INTRODUCTION

The lure of a distant horizon

Variation in indigenous minority languages

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Studies of indigenous minority languages have led to invaluable new perspectives in grammatical theory, typology, descriptive linguistics, ethnographies of communication, and countless other facets of linguistics and anthropology. Yet such languages have received comparatively little attention in quantitative variationist sociolinguistics, i.e., the research of language variation and change that has grown out of the Labov tradition (e.g., Labov 1963, 1966, 1994, 2001). In an era of globalization and increasing cross-cultural contact, the time is ripe for more variationist sociolinguistic exploration of indigenous minority languages and the new insights they may bring.

After all, such underrepresented language communities provide meaningful contrasts and comparisons with more commonly studied language communities. For example, though models of socioeconomic stratification may be very effective in certain urban settings, the rural agrarian villages of some indigenous communities can be more homogeneous in terms of social class, so other factors such as clan (Stanford, this volume) or “covert hierarchies” (Clarke, this volume) may be more meaningful. Besides pointing out such contrasts, variationist research of such languages may also provide cross-linguistic and cross-cultural support for principles in existing sociolinguistic models. Therefore, in the same way that other subfields of linguistics have already gained crucial new perspectives by considering data from lesser-known languages, variationist sociolinguistics has much to gain as well.

This anthology, the first of its kind, serves as a platform for side-by-side comparison of 21 fieldwork-based variationist studies of indigenous minority languages. With one or more contributions from each of the six populated continents (Figure 1), this volume offers a broad picture of current developments in the study of variation in indigenous minority languages across the world.
Our topic of focus in comparison to other work

First, we should point out that this anthology is not primarily intended to be a collection of *ethnographies of communication* (Hymes 1962, 1964; Gumperz & Hymes 1964) among lesser studied languages. We recognize that a great deal of influential prior work has focused on ethnographies of communication and other related qualitative approaches (e.g., Jackson 1974; Basso 1972; Frake 1964; Irvine 1974 inter alia, and recent work such as Innes 2006; Aikhenvald 2003 and others). Such research plays a fundamentally important role in the understanding of language in diverse settings. Naturally, the studies in this volume contain ethnographic components, and such perspectives and insights are often crucial to the variation analysis. But ethnographies of communication and other related qualitative, anthropological linguistic approaches are not our primary focus.

Secondly, many studies of indigenous languages touch on the pressing issues of language endangerment, death, and revitalization, and such issues arise in this volume as well. However, we do not view this topic as the primary focus of our anthology. After all, other work addresses these issues more directly, e.g., Fishman (1991, 2001), Hale et al. (1992), Grenoble & Whaley (1998, 2006), Nettle & Romaine (2000), Hinton & Hale (2001), and others. Likewise, we are mindful of the important work being done in language description and documentation, where many researchers are striving to engage with as many indigenous languages as possible before they vanish. Many of the authors in this volume depend upon such work for background information, and some provide a considerable amount of description and documentation in their own work (see Nagy, this volume). Nonetheless, language description and documentation is not the primary focus of the collection.

Instead, our primary focus is a topic that we consider to be a significant lacuna in linguistics: quantitative variationist sociolinguistic research of indigenous minority languages. Sankoff showed the value of a quantitative variationist approach in Papua New Guinea (see Sankoff 1980, especially Chapter 3), an approach also found in Eckert’s work on Gascon (1980). Foley produced an early quantitative variationist study of Cherokee (1980), and other studies have appeared as well (e.g., Di Paolo 2007; Haddican 2005 inter alia). Yet in comparison to other areas of linguistics, this topic has received far less attention. Hymes (1980) recognizes the importance of a quantitative, variationist component to understanding language in sociocultural context: “Clearly any adequate analysis of such questions will have to make use of the quantitative approach to linguistic change across cultures, as does Sankoff” (p. xiv). Hymes foresees that “an adequate analysis of the social life of language” will require “technical linguistics, quantitative and mathematical technique, ethnographic inquiry, ethnohistorical perspective” (see also Bauman & Sherzer 1989: 17). We believe, therefore, that the present collection of
studies of variation and change in underrepresented languages is timely and valuable to the “broad church” (Coupland 2007a: 4) of sociolinguistics in general as well as to variationist sociolinguistics in particular.

