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The Geography of Language: Steps toward a New Approach[1]

Abstract: Against the backdrop of established paradigms of geolinguistics, this paper argues for a new approach to the geography of language which un-trivializes the connection between language and space and moves the speakers to the front stage, both in terms of their perception of language spaces and in terms of their construction of language spaces through linguistic place-making activities.

1. Language and space: a short synopsis of established research paradigms

Previous research on the geographical distribution of linguistic features has been conducted within three well-established fields, all of which have a long history. Despite their achievements, all three research traditions are based on the assumption of a trivial connection between language and space, which has become increasingly problematic, as will be shown below.

      Dialectology or dialect geography, i.e. the study of linguistic variants within the space of one single language or a group of historically closely related languages (such as the "West Germanic" or the "East Slavic" languages). Dialect geography started out in the first half of the 19th century when the first maps of the European language spaces were drawn; among the earliest examples are Johannes Andreas Schmeller's (1821) map of the Bavarian dialects and Karl Bernhardi's map of the German language (1843/1849). Dialectologists have since then developed highly sophisticated methods of mapping language variation in geographical space, culminating in various large nation-wide dialect surveys (such as in Germany, the *Sprachatlas des Deutschen Reichs* compiled by Georg Wenker shortly before 1900) and regional dialect atlases, sometimes also in transnational atlases (for a comprehensive survey of dialect mapping, cf. Kehrein et al. 2010). Map-based dialectology has recently proceeded to a new level of technical refinement by using mathematical algorithms that can generate maps out of large aggregated data sets, known as dialectometry. Based on the pioneering work of Séguy (1973), it was above all the Romance dialectologist Goebl (1982, 1984, 2005, 2006, 2007) who developed mathematical methods for the analysis of aggregated geolinguistic data. While traditional dialect geography either restricted itself to

the mapping of isolated dialect features, or combined these isoglosses in a selective and often merely intuitive way to define dialect areas, the big advantage of dialectometry is to make visible geographical patterns at a high level of abstraction which can hardly be reached by traditional methods (cf. Streck & Auer forthc.). The aim is to discover high-ranking spatial structures, using as many linguistic variables as possible. While Goebl and his school (cf. Kelle 1988, Hummel 1993, Schiltz 1996; with a slightly different orientation also Rumpf et al. 2009; Pickl & Rumpf 2011) have used existing dialect maps representing single variables for their purposes, the second important school of dialectometrists around Nerbonne (cf. Nerbonne 2006, 2009; Heeringa 2004; Heeringa & Nerbonne 2001; Nerbonne & Siedle 2005) has turned to elicited data sets such as questionnaire data or translation task data. Most of their studies are based on distance measurements between items or sets of items, using so-called Levenshtein distances (cf. Heeringa 2004 on Levenshtein algorithms). Recent work not in the least done in Freiburg (Streck 2012b for German dialect phonology, Szmrecsanyi 2012 for UK-English morphology) has shown that the same or similar methods can also be applied to spontaneous speech. Methods such as Cluster Analysis and Multidimensional Scaling are used to generate dialect maps.

Areal linguistics (areal typology) developed in the early 20th century as a linguistic subdiscipline that explicitly addresses a kind of order in cross-linguistic variability that could not be accounted for by genetic and typological linguistics. A predecessor of this approach can be found in Joh. Schmidt's "wave theory" of language change (1872). During most of the 20th century, areal typology remained closely connected to the notion of 'Sprachbund' (Trubetzkoy 1930). According to a narrow definition, a Sprachbund constitutes an area of convergence between more than two non-related languages which has developed through frequent contact (and geographical vicinity). The Balkan Sprachbund is the most striking example (cf. Mišeska Tomić 2006), but other convergence areas have been proposed as well (cf. Stolz & Stolz 2001 on the Mesoamerican Sprachbund, van der Auwera 2011 and Haspelmath 2001 on the Charlemagne Sprachbund, or Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli 2001 on the Circum-Baltic contact superposition zone). Just as in dialectology, new mathematical methods of generating map representations of linguistic features across the world have led to a revival of areal linguistics, which today is defined more broadly as the branch of linguistics that deals with the distribution of grammatical and phonological features around the world, without restricting the research focus on areas of convergence between non-related contact languages (Dahl 2001). In recent years there have been an increasing number of pleas for

systematically including non-standard varieties in areal typology and areal linguistics (e.g. Murelli & Kortmann 2011). The most impressive results of this new way of doing areal linguistics are perhaps the *World Atlas of Language Structures* (WALS) (cf. Dryer & Haspelmath 2011) and for global variation within a single language WAVE, i.e. the *Mouton World Atlas of Variation in English* (Kortmann & Lunkenheimer 2012; cf. also Kortmann & Lunkenheimer 2011). Mathematical algorithms have been applied to world-wide data sets, among others, by Cysouw (e.g. 2005).

In general, it is more difficult to define cross-linguistic areas of convergence than to adopt a dialectological approach focusing on linguistic areas within a single language: By definition, linguistic features vary more independently from each other in the former than in the latter case. This is perhaps the main reason why methodological and theoretical issues have been discussed more thoroughly in areal typology than in dialect geography, although the basic problems encountered in the two disciplines are similar in nature (cf. Stolz 2010). In particular, both types of geographical linguistics share the problem of defining and delimiting from each other language or dialect areas, given that the available data often suggest a centre/periphery structure at best (cf. Nichols 1992). This raises the issue of whether a language area can be defined solely on linguistic grounds, or whether it also needs some kind of extralinguistic ('cultural') basis. After all, why should languages or language varieties converge, or fail to diverge, unless there is some kind of social or cultural bond that keeps their speakers together (Kaufmann 2010a)? This, in turn, leads to the question of whether it is really geographical vicinity or spatial closeness that holds together a language space, and – if this question is answered in the negative – whether and to what extent space is needed at all as a crucial concept in a linguistic account of the observable similarities between varieties (see Bisang 2010 and Bisang forthc. for a critical discussion; see also Kortmann forthc.). The emergence of Spanish, Portuguese, French and English as colonial 'world languages' in the Early Modern period is an obvious early challenge to narrowly defined notions of language spaces based on geographical continuity, as are non-contiguous minority language spaces such as that of Mennonite Low German and of Yiddish.

Language minority spaces and their political status. The third field concerned with space and language is associated with certain branches of sociolinguistics that deal with linguistic minorities, their language rights, their language spaces and their relationship to the dominant (national) language space. Research in this area also takes place outside linguistics, for instance in the sociology of language, in population statistics, and in political science and

history. What is at stake here is the so-called **territorial principle** (Grin 1994, Viaut 2007) according to which a language should have official status in a territory in which it is spoken. This postulate is of course at the heart of European nation building, and it continues to be used as a political argument by minorities that want to establish themselves as nations, with or without a nation state. In times when national borders are at stake and geopolitical orders are redefined, research on language spaces based on population statistics and language censuses often assumes central political importance. (A case in point is the enormous rise of studies of this kind after World War I in the dissolving Austrian empire.) But the territorial principle is also crucial for the status of legally acknowledged national languages and therefore the amount and kind of support each of them receives in officially multilingual states such as Switzerland or Finland. The decision to declare a district as Swedish-speaking or a canton as French-speaking is usually based on language statistics among its resident population, with different regulations on what counts as a sufficient number of speakers. Linguistic research for determining language areas according to the territorial principle has of course also extended beyond sociolinguistic survey studies; in particular, it includes historical studies and studies on the present status of the minority languages. The former address questions such as the following: How long have certain population groups speaking a given language been documented in the area? Which status did their language have? Was it spoken or written? Did it develop a literary tradition? Relevant questions from the minority language perspective include whether the relevant language is spoken monolingually or only in a 'mixed' style, in conjunction with the majority language (cf. the examples and the discussion in Pusch 2010). All of these questions have played an important role in language policies since they can be exploited for political purposes: for example, certain geographical spaces can be claimed for a language (and hence a certain legal status), thus justifying the linguistic dominance of its speakers over those who speak (or claim to speak) another language in this territory.

