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Place and language: Links between speech, region, and connection to place

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Abstract

The relationship to place and language has been central to linguistic research since the beginning. Several distinctive eras of investigation into place and language have taken place, from focusing on relatively nonmobile elderly speakers to deep investigations of how different speakers relate to a particular place. Place impacts language in a variety of ways, from large differences between national varieties to ecological and social distinctions in varieties associated with a small local area or neighborhood. Further, place interacts with other social factors and contributes to linguistic variation in an additive (or perhaps even multiplicative) fashion. As the investigation into the impact of place has developed and evolved, researchers have noted that it is not merely place itself that is the most important, rather the speaker's *relationship* to place that is perhaps the most crucial aspect. In fact, a speaker with a close connection to place might use features that are associated with a particular place even if those features are stigmatized, because those features represent the speaker's connection to place. Without consideration of how a speaker orients—whether toward or away—any investigation into place or regionality and language will be incomplete.

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dialectology, place, sociolinguistics

1 | INTRODUCTION

When thinking of factors that influence and impact language variation, many individuals think of place. Most, if not all, people have experience with hearing someone speak who is from a different area and have noted differences in language, both large and small. Some of these differences are lexical—differences in meaning of certain words—where one person uses a different term (e.g., *soda* or *pop*) or where one person has a different meaning for a term (e.g., *barbecue*). Other differences stem from slightly different grammatical systems, which can be quite noticeable, for example, *needs* + past participle, multiple modals (*might could*), or approximative *liketa* as in "I liketa died when I saw that" (the Yale Grammatical Diversity Project, www.ygdp.yale.edu, has many of these examples, among many others). Many speakers who use these constructions are often flummoxed when using these structures outside of their home regions, as non-

users often have difficulty understanding or parsing some of these phrases. Occasionally, these misunderstandings can be quite comical, as when the author used the structure "I don't care to give you a ride" with the meaning of "I'd be happy to give you a ride" to a speaker who parsed this phrase more linearly, and understood the author to be saying "I do not want to give you a ride." Each person was quite confused at the reaction of the other! More commonly, though, is the experience when speakers recognize differences in pronunciation associated with region. For example, the author's identical pronunciation of the words *pen* and *pin* signal a Southern US background. Often, a way of speaking is associated or recognized as being indicative of where someone is from, that is, it indexes (or points out) place. Thus, how someone sounds can provide information about where they are from. Sometimes, we can identify someone's regional background from just a few words.

In a sociological discussion of place, Agnew (2002) outlines three components of place. First is *locale*. He defines this as "the setting in which everyday life is concentrated for a group of people" (16). Fundamentally, locale is an actual physical setting where life occurs. This corresponds to what many people think of as place. The second component is *location*, the "node that links the place to both wider networks and the territorial ambit it is embedded in" (16). This is a connection to some larger unit (region, nation, city, etc.) and larger group of people, and also, at the same time, some degree of separateness. Thus, place is part of a whole, but can also be separated from it. It must be noted that *location* is a relational concept, as in what is the *locale* nested within and, crucially, what is not included. The final, and potentially the most important in the current understanding of place and language, is a *sense of place*, which Agnew defines as "symbolic identification with a place as distinctive and constitutive of a personal identity and a set of personal interests" (16). This means that a person's relationship to place is central to understanding the impact of place on language.

Many if not most of us have known people from places with fairly recognizable varieties (such as the Southern US or Boston, MA). It is noteworthy that these varieties that we can point out, or at the very least recognize, tend to be stigmatized. That is, speakers who use these regionally marked features typically are judged for how they speak, and this judgment is often negative. In contrast, what we often consider supra-local varieties tend to not have recognizable features. Some speakers from these recognizable areas do not necessarily "sound" like they are from that area. Occasionally, such a person has moved or lived somewhere different for a period of time. However, more often, the person is keenly aware that sounding like one is from a recognizable area might make one the object of stigma in the broader culture. Sounding like a person from that area might have negative social consequences for that speaker. In contrast, there are speakers from stigmatized areas that use features associated with that area proudly, even though they might not have lived in that particular area for years. Therein lies the difficulty with investigations into regional linguistic patterns—how a speaker feels toward a region can influence their usage of features that index (point out) a certain regional background (the *sense of place* described above).