Most linguists agree that language endangerment is a critical issue due to the rapid onslaught of modern social forces. However, long before a language has reached a point of noticeable moribundity, the sociolinguistic setting of the community has usually been drastically changing, making it difficult to gauge features of language variation and change that may have been present when the language was healthier. While we subscribe to a dynamic, interactive view of culture as a process, i.e., that change, contact, and hybridity are constantly present even in so-called isolated societies, we nonetheless observe that when indigenous cultures come into extensive contact with dominant, culturally divergent groups, the dominated group often undergoes dramatic changes. When an indigenous language dies and its visible community vanishes, we lose opportunities for grammatical knowledge and ethnographic, anthropological linguistic understanding. But for variationist sociolinguistics, we also lose invaluable opportunities to observe language variation and change in situations that are starkly different from those more commonly studied. It may be that certain culturally dependent types of variation or other important evidence about sociolinguistic principles and patterns are disappearing forever along with these cultures; it is undoubtedly the case that these communities can give us a deeper and more balanced perspective on language variation and change.

What is an “indigenous minority language”?

One possible view of a prototypical “indigenous minority language” would be a language spoken by a fully endogenous, numerical minority group which is indigenous to the local region and which experiences a maximally distinct linguistic/cultural contrast with the majority group around it. Languages that may approach such a prototype include the Dene Shtíiné speakers of Canada (Thiering, this volume), the Northern Paiute speakers of the United States (Babel, this volume), the Warlpiri speakers of Australia (O’Shannessy, this volume), and others. Yet when one examines the term indigenous minority language closely, it is not as straightforward as it might seem, and even the languages mentioned above may diverge from the prototype in significant ways. Therefore, although we find

indigenous minority language useful to define the area of study, we view this term
in relation to a prototype rather than a rigid feature-based definition. The lan-
guage communities selected for this collection share certain similar experiences
and characteristics, yet they cluster around the prototype from slightly different
ranges and angles in a way that we hope will contribute toward meaningful per-
spectives on language variation and change.

First, we recognize that indigenous is relative when applied to human com-
munities. After all, most groups have migrated at some point in history, and the
forebears of a current group may have migrated from elsewhere in earlier times.
Furthermore, the socially constructed notions that distinguish one group from
another are constantly evolving. Even if all members of a community were to
agree that one particular, contemporary group represents the first group that oc-
cupied a region historically, that group's own historical integrity and uniqueness
is a negotiable social reality subject to shift and reinterpretation over time (cf.
quoted in Tapp 2003:110 inter alia). Nonetheless, many communities have well-
accepted, socially meaningful narratives asserting that certain groups in their
region were established considerably earlier than other groups, a sense of pre-
cedence that is expressed in terms of centuries, millennia, or longer. Therefore,
our use of indigenous encompasses these senses in a practical, meaningful way
that focuses our area of study while also avoiding egocentric terms like "exotic."
Finally, we also note that indigenous has often been used to differentiate pre-
colonial groups in a given region from those established in that region during or after
the colonial era; our usage is consistent with this sense as well.

Secondly, we consider minority status in terms of relationships with other
groups, not just as a simple numerical minority. Language communities in this
collection share commonalities due to their minority stances with respect to so-
cial, political, and/or economic relationships with other groups in their regions.
Although such relationships often occur when a language community is a nu-
merical minority, a group may also be found to have a minority stance for other
reasons. For example, Ewe is used by a large population in Togo (see Noglo, this
volume), yet in many senses French has higher status in that country.

