

Factors affecting bias towards researching varieties of English

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General problems

- ▶ We know that bias in science exists
- ▶ Publication bias, researcher bias, selection bias...
- ▶ Linguistics is a young science, and although this means bias may be limited, it likely still exists.
- ▶ However, there may be more biases in certain fields that are more specific to those fields.

Specific problems

- ▶ LVC is a field where further forms of bias than those universal to all scientific fields can enter.
- ▶ Question: Are we studying language varieties based on something unconscious
e.g. how near to a university they are.
- ▶ bias in what we choose to study leads to gaps in the broader LVC data

Specific Consequences

- ▶ If we have systematic gaps how can we draw broader conclusions about principles of variation and change?
- ▶ It is important therefore to identify and minimise any forms of bias including publication bias, researcher bias and any forms of bias more specific to the field at hand.
- ▶ Only then will the most representative data be obtainable.

Research questions

How can we go about assessing possible bias in Language Variation and Change Research? A few possible questions.

1. Are English varieties that are geographically distant from linguistics university departments more likely to be understudied?
2. Does the presence of a locally focused corpus increase the research output on a particular variety?
3. Are English varieties associated with higher social/income status lacking in research articles?
4. Is more research conducted on varieties of English associated with suburban, metropolitan, or rural areas?

Data collection

- ▶ A systematic literature search to quantify frequency of publications on a specific variety.
- ▶ Geographical measurements using R and Google Maps.
- ▶ Systematic online searches to establish the existence of corpora and the average income of areas of interest.

Data analysis

- ▶ Each dependent variable will be assessed as a predictor of frequency of publications for different varieties of English.
- ▶ Details are available on the Open Science Framework:
<https://osf.io/h7t6x/>

Thank you for listening

Any questions?

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Our questions for you:

- ▶ Are you convinced by the possibility and consequences of bias in LVC research?
- ▶ Any tips on submitting this as as a **methods** paper to a conference