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Special issue on

sense of place in the history of English

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Preface by the guest editors

This special issue is concerned with how the multidisciplinary concept "sense of place" can be applied to further our understanding of "place" in the history of English. In particular, the articles collected here all relate in some way to complicated processes through which individuals and the communities they are embedded within are defined in relation to others and to their socio-cultural and spatial environments (Convery et al. 2012). We have brought together eight articles focusing on specific aspects of this theme using different theoretical models that offer new insights into the history of the English language from the Old English period to the twenty-first century. The findings will also be of interest to researchers in the fields of corpus linguistics, English dialectology, lexicography, prototype theory, sociolinguistics and syntactic theory.

The very nature of the available data in historical linguistics means that scholars have had to be highly sensitive to the provenance of their materials or, as Fitzmaurice and Smith (2012: 20) put it: "texts need forensic analysis." This means observing the rigorous approach to data adopted by historians, i.e. ensuring that texts are contextualized in relation to locations, speakers and their socio-cultural milieu.

Debates about place, space, and spatiality as socially constructed categories are gaining momentum in studies of contemporary linguistic variation (e.g. Johnstone 2004; Britain 2009; Auer et al. 2013). This new research treats space as much more than the simple plotting of physical regions in a dialect atlas that function as the location of a linguistic feature. Instead, space is treated as dynamic and conditioned by those who live within it. Indeed, scholars have begun to uncover linguistic evidence to demonstrate that community

members project competing definitions and experiences of the places they inhabit or frequent, such that "there is no consensual sense of place" (Eckert 2004:108). This lack of consensus about the meaning of place for members of speech communities stems from ideas in cultural geography that despite the fact that "individual agents are always "situated" in the world" (Entrikin 1991:3) people are always "cultural agents, [who are] interpreters and creators of meaning" (59). This entails that linguists interested in language and place must study it from local perspectives in order to discover how an area is culturally defined, as well as to elicit what linguistic features are meaningful within that particular locale. As place "is one of the most frequently adduced correlates of linguistic variation" (Johnstone 2004:65), studying these self-defined, "vernacular" regions is therefore a necessary component to any study of contemporary language variation and change (70). Of course, there are factors in the modern world which mean that an individual's experience of place and space is necessarily different from that of their forefathers. Despite this, we should be no less sensitive to writers' divergent experiences of their environments when conducting historical studies of the English language than we are in synchronic approaches to language variation and change.

This perspective thus informs the treatment of place in this collection which, taken as a whole, captures the idea that it is not perceived of as static and fixed, but as a location for competing definitions and multiple interactions all of which produce differentiated views of what a "sense of place" means. This orientation competes with the "objective space-time of modern science" (Entrikin 1991: 63) which not only struggles with the idea of differential "senses" of place, but has also eroded other traditional and religious world-views that dealt with "place" in specific ways. Given that "[t]he earliest religious myths of humanity were concerned with the need to introduce orientation or a centre of reference into time and space" (Charme 1984:157), it is unsurprising that, even in the earliest texts, places can be envisaged as more than their mere physical locations. This, in turn, allows for the possibility that they can also be imagined and referred to metaphorically, which is a key consideration when it comes to understanding texts from the Old English period, in particular, as the first contribution to this collection by Adam Mearns highlights (see also Semper, in press). Using a prototype model of semantic structure, the author examines the extent to which monsters and devils in the Anglo-Saxon period can be categorised as "supernatural" beings in the contemporary sense, and the manner in which their characteristics defined the conceptual category that they belonged to in Old English. This process thus allows the author to investigate how the concept "place" might have been conceived during the Anglo-Saxon period. By offering evidence from texts like Beowulf, Juliana, and *Bald's Leechbook* for the