In this review, how place has been used throughout much of linguistics and language science will be discussed, focusing primarily, but not exclusively on the United States. In Section 2, I discuss why place features so prominently in research. Section 3 provides some historical context, and Section 4 discusses current approaches to place.

2 | WHY PLACE IS IMPORTANT

When investigating how place (and changing place) impacts language, it is crucial to understand that language mediates identity. In this vein, Harrison (1998) writes "identity is generated through culture—especially language—and it can invest itself in various meanings ... [h]erein lies the facility of identity politics: it is dynamic, contested, and complex." (248). Sociolinguistics, at its core, is the investigation of the relationship between identity (and all of its influences and factors) and language. Building on this idea, Chambers (2003) argues that "the underlying cause of sociolinguistic differences, largely beneath consciousness, is the human instinct to establish and maintain social identity" (274). As Eckert (2000) explains, "the study of meaning in sociolinguistic variation is a study of the relation between variation and identity" (42). Identity and how speakers construct their social selves has become a central research focus of scholars of language and place.

Languages are composed of features, from phonetic to syntactic to discursive. We know that linguistic features have social meaning, both within the local contexts and in larger regional and national contexts. What is noteworthy is that linguistic features do not in and of themselves carry social information. The patterns of use by certain individuals that belong to particular groups, or just the speakers themselves, can cause a particular feature to acquire social meaning. This association between feature and group (or aspects of groups) is called *indexicality*, which is, as Bucholtz and Hall (2004) defines, "the semiotic operation of juxtaposition, whereby one entity or event points to another" (378). It must

be noted that this process is not automatic. That is, the correlation between a group and a feature does not entail an indexical link. The link must be understood and recognized by individuals, and it must have meaning within the society. Crucially, a feature can be associated with more than one type of information, as in the idea of orders of indexicality from Silverstein (2003). For example, in Plichta and Preston's (2005) study of the (aɪ) variable, the monophthongal /a/ variant was often associated with both Southerners and males. Features may not index just one group, however. Rather very often there are typically multiple levels of association with each linguistic feature (to different demographic groups or different aspects of groups, see Eckert, 2008 for the multiple associations [indexical fields] that some features can invoke). Sometimes these particular levels are quite different or even conflicting, for example, Preston's folk dialectology work showing that Southern features are both "pleasant" and "uneducated" Preston (1989, 1997, 1999).

In conceptualizing how the process of indexicality occurs, Ochs (1992), writing about language and gender, notes that features become associated with particular social categories indirectly, rather than a direct one to one link. She describes the use of sentence-final particles in Japanese as a clear example. There are two options for these particles, *-ze* and *-wa*. The latter typically functions to mitigate the force of an utterance, representing a type of deference in conversation, the stance that an interlocutor has toward the other participant(s). However, in this sociolinguistic context, those who tend to use this deferential connotation tend to also be female. Over time, the particle came to not only reflect deference, but also the gender of the speaker. And, it should be noted, that these two ideas are ideologically linked. That is, the first index of deference is linked to the second index of gender (for a discussion of indexical orders and ordering, see, Silverstein, 2003). Thus, this form now connotes two different meanings, indexing women's speech and deference, combining a stance relationship and gendered identity.

When thinking about place, this process works in a similar fashion. Certain features are used, usually for sociohistoric settlement and migratory reasons, by speakers from and in a particular geographic area. Some of these features are distinct from parallel features in another geographic area, as the speakers from one region have a slightly different history and/or settlement than another region. Further, the difference in production is noticed and recognized (sometimes this does not occur) as being used by speakers from this particular area. Thus, the use of these features becomes linked (indexed) to a geographic area. Typically, attitudes and beliefs about that geographic region also become linked to the linguistic features as well (which will be elaborated below).