2. The deficits of the established paradigms

The three above-mentioned research traditions have been highly successful in dealing with the linguistic side of geo-linguistics; however, they are based on **simplistic assumptions about the relationship between space and language**. This simplification results from the fact that, according to traditional views of the relationship between language and space, **the speakers of a language are left out of account**. Languages are directly linked to spaces: a given part of geographic space is assumed to be the 'natural habitat' of a language, and a given language

is assumed to 'have' its own space. But, of course, languages cannot be located in geographical space in the same way as coal-mines or rivers. Their only link to a particular territory is the fact that they are spoken by people who inhabit this territory, or that speakers believe that the territory is under the roof of a given national standard language. It is the speakers of a language who represent the essential part of the equation language = speakers = territory. However, this essential middle part has commonly been omitted due to two assumptions:

1) the assumption that **speakers only speak one language** (i.e. they are monolingual and mono-varietal), or (at least) that one of their languages/varieties is so dominant that the other(s) can be disregarded, and

2) the assumption that **speakers are bound to places**, i.e. they are immobile.

As long as these two assumptions are made, languages can be directly mapped onto geographical space, without looking at their speakers. In a nutshell the central challenge geo-linguistics is facing today is that these assumptions are no longer valid – if they have ever been. We therefore need theories and empirical studies that bring back the speaker as a major factor in geolinguistic variation. If we want to arrive at a more realistic notion of how language and space are intertwined, the equation language (= speaker) = place must be untied (Quist 2010).

Traditional linguistic conceptions of space and language include three further assumptions which need to be questioned:

3) The assumption that space is a **container** that includes languages (or, for that matter, speakers using languages). The container view of space is a widespread assumption in Western thinking (cf. Löw 2001: 17-35); it is based on an absolute conception of space according to which spaces exist prior to and independently of the objects they contain. Applied to language spaces this means that speakers are constrained by the language space in which they happen to find themselves – rather than language spaces being created *by* speakers.

4) The assumption that similarities between speakers increase to the extent to which they live together in one place/area (an extreme version of this view is that the language of all speakers in a place/area is the same), and decrease the further they are apart from each other. This assumption echoes the Neogrammarian tenet (resuscitated, e.g., in Trudgill 1974) that speakers accommodate to each other automatically if they interact frequently. The **homogeneity of linguistic areas** is therefore the direct result of dense

network contacts, which are taken to develop automatically in an area unless natural or political borders present an obstacle to communication.

5)   The idea of **contiguous and mutually exclusive language spaces** instead of dispersed and overlapping or overlaying or perforated ones. All language spaces are seen as having the same maximal **'density'**, like colours whose maximal density keeps them from shading into each other. This implies that a speaker can only act in one language space at a time (and cannot, for instance, participate in a French language space when speaking on the phone, and simultaneously participate in a German language space in face-to-face interaction), and that an ideological language space (for instance that of a minority language) cannot be interspersed with or make visible a different underlying language space (for instance that of the majority language).

Despite their tendency to trivialise the relationship between language and space, all of the above-mentioned linguistic disciplines – dialectology, areal typology and minority sociolinguistics – have without doubt produced an enormous amount of valuable research on the geographical distribution of linguistic forms. However, it is easy to see the limitations of this approach, particularly when we want to address the pressing (socio- and geo-)linguistic concerns of contemporary societies. These shortcomings are perhaps most dramatically felt when the wide range of phenomena is taken into consideration which falls outside the scope of this type of research on language and space, because the phenomena at issue cannot be made compatible with the above assumptions.

One of these neglected phenomena is the **relevance of mobility** (instead of stability) for language variation and change. Similar to stability, the mobility is intrinsically linked to space (Vélasco-Graciet 2009). However, the above-mentioned research traditions are all built on the assumption of stable settlements; they are therefore bound to disregard mobility, and hence a major aspect of what space is and what it means to human beings. It is an open question whether the exclusive focus on stable settlements and immobile speakers has ever done justice to language and language change. People have always been on the move, during the Great Migration, during the European colonial expansion, in the enormous population movements in the age of industrialization, particularly from the countryside into the urban industrial centres, etc. Similarly, the first half of the 20th century witnessed the forced displacement of whole populations. The impact of these movements on language is only partly known (e.g. from pidgin and creole studies, from colonial studies, and from studies on superstrate and substrate effects of language contact in Europe); on the whole, this topic has

been underexplored in linguistic research. However, there can be no doubt that mobility has become such a central feature of human existence in the age of globalization that any kind of linguistics that is not able to address its effects will be in danger of falling out of step with reality. Blommaert (2010: xiv) has therefore argued with some justification that the older type of linguistics that is "robbed of the spatial and temporal features that define [the] occurrence, meaning and function [of language] in real social life" needs to be replaced by a new paradigm that is based on a "view of language as something intrinsically and perpetually mobile, through space as well as time, and *made for* mobility". Many of the central social processes of modernity and late modernity are linked to mobility: from work migration to indentured labour and slavery, from colonization to the formation of new towns, from urbanization to suburbanization, commuting and gentrification.

The lacunae of research that result from the neglect of mobility can be observed in all fields of geolinguistics. In **dialectology**, an obvious example is the neglect of commuting and its effects on the dialectal landscape. The effects of commuters on urban as well as rural dialects are only beginning to be understood (cf. Britain 2012, forthc. and pioneering work by Besch et al. 1981). The idea that village life is tantamount to stability, conservatism and tradition frequently turns out to be a mistaken stereotype of contemporary rural life, particularly in the (rapidly expanding) commuting zone around the large cities, but equally in highly frequented touristic areas or along major transportation infrastructure. In **areal typology**, the influx of large numbers of speakers from so-called poverty zones and from politically unstable areas into the metropolitan centres has brought speakers from typologically distinct languages into much more intensive contact with each other than has ever been the case in the 'zones of linguistic convergence' in which traditional Sprachbünde are said to have emerged. Under globalised conditions, the real zones of convergence are the superdiverse (Vertovec 2006) urban spaces the structure of which cannot be captured by traditional geolinguistic methods any longer. So far, there has been little research on language contact between immigrant languages in these superdiverse places; what we do know, however, is that new varieties of the majority language emerge in such contexts ("ethnolects", "multiethnic street languages") that are a consequence of mobility (and hence are related to movement in space) (cf. Kerswill et al. 2008, Cheshire et al. 2011, Fox et al. 2011, Quist & Svendsen 2010, Kailuweit 2006, Wiese 2012). In research on (old, autochthonous) **linguistic minorities**, it is more and more frequently observed that diasporic groups intervene from outside the 'minority language space' via the new media to take part in the local minority

language politics and to work for the protection and maintenance, or even revival, of 'their' language (cf. the case of Rusyn; also see Magocsi 1996). In this way, the traditional distinction between autochthonous minorities (which are said to live in 'their' language space and are considered to have a right to defend it against the majority language) and new minorities of recent immigration origin (whose areas of dense residence cannot be used by them to claim this space as their own space) becomes obsolete, even more so as the diasporic speakers of the minority language often outnumber those 'back home'.