ambiguous incorporeal quality of devils and monsters that are able to impinge upon the physical world, the contribution establishes the idea of place as a normative construct. Thus, being in a specific place (or time) involves acting in a particular fashion, or believing a set of ideas about the place and its relationship to other places, with the "reality" of the place "clarified and understood from the perspectives of the people who have given it meaning" (Tuan, 1979: 387). Moreover, the research underpinning this article clearly demonstrates the importance of contextualizing Anglo-Saxon literature by also examining these concepts in prominent Latin works that influenced English scholars in the period such as Augustine's De Civitate Dei. This approach provides a fuller understanding of the physical world of the period and places within it, as well as the fact that the potentially fluid boundaries between the physical and supernatural worlds is one way of understanding the power of the papacy, which, according to Anderson (1991) maintained such influence via "a conception of the world, shared by virtually everyone" (15). The author develops an argument that such was this conception of the world during the Anglo-Saxon period that exclusion can be identified as the essence of the conceptual category that encompasses the monsters and devils of this era. The importance of exclusion, either from the physical world, or from places considered "civilised" is key to understanding the ways in which boundaries of "place" were imagined and constructed in Old English texts.

Johnstone (2004: 70) asserts that: "individuals ground their identities in socially constructed regions" and the article by Caitlin Light and Joel Wallenberg, which also uses Old English data, is the first of our contributions to examine the idea of place as a physical location in this sense. The authors examine the use of the passive in digital text corpora consisting of parallel passages from the New Testament written in three very different regions where Germanic has been used, represented by early new High German, 16th-century Icelandic and Old, Middle and Early Modern English. The issue of place is also addressed on a more local level too with their diachronic and diatopic investigation of the same feature in Old English as well as northern and southern late Middle English translations of the Rule of St. Benedict, a monastic text. Their findings underline the importance of the availability of strictly comparable parallel parsed corpora for investigations of dialectal and historical syntactic/pragmatic variance. They are significant too for furthering our understanding of the grammatical restructuring that English has undergone diachronically and the importance of attending to the interface between pragmatics and syntax. Interestingly, they demonstrate that one of the most studied features with respect to change in the history of English, i.e. the loss of verb-second (see van Kemenade 2013: 822), does not seem to be a factor affecting the

frequency with which the passive is used, as predicted by Seoane (2006). Instead, their results implicate the decline in use of the impersonal pronoun *man*. They argue that this change increases the frequency of passivisation in the southern Middle English Rule translation where the construction is more entrenched than it is in the linguistically conservative north where *man* impersonals remain grammatical and thus almost as prevalent as they were in the Old English Rule translation. Moreover, Light and Wallenberg argue that this important regional difference in the grammars and information-structure choices of Middle English writers becomes apparent only in the monastic texts, because they differ from the New Testament stylistically.

The third article by Nuria Yáñez-Bouza and David Denison also investigates change through time and regional space using digital corpora with a focus in this case on variants of the double object construction. This contribution similarly addresses questions about dialect and register but it also examines lexical issues (the behaviour of particular verbs and pronouns) and processing factors (priming and the use of prefabricated expressions). The authors interrogate a much more diverse collection of large-scale contemporary and historical electronic resources than would be the norm in English historical linguistics, demonstrating the importance of adopting such methods, particularly when tracking the trajectory of relatively rare constructions through temporal and geographical space. The article is innovative too in combining syntactic analyses of double object variants, largely within a Construction Grammar framework, with an investigation of the construction's development as a social and/or regional marker using data from early normative grammars. Interestingly, they find that while the $V-O_d-O_i$ *give it me* variant is now well on the way to being "enregistered" in certain regions of the British Isles (especially in the North), there appears not to have been any variation in British English dialects with respect to this feature in Early and Late Modern English. There is no evidence either that it was suppressed by prescriptive works of the time in which other features that have since become associated with "socially constructed regions" were indeed held up for ridicule.

While the contribution by Terttu Nevalainen, which comes next, is also based on electronic corpus data, it takes a more microscopic approach, honing in on two case studies from the Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence (PCEEC) (Raumolin-Brunberg & Nevalainen 2007). This article uses the framework of social network analysis, originally offered as an explanation for speaker innovation in the ground-breaking work of the Milroys in their Belfast sociolinguistics projects of the 1970s and 80s (Milroy and Milroy 1985). Milroy (1992) extended this approach to historical English sociolinguistics and this model,

which views language as social practice, has since been further developed and applied in socio-historical linguistics with considerable success (see, Bergs 2005, Conde-Silvestre 2012, Pahta et al. 2010, Palander-Collin 2013 and Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2000 inter alia).

