HiSoN Summer School: 23-31 July 2023
Abstracts and readings

James Hawkey (University of Bristol)
From past to present: Historical language ideologies, language policy and variation in the Catalan-speaking Pyrenees

In these sessions, we will explore the links between layers of history, the discursive study of language policy and elements of language variation, all focusing on the Catalan-speaking regions of the Pyrenees. Blommaert (2005) considers text to be part of a historical textual tradition, and that the failure to integrate historical context into discussions of text leads to analytical problems. Discourse (including that which is present in instances of language policy) is thus best seen as subject to layered simultaneity – a speech event occurs synchronically but is influenced by many layers of historicity (cf. Braudel 1969 [1958]), only some of which are perceived by the speaker. The tendency to only perceive what happens in the present time scale hides features and processes operating on different scales (Blommaert 2005). History is thus vital to our understanding of both language policy and linguistic practices. We will examine linguistic practices in light of our discussions about history by looking at language variation in the region, thus providing a holistic view of diachronic and synchronic sociolinguistics in the Catalan-speaking Pyrenees.

Hawkey, J. 2018. Language Attitudes and Minority Rights: The Case of Catalan in France. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. Chapter 1, sections 1.1-1.3 (pp. 1-30).

Joseph Salmons (University of Wisconsin – Madison)
Historical enregisterment of emerging varieties

Historical sociolinguistics gives us rich opportunities to track the emergence of recognizable new features and varieties, historical enregisterment. Historical written sources provide 'eye dialect' and other representations, metalinguistic commentary, and evidence revealing awareness of and attitudes toward particular features and varieties. This class will explore how you can advance our understanding with historical texts. Taking some English examples, searching newspapers.com for "bad grammar" yields many discussions from sometimes surprising perspectives. What is stigmatized changes steadily over time — we mostly no longer take serious concerns like "'Ain't' can wreck a home" (Santa Rosa Press Democrat, 1951, with a plea not to nag people about grammar). A search for "ain't" not only yields condemnations but very often representations of socially or regionally affiliated speech which sometimes look dramatically different from how we would characterize related varieties today. Searching placenames with "accent" and "dialect" can provide information about when varieties were recognized and how they were evaluated socially — "Wisconsin accent" only appears in papers in the 1930s, it looks like. If you can do searches and gather data along these lines for languages / dialects and communities you know before HiSoN, we should be able to begin to develop analyses.

Brief readings for before the Summer School:

Johnstone, Barbara. 2016. Enregisterment: How linguistic items become linked with ways of speaking. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 10.11. 632-643. link

Moquin, Laura & Joseph Salmons. 2020. Scandinavian-American English over time: Stereotypes and regionalization. *Ampersand* 7. link

Further reading (if you feel inspired):

Agha, Asif. 2003. The social life of cultural value. *Language & Communication* 23. 3-4. 231-273. link

Font-Santiago, Cristopher 2021. *Puerto Rican Island English (PRIE): On the emergence of a new dialect of American English*. University of Wisconsin – Madison dissertation.

Font-Santiago, Cristopher, Mirva Johnson & Joseph Salmons. 2022. Reallocation: How new forms arise from contact. *Language and Linguistic Compass* 16.8. e12470. link

Examples of corpora you might consider using (among many!)

- Newspapers.com [via libraries, or free short-term trial]
- NOW corpus, overview
- Zeitungskorpus
- El corpus del español

Monica Macaulay (University of Wisconsin – Madison)

125 years of variation and change in Menominee, a native language of Wisconsin

Menominee is an Indigenous language of North-Central Wisconsin. By the usual metrics it would be considered "moribund" or virtually "extinct," because there is only one elderly first-language speaker alive today. However, this is actually a time of great hope and promise for the language due to extremely vigorous and widespread language revitalization programs. This course will present a historical sociolinguistic analysis of Menominee language status from the 1890s onward. We will begin with historical characterizations of the speech community, based on data from the 1910 census and other reports. From the early to mid 20th century, evidence is provided by metalinguistic comments and reports of language attitudes, especially including work by the most famous student of Menominee, Leonard Bloomfield. Bloomfield intentionally suppressed variation in his presentation of Menominee grammar, believing that his understanding of the language enabled him to rise above variation to approximate a community norm. We will contrast this with current language revitalization practices, which allow for and even teach forms that would have been "ungrammatical" to earlier native speakers. We will address these changes and consider what the future holds for this language.

Readings:

Bloomfield, Leonard. 1927. Literate and Illiterate Speech. *American Speech* 2(10): 432-439.

Polinsky, Maria. 2016. Structure vs. Use in Heritage Language. *Linguistics Vanguard* 2(1): 1-14.

