Tagliamonte & Smith 2005), aux/neg contraction

(Tagliamonte and Smith 2000a), quotatives (Tagliamonte & Hudson 1999), and

relative clause markers (*that* vs. *wh-* vs. zero) (Tagliamonte, Smith and Lawrence

2005).

Also influential in recent literature has been Milroy's (2000) comparison of ideologies

of standard language in the United States and Britain. Milroy describes how the

different sociolinguistic histories of these two societies have produced different

ideologies of non-standard speech: non-standard language is understood primarily as a

class "problem" in Britain but a race/ethnicity "problem" in the United States.

In a similar vein, Buchstaller (2006b) compares perceptions of quotative use in the

UK with results from a similar US study by Dailey-O'Cain (2000). Using an

innovative written matched guise methodology, Buchstaller collected data on

perceptions of *be like* and *go* as verbs for introducing direct speech (1) and (2).

(1) *I'm like* 'urgh' you know 'Indian candy is not very good'. (Buchstaller 2006a)

(2) and she'll *go* 'get me a cup of tea I've been at work all day'. (Buchstaller 2006a)

Buchstaller's results suggest that while many attitudes toward quotative use are similar in the UK and US, others vary. On the one hand, Buchstaller notes that both *be like* and *go* use are similar in the US and UK studies: both of these quotatives are associated with young speakers and women. However, while *be like* use is associated with middle class speakers in the US, it is also associated with working class speech in the UK   Similarly, in Dailey-O'Cain's US data, *be like* use is consistently evaluated positively across solidarity attributes, while in the UK *be like* is evaluated positively for some attributes (trendiness, animated) and negatively for others (unpleasant). As Buchstaller notes, these results are instructive for current understanding of diffusion, in that they suggest that as innovative features spread, the social meaning of the innovation may be re-evaluated in local context (Buchstaller and D'Arcy 2007).

2.6 Regional variation

Walking in the footsteps of English dialectologists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Wright 1892), much recent sociolinguistic work continues to describe variation across and within local and regional varieties. The touchstone for much of this research since the 1970s has been Trudgill's variationist work.

Of particular note among recent regional studies are Watson's (2006,) and Sangster's (2001) careful studies of variable lenition of /p,t,k/ in Liverpool, a feature of Irish English brought by Irish immigrants to Liverpool in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (cf. Kallen 2004). As Watson (2006) notes, an intriguing question with a view towards the future of Liverpool English is whether t-lenition, an emblematic feature of local speech, will be displaced in the short term by t-glottaling, which is

diffusing into many northern English dialects (Foulkes and Docherty 1999).

Richards' 2008 thesis describes patterns of variation and change in Leeds, a major

Northern urban centre that, like Liverpool, has received little attention in the

sociolinguistic literature. Richards reports a rich pattern of variation in apparent time

data for eight different variables from different parts of the grammar. On the one

hand, a handful of features which recent literature reports to be diffusing quite rapidly

in other UK dialects—*be like* quotatives, t-glottalling, TH-fronting—likewise appear

to be entering Leeds English. At the same time, however, many localised emblematic

features of the dialect including "secondary contraction"— [• • • •] *don't*, [k• • •]

can't—are being retained. The pervasiveness of such uneven patterns of diffusion

and retention across variables in a single community underscores the need for more

perceptual work and a more refined model of social and linguistic constraints on

borrowing in processes of dialect contact (Bailey et al 1993, Trudgill 1986, Kerswill

and Williams 2002).

The literature focusing on regional variation in the Irish Republic is relatively small

compared to that for the UK, for reasons perhaps related to the symbolic importance

of Irish and the process of shift from Irish to English in Irish national life (Hogan

1927, Kallen 1997, Corrigan 2003b). However, in recent years Kallen (1997) and

Hickey (2007a,b, 2005, 2004, 2002) have contributed important descriptive work in

this area.

Comment [M2]: 2007a or 2007b?

Northern Ireland is much better represented in the literature and has been the focus of

seminal research. Milroy's (1987) careful examination of different aspects of

phonological variation in Belfast is a landmark study of the relationship between

social network structure and language use. More recently, McCafferty (1999, 2001) has examined the way religious and ethnic identity shape language use in Derry.

Henry's (1995, 2002) study of morphosyntactic variation in Belfast has been influential in both variationist and comparative syntax literature. In a similar vein, Corrigan (2000, 2003a, forthcoming) has studied syntactic variation and language contact in the Northern Irish dialect South Armagh from a perspective that draws on both generative and variationist traditions. In particular, Corrigan's (2003a) study of *for to* infinitives in South Armagh, is a good example of ways that formal syntactic analyses may be enhanced by experimental and variationist data collection techniques.

Comment [M3]: check date with ref list please

Related to these regional studies have been efforts to disseminate corpora of regional speech for research and teaching purposes. Most notably, a Newcastle-based team of researchers led by Corrigan have recently produced the *NECTE* corpus, a digital collection of dialect speech from Tyneside in North-East England (Allen et al 2007, www.ncl.ac.uk/necte/). Similarly the *IViE* corpus, produced by researchers based at Oxford contains recordings of nine urban dialects from the British isles: Belfast, Bradford, Cambridge, Cardiff, Dublin, Leeds, Liverpool, London and Newcastle. Two other online corpora have appeared during this period: the SCOTS corpus offering a substantial number of written texts and speech recordings for varieties of Scottish English (www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk), and *BBC Voices* website (see also Coupland and Bishop 2007).