Geographic place is singled out for several reasons. Benedict Anderson developed the idea of "imagined community" (Anderson, 1991), wherein communities arise from a person's interaction with aspects of shared society (Anderson specifically mentions various media) and each person's perception of their membership in this community. Following Anderson, Johnstone (2004) writes "regions have come to be seen as meaningful places, which individuals construct, as well as select, as reference points. Identification with a region is identification with one kind of imagined community" (69). It must be noted that an individual can define place and also place can be defined for them. Often, these two definitions may result in quite different social meanings, with the individual's definition being positive while the imposed definition being negative. Some regions, such as Appalachia in the United States, elicit strong affinities on the part of some natives. In an essay Jones writes about Appalachian people, "we are oriented around places. We never forget our native places, and we go back as often as possible. Our place is always close on our minds. It is one of the unifying values of mountain people, the attachment to one's place" (1975). Later, he discusses the "love of place" as a value of many Appalachian natives (Jones, 1994). Especially, the sense of a specific place, the "homeplace" is central to many Appalachians, as it is the tangible expression of the love for and attachment to place (Cox, 2006, p. 219). "Homeplace" typically refers to the house and surrounding land of a family's ancestral home, where the speaker was born and raised and/or where the speaker spent considerable time. This *sense of place* and place attachment does have an "imagined" component, as Anderson and Johnstone noted; for example, many Appalachians refer to a "homeplace" even when they have migrated to other regions (Berry, 2000) or even when it is the homeplace of their grandparents or earlier generations (see, e.g., Anderson, 2003). M. Montgomery (2015) observes an uptick in the use of "homeland" by Appalachian natives, often co-occurring with a personal possessive, such as *my* or *our* to refer to the region, as a whole or one's hometown or home county. Thus, the region and particular *locations* within it are present in the minds of many residents and reflected accordingly through language. Appalachia is not alone in this respect, but provides an intriguing example to which we will return.

Even though a place may hold importance for many residents, it may not be present for them in the same way or with the same connotations especially if the connotation arises from outside sources, or the importance may change over time. As individuals are members of various groups and communities (Johnstone, 1996), there may be relationships and tensions and multiple ways of understanding their social environment. Individuals vary with respect to which

memberships (or aspects of memberships) to express at any given time. As LePage and Tabouret-Keller (1985) argue, language is, fundamentally, a "series of acts of identity" in which "an individual creates for himself the patterns of his linguistic behavior so as to resemble those of the group or groups with which from time to time he wishes to be identified, or so as to be unlike those from whom he wishes to be distinguished" (181). Thus, it is difficult, if not impossible, to disentangle linguistic behavior from the ideologies present in society about various groups. An individual may exercise agency to construct an identity based on the positive aspect of Appalachia or his/her individual view of a particular place in the region. This can permit insight, as:

> an ideological analysis treats social categories as locally created by social actors and discoverable by analysis, rather than as a given. Consequently, an ideologically oriented account of language variation and change treats members of speech communities as agents, rather than as automatons caught up ineluctably in an abstract sociolinguistic system. (Milroy, 2004, p. 167)

From an ideological standpoint then, the locally relevant aspects of identity, such as rootedness, may trump circulating negative tropes.

3 | PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF SOCIOLINGUISTICS

Place has featured prominently throughout language investigations across the ages. The understanding of how place matters has changed. Below, I trace how writers, philosophers, and thinkers have discussed the intersection of place and language. Early on, place was just a *locale*. There were differences in the physical settings, and thus language varied. Later, the *location* began to matter, as linguistic atlas research discussed how the parts might fit into a whole. When we move to the present, understanding how the *sense of place* is crucial moves to the fore.