Peadar O Muircheartaigh (University of Edinburgh)
The sociolinguistics of Early Irish

This short course will examine the question of linguistic variation and change in Medieval Irish, a Celtic language which was a vehicle for an extensive literature in the Middle Ages. Celtic Studies arose in the nineteenth century, in no small part as a product of the Neogrammarian school, something which has left its trace on scholarship on Medieval Irish. We will look at how methods from historical sociolinguistics can shed light on the nature of variation and change in Irish. After a brief overview of the external circumstances and internal structure of Medieval Irish, we will look especially at

- the vexed question of dialectal variation in Old Irish and its relationship to more recent dialectal variation (starting with Jackson 1951);
- the relationship between Old Irish and Latin in medieval Irish sources (starting with Ó Muircheartaigh 2018).

The former issue, among other things, challenges us to follow Labov's maxim on 'making the best of bad data' in charting the history of Irish dialects. The latter issue forces us to re-think earlier overly simplistic characterisations of our linguistic sources which cannot be interpreted in Neogrammarian terms alone and requires the perspective of sociolinguistics.

Readings:

Jackson, Kenneth. 1951. 'Common Gaelic: The evolution of the Gaelic languages [The Sir John Rhys Memorial Lecture]', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 37: 71-97.

Ó Muircheartaigh, Peadar. 2018. 'On the sociolinguistics of the superlative adjective in the Milan Glosses', *Ériu* 68: 129-144.

Peter Thaler (University of Southern Denmark)
Language, Politics, and Identity in the History of Schleswig

This class illuminates the political and cultural development of the Schleswig region in the longue durée. It traces the development of the region from Danish periphery to increasingly independent duchy and finally, in the age of nationalism, contested borderland. Thereafter, it supplements this constitutional investigation with a long-term perspective of cultural and especially linguistic conditions. The class also analyzes identity formation in a multicultural border region. It highlights the changeability of national sentiments and explores what has motivated local inhabitants to define themselves as Germans or Danes. National boundaries begin to blur, and several layers of identity surface side by side. This composite character gives national identity in Schleswig special relevance for the international political and scholarly discussion. It is a class in history, but with a special focus on the role played by language in both identity formation and political discourse.

Thaler, Peter. 2012. The discourse of historical legitimization: a comparative examination of Southern Jutland and the Slovenian language area. *Nationalities Papers* 40, 1: 1-22.

Sheila Watts (University of Cambridge)
Defining Linguistic Difference: Middle Low German and Middle Dutch

The 16th century saw a linguistic transition from Low to High German in texts written in the towns of Northern Germany as the importance of the Hanseatic League waned and other networks became more prominent. The spread of Early New High German linguistic forms can be traced from East to West, so that in a western town like our case study, Oldenburg, the transition was not complete until the mid-17th century. Our focus will be on the early part of that transition phase (1482–1550), where texts show a mixture of linguistic forms, from Middle Low German letters to city officials in Hamburg, Lübeck and Bremen, to mixed High and Low German letters between the Count of Oldenburg's family and relatives further east in Braunschweig and in Sachsen-Anhalt, to letters exchanged with the Bishopric in Groningen and representatives of small Frisian towns in Low German with Dutch characteristics. All three 'languages', involved are on a dialect continuum, and the features which are used to distinguish them are not all equally distinctive. We will draw on a small corpus of hybrid, code-switching and indeterminate texts to discuss the principles of linguistic distinctiveness, and the position of Low German in the Dutch – High German sandwich.

Brief readings for before the Summer School:

Howell, Robert B. 2006. Immigration and koineisation: the formation of early modern Dutch urban vernaculars." *Transactions of the Philological Society* 104(2). 207-227.

Wright, Laura. 2002. Code-intermediate phenomena in medieval mixed-language business texts." *Language Sciences* 24 (3-4). 471-489.

Further reading (if you feel inspired):

Litty, Samantha M. Historical Sociolinguistic Contexts: Networks and Feature Availability in 19th Century German Letter Collections. link

Van der Wal, Marijke and Gijsbert Rutten. 2013. Touching the Past. Studies in the historical sociolinguistics of ego-documents. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins. link

Silvia dal Negro (Free University of Bozen-Bolzano)
Language change in demographically reduced languages: the example of Walser German

The topic of this class is the interaction between (reduced) demography, language change and language shift. The locus of investigation is that of German enclaves in North-Western Italy, the so-called Walser *Sprachinseln*, where Swiss German dialects have been spoken for more than seven centuries but are nowadays either extinct or critically endangered. In the class we will discuss the impact of demography both on maintenance and on shift, as well as on the different roles played by language contact under sociolinguistically diverse conditions. In the second part of the teaching module the focus will be on social deixis and its interactions with the grammatical category of gender in some of these dialects. Taking into account the intergenerational diachronic variation we will reflect on the interplay between sociolinguistic conditions, communicative context and linguistic categorization.

Dal Negro, Silvia. 2011. The definition of semi-speakers on the basis of linguistic features. *Language contact and language decay: Socio-political and linguistic perspectives*. 46-71.