There is a second field of phenomena that is necessarily neglected in an approach that trivialises the connection of space and language by leaving out the speaker. This is perhaps best subsumed under the geographical notion of **spatial scales** (Swyngedouw 1997, 2004), which so far has been used in linguistics in discourse analysis only (Fairclough 2006) and in Blommaert's plea for a linguistics of mobility (Blommaert 2010 only). In traditional approaches to language and space, the geographical scale is fixed and predetermined. For instance, it may be a space at the scalar level of a national language community (as in national dialect atlases), of a region (as in regional dialect atlases), the entire world (WALS, WAVE), or a minority language area (Wales or Catalunya). But present-day average language users are flexible to move up and down the geographical scale in everyday life. Take speakers in Catalunya: While they may speak Catalan at work and in the family, some of the interactions in the public sphere will be conducted in Castilian (larger scale), which may also be the language of phone calls to business colleagues in Madrid, while visitors may be welcomed in English (even larger scale). It is important here **to distinguish between the location of the speaker and the association of certain linguistic forms with geographical spaces**. In a trivialised approach to language and space, speakers are assumed to use the linguistic forms associated with the place in which they speak. The choice of a geolinguistically stratified linguistic feature by a speaker is analysed as locating the speaker in the geographical space to which this feature 'belongs'. (Thus, a dialect or minority language speaker is interviewed in the place where s/he lives as a representative of this space.) However, a much more realistic assumption is that speakers use linguistic forms that are indexes of different language spaces on varying scales at the same time or in alternation, depending on which language space they wish to refer to, but independently of whether this space includes their 'here' in the act of speaking.

Various proposals have been made to construct **hierarchies of the languages of the world** that in effect represent scalar orders, although they are rarely discussed in these terms.

Perhaps most influential is de Swaam's (2001) distinction between peripheral languages, central languages, supercentral languages (12) and one hypercentral (global) language, i.e. English (cf. also: Mühlhäusler 1996, Calvet 2006; on a more critical note Mufwene 2010, who emphasises the continuity between older and present-day "world systems" of languages.). De Swaan's scale presupposes a clear distinction between languages and varieties, but of course his model could be extended to include varieties below the level of what he calls "peripheral languages", such as regiolects or traditional dialects. De Swaan uses spatial metaphors (mainly astronomical ones) to illustrate the relationships among the languages involved (e.g., some languages are described as "rotating" around others). The important point he makes is that the status of a language also determines its geographical reach, not only in the sense of a "language imperialism" (Phillipson 1992), with some language(s) infringing on the territory of others and acting as "glottophagues" (Calvet 1974), but also in the sense of an overlay of various spheres. The more central the position of a language is in de Swaan's model, the greater are its chances to be included in the linguistic repertoire of the speakers of the more peripheral languages. The prediction is therefore that superstrate language contact influence will proceed in the direction from the more central to the more peripheral languages, creating geographical spaces in which languages become simultaneously relevant in an orderly way. There is indeed a good deal of evidence that the multiple linguistic resources of speakers of the more peripheral languages do not necessarily lead to the extinction of the lesser used languages, but rather to novel forms of language mixing (Thomason & Kaufman 1991), just as they lead to novel forms of cultural mixing (hybrids) (cf. Pennycook 2007 for hip-hop). The scalar order of language geography can be used locally for place-making: rather than making the smaller languages disappear, the larger ones are combined with them to produce mixtures and fusions with a restricted local reach, which are used to construct new spaces on a smaller scale (cf. Robertson 1995).

A third field of phenomena that is eliminated from research on language and space as long as a simplistic notion of the relationship between the two is taken for granted, are **language spaces as media spaces**. There are two ways of addressing this field of research. First, it can be observed that geographical spaces are increasingly **claimed** by social groups as 'belonging' to a language through the use of media, instead of being 'obviously' and 'naturally' associated with these languages on the basis of the fact that the speakers that inhabit these spaces speak the languages. There is a strong correlation between the loss of speakers of the minority language in the territory in question and such a deployment of media

resources to (re)claim it. Efforts to maintain or revive a minority language therefore regularly include attempts to make the language **visible** in the geographical space that is claimed for it (on whatever grounds, often historical ones). Perhaps the most obvious way to do so is the use of the written language in public. Numerous studies on "linguistic landscaping" have demonstrated how minority language spaces are symbolically defined by using the medium of writing, particularly on certain privileged sign carriers such as street signs, billboards, signs in public buildings, etc. (cf. Gorter 2006, Shohamy 2009, Scollon & Scollon 2003, Stroud & Mpendukana 2009). But the use of media to claim a geographical space linguistically also extends to its "soundscape" (e.g. public announcements in train stations and airports), the availability of local newspapers, of radio and TV in the minority language, etc. Apart from (minority) languages, dialects are also increasingly subject to processes of symbolic linguistic landscaping attempts (cf. Auer 2009). It can be argued that we are dealing with compensatory strategies (Kailuweit forthc.) here which already respond to a dissolution of the language-speaker-space equation. Their direct effect on language revitalization are probably minor, but the indirect effect of boosting the status of a minority language must not be underestimated (cf. Fishman 1991, Kaufmann 2006).

The second way of approaching the issue of language spaces as media spaces is to investigate the ways in which electronic media are used in order to **create supranational or even globalised language spaces**. Passive media such as TV play an important role for supercentral languages and the hypercentral language English, since they are an important means by which standard varieties spread worldwide (and compete with each other as the dominant norm of a second or third language). Interactive media such as the Web2.0 have no immediate geographical counterpart at all but may nonetheless be treated as language spaces by their users (Mair & Lacoste 2012, Mair & Pfänder forthc.)

3. Bringing in the speaker

Our central claim is that the speaker needs to be brought (back) into research on language and space in order to make geo-linguistics better equipped to deal with the challenges of contemporary societies. This first of all implies recognising the relevance of **the act of localization** for a theory of language and space. By this we mean the processes by which speakers produce linguistic signs that have an indexical value which can be interpreted in geographical terms, **and** the processes by which the recipient of these linguistic signs interprets them as an index of a certain place or space. Our starting point are therefore two

questions:

3.1. Production: Which linguistic structures observed in the speech of a person or groups of persons vary across geographical space?