Nevalainen examines a kinship network (that of the Johnsons, a merchant family) and an individual network (that of Samuel Pepys) with members in each classified as conservative, in-between or progressive with respect to various linguistic changes in Early Modern English that are at different stages of advancement. This article is the first in the special issue to examine place not as "region" but as "lived experience" through socially constructed "imagined" (cf. Anderson 1991) communities of letter- and diary-writers. By capitalising on the social networks reconstructed by professional historians and other sources of bibliographical metadata, the author is able to reveal – at least in part – the communicative interactions of the past. The article provides considerable evidence for the idea that the spaces which the Johnson family and Samuel Pepys inhabit within the capital (primarily the commercial City of London versus the Royal Court at Westminster) and the way in which they experience them impacts upon their linguistic choices. Hence, the network analysis of the Johnson family revealed that "social proximity need not result in similar profiles in linguistic leadership", and that this kinship and business network had "somewhat divided allegiances". As for Pepys, he "proved progressive with respect to ongoing language changes but not uniquely so either in the City or at Westminster" and he may have been a "community broker in linguistic terms". Whether he was or not will of course require further research but Nevalainen's article points the way towards articulating the manner in which place as "lived experience" can be objectively reconstructed using the "rich contextualization" methodology advocated here.

The fifth article by Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade and Viktorija Kostadinova examines perceptions of have went from a macroscopic perspective. Again, they interrogate electronic corpus data (both historical and contemporary), which they combine with materials from normative 18th-century usage guides as well as contemporary blog posts and face-to-face interviews. Their contribution sheds light on the development of have went and the manner in which it has been appropriated on both sides of the Atlantic as one of the mechanisms whereby individuals construct the divergent transnational identities of 'British' versus 'North American'. What is more, they find from their recent pilot studies testing language attitudes that the expression also exemplifies place as "lived experience", since have went is regarded only by American participants as a "usage problem" to which they are "highly sensitive". Their British peers, instead, view it simply as a non-standard "dialectal

feature" falling out from prescriptive classifications of the strong verb system in early grammars and usage guides which thus created the contemporary standard verbal paradigm of go – went – gone. What is more, the authors present evidence suggesting not only that North American participants with different socio-demographic characteristics perceive have went and have gone differently as far as status is concerned, they also report a difference in meaning between the two forms. This is an important finding from the perspective of any future comparative sociolinguistic research on this collocate that examines data from different regional Englishes, since semantic equivalence is presupposed when comparing expressions like this within the paradigm (Tagliamonte 2004).

The sixth contribution by Philip Durkin examines the documentation of regional dialect lexis in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), with particular focus on the difficulties this might present for lexicographers. The author identifies changing orientations towards and perceptions of regional dialect areas as a key problem in defining the "place" that a specific item might "belong to." For example, the author reports that "for most specialists in Middle English, Cheshire and most or all of Lancashire … falls within the midland, or specifically north-west midland, dialect area." Such an allocation of these counties, however, contrasts with analyses based on contemporary dialect data (e.g. Trudgill 1999)[1], which conceive of the geographical boundaries designating the north-west midlands rather differently. This issue reflects debates about the divergent ways in which place can be comprehended (cf. Entrikin 1991), and that the "meaning" of places will naturally change over time. Furthermore, it underscores the possibility that lexical items may not necessarily have a stable relationship with particular locations over their history, and that there will always be competing definitions of "place" which entail that indicating regional provenance or the location of current usage is fraught with problems engendered by different readers', and indeed scholars', varying perspectives.

Despite these issues, folk concepts of the "dialect region" are well engrained the world over, as research within the realm of perceptual dialectology amply demonstrates (e.g. Preston 1989; Niedzielski & Preston 2003; Montgomery 2012; Evans 2013). Thus, to jettison the link between linguistic features and place in dictionaries would appear to be a rather short-sighted approach, and Durkin goes on in his article to investigate four lexical items associated in various ways with the north-east of England, Mackem, Geordie, pet, and ram-raid which demonstrate exactly that but which also illustrates the complexities of the task.

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[1] Leaving aside the fact that Trudgill (1999) focuses primarily on accentual differences.