Thirdly, as for language, we do not attempt to navigate the shadowy border
between language and dialect. We recognize that what one person considers a
dialect might be considered a language by someone with a different sociopoliti-
cal or sociolinguistic viewpoint. While the "prototypical" indigenous minority
language may have maximal linguistic distance from nearby majority languages,
in practice we find that many minority communities share significant linguistic
features with majority communities. Yet such minority communities often main-
tain their own distinct language ideology and group identity. Moreover, contact
with a majority language is a fact of life for many minority language communities. Therefore, when studying language variation and change in indigenous minority communities, issues of language attrition and death and other topics of language contact naturally arise. In a rapidly changing, globalizing world, many indigenous minority languages are experiencing acute contact issues, and this collection includes studies to reflect that reality.

Variation in indigenous minority languages: The story so far

In this section, we survey recent variationist studies of indigenous minority languages, drawing both from this volume and other publications, in order to outline initial insights and paths for future research. As we have seen, “indigenous minority language” can apply to a diverse set, a wide range of cultures and settings. We do not attempt to develop general principles of variation in indigenous minority languages. Rather, we present some of the perspectives that these language communities may provide. After all, many of these communities do share some important traits, especially when viewed in contrast to more commonly studied communities. In particular, given the influential role of Labovian methodology and principles of language variation and change (e.g., Labov 1994, 2001; Trudgill 1972 inter alia), we suggest some of the ways that underrepresented language communities may support and challenge classic variationist perspectives.

In this section, then, we compare indigenous minority results against classic variationist principles and approaches, which seems to be an appropriate initial heuristic. Naturally, future analyses and fieldwork can further our understanding by integrating (see Holmes & Meyerhoff 2003:15) practice-based, interactional, discourse-centered approaches and microanalytic methods. For the present study, we outline results from quantitative variationist studies with respect to social class, clan, lack of a standard, network analysis, exogamy, gender roles, contact with majority languages, age, and internal linguistic factors.

Social class

When applying a variationist sociolinguistic approach to indigenous minority languages, one of the first observations one makes is that many such languages

do not have clear socioeconomic class distinctions or that distinctions emerge in
different ways. Social class has had a fundamental place in variationist analyses
of majority languages (e.g., Labov 1966, 1972, 2001; Trudgill 1974 inter alia). Yet
many indigenous minority language communities, especially those in rural ar-
ers like the Sui people of China (Stanford, this volume, 2007), do not have such
clearly demarcated socioeconomic categories. Other examples include Kaluli of
Western Samoa and Papua New Guinea (Ochs & Schieffelin 1984), Nganhcara of
Australia (Smith & Johnson 1986), and the Vaupes region of the Amazon (e.g.,

Where identifiable hierarchical contrasts do exist, they may not fall along the
traditional class lines frequently assumed for majority languages in urban societ-
ies. For example, Clarke (this volume) finds that for the "relatively egalitarian"
indigenous Innu community of Sheshatshiu, Labrador, “a classification scheme
grounded in socioeconomic stratification, as per urban variationist studies...was
almost totally irrelevant.” Instead, she finds that the community is best described
as having a “covert” hierarchy based on territorial groups. In other indigenous
North American communities, Molly Babel (p.c.) observes that social hierarchies
related to tribal leadership status may have sociolinguistic reflexes as well.

Other perspectives include Romero’s (this volume) analysis of egalitarian dia-
lects of K’iche’, and Rau, Chang, & Dong (this volume), who describe the Yami
people of Orchid Island, Taiwan as emically egalitarian with respect to social class.
In a study of Ewe in Togo, Noglo (this volume) cautions that Western-oriented so-
ciolinguistic approaches rely “too heavily on social class as a primary independent
research variable.” Likewise, for Garifuna speakers in Belize, Maya Ravindranath
(p.c.) notes the difficulty of quantifying socioeconomic status with traditional
measures like income; a Garifuna speaker’s income level may be closely related to
the number of relatives living in the United States, rather than traditional social
class measures.