On the scalar level of the **region** there is a wealth of evidence that the strength of the geographical ('diatopic') signal in speech as produced by speakers dispersed over a geographical area decreases as these speakers become more mobile, and more oriented to larger-scale (national and supra-national) models of social life through education and the media. The loss of the dialects, often lamented in public, is technically speaking a deterioration of the geographical signal in spontaneous speech (see most recently the contributions in Hansen et al. 2012). Very often, it is due to an orientation to national language spaces, i.e. the superimposition of a standard variety on a variegated dialect space. This means that less of the inherent variation in speech can be explained by reference to the location of the speakers, be it their birth place, their 'spatial biography', i.e. their mobility in space throughout life, or their current place of residence. Unfortunately we know rather little about this decreasing strength of the geographical signal in language, since larger-scale quantitative, diachronic studies on dialect levelling or loss across an area are rare (but cf., e.g., for southwest Germany, Streck 2012b, Schwarz forthc., Streck & Auer 2013, Auer et al. 2011). Studies on dialect levelling or dialect change (see, for a summary, Hinskens et al. 2005; for the Romance languages Dessì Schmid et al. 2011) usually only deal with single variables or groups of variables, often in one single community (e.g. town). There are also methodological problems involved; for instance, the set of variables investigated is usually restricted to those from traditional dialectology, with its well-known neglect of supra-segmental phonology, sub-phonemic processes, syntax and discourse structure (but cf. Gilles 2005, Peters 2006, Leemann 2012; Gilles & Siebenhaar 2009 on geographical variation in German intonation patterns, Cheshire 2007 on variation in British English discourse organization, Seiler 2005, Barbiers 2013, Kaufmann 2007, Kortmann 2010 on syntactic variation in dialects, to name just a few exemplary exceptions). Still, by and large the generalization seems correct that in most parts of Europe the dialectal signal in spontaneous speech has decreased in strength. In particular, this applies to the disappearance of dialect features with a very low geographical reach (and perhaps high salience, cf. below), i.e. those typical of the traditional (base) dialects, in favour of more regional or more standard features (Auer 2005, Auer 2011). Where new non-standard features emerge that are not merely

intermediate forms on the way to a more standard-like way of speaking, they are not bound to small geographical areas any longer but tend to spread out rapidly over large regions or even the entire language community (cf. the spread of glottaling/glottalization in British English, cf. Milroy et al. 1994; the spread of the LIKE-quotative in varieties of English worldwide, cf. Meyerhoff & Niedzielski 2003, or the spread of Germ. /niks/ instead of /niçts/ as described in Streck 2012b).

3.2. Reception: Can recipients of a given stretch of speech use certain features to 'place' the speaker, and if so, which ones?

As has been repeatedly pointed out in recent social dialectological research, individual linguistic features used in modern varieties can typically index more than one macro-social category, i.e. in addition to their geographical index value, they can be used to index social class, gender, etc. This **indexical order** (Silverstein 2003) or **indexical field** (Eckert 2008) often makes it impossible to establish a simple one-to-one correlation between linguistic variables and extralinguistic parameters. Rather, the indexical value of individual variables depends on their linguistic context ("social style", Eckert 2001), i.e. their co-occurrence relations with other features.

The integration of perception into geolinguistic research as the counterpart of production is no matter of course. Rather, the dominant paradigm has mostly been restricted to areal stratification in production data. However, there is a small tradition of perception research in social dialectology as well (cf. Niedzielski & Preston 2003 for an overview, also cf. Krefeld & Pusstka 2010 and Purschke 2011). Outstanding examples include Kerswill's work on the identification of Bergen dialects (Kerswill 2002) and the identification of dialectal and ethnic categories in England (Kerswill & Williams 2002b), both focusing on phonological variables to test dialect recognition. Some experimental designs have used manipulated speech (for resynthesised intonation contours, e.g. Peters et al. 2002), and a few ERP studies have investigated how linguistically incompatible variable realizations are processed neurologically (Hanulíková et al. 2012). The meaning of linguistic variables (in the sense of attitudes towards their speakers) has been most successfully studied using psycholinguistic differentials in Kristiansen's work on geographical variation in Denmark (e.g. Kristiansen 2010a & b, Kristiansen & Jørgensen 2005). Furthermore, lexically based methods of discourse analysis (cf. Garrett et al. 2005, Kerswill forthc.) have been used to reconstruct the social meaning of the variables. In ethnographic studies on sociolinguistic

variation (such as in the framework of Eckert's *Third Wave Sociolinguistics*, cf. Eckert 2012) the orders of indexicality of originally dialectal features are investigated by observing their use in interaction and tapping community members' knowledge of stereotypes linked to linguistic features.

In the present framework, the integration of perception naturally falls out from the fact that the act of localization is always dialogical; it can only be successful if speakers choose a set of variables in such a way that the recipients can link them (and hence the speakers themselves) to a geographical location. Not all features that can be shown by linguists to vary across geographical space are suited in the same way for achieving successful acts of localization. This brings in the much-debated issue of **salience** (cf. Schirmunski 1928/1929, Trudgill 1986, Kerswill &Williams 2002a Labov et al. 2006; Lenz 2010). It has long been argued that different types of linguistic variables should be distinguished based on their status in a community, starting at the latest with Labov's distinction between indicators, markers and stereotypes (1972b). Based on different distributional patterns in their social and stylistic stratification, Labov points out that indicators, markers and stereotypes show a different involvement in language change. Indicators are not involved in change at all, since change always presupposes some kind of social stratification of a variable, and also some speakers' conscious or unconscious response to this stratification. Indicators are not noticed by their speakers (although they may of course be noticed by outsiders to the community), this is only the case in markers and stereotypes. Dialect features that have the status of a marker can be involved in change, since they are usually noticed and attributed to some social group within the dialect community. The status of stereotypes –the most salient features – is however not easy to assess, since they may or may not be involved in language change. In fact, stereotypes may continue to figure strongly in metalinguistic discourse about variation even after they have largely disappeared from spontaneous vernacular usage and thus transform into language-ideological rather than linguistic phenomena. It seems that a highly salient feature can receive positive or negative evaluation, and accordingly either be preserved even when other, less salient dialect features, have already disappeared, or else be lost particularly early, when speakers consciously avoid it as a highly stigmatised variant (cf. Auer et al. 1998).

Other approaches to classifying linguistic variables according to their salience (even though the term itself is not used) were proposed by L. Milroy and B. Johnstone. L. Milroy (2007) distinguishes "off the shelf" features from "under the counter" features (building on Eckert 2003: 395). "Off the shelf"-variables can easily be adopted by all speakers, since they

are easy to identify and to manipulate. They can be copied on the basis of limited exposure to the variable through superficial, weak network contacts, even over long geographical distances (e.g., via TV). They are "highly visible" (Milroy 2007: 153) and often stereotypically linked to certain social groups, i.e. they carry a high "attitudinal and ideological load". "Under the counter"-variables, on the other hand, operate on a much smaller geographical scale, i.e. they can only spread in close-knit communities in locally bound environments. They are not salient, but transmitted via unconscious accommodation in face-to-face contact. Milroy makes an important additional point that relates the two types of variables to linguistic structure: "off the shelf"-variables arguably are structurally and sociolinguistically less complex than "under the counter"-variables. The theory thus makes strong predictions about the relationship between language change, salience, linguistic complexity, and the areal reach of a variable. These predictions deserve a closer look and need to be tested inside as well as outside the Anglophone world. Another proposal for classifying sociolinguistic variables which refers to the social meaning and salience of dialect features comes from Johnstone (e.g. Johnstone et al. 2006), who combines Labov's 1972 distinction between indicators, markers and stereotypes with Silverstein's "orders of indexicality" (2003). She distinguishes between 1st order indexicality (when variables are used by speakers without noticing, because 'everybody speaks like that'), 2nd order indexicality (when an awareness of social differences and correctness is imposed on these variables) and 3rd order indexicality (when variables are selectively used by speakers regardless of social class to consciously display their regional or local identity, often in a "semi-serious" way). Her three orders describe a diachronic development (from 1st to 3rd order indexicality), but since only some 1st order indexicals become 2nd order indexicals, and even less of them become 3rd order indexicals, the distinction also implies a typology of features. The three types are progressively more conscious, i.e. their salience increases from one level of indexicality to the next. Johnstone's model was developed on the basis of data from Pittsburgh/USA, and again, it is highly desirable to apply it to other sociolinguistic contexts.