The first two examples, which are used as identifiers for native inhabitants of Sunderland and Newcastle-upon-Tyne (and speakers of the varieties associated with these locations), respectively, are of particular interest in relation to the perception of the dialect landscape of England (see Corrigan, Buchstaller, Mearns, Moisl, 2012). Perceptual dialectology has demonstrated that the widespread use of dialect area labels such as these is one of the key ways in which perceptions might change over time (Montgomery 2012:658–660). Pet is considered in relation to illustrations of its use including a quotation from the adult comic *Viz* published in Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1979-present), in which pet occurs with numerous representations of the local urban accent. Taking cognisance of these associations as well as attending to other examples of how and where exactly pet has been used, Durkin argues builds support for identifying the specific ways in which forms can become associated with particular "dialect areas". In his discussion of ram-raid, for example, the author investigates an item for which the first OED attestations can be ascribed to regional sources in the north-east of England, but for which there, in fact, appears to be little association with this region specifically. Durkin's close examination of these four items clearly demonstrates the "real challenges for lexicographers" when dealing with regional variation in lexis. Moreover, his contribution clearly demonstrates that establishing concrete associations between specific lexemes and an explicit "place" of origin can be far from straightforward.

The contribution by Susan Fitzmaurice uses various data sources from advertisements and blogs to newspaper reports and speeches in order to examine polysemy in relation to ideologies of race and social orientation in Zimbabwe. This is thus another of the articles that investigates the issue of place as "lived experience" and the "symbolic context of human life" (Johnstone 2004:67). It assesses the impact of colonialism and charts the shifting definitions of key lexemes imbued with multiple meanings over time, such as 'settler' (Rhodesian/European), 'African' (black/native), and 'Zimbabwean'. The author asserts that these terms are "inextricably linked to access to and association with the agricultural land in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe" and, in this sense, the contribution also addresses the concept of "place as locale" (Giddens 1984). It finds that in colonial Rhodesia, the term 'settler' originally applied primarily to white colonists of British origin who had near exclusive access to the most fertile agricultural lands. 'African', by contrast, referred to the colonised black Zimbabweans who were relegated to the Reserves. Furthermore, the evidence presented supports the view that the term 'African' has undergone a semantic change in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The author argues that this shift coincided with the black majority government's "Fast Track Land Reform Programme", when white Zimbabweans asserted

their right to possession of the land on the basis of their being as legitimately African as their black peers. Moreover, the term 'Rhodesian' (or 'Rhodie') has also undergone semantic change and now principally refers either to whites from a bygone era (the colonial period) or to those whites who left Zimbabwe to resettle elsewhere in Africa and Europe after independence in 1980. The analyses presented rely on the important work in semantic change (principally the notion "invited inference") published in 2002 by Traugott and Dasher. The contribution extends accounts like these of the metaphoric and metonymic processes that must have been involved in creating the parallel lexicons that have arisen in Zimbabwe over time.

The final contribution by Carol Fehringer and Karen Corrigan considers the use of the "semi-modals" have to, have got to, and need to in the Diachronic Electronic Corpus of Tyneside English (DECTE). This monitor corpus, which contains spoken data from the north-east of England from the 1960s to the present day, is used to investigate the replacement by these semi-modals of the older must form as markers of obligation and necessity in the region. Throughout their analysis, the authors are able to not only consider the corpus data in relation to diachronic change within a single location, but they also utilise DECTE to address questions relating to the different ways in which people live and experience the region where they were born and raised. This approach is exemplified in their consideration of the potential effects that an individual's gender or educational background might have on their linguistic choices. Such an orientation thus treats the north-east as a "meaningful context of human action" (Entrikin 1991:10), experienced and lived in diverse ways by different groups of people.

Our heartfelt thanks go to all our contributors for engaging in this project with such enthusiasm and for producing articles that make important contributions to debates in corpus linguistics, English dialectology, lexicography, prototype theory, sociolinguistics and syntactic theory. Of course, we also expect their work to stimulate further research into the "sense of place" in English historical linguistics, which we predict will become a key focus of interest in the coming years given the topicality of the concept across diverse disciplines in linguistics and beyond.

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The idea for this project came from a brain storming session following the Sense of Place conference at the University of Sheffield on April 6th 2013 to celebrate the work of Professor Emeritus Joan Beal to whom we also dedicate this special issue. We hope this volume is a fitting tribute to someone whose own work features so prominently in the contributors' references.

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