Minority Report

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Introduction

Bias in science is unavoidable, and sociolinguistics is no different. In order to combat sources of bias, we must first identify its existence. With this study we aim to assess:

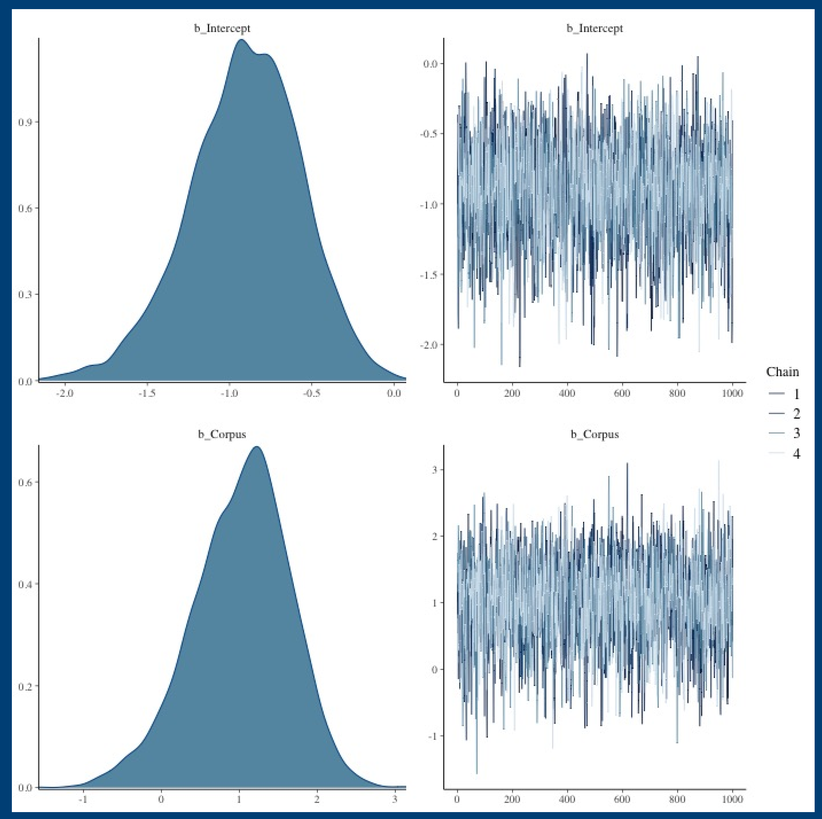
- whether there is bias towards studying some varieties of English over others.
- whether location in relation to a research institution affect frequency of study of a variety of English.
- other possible geographical/research characteristics (e.g. the existence of corpora/average income of the area) that may affects the frequency of studies published.

Methods

In order to meet our aims we:

- Systematically searched Web of Science for studies on each particular variety of native English as identified by Wikipedia.
  - Search Term: (WC=(Linguistics) AND ((ALL="name of variety") AND ((ALL=sociolinguist*) OR (ALL=varia*) OR (ALL=change))))
  - Document Type: All
  - Timespan: 1982-2019

Are there geographical biases in the study of language variation and change?



Scan to access materials for this study on Github.

Methods cont.

- pre-screened the resulting list and removed based on the inclusion criteria:
  - the study assesses language variation or change
  - study assesses the variety of English specified in the search
- The remaining studies from each search were counted.
- Regional average uk disposable incomes were obtained from the office for national statistics.
- The existence of corpora for a variety was obtained by google searches.
- Geographical distance between a variety and the nearest linguistics dept. were obtained using the ggmaps package in R.

Results

Table 1. Poisson glms with area income, whether the variety is from a metropolitan area, miles to nearest linguistics dept. and corpus existence as respective predictors of the frequency of studies on a variety.

	Estimate	Est. error
Intercept	1.03	1.79
Area income	-2.21	2.31
Intercept	-0.92	0.34
Corpus	1.04	0.63
Intercept	-0.65	0.39
Miles	-0.18	0.92
Intercept	-0.79	0.34
Metropolitan	0.28	0.52