The emphasis placed on processes of localization reflects our belief that the proper way to investigate the relationship between language and space is to reverse the traditional order of research on language and space. Most of the time, an individual's or group of individuals' speech is no simple **reflex** of the spatial location in which it occurs; we need to be attentive to **how humans achieve localizations** and, by doing so, **construct language**

spaces. From this perspective, speakers are seen as agents who choose variables from a range of options as a way of "placing" themselves, and enabling their recipients to "place" them (LePage & Tabouret-Keller 1985). Of course, this is only possible on the basis of some shared stereotypical knowledge about how linguistic variables are distributed geographically, i.e. some "imagined" geo- and sociolinguistic system: the relationship between knowledge and localising activities is reflexive. **The reversal of the usual way of thinking about space and language puts us in a position to analyse the place- and space-making activities which we believe are typical of late modernity, both in face-to-face interaction and in mediated interaction.**

4. Space-making/Place-making

It has been argued above that the dominant way in which space has been conceptualised in linguistic research on language and space is absolute, and that it implies a "container view" of space as existing prior to and independently of any linguistic utterances or varieties that are located in it. The position of the speaker plays no role in such an 'allocentric' conception of space. There is, however, a different tradition of conceptualising space as **relative**. In the most concrete sense, this relativity simply means that space is defined by relations between objects, which, instead of **being in** a space, **constitute** space. According to this view, there can be no empty space; the dualism between space and matter does not exist. Spaces are constructed by spatially co-ordinated human agents (Lefèbvre 1974), be it as temporary interactional spaces which are formed and dissolved with every social encounter (Goffman 1963), or as more permanent places (*Orte*), socially meaningful spaces which derive their significance from the activities taking place in them, and the values ascribed to them. On an even larger scale, spaces are constructed as social territories which often have an existence outside the full reach of the individuals who "occupy" them (i.e. they are only partly accessible) and are therefore to a large degree "imagined", but nonetheless discursively constructed (cf. Simmel 1903 for a sociological approach to space in the constructivist tradition).

In line with this layering, speakers' knowledge about language spaces (i.e. the knowledge on which locational acts are based) is egocentrically organised (Niedzielski & Preston 2003): it usually decreases the further the relevant spaces are away from the speaker's and recipient's spatial experiences. We have a relatively precise knowledge about the way in which those people speak of whom we have first-hand experience, and whom we can link to

certain geographical places. Second-hand knowledge about language spaces is usually more vague and error-prone.

In geography, the difference between absolute and relative perspectives on space is mirrored by the shift from the quantitative paradigms of the 1970s to approaches that focus on "the life-world of being creatively located not only in the making of history, but also in the construction of human geographies, the social production of space and the restless formation and reformation of geographical landscapes" (Soja 1989: 10-11). Since then, there has been an increased interest in the way in which people construct spatiality. This may happen partly through their bodily experiences (vision, motion), partly through public and institutional activities aimed at creating spatial identities (such as urban architecture), and partly through media constructions of local identities. However, the role of language and language variation is usually left out of this picture in human geography.

The notion of **place-making** (as used, for instance, by Cresswell, 2004) refers to the processes by which anonymous space is turned into "somebody's" place, i.e. a location for which certain people have a "sense" (Agnew 1987), an emotional attachment, and which for them has a "value" (Tuan 1977). It is obvious (and generally acknowledged by geographers) that language plays an important role in place-making activities, starting with the very simple but sometimes also very complex process of name-giving. (The major political battles that are fought over names for settlements or streets, and the language which provides them, present ample evidence of the relevance of name-giving for place-making; see also Burenhult & Levinson 2008 for the geo-linguistics of landmarks.) In linguistics, the relevance of public language use for place-making has received some attention in work on minorities (Backhaus 2007, Gorter 2006, Landry & Bourhis 1997), but – apart from Johnstone's work cited above (also cf. Johnstone 2009, Johnstone & Kiesling 2008) – there are few studies that investigate the use of dialect features for place-making (among the exceptions are Kallmeyer 1995, Beal 1999). This is regrettable, since not only minority languages, but also dialects, regional languages and regional dialects play an important, but largely unresearched role in what geographers call "New Regionalism" (e.g. Amin 2004, Paasi 1986, Werlen 2000 and 2007). **New Regionalism** (as opposed to the Old Regionalism of the 18th and 19th century, cf. Köstlin 1980) consists of a positive re-evaluation of the traditional regions within the nation states. Their disappearance or at least diminishing relevance was a consequence of the increasing strength of the nation states whose language policies in most parts of Europe explicitly aimed at marginalising regional language forms in favour of the uniform national

standard variety. New Regionalism is a reaction to this state centrism, but also to globalization, which is seen as another threat to territorial unity and sovereignty. Supported by the European Union ("regional governance"), regions such as Scotland or Wales in the UK, Catalunya, the Basque country and Galicia in Spain(/France), or Northern Italy have argued for regional political control and an (expected, or promised) increase in economic welfare by strengthening regional autonomy. In Germany, regional thinking has always been entrenched in the idea of the federal state, but – in synchrony with the rise of global geographies (see below) – regional identity discourses seem to have gained force as well, particularly in economically prosperous regions (such as in the metropolitan regions of Stuttgart and Munich, the Frankfurt Rhine Main metropolitan region, or the Lake Constance region. Whether this has had repercussions on the linguistic repertoires and the social evaluation of the salient dialect features in these regions (as suggested in the famous Baden-Württemberg publicity campaign around the slogan *Wir können alles. Außer Hochdeutsch* – 'we can do everything, apart from speaking Standard German'), needs to be investigated (see Pedersen 1996 on Danish). New Regionalism seems to be a countertrend to the general tendency to give up regional ways of speaking in favour of more standard-like, or at least non-regionalised ones. It sometimes receives support from the commodification of dialectal features in modern tourism, often based on notions of 'authenticity'. Obviously, such new social constellations will lead speakers to deploy regionally indexed linguistic features in ways not systematically accounted for in traditional dialectology and variationism. Where a traditional speaker of a broad dialect is predicted to accommodate toward more standard-like usage in more formal situations or in communication with outsiders, a "modern" regional speaker-activist, for whom a possibly enregistered dialect has the primary function of gatekeeping for the regional community, will use a comparatively smaller number of highly salient regional features, but be far less willing to give them up in communication with outsiders. The result may be what the creolist Allsopp (1996: vii) has called the "anti-formal" stance taken by speakers who wilfully opt out of the modern mainstream sociolinguistic consensus in which the regional signal is weakened as one moves from informal to formal situations, or from working-class to middle-class speakers.

Place-making is a notion that implies intimate, network-based communities not exceeding the limits of the world in reach, i.e. places can be experienced directly (or at least they appear to be accessible to direct experience). Place-making thus works at the level of small neighbourhoods, towns or cities, or smaller regions. Yet larger spaces can also be the

result of processes of social construction in which language plays a central role.