Clan

In rural indigenous communities where traditional socioeconomic class cat-
egories are indistinct, clan-level distinctions are often highly important, as dis-
cussed in detail in Stanford (this volume). In Smith & Johnson’s (1986) study of
Nganhcara, Bowern’s (2008) study of clans in Arnhem Land, Australia, and in Sui
communities (Stanford, this volume), clan is a crucial level of social organization.
Clan-level linguistic variation often marks key aspects of social identity that go
beyond age, socioeconomic class, or other such factors. In this way, clan may be a
fundamental sociolinguistic variable for many indigenous minority languages.
Lack of a standard

Variationist studies of indigenous minority languages often face the challenge of the lack of an established standard variety and orthography. Clarke (this volume) notes this challenge in Sheshatshiu, Labrador:

The current context...does not represent the usual Labovian focus of study: in Sheshatshiu, not only are speakers often not literate in their first language, they also lack a clearly-defined linguistic standard, encoded via a standardized orthography.

Therefore, to define their objects of study, some researchers have turned to a diachrony framework, e.g., Léonard & Sunuc for Mayan (this volume), or to a "sociogrammar," as suggested by Nagy for Faetar (this volume). Unlike studies of relatively homogeneous speech communities, many indigenous languages exist in situations of extensive multidialectal or multilingual contact with ambiguous boundaries and no established single standard for the researcher to use as a reference point. Nagy sees such situations from a positive angle, suggesting that a lack of "agreed-on stigmatized forms" in such language communities can change the "lens through which the linguist examines the language." Thus, the challenge that researchers face by the absence of a standard variety may have the positive result of an escape from the sometimes staid influences of a "standard ideology." Nagy quotes Cheshire's observation that "variationists have worked almost exclusively on languages that have been heavily standardized, so the potential influence of the standard ideology on the selection of variables for analysis has been high" (Cheshire 2005:87, quoted in Nagy, this volume).

The dense and multiplex village: A single community of practice?

Indigenous minority language communities can also differ from majority language communities in the terms of social networks. Analyses of social networks (Milroy 1982, 1987) and communities of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998, 2000; Eckert 1988; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992, 2003; Holmes & Meyerhoff 1999; Meyerhoff 2002) have played important roles in variationist research and will likely be valuable in many indigenous language communities as well. However, in some close-knit village-oriented communities, the entire village might be viewed as functioning as the only significant community of practice, and social networking may be too dense to easily evaluate. For Sheshatshiu Innu, Clarke (this volume) observes the following:
An approach in terms of social networks – though originally envisaged as fruitful – proved too difficult to implement in any systematic fashion. In Sheshatshiu, as in other Innu communities, almost every resident has ties (often dense and multiplex) with almost every other resident, through such factors as kinship, marriage, adoption, and co-participation in a range of activities, both within the community and outside.

Likewise, in most small Sui communities (Stanford 2007), the village appears to function as a tightly knit community based on close family relationships – an extremely dense and multiplex network. While there is surely some degree of social division and individual differences in network strength among village residents of such communities, the differences may be subtle enough that dense and multiplex daily community interactions override other individual distinctions, reducing network-related variability. However, beyond the level of the small village, such analytic techniques may be useful. For example, analysis of inter-village or inter-clan networks may provide meaningful sociolinguistic insights.

Exogamy

Exogamy is another sociolinguistic issue that is often prominent in small indigenous minority communities. When exogamy and associated in-migration patterns occur between close-knit communities, certain linguistic markers may be crucial as in-marriage spouses determine how to index their identities. Such sociolinguistic reflexes of exogamy are found among the Sui people (Stanford, this volume), Australian communities such as Nganbura (Smith & Johnson 1986) and Arnhem Land (Bowern 2008), and among Hmong Daw/Mong Leng mixed marriages in the U.S. (Stanford 2008). Similar effects of exogamy are presumably at work in many other communities around the world as well.