3. Bilingualism, ethnicity and code choice

3.1 Code choice and language use in Celtic speaking areas

A considerable amount of literature has focused on bilingualism and code choice among speakers of the British Isles' surviving Celtic languages, Scottish Gaelic, Irish and Welsh. In the following brief discussion, we highlight some key recent literature in this area, setting aside extensive recent work on language policy and planning in these communities.[1]

Work by Deuchar and collaborators on Welsh-English bilingual speech has been influential in recent code-mixing literature. In a series of recent papers, Deuchar and colleagues have used Welsh-English data to test and inform different models of codeswitching in adult grammars including the Matrix-Language Frame model (2005, 2006) and Muysken's (2000) typology of mixed bilingual speech (Deuchar et al 2007), as well as models of acquisition of codeswitching in developing bilinguals (Deuchar and Quay 2001, Deuchar and Vihman 2005). Since Stenson's (1990) approach to Irish-English codeswitching within government and binding theory, relatively little work has focused on Irish-English and Gaelic-English switching, with the notable exception of O'Malley-Madec's (2007) study of borrowing in Irish-English bilingual speech.

> **Comment [M4]:** not in refs

Much other literature has examined consequences of language contact between English and Celtic for change in these languages. In particular, many properties of Irish English, especially perfect constructions, have been attributed to substrate influence from Irish, however, the extent and nature of this influence remains debated A useful overview of this debate is provided in Hickey (2007b).

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[11] We refer interested readers to Williams and Morris (2000) and Jones (1998) for recent discussions of revitalisation efforts on behalf of Welsh, and to McLeod (2006) for Scottish Gaelic.

3.2 The language(s) of Britain's Anglo-Caribbean, Asian and Chinese communities – developing ethnolects

In the mid-twentieth century, during the UK's postwar economic expansion, workers from several different parts of Britain's shrinking empire—principally present day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Hong Kong and the Caribbean—began immigrating in large numbers to the UK to work in England's industrial centres. Until fairly recently, the speech of these groups had received relatively little attention in the sociolinguistic literature, compared to that for "indigenous" varieties. In recent years, however, more sociolinguistic work has focused on these communities.

Hewitt's (1986) ethnographic study of language use and code choice in South London's Jamaican and Anglo communities has been seminal for studies of language use among Britain's "new" ethnic groups. Sebba (1993) and Rampton (1995, 1998) have subsequently drawn on this work in studying use of Jamaican Creole and Asian features not only among Afro-Caribbeans and south Asians but among whites as well.

Similarly, since the mid-1990s, Li Wei and collaborators have published a series of papers on code-switching between Chinese and English in Newcastle (Li 1994, Li and Milroy 1995, Raschka, Li and Lee 2002) which have been influential in the development of conversational analytic approaches to code-switching, as has Sebba and Wooton's (1998) work on Creole-English Codeswitching. More recently Pert and

> **Comment [M5]:** not in refs

Letts (2006) have focused on codeswitching and code-choice among Mirpuri heritage speakers.

Increasingly, sociophonetic literature has focused on these communities as well. Thus we note Heselwood and McChrystal's study on Bradford Asian (e.g. Heselwood and McChrystal 2000) who find evidence of retroflexion in Asian English speakers, Hirson and Nabiah (2007) on rhoticity and expressed Asian identity in London Asians, and the recent (and ongoing work) trying to unpick the characteristics of 'Glaswasian' (i.e. Glaswegian Asian) accent, such as postalveolar place of articulation for /t d/ and clear syllable-initial /l/ (e.g. Lambert *et al* 2007). Ethnicity and local accent is also a feature of Straw and Patrick's work (e.g. 2007) on Barbadians in Ipswich.

Finally, a further vein of sociolinguistic research which we felt should be included here, is represented in the recent interesting studies which have emerged from linguistic ethnography (cf Rampton 2007). The chosen sites of ethnography, mainly (greater) London secondary schools, with catchments comprising communities with a range of ethnic backgrounds, mean that such research either has a focus on ethnicity and language, such as Harris (2006), which considers the construction of new ethnicities and language use in hybrid sociolinguistic identities such as 'Brasian' (as opposed to 'British Asian'), or includes ethnicity as a key element in linguistic interaction (Rampton 1995), or for which ethnicity is a pervasive or underlying issue (Rampton 2006).

4. Future directions

British sociolinguistic research – within the themes noted here – continues apace, as is indicated by the wealth of projects either just starting, or ongoing at the time of writing. In particular, identity, place, and language will be explored along the Scottish-English border in Llamas and Watt's project *Linguistic variation and national identities on the Scottish/English border*. Kerswill and Cheshire's current project *Multicultural London English* focuses on ethnicity and its potential impact on mainstream varieties of English. Finally, Sharma, Rampton and Harris are employing an innovative combination of quantitative and qualitative/interactional sociolinguistic approaches in their study of dialect development in families of Indian origin in London, *Dialect development and style in a diasporic community*.

Innovative experimental work currently in progress includes Scobbie and Stuart-Smith's efforts to develop new articulatory methods for analysing sociolinguistic variation (using ultrasound tongue imaging to investigate derhoticization in Scottish English in the first instance, Lawson *et al* 2008). Foulkes et al (forthcoming) are carrying out much needed work on the perception of sociophonetic variation; and Stuart-Smith and Smith are starting to tackle experimentally the challenging issues of what and how we learn about accents from mediated speech (Stuart-Smith and Smith 2008).

Finally, we have said nothing about the wealth of sociolinguistic research relating to education, institutional talk, language and globalization, different emerging forms of textual communication, or even the explosion of interest in internet language; but

even a cursory glance at the list of contributors to the recent *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics: Sociolinguistics*, underscores the significant contribution of British and Irish sociolinguists to these areas.

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