3.1 | Place and language in history

The relationship and connection between a speaker's region and their speech has been recognized for millennia in the history of practically all the linguistic traditions that we have written records. For example, in India, one of the earliest grammarians, Pāṇini (circa 400 bce), included regional variants in production. Pāṇini tended to label these productions as preferable or marginal, reflecting a prescriptive bent. Yet, this type of description had profound impact on modern linguistics, and Pāṇini is often regarded as the "father of linguistics." However, Pāṇini was not the only one interested in regional productions, even though his work had the greatest impact. In ancient China (circa 200 bce), grammarians and lexicographers, such as Yang Xiong, performed what can best be described as dialect geography wherein differences in usage (and possibly pronunciation) were attributed to different regions in China (Yang & Asher, 1995). In the Middle East, early Arabic grammarians (circa 800 ce) sought elicitations from tribespeople from various areas, primarily to avoid those who had connections to urban populations, to document variation in attempts to find speech that was not influenced by non-prescriptive norms (Suleiman, 1995), a point to which we will return. Additionally, there are mentions of regional variation outside scholarship, as in the Hebrew Bible book of Judges, where the pronunciation of the word "shibboleth" was used to differentiate the Gileadites from the Ephraimites, with tragic results.[1] In the Greco-Roman world, language and grammar were studied, and many thinkers, philosophers, and others produced many, many works. Many of these mention variation, sometimes in passing. However, in the second century ce, a grammarian Sextus Empiricus noted several types of phonological (sound) variation and differences among certain speakers from different regions.

Into the Middle Ages, the study of language shifted toward writing grammars of Greek and Latin for pedagogical purposes. Mentions of variation became rarer, as the point of much of the extant literature was how to teach the language to new groups. However, during the Renaissance, thinkers and writers began to notice that the ways that people spoke differed across space, and also differed from the page. Leonardo Bruni, in the 14th century, discussed the *sermo vulgaris* "unlettered speech" that differed across the Italian Peninsula. As the space changed, so did the language. However, much of his discussion centered on language history and evolution, and not necessarily on variation itself.

From this brief overview, one can see that place and linguistic variation has a long history. Thinkers, writers, grammarians, and philosophers have noticed since the beginning that language varies across space. However, many of these

notions were just that, notions. How, why, and to what degree language varied across space was not a question considered. As we move into more modern investigations, more systematic means of understanding the influence of place emerge.

3.2 | Linguistic atlas work

For much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, much of the extant literature on language focused on comparing the emerging national varieties and understanding language history. The variations across place focused on national varieties (as this was when many nation-states began to emerge). Many debates about how languages were related, where language came from, and others took place during this period.

However, this focus began to change in the 19th century. In the first half of the century, dialect areas were classified based primarily on intuition and personal preference. People knew that different regions had different varieties. One could say that the influence of *locale* was noted, and also that of *location*. Yet, as linguistics and language science began to become more scientific, these intuitions were challenged. Some schools of thought, for example, Neogrammarians, emerged from the investigation of language similarities and language history. Certain sound correspondences were noted among various languages, and familial relationships were posited. With these successes, various hypotheses were posited, such as the Neogrammarian claim that "all sound change is exceptionless." Such a claim needed to be tested. Thus, researchers went out into different places to hear from different speakers to test this thought. Heterogeneity was what they found, and thus challenged their hypothesis. More data, with stricter methods, was needed. Also, a clearer understanding of where exactly people spoke differently was necessary, that is, exactly how much the *location* mattered. And, how this variation fit into language theories was also important.

The first dialect survey that we are aware of took place in Germany. Georg Wenker, from 1876 to 1887, mailed out lists of sentences to schoolmasters to be transcribed in the local variety. Over the decade, he mailed 50,000 surveys and received almost 45,000 completed surveys. Such an enormous amount of data was both fantastic and overwhelming. Wenker had so much data that he had to limit his analysis to a handful of features and a couple of hand-drawn maps (Wenker, 1877). He continued to collect data, and shared this data with other scholars. In 1926, Ferdinand Wrede, using many of Wenker's files, completed the linguistic atlas of Germany. Similar projects, using mailed surveys, were conducted in Denmark and published from 1898 to 1912.

