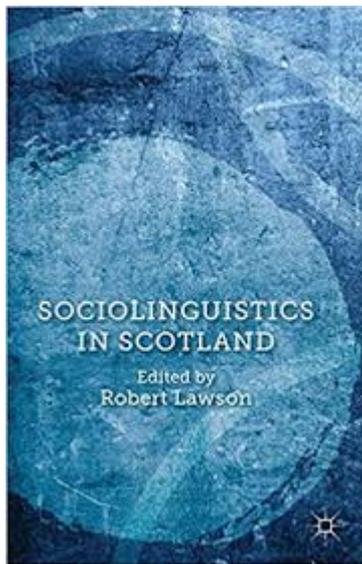


'Sociolinguistics in Scotland' edited by Robert Lawson

Review by Maggie Scott



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pronunciation—found for example in Aberdonian *fit* ‘what’—is ‘now lexically restricted and socially marginalised’ (p.48), with older speakers preferring [ʌ]—as in Scots *whit* ‘what’—while children from the middle-class and working-class areas using the more anglicised pronunciation [w]. Interestingly, he also observed that adolescents from the working-class area are perhaps asserting a teenage group-identity by using [f]. In chapter four, Eleanor Lawson, James M. Scobbie and Jane Stuart-Smith report on ‘A Socio-Articulatory Study of Scottish Rhoticity’ which employed ultrasound tongue imaging to produce very detailed results often undetectable by other techniques. This research revealed new evidence for ‘variants which are socially stratified, but apparently covert’ (p.75), acting as subtle markers of social identity and group allegiance.

Chapter five, ‘Sociolinguistic Variation on the Scottish-English Border’ by Dominic Watt, Carmen Llamas and Daniel Ezra Johnson, focuses on phonetic evidence gathered from Carlisle, Gretna, Eyemouth and Berwick-upon-Tweed as part of the research project, *Accent and Identity on the Scottish/English Border*. Close examination of pronunciations of *r* amongst the test groups produced mixed results, some coinciding with the geographical border, others patterning in quite different ways, and so the findings ultimately both ‘support and confound the predictions made by researchers who have previously investigated language variation and change in the border area’ (p.98). In chapter six, ‘Hitting an Edinburgh Target: Immigrant Adolescents’ Acquisition of Variation in Edinburgh English’, Miriam Meyerhoff and Erik Schleeff examine the speech of two groups of teenagers, one group being born in the city, the other having emigrated from Poland in 2004. Although previous studies indicate that non-native speakers are less likely to use informal pronunciations of English words, Meyerhoff and Schleeff found that the Polish immigrants were quite likely to use the same informal pronunciations as the Edinburgh teenagers, both groups evidencing glottal stops for *t*, and *-in* for words with standard spellings in *-ing* (p.111). Perhaps this indicates greater social integration, or says something about how English is learned in this context, where the speech of locals appears to be more influential than an abstract model of English with more artificial ‘standards’. This study is significant both because of its contribution to the understanding of variation in comparable groups of native and non-native teenagers living in the same city, and because of its intention to reinvigorate sociolinguistic research on Edinburgh English, which has seen limited activity since the 1980s.

Chapter seven, by Ole Schützler, investigates 'Vowel Variation in Scottish English: Accent-Internal Differentiation or Anglicisation?' and finds no evidence, at least amongst the test group, that speakers of Scottish Standard English 'aspire' to sound like speakers of Southern Standard British English (also known as Received Pronunciation). In chapter eight, Lynn Clark examines 'Phonological Repetition Effects in Natural Conversation: Evidence from TH-fronting in Fife'. The key issue is 'how and why speakers repeat linguistic material in quick succession' (p.154), so if the speaker pronounces < th > as [f], are they more likely to do so on subsequent occasions? Clark's answer to this question is yes, suggesting that repetition effects, so far chiefly noted in syntactic analyses, are also observable for phonological features.

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from the Isle of Skye, who is bilingual in Scottish Gaelic and English, and uses code-switching as a narrative technique in telling the story of the 'Flannan Isles', often shifting from one language to another to highlight a change in the direction of the tale or underline the end of a particular episode. The volume concludes with chapter fifteen, by Mercedes Durham, 'Thirty Years Later: Real-Time Change and Stability in Attitudes towards the Dialect in Shetland'. Here, Durham compares the results of attitudinal studies carried out amongst schoolchildren in Shetland in 1983 and 2010. Many of the children born in Shetland who took part in the 2010 study 'do not have local roots' (p. 314), and overall, fewer children identified themselves as dialect speakers. However, evidence from email, text-messaging and social media revealed that in these contexts, 'dialect use is robust and able to fulfil social functions for most of the children, be they local or not' (p. 314).

While this volume provides an excellent sampling of work currently being conducted on Scottish material, it reinforces the need for small-scale studies with few participants to be followed up with additional, complementary projects that help make sense of initial findings. Brato, for example, notes that the middle-class children in his study are taught in an independent school where 'their fellow pupils and many of the teachers are non-Scottish', perhaps reinforcing their use of [w] for < wh >, as in *wat* 'what', observed in the interviews, 'in order to avoid sounding "too Scottish"' (p. 49). It would therefore be unwise to consider their evidence as indicative of any wider trends, and it would be useful to know if these same children sound 'more Scottish' in other environments. As Brato underlines, researchers must treat their findings with care regarding issues of 'national alignment and identity' (p. 49) which may be masked or influenced in complex ways by the speakers' contexts.

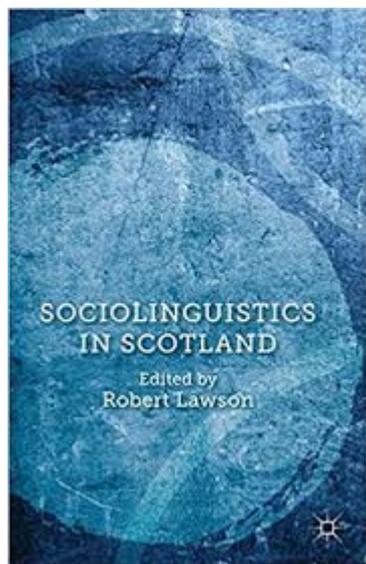
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