

## Foreword

This third volume of *Principles of Linguistic Change*, dealing with *Cognitive and cultural factors*, appears a decade after the second, and some accounting for the delay might be in order. The first volume on *Internal Factors* in 1994 was followed by the second on *Social factors* in 2001. The next five years were largely occupied with the publication of the *Atlas of North American English [ANAE]*. The Atlas radically transformed our view of linguistic change in progress in North America, and much of this volume is devoted to understanding the impact of its findings. *ANAE* built upon the solid and reliable work of Kurath and McDavid in the Eastern United States, and many chapters of this volume will show how strongly it confirmed their fundamental insights. But that traditional base was not embedded in a systematic analysis of linguistic structure. It did not employ the approach to structural change generated by Martinet, Weinreich and Moulton, nor the principles of accountability used in the study of change and variation. Prior to the Telsur study that is the basis of *ANAE*, those tools had been applied in the study of a relatively small number of speech communities: Martha's Vineyard, New York City, Detroit, Panama City, Norwich, Montreal, Philadelphia and exploratory studies of a few dozen cities in England and America as reported in Labov, Yaeger and Steiner in 1972. The selection of those cities was the result of a series of historical accidents stemming from the personal history of the researchers. The larger linguistic

landscape of North America, outside of the Eastern United States, was left in darkness until *ANAE* appeared.

Three major findings were surprising to both linguists and the general public. (1) It was found that dialect diversity is not diminishing: the larger regional dialects, each defined by active changes in progress, are becoming increasingly more different from each other. (2) Several of these regions, especially the Inland North, display an extraordinary homogeneity across great distances and large populations. (3) The boundaries separating many of these communities are sharply defined by the coincidence of many phonological and lexical isoglosses. In the four years since the publication of the Atlas, I have pursued many paths towards the explanation of these phenomena. Various chapters of this volume are engaged with the effort to account for them by settlement histories, cultural patterns, and general principles of linguistic change. I am more than ever indebted to my co-authors of *ANAE*, Sherry Ash and Charles Boberg, for their help in constructing the solid foundation on which the current volume is built.

The second to fourth chapters set the stage for the investigation by demonstrating that the cognitive consequences of linguistic change are a serious reduction in intelligibility within and across dialects. Here too I am indebted to Sherry Ash, my partner in the experimental studies of Cross Dialectal Comprehension, which date from the 1980s.

The seventeen chapters of this volume were given the most intensive scrutiny by two reviewers. I have spent the last five months in radical revisions in response to their comments, corrections and suggestions. Gregory Guy and Ronald

Kim have allowed me to name them and acknowledge my deep indebtedness to them for this effort. I have footnoted only a few of their contributions, which are found literally on every page.

In this volume, I have built upon the recent research of Maciej Baranowski, Jeffrey Conn, Aaron Dinkin, Keelan Evanini, Joseph Fruehwald, Matt Gordon, Kirk Hazen, Daniel Johnson, Jamila Jones, Paul Kerswill, Dennis Preston, Gillian Sankoff, and Tonya Wolford. The work of Peter Trudgill on language change and diffusion is a point of reference throughout the volume, as a glance at the bibliography will demonstrate. The insights of Penelope Eckert on the social meaning of variation are fundamental to this volume. Much of my effort is devoted to the challenge of applying her findings in the Detroit area to a wider context, and each exchange with her has led to an advance in my own thinking.