Researchers questioned the use of mailed surveys, and devised other methods to determine geographical diffusion of language. In France, Jules Gilliéron, designed an elicitation questionnaire. He hired a fieldworker, Edmond Edmont, to travel around France interviewing speakers with the questionnaire. From 1896 to 1900, Edmont bicycled around France and interviewed 700 speakers from 639 different locations. Edmont had a marvelous ear for phonetic difference, and sent his results back to Gilliéron. Publication began almost immediately in 1902, and culminated with the final volume in 1912. This linguistic atlas of France was enormously influential. Similar works began in Switzerland and Italy by Gilliéron's students, Jakob Jud and Karl Jaberg.

Shortly after these projects were underway, a similar project was to begin in North America, the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada. Because of the immense area that was to be covered, the continent was divided up into sections. Each section (roughly corresponding to region) was considered a separate project. These projects were massive undertakings, and Hans Kurath served as the coordinator and directed the earliest project. These projects sent fieldworkers out to interview long-time residents of the various regions, starting in 1930. Each project proceeded with slightly different methodologies (due to technological progress). The earliest project, *Linguistic Atlas of New England*, was published in three volumes and a handbook from 1939 to 1943 (Kurath et al., 1939, 1939). The second project was *Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States*. The outbreak of WWII meant that the data collection and unfolding of LAMSAS was rockier than LANE. Nonetheless, several important works using LAMSAS data have appeared, Kurath (1949), Atwood (1953), and Kurath and McDavid Jr. (1961). LAMSAS itself appeared in 1980 (McDavid Jr., Kretzschmar, & Hankins, 1980), and a handbook was published in 1994 (Kretzschmar, McDavid, Lerud, & Johnson, 1993). Two later projects under the auspices of the *Linguistic Atlas Project* have appeared, *The Linguistic Atlas of the Upper Midwest*, which covered Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, and the Dakotas, was published in several volumes from 1973 to 1976 (Allen, 1973). Later, the *Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States*, covering the Southeast, under the direction of Lee Pederson appeared from 1986 to 1993 (Pederson, McDaniel, & Adams, 1986). LAGS utilized a small team of fieldworkers and a small team of transcribers to help make the work more consistent. Further, the data was released on microfiche and also a computer mapping program was also used.

There are other ongoing atlas projects. The *Linguistic Atlas Project*, formerly at the University of Georgia and now housed at the University of Kentucky, has all of this data. There is a website, currently housed at UGA (www.lap.uga.edu), where much of the data is available. Also, a researcher can contact the LAP for more. Some of the data that is available depends upon the precise project, since the projects cover a wide timeframe and methods and technology changed the nature of each respective project's methods and data. Most of the projects have summaries of a participant's productions, lists of lexical items, etc. For the more recent projects, audio recordings and transcripts are available (or are in progress). Outside the United States, there is ongoing work in the United Kingdom to map variation, using updated linguistic atlas methods (e.g., Britain, 2007 and the forthcoming new edition, or Hughes, Trudgill, & Watt, 2013).

Another project, while not precisely a linguistic atlas, was the *Dictionary of American Regional English* (DARE; Cassidy & Hall, 1985). The goal of this reference work was to document and also define lexical items and usages that vary regionally across the United States. Fieldworkers fanned out across various regions, interviewing participants and seeking lexical items and their definitions. While not exactly an atlas, the DARE editorial team considered place, and used broad regional designations with respect to the extent and commonality of the lexical items. Here, *locale* and *location* was considered, as the goal was a reflection of the regional variety in the United States, while also considering each region as part of the whole. There was and is recognition that physical place affects production, and that these physical places were and are parts of a whole.