Gender and sex

Quantitative variationist sociolinguistic research of indigenous minority languages also gives new insights into issues of gender, sex, and language. Classic principles (e.g., Labov 2001: 266, 275, 292; cf. Labov 1972, 1990; Trudgill 1972) may find support in some indigenous communities or be challenged in others, and other issues may be uncovered. Of course, gender roles are highly sensitive to (and constitutive of) differences in culture, so this is naturally an area of interest for variationist research of underrepresented communities. The following sketch of results serves as an initial comparison to those classic principles that have had an influential role in the variationist tradition. A fuller treatment on gender and
sex is far beyond the scope of this chapter, and countless other perspectives remain to be examined (cf. Holmes & Meyerhoff 2003).

A number of studies of indigenous languages support the notion that women are frequently leaders in changes from above and below, and that, in situations of stable variation, they have higher rates of prestige variants and less stigmatized variants than men (Labov 2001: 266, 275, 292). For example, in a study of negation marking in K’iche’ of Guatemala, Romero (2008) shows that women are leading a change from below. Among Garifuna speakers of Belize, Ravindranath (forthcoming) finds that women are innovators in an increase in r-deletion. Clarke (this volume) reports that “like their counterparts elsewhere, Sheshatshiu women seem more attuned than men to the social symbolism encoded by linguistic features.” A study of the Yami people of Taiwan (Rau, Chang, & Dong, this volume) finds that young Yami women are currently involved in vowel raising more than men, a feature which has become indexed with “positive social meaning.”

However, results from other studies suggest more nuanced, culturally dependent effects. Among the Eastern Cham people of Vietnam, Brunelle (this volume) describes a situation where women’s access to prestige is limited. Therefore, “since linguistic prestige is almost out of reach regardless of the efforts made, [Cham] women make little attempt to use H features in their Formal I speech.” Romero’s (this volume) study of K’iche’ fricativization of intervocalic /l/ illustrates another case where lack of access has a significant effect. K’iche’ women use a stigmatized variant more than men; K’iche’ men use the stigmatized variant less frequently since they have had greater access to outside communities which have a negative view of that speech characteristic. In addition, Haddican (2003) reports a case where Basque men appear to be leading a change toward prestige forms. Such examples from understudied language communities illustrate the value of analyzing in “highly local terms” (Meyerhoff 1999: 233–234) for a particular society.

Majority language contact and age

In many indigenous language communities, intense contact with a majority language is a constant fact of life. Of course, contact has always been a key issue in the study of majority languages as well, but since many indigenous communities are politically and socially dominated by a nearby majority language, intrusive language contact issues are often acute. While some variationist studies of majority languages may be able to (heuristically) define a fairly homogeneous speech community for analysis within the bounds of a single language, language contact is often an unavoidable aspect of research in indigenous minority languages. Issues of contact with a majority language play a prominent role in the
studies in this volume of Mansi (Biró & Sipócz), Dene (Thiering), Frisian (van Bezooijen), Catalan (Carrera-Sabaté, Montoya-Abat), Chichimeco Jonaz (Lastra), Warlpiri (O'Shannessy), Peruvian Quechua (Pasquale), Northern Paiute (Babel), and Maori (Harlow et al.). Some of these studies also find a related age contrast; younger speakers are more influenced by the majority language, thus suggesting possible change in progress (e.g., Thiering, Lastra, O'Shannessy, and Brunelle). For example, Brunelle (this volume) finds that young Eastern Cham men are more likely to acquire prestige through the Vietnamese community while older men are more likely to use features of the H variety of Eastern Cham to achieve prestige. However, Brunelle's study also shows how a fine-grained quantitative variationist approach can challenge generalized assumptions about the influence of dominant languages; he determines that monosyllabization in Eastern Cham is primarily a matter of stable Cham-internal diglossia, rather than a change in progress due to direct influence of dominant Vietnamese.