5. Imagined communities, imagined language spaces

One of the best-analysed examples of territorial construction at larger geographical scales is **nation building**. Standard languages are symbols of nations and often bound to their spaces, which in the process of their discursive construction therefore become equated with language spaces. As a citizen of a modern nation, an individual is not only part of one or more communities that are sufficiently small (and spatially accessible) to be experienced directly, but also part of a nation, a social institution that is beyond communicative reach and only accessible as an "imagined community" (Anderson 2006). As such, the speaker is qua nationality assumed to be a speaker of the national (standard) language. Seen from this perspective, it was the European national standard languages which for the first time dissolved the equation speaker = language = territory in a systematic way: in fact, they often gained their status without having speakers at all, although they were construed as controlling a certain state territory (cf. the Finnish or the Norwegian language space in the 19th century).

At least in Europe, the national standard languages are still associated in a very strong way with national territories (Heller 2011). When there is more than one nation state in which the same language functions as (one of) the national standard language(s) (as in the case of so-called pluricentric languages; cf. Clyne 1992, Ammon 1995), there is a strong tendency for more than one national standard to develop. Compared to the level of the dialects, where the last 50 years or more are characterised by rapid changes, mostly of the convergent type (dialect levelling or dialect-to-standard advergence), the national language spaces have remained quite stable, unless of course the national borders themselves have changed or have been upgraded from empire-internal to state borders. In the latter case, a range of sometimes unstable adjustments have been observed, particularly in the states that came into being after the collapse of the Soviet empire (cf. the status of Belarussian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, Ukrainian) and of Yugoslavia (Croatian, Serbian, etc.; cf. Gröschel 2009), few of which have been analysed in depth so far. Nations usually have a nation state, but there are exceptions, some of which have developed national standard languages just in the same way in which nation states have; the best example in Europe surely is the Catalan nation and national standard language within the state of Spain. Other minority nations have been less successful.

It is also well-known that the language spaces claimed for the European national standard languages were by no means coextensive with the areas in which the relevant

languages were actually spoken (and partly continue to be in conflict with them); not only was it an open question which dialects should be subsumed under the 'roof' of an emerging national standard language, but in addition state borders and language borders were by no means identical (Mattheier 1988, Fishman 1989, Gardt 2000, Stukenbrock 2005). Modernity begins with a phase of high discursive efforts to 'enregister' (Agha 2003, 2007) the standard (Silverstein's 1996 'monoglot standard') and to make it available and accepted in the whole territory, at the expense of minority languages and dialects. However, not only existing state borders, but even historical political borders can have an impact on language use and contribute to the delimitation of dialect regions (cf. the example discussed in Streck 2012a).

While this struggle to align national and linguistic borders is still going on in some states (e.g. in the Baltic states since 1989), the **border regions** themselves have become an object of research (e.g. Perkmann & Sum 2003). The German national borders, crosscutting a number of old dialect continua, are characterised by linguistic divergence (Auer 2013), although these borders are wide open and the relations between the nations on the two sides of the border are friendly and no nationalistic antagonism is involved. Many of the east and southwest European borders that crosscut dialect continua (and even standard roofs!) are too young to have had a strong impact on language behaviour – or at least they have not been investigated thoroughly (cf. Søvik 2005 for some remarks on the Ukrainian/Russian border). Other borders, such as the one between Poland and (now) Belarus (formerly the Soviet Union), have changed their status in the post-1989 period. Woolhiser (2005) found a substantial change in the Belorussian dialects on the Belorussian side, which he attributes to the replacement of the dialects by a Russian/Belorussian mixed variety as a marker of rural solidarity. On the Polish side, there is little influence from the structurally more distant roof which (like German in the Dutch/German case) seems to favour a shift to Polish, resulting in linguistic divergence. In the more stable Western European states, Llamas (2010) found linguistic divergence in the eastern part of the Scottish/English border, correlating highly with speakers' distinct Scottish vs. English identities; Ryckeboer (2000) describes the growing importance of the French/Belgian state border as a linguistic border separating a former dialect continuum of Flemish dialects. It is not difficult to see the ideology of the modern European nation state at work here, since language spaces are allocated to national spaces in a complete and exhaustive way, and without internal differentiation. The state (and its language) is "fully, flatly, and evenly operative over each square centimetre of a legally demarcated territory" (Anderson 1983 [2006:19]; also cf. Kaufmann 2010b for an example

from outside Europe). Viewed from this perspective, it would be misleading to characterise border dialects as incapable of surmounting the border which divides them (as the communication frequency model suggests); rather, because of the ideological equation of one nation = one territory = one language, the state borders are construed as the insurmountable territorial limits of the reach of the standard varieties.

The construction of national language spaces proceeded in tandem with the development of new media. This started with the invention of printing, without which the emergence of the modern standard languages is hard to imagine, and has ended or is nearing the end in the age of audiovisual mass media, which enforced the codification of a spoken standard, particularly during the "golden age of radio" when a few broadcasting stations served huge audiences. But of course, there are also other "imagined communities" apart from the nation state. Among them are **diasporic communities** (ranging from religious ones – most prominently and paradigmatically the Jewish community after the exodus – to modern transnational communities of work migrants who maintain a strong ideological and communicative orientation toward their home country, such as Turks in Europe, Filipinos in the Arab world, or Caribbean creole speakers in the UK; cf. Mair 2010). Diasporic groups are paradigm examples of the dissolution of the space = speaker = language equation: the 'places' to which they are emotionally attached are not the ones in which the speakers are located. Often, language is one of the values attached to the home country. Imagined communities also include globally dispersed groups without a 'homeland' (such as the Mennonites), religious organizations (the *ecclesia catholica*), cultural-religious spheres (the Muslim world, etc.), and colonial empires (the British Empire). Language (including linguistic practices, genres and styles) is essential in holding together these communities and, again, various types of media – from books to Web2.0 – play a role in the propagation of linguistic forms and practices.

6. New spatial practices: globalization and its challenges

Transnational or global language spaces are not an invention of the late 20th century. On the contrary, the most fundamental reorganization of the language spaces of the world occurred as a consequence of the European colonialization from the 16th century onward, imposing the European languages on the often variegated and multilingual language spaces of the colonial territories (cf. Mair 2010). These reorganization processes in the wake of European colonialism are probably unparalleled by any of the language-related developments which today are subsumed under the heading of globalization. Indeed, the linguistic consequences of

this process of exporting the European languages, such as the emergence of overseas varieties of these languages through contact with the indigenous languages and through levelling among the varieties brought along by the colonialists, are far from understood (cf. Kortmann & Schneider (eds.) 2004, Kortmann & Lunkenheimer 2011 and 2012, Kachru 1982, Schneider 2007, Trudgill 2004; for French Calvet 2006; Gadet, Ludwig & Pfänder 2008, Drescher & Neumann-Holzschuh 2010, Blumenthal & Pfänder 2012, among others).