These projects collected and collect huge amounts of data, and mapped how people spoke differently across the United States and around the world. As the *locale* or *location* changed, so did the speech. However, much of the focus remained on the fact that differences in speech lie primarily in just geography, and much of the data was collected from rural areas from older speakers. This focus was by design. Fieldworkers were instructed to seek out non-mobile, older, rural speakers. Further, the preference was for older males. These participants were termed NORMs—nonmobile, older, rural males. Since the goal was more the geographic spread and extent of certain language features, Lameli (2010, p. 583) notes "a social embedding of the linguistic data was not the goal of the investigations." Thus, the focus was on speakers from a single demographic group. As a result, the language of these NORMs was seen as emblematic of certain areas. Such speakers were seen as potentially having more conservative features that could trace both the evolution of language as well as helping to understand migration and immigration. This type of data is useful for these goals, but it does not tell a complete story. The *sense of place* is missing in the atlas work. This statement is not an indictment of these projects. Much of what we know about the geographic variation of language came from the projects. The goals were to map where language varied. It was considered a given that the geography was going to matter. Below, we shall see that is not always the case.

4 | TO THE PRESENT—LANGUAGE, PLACE, AND A SENSE OF PLACE

More recent investigations[2] into geographic variation include the final component of place, the *sense of place*. Much of this focus can be attributed to a classic study of Martha's Vineyard, Labov (1963). Labov was interested in how language variation and change operated and potentially spread across places. In this study, Labov found that both place and a speaker's feeling about the island itself helped explain the variation present. Islanders who were from "up-island" and viewed the island in a positive light used more central realizations of the nuclei of both /aɪ/ and /aʊ/. These speakers may have utilized more central realizations to distinguish themselves from seasonal tourists and other residents. "Down-island" residents and those who viewed the island negatively and wanted to leave used less centralized variants, perhaps aligning with the linguistic norms of seasonal tourists and off-island language varieties. These results and conclusions show that the *sense of place* is also crucial, and many speakers desire to express place with their speech.

This inclusion of a *sense of place*, and a more focused investigation of a single place started a distinct shift in dialectology and sociolinguistics. As this shift began, tension between the two fields emerged. Many linguistic atlas workers were called "word collectors," disparaging their work as merely a list of novel words or productions. The burgeoning field of modern sociolinguistics was seen as encroaching upon the long history of linguistic atlas work and not respecting the findings of the past, and not recognizing how much variation actually existed, as many sociolinguistic studies only focused on a handful of variables. However, both fields grew from this conflict, which mainly stemmed from a difference in goals and methods. Recognizing that variation includes place and other social aspects (and individual factors) helped linguistic atlas work progress. And, noting that linguistic atlas work can show the great expanse of geographical

spread and how many variants are truly possible (e.g., the inclusion of complexity theory into sociolinguistics, as in Kretzschmar, 2009, 2015).

As in Martha's Vineyard, the *sense of place* on the part of natives might be highlighted when in contact with outsiders. Lane (1998), investigating the emergence of new regionally associated features in and around Thyborøn, Denmark, found that speakers who used the most regionally marked features had greater levels of interaction and contact with people not from the town or its immediate area. She suggests that pride (i.e., a part of the *sense of place*) in the local variety encouraged the use of marked features, especially with outsiders. A speaker's identity with Thyborøn seemed to be more important than the stigma from using marked features.

The social associations of place can also influence the extent to which speakers utilize features associated with it. In particular, expressing an allegiance or a connection to a *location* permits individuals to express aspects of that place—qualities of the place that speakers want to have associated with themselves. In Pittsburgh, Johnstone and colleagues observed that the use of a monophthongized /aʊ/, *dahntahn* for downtown, represents a local person, a "Pittsburgher." Interestingly, this association was primarily for those who do not themselves use the monophthong. Additionally, the indexical connection for non-monophthongal speakers is not only to locality, but also a particular type of working class identity. Monophthongal /aʊ/ can be employed (and also