While the issue of the influences of a majority language is commonly addressed in studies of language death and attrition (cf. Crystal 2000), many variationist sociolinguistic studies of majority languages have been able to view a speech community as an idealized, relatively isolated object with negligible contact effects from intrusive languages (e.g., classic studies such as Labov 1966; Trudgill 1974). Even when variationist research focuses specifically on language change, e.g., regional changes/vowel shifts in English, such research can often make the reasonable assumption that no dominant outside language is imposing catastrophic changes due to contact. By contrast, variationist studies of indigenous minorities are more often than not faced with dramatic influences from socio-economically, politically, and/or culturally powerful majority languages in direct, intrusive contact with the language of study (e.g., indigenous minorities in North America). In many of the studies listed above, contact with a majority language is therefore a key factor to investigate with respect to language variation and change, thus showing another way that variationist research of indigenous minorities often differs from majority language research.

Internal linguistic factors

In addition to the social factors and language contact issues described above, indigenous minority languages may have further perspectives to provide due to the

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4. External factors are often included as possible original sources, of course, and many studies also specifically look at the influence of contact with other varieties, such as the influence of African American English on other varieties of American English and vice versa.
structure of the languages themselves. Just as postvocalic /r/, -in/-in, -t/d deletion, and other well-known sociolinguistic variables have played important roles in understanding how languages vary and change, less commonly studied variables of indigenous minority languages can be compared and contrasted with other languages. For example, fricativization of /l/ is not commonly investigated as a sociolinguistic variable, yet Romero (this volume) finds it to be a key social marker in K'iche'. O'Shannessy (this volume) finds ergative case-marking and word order to be significant variables in Warlpiri, and Brunelle (this volume) examines monosyllabization as a variable in Eastern Cham. Satyanath & Laskar (this volume) make use of variation in clitics and classifier marking to uncover issues of language and identity in Bishnupriya Manipuri.

On the other hand, some variables found in indigenous minority languages are similar to those of other variationist studies and can therefore be used for comparison. For example, Rau, Chang, & Dong’s (this volume) study of the nuclei of (ay) and (aw) in Yami of Taiwan may be compared with Labov’s study of similar diphthongs on Martha’s Vineyard (1963). The vowel shifts investigated in Quichean Mayan (Léonard & Sucuc, this volume), Māori (Harlow, Keegan, King, Maclagan, & Watson, this volume), and Shoshoni (Di Paolo 2007; Di Paolo, James, & Sykes 2008), r-deletion in Garifuna (Ravindranath, forthcoming), and word-final deletion in Faetar (Nagy & Reynolds 1997) can also be considered in light of comparable processes in majority languages.

The studies in this collection

The chapters in the volume are organized around two general themes. In Part I we present articles that have a central focus on variation in phonetics and phonology. The studies in Part II include variation in syntax, morphology, and morphophonology.

Part I: Variation in phonetics and phonology

In Chapter 1, Molly Babel presents a study of intergenerational variation in sibilants and stop consonants in Northern Paiute (Western United States). She conducts two phonetic experiments on speakers of this highly endangered language, exploring categorical and gradient effects of sound change. Her sociophonetic analysis of three generations of speakers shows how obsolescing languages can undergo sound change both through substitution and through expansion of phonological categories.
Marc Brunelle investigates monosyllabization in Eastern Cham of Vietnam in Chapter 2. Rather than a change in progress due to the direct influence of Vietnamese, the presence of monosyllabized words is a case of stable variation among (quasi-)diglossic varieties of Eastern Cham: H, L, and a compromise variety, Formal L.

In Chapter 3, Josefina Carrera-Sabaté investigates Lleidatà, a western dialect of Catalan (Spain). Post-alveolar sibilants are realized variably in Catalan, with more affricates in western dialects than eastern. Using both production and perception data, Carrera-Sabaté determines that Lleidatà speakers are adjusting their pronunciation of sibilants toward the overt prestige of the written language and eastern dialects.