Without denying the fact that important transnational and even global processes took place in earlier historical periods, we nevertheless argue that **globalization** refers to a set of historically **new spatialities** characterised by a "triad of deterritorialization, interconnectedness, and social acceleration" (Scheuermann 2010). These new spatial compositions look perforated, permeable, non-contiguous and overlapping from an allocentric perspective (such as in map representations). From an egocentric perspective, they turn places (such as cities) into sites in which multiple geographical networks and flows meet temporarily (Castells 2010 refers to the transition from a "space of places" to a "space of flows", cf. also Massey 2004). The worldwide mobility and migration of people speaking many languages – due to a multitude of reasons, from work migration to escape from war and terror – 'disturbs' the established patterns of how languages and linguistic forms are distributed in space. The difference between these forms of mobility and earlier ones (such as emigration and colonialization in the 19th century) is that migration is no longer just a phase of transition between two stable ways of living, i.e. a simple trans-location. Rather, it leads to a permanent overlay or hybrid amalgamation of old and new cultural and linguistic affiliations, and therefore spatial connections. We also observe the worldwide movement of texts, commercial products and cultural artefacts linked in various ways to languages which travel around the globe in electronic or material form. Commercial products sold on worldwide markets carry along with them linguistic forms such as trade names, slogans or even writing systems; mass media products already produced for worldwide markets (music, telenovelas, international news broadcasts) by globally oriented broadcast companies and an international music industry reach every corner of the world and bring along, not only linguistic forms, but also linguistic genres and pragmatic conventions linked to the respective speech communities. Note that this global circulation of linguistic resources does not affect standard or written varieties of languages only, but increasingly includes spoken and vernacular forms of low or covert prestige. Thus, the global media and technology are no longer chiefly agents of

linguistic homogenization and standardization, as in high modernity, but are involved in a complex dialectic of standardization and destandardization.

The result of these developments seems to be a dissolution of the traditional equation of bodies (speakers), languages and spaces. At first sight, then, the spatial transformations of late modernity seem to entail the **disappearance of space** and spatial experiences. Indeed, sociologists and philosophers such as Bauman (1998: 8) or Badie (1995) have interpreted globalization as the "Great War of Independence from space" and as "la fin des territories" respectively; and the geographer Relph diagnosed placelessness in late modern societies as a consequence of mobility and lack of authentic experiences (Relph 1976). We believe, however, that this is only one side of the dialectics of globalization. The other side is represented by the many attempts to retain old spaces and to create new ones (cf. Waldenfels 2009, Roudometof 2005). **The dialectics of deterritorialization and reterritorialization (Mair 2012) bring to the open what space has always been (as pointed out already by Simmel in 1903): the result of interactional and discursive construction.**

Compared to the cultural, historical and economic sciences, where globalization and its impact have figured prominently in the discussion for the past two decades, the linguistic contributions to the field are still rudimentary (cf. Heller 2003, Blommaert 2010, the handbook edited by Coupland 2010 and Kohnen & Mair 2012). Many of the suggestive theoretical concepts introduced into the debate (linguistic flows, linguistics of mobility, etc.) remain to be operationalised and tested in broadly based empirical research, and robust and stable theoretical frameworks need to be developed.

7. Central research questions

Against the backdrop of the previous sections, we are now in a position to formulate guiding questions for a new geography of language:

Question 1: Has it become more difficult to locate a speaker in geographical space?

Since the beginnings of geolinguistics in the 19th century, the "basilectal management of space by homo loquens" (as Göbl 1982, 1984 calls it) is assumed to follow the laws of geographical proximity. Since geographical proximity is taken to approximate the probability of social contact, it is believed to determine linguistic accommodation and hence to predict linguistic similarity (Johnstone 2010). Of course, the status of this equation of spatial proximity, social contact and linguistic convergence has always been questionable. However,

due to various well-known social changes (better education and hence the "demotization", Mattheier 1997) of the standard language, widespread media consumption, increased mobility) the "basilectal management of space by homo loquens" has fundamentally changed over the last 100 years. This leads to the first guiding question: how much of the observable variation in language can still be explained by geography in the sense of proximity or distance in space? The question can of course also be asked from the perspective of the hearer instead of the linguist: how reliable is language today as a (first order) index of geographical belonging or provenance?

Question 2: Which features are used by speakers and hearers as salient spatial indices?

Assuming that the simple equation of speakers, localities and language has become more and more difficult to uphold, it follows that it can no longer be taken for granted that the geographical indices relevant today are those we know from traditional dialectology and areal linguistics. Rather, speakers can draw on a large repertoire of forms to express spatial belonging. A central question is which of these features assume the status of **salient variables for place-making**. The traditional notion of a "variety" (such as a dialect) as a closed linguistic system becomes more and more problematic, as linguistic resources that historically are part of different varieties (standard and dialect, different dialects, ethnolects and learner varieties, different languages) may be mixed. In this context, it is of central importance to investigate how features traditionally assigned to different varieties can be combined within one structural level (such as phonology) and across levels (for instance, in phonology and morphosyntax).

Question 3: Which role do different geographical scales (neighbourhoods, regions, nations, global communities) play with respect to each other?

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to investigate place-making activities, processes of enregisterment, and constructions of spaces at different geographical scales. The further one moves up on this scale, the less important face-to-face interaction becomes, and the more the construction of spaces becomes an ideological issue. Media assume central importance, either as a way to replace face-to-face communication between individuals (by electronic communication), or by providing models for language spaces (in the mass media).

The **multiplicity of geographical scales** investigated allows us to describe changes in the relationship of these scalar levels relative to each other. One type of change is that

geographical units at specific scalar levels (such as, for instance, nations, or regions) increase or decrease in relevance relative to each other. Different claims have been made in the literature, in- and outside of linguistics: for instance, it has been claimed that nations are becoming less relevant as global networks and areas of flows are gaining importance, or that nations are becoming less relevant because the minority regions they contain are emancipating themselves from their superordinate nations. But the opposite case can be made as well: nations continue to provide highly relevant reference spaces for language (variation), supported by the strength of the national standard languages. Finally, the question about the relative strength of geographical spaces with regard to language can also be asked in a radically different way, giving up the idea that one geographical scale will always increase its power at the expense of another. Late modernity may be characterised exactly by the simultaneous relevance of different scalar levels for actors. If this is true, the strength of regions – to take just one example – is fully compatible with the growth of supranational geographical scales ("glocalization").

Question 4: Are nation spaces and language spaces converging or diverging?

This Question focuses on one of the scalar levels discussed under Question 3 which we believe to be of particular relevance. The idea of a perfect match of state boundaries and language boundaries is an idealization and ideological construct of 19th century nationalist thinking which never quite reflected reality. In present-day Europe, we observe two **divergent tendencies**. On the one hand, there are precarious mismatches between nation states and their language(s), particularly when a state language is only accepted in parts of a country's territory (as is the case of Ukraine). On the other hand, and more frequently, state territories become more relevant than they used to be for the delimitation of language spaces, since the influence of the respective national standard languages extends exactly to the limits of the state territory, i.e. to the national border. This seems to be the case with most dialect continua cross-cutting language areas, in which we observe tendencies towards linguistic divergence. Divergent tendencies are also at work when pluricentric languages (such as German in Germany, Austria and German-speaking Switzerland) diverge in ideology and practice through the enregisterment of diverging standard varieties.

There are also nations that do not inhabit a state of their own; consider the Welsh or the Catalan nation. In these cases it needs to be asked how the territories claimed by these nations are symbolically constructed by linguistic arguments, and how the minority status of the

language claimed to be spoken in the area affects its symbolic representation in public. For instance, the loss of the minority language in everyday (particularly public) life may be **compensated** for by the enforced medial presence of the language and by its enforced presence in the linguistic landscape (i.e. public written language, cf. Corsican, Welsh).

Question 5: How do political borders affect language?