Sandra Clarke describes her research of the Innu settlement of Sheshatshiu, Labrador, Canada in Chapter 4. Through a study of phonological variation, Clarke determines that partial dialect convergence is occurring as Innu speakers from different regions interact in the new community, and she reports stratification and prestige differences. However, instead of socioeconomic stratification, Clarke finds a “covert hierarchy” organized according to territorial groups. Upward mobility with respect to territorial group membership is played out linguistically.

Māori (New Zealand) sound change is explored in Chapter 5 by Ray Harlow, Peter Keegan, Jeanette King, Margaret Maclagan, and Catherine Watson. The study examines Māori vowels, diphthongs, stops and /r/ across a 100-year timespan. Finding parallels with New Zealand English vowels and stops, the authors suggest that Māori vowel shifts and changes in stop aspiration are related to external influences from English as well as language-internal changes.

In Chapter 6, Yolanda Lastra investigates Jonaz Chichimec of Mexico, reporting on four changes in progress (merger of /i/ and /u/, /g/- > o, /r/- > /s/-, and /c/- > /s/). She also analyzes a change in the classifier system; a classifier is changing from an earlier generic usage to a more specialized usage in younger generations and is now being substituted by another classifier.

The Quichean language Kaqchikel (Guatemala) is the topic of Chapter 7, where Jean Léonard and Cecilio Tuyuc Sucuc describe variation and change through an acoustic sociophonetic study of tense/lax vowel contrasts. The authors model the Kaqchikel diatopic by means of the vowel shifts observed in the different individuals of their survey.

Braulio Montoya-Abat provides a study of Alicante Catalan (Spain) in Chapter 8. On the basis of reductions in the vowel system, re-introduction of /r/-, and reductions in syllable codas, Montoya-Abat suggests that the dying language, Alicante Catalan, is converging with the dominant language, Spanish.

Chapter 9 brings us to Togo, West Africa, where Kossi Noglo researches Ewe as an example of language urbanization in an African setting. Noglo finds
language change and simplification among urban Ewe speakers with respect to bilabial fricatives, alveolar affricates, and reduplication. Significant independent variables include ethnicity, community (urban versus rural), and gender.

In Chapter 10, Michael Pasquale examines shifts in /t/ and /d/ in Peruvian Quechua. He finds raising of /t/ and /d/, especially among Spanish-dominant bilinguals, and suggests that the ongoing Quechua sound changes are due to contact between the two linguistic systems of Quechua and Spanish and also due to the social role of Spanish.

Following the tradition of Martha's Vineyard (Labov 1963), Chapter 11 is an island-based study of /ay/ and /aw/ conducted among the Yami people of Orchid Island, Taiwan by D. Victoria Rau, Hui-Huan Ann Chang, and Maa-Neu Dong. The authors determine that Yami diphthong raising has become a positive social marker on the island. Women are found to be leading this sound change, a situation which the authors link to changing social roles and opportunities for Yami women.

Sergio Romero presents a study of K'iche' (Western Guatemala) in Chapter 12, exploring the intervocalic fricativization of /l/ as a regional stereotype associated with Santa Maria Chiquimula township. Unlike other studies of stable sociolinguistic variation where women have been observed to avoid stigmatized forms (Labov 2001:266), the men of this township use the stigmatized feature less than women. Romero suggests that the men are more sensitive to the stigmatization of this feature since they have more contact with other dialects.

In Chapter 13, Renée van Bezooijen brings us to Holland for a study of alveolar realizations of /r/ among West Frisian speakers. This alveolar variant of /r/ persists despite contact with the Dutch uvular and approximant variants of /r/. However, the author finds a uvular variant in Town Frisian, and she traces this variant to contact between elite urban speakers in the early 20th century.

Part II: Variation in syntax, morphology, and morphophonology

We begin this section with a visit to Russia in Chapter 14, where Bernadett Börö and Katalin Spócz conduct a real-time study of Mans language shift. The authors compare a corpus of 19th century texts with modern texts in order to trace grammatical changes in the passive and dual as well as lexical changes. They find evidence of significant changes in the passive and the lexicon, and smaller changes in the use of the dual.

Chapter 15 is a study of morphophonological variation in Scottish Gaelic. Using data from the Linguistic Survey of Scotland (approx. 1949-1960), Anna Bosch and James Scobie investigate variation in nasal mutation. The study un-
covers new perspectives on Scottish Gaelic variation and illustrates both the value and challenges of applying prior fieldwork data to modern variationist research. In Chapter 16, Miriam Meyerhoff examines corpora of Bislama and Tamambo (Vanuatu, South Pacific) to determine the influence of animacy in the variable presence/absence of a pronominal subject in a clause, the form of 3p agreement, and the presence/absence of pronominal objects. She uses the results to evaluate the role of substrate transfer (Tamambo to Bislama) and illustrate the value of multivariate, quantitative analyses in such contact situations.

Naomi Nagy (Chapter 17) then explores the challenges of field research in less commonly studied languages and shows how a variationist approach can provide solutions. Drawing on her experiences with Faezar (Italy), she discusses five specific challenges and also develops the notion of a "sociogrammar," a way for the linguist to describe a language with as much attention to variability as possible.

Carmel O'Shannessy studies a Warlpiri community of northern Australia in Chapter 18, investigating different generations of speakers of Lajamanu Warlpiri and a newly emerging language, Light Warlpiri. O'Shannessy finds evidence of an ongoing, intergenerational shift in ergative marking in this complex language community.

We turn to India in Chapter 19, where Shobha Satyanath and Nazrin Laskar present a study of classifier clitic marking in Bishnupriya Manipuri. Analyzing variable NP structure in Bishnupriya, the authors conclude that post-nominal word order and pronominal clitics are used by Bishnupriyas as distinctive markers of linguistic and ethnic identity.

In Chapter 20, James Stanford presents a case study of clan dialects in Sui (China) in order to explore the significance of clan as a sociolinguistic variable among the Sui people and other clan-based societies. His chapter illustrates how clan can play a key role in the full range of contemporary variationist research objectives.

We conclude the collection with Martin Thiering's study of Dene Sułiné (Chipewyan) of Canada in Chapter 21. Thiering investigates an ongoing loss of topological spatial relations in Dene Sułiné, finding that the morphology of younger speakers includes only a restricted set of spatial morphemes compared to older speakers' more complex morphosyntax and semantic patterns.

Before moving on to the articles themselves, we would like to express our appreciation to the authors who generously provided the studies in this volume and other scholars who gave helpful insights or helped connect us to researchers as we developed the project, as well as comments on the manuscript given by students in James Stanford's spring 2008 course on “Sociolinguistics of Lesser Studied Languages” at Rice University, and other suggestions from Kevin Heffernan and Jonathan Evans.
Although a volume like this can only provide an introduction to the research being conducted around the world, we believe that the studies given here are representative of current trends in variationist research of indigenous minorities. This volume can then serve as a stimulus for increasing variationist attention to less commonly studied languages. We consider each study of an indigenous minority language to be a priceless gem. After all, though very rewarding, research on language variation and change in such communities can be challenging. For example, with only 15 remaining speakers, Mono Lake Northern Paiute (Babel, this volume) illustrates one of the practical challenges: lack of speakers. Even in more robust languages, research access is often limited due to sociopolitical sensitivities and, unfortunately, a long history of oppression by majority groups. Similarly, many close-knit, isolated communities require nurturing of extensive personal relationships before research is welcomed. Such circumstances, and the different means that researchers find to address them, make studies like those presented in this volume all the more valuable. Beyond gains in linguistic knowledge, we also find that the cross-cultural interaction implicit in such research can leave the researcher and the researched both deeply enriched.

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