This question is linked to Question 4, but answering it requires taking a close look at the details of the linguistic developments in border regions. Particularly interesting are cases in which the same or a similar language is used on both sides of the border. Even though the language variety spoken on the two sides of the border may be identical or next to identical, its role in the repertoire may differ massively (as can be seen in the most impressive way when Alemannic dialects in Switzerland, Germany and Alsace are compared, which are embedded in a diglossic repertoire with an endoglossic standard, a diaglossic German repertoire with a continuum from dialect to standard, and a bilingual diglossic repertoire, respectively). In the case of minority languages cross-cutting political borders, the political status and institutional support may be very different on each side of the border (cf. the case of Rusyn). **Border identities** – i.e. 'third spaces' between the two adjacent geographical-political spaces as they have often been discussed in the social sciences – do not seem to play a major role yet in linguistic terms, i.e. the linguistic developments at political borders are divergent rather than convergent in Europe and North America. This may be due to the stability of most nation states on these continents. Less stable (young) states are a possible exception; e.g. East Ukrainians in many ways feel close to Russians on the basis of a common language (Russian).

An important subtopic under Question 5 is the persisting relevance of former political borders and of sub-national political (administrative, state) borders within one nation state.

Question 6: When and under which conditions does mobility weaken or eliminate the link between language and space?

It seems obvious that the mobility of individuals or groups, be it on a national or international scale, threatens the link between language and space, i.e. that it detracts from the efficiency of language variation as an index to geographical belonging or provenance. Mobility must be distinguished from **migration**. At least for the traditional pattern of migration in the sense of translocation, no big changes in the linguistic management of space may ensue. Language

spaces can for instance be reproduced by migrants in the receiving society. The link between geography and language may then become more indirect, but it is not dissolved. Stable migratory settlements can also increase the amount of areally bound variability in the receiving language area when they give rise to specific **ethnolectal forms** of this language (such as the specific variety of Portuguese spoken by German and Italian settlers in the south of Brazil, which identify speakers as coming from these settlement areas.) A classical example of the creation of new geolinguistic patterns is migration in the context of the **colonial expansion**; as a consequence, numerous spatially bounded (often national) varieties of English, French and Spanish have emerged all over the world which have characteristic features not shared (or not enregistered) by the national variety of the former colonial language (cf. Canadian French, New Zealand English, etc.).

In contrast to these traditional migration patterns, the present-day patterns of mobility (which may include new forms of multiple migration) are assumed to weaken speakers' attachment to places and to make them resort to more neutral, areally unspecific ways of speaking. This applies to **inner mobility** (i.e. mobility within a language area) whose effects are usually discarded as chaotic and unstructured in (social) dialectology and which has therefore only rarely been analysed (cf. Siegel 2010 for a summary). Inner mobility can be investigated by analysing the changes in a group of speakers who leave their traditional home and largely move to a more industrialised and more urban region. Alternatively, it can be investigated by broadening the scope of urban sociolinguistic studies by including not only informants born and grown up in the locations under consideration (a species of informants who are harder and harder to find in the younger generation), but also those who have moved to this location. For these speakers, there are four possibilities: they may preserve their old way of speaking (the dialect of their birth-place), they may accommodate to (some salient features of) the dialect spoken in the receiving place, they may resort to a more neutral, standard way of speaking, or they may develop novel ways of speaking, mixing various features. **Outer mobility** (and particularly outer migration) into and from another language area has been the topic of research on language acquisition and bilingualism for a long time, but often without sufficiently taking into account the new, multiple migrants, the superdiversity of migratory contexts, and the typically uninterrupted flow of people, media products and verbal interactions from and to 'home'.

Question 7: How do the new transnational and global language spaces of late modernity differ from more traditional language spaces?

Transnational and global language spaces have always existed. For instance, the religious-cultural-intellectual spheres of Judaism, Catholicism and Islam have all been symbolised by the use of a religious language (Ancient Hebrew, Latin, Classical Arabic). The European colonial expansion has created global language spaces of English, French and Spanish. Again, we see contradictory forces at work:

On the one hand, multiple global migration movements have led to the dispersion of languages together with their speakers over many parts of the world, particularly the European, Asian and North American industrial centres. It has frequently been observed that these migratory movements have led to **superdiversity** in the receiving countries, most of all in their large urban centres. This superdiversity is often based on the co-presence of numerous **diasporic communities** in one location which remain linked to their homeland. From the perspective of language and space, the difference between old and new transnational language spaces can therefore be formulated as follows: older transnational and global language spaces are based on uniformity and stability, with strict regimentations of these language spaces being imposed on large parts of the world. By contrast, new transnational language spaces are based on diversity and continuous change. They link many places with each other, but the resulting networks of flows of speakers and texts are geographically non-contiguous, often only connected by electronic media and therefore not accessible to direct experience. The world of direct everyday experience, on the other hand, is only rarely made up of spaces that can be linked to one language only; rather, these spaces are multilingual, fragmented, and unstable. How the multilingual spaces of direct experience and the (partly) monolingual diasporic spaces are managed and construed by speakers remains to be investigated; answering this question certainly is one of the foremost tasks of a sociolinguistics of globalization.

On the other hand, contemporary developments of the global linguistic ecology also produce language spaces below the global and transnational level, since we are witnessing the dissolution of the formerly more or less well-defined colonial language spaces into national and regional varieties with a strong local identity-dimension. Despite the global presence of English and to a lesser extent Spanish in the media, the trend is not toward one variety of Spanish or English gaining control over the world; rather, the languages spaces of the former colonial languages tend to disintegrate into more local, often national varieties.

Question 8: What is the role of the media in the construction of language spaces?

While there has been some scepticism regarding the impact of the media on specific, single-variable processes of language change (cf. Chambers 1998), it is obvious that the mass media have played a central role in the spread of the standard languages throughout the 20th century, and thus in the construction of national language spaces. Today, the relevant geographical scales extend both below and above the national level. To be mentioned here is the increasingly **global reach of some Spanish and English language audiovisual media** (mainly TV). TV formats are more and more produced with a global market in mind. This development clashes with the increasing emergence of national varieties of Spanish and English (as well as, to a lesser extent, French). The way in which this clash is resolved will shape the future organization of the global language ecology. But media also are relevant on the **regional and local level** through various non-traditional formats such as soaps (cf. "Coronation Street" and its relevance for Northern English).

Another important development is the rise of the new, **interactive media,** particularly what is often called Web 2.0. The traditional scepticism in sociolinguistics against the relevance of the media for language change was based on the (neogrammarian) conviction that language change is dependent on direct interaction. As the mass media only allowed reception and consumption they were not believed to be able to influence people's linguistic behaviour. However, the new resources that make up Web 2.0 are no longer subject to the same constraints; electronic media have become interactive and therefore a true competitor for direct (oral) interaction. This interaction is liberated from the restrictions imposed on direct oral interaction, i.e. co-presence in one directly experienced space of interaction. The central assumption of traditional research on language and space mentioned above (Question 1), i.e. that frequency of interaction can be approximated by spatial proximity, is therefore partly invalidated.

8. Concluding Remarks

What we need consists in no less than a reconceptualization of the relationship between language and space: the formerly taken-for-granted nature of space as a container in which languages and linguistic items are located must be replaced by a notion of space as interactionally and discursively construed. Along these lines, space must be re-conceived as a means of producing order and meaningfulness in human lives. The function of language in

this connection is twofold: First, it is used as an index which serves to place speakers in these spaces, secondly, it contributes to the construal of these spaces themselves. As outlined in this paper, such a reconceptualization presupposes a re-thinking of many traditional approaches in geo-linguistics, eventually leading to a sociolinguistics of mobility and mobile resources, but also of place-making and regionalization; however, it also implies a critical reappraisal of some assumptions of research on globalization, such as the alleged disappearance of the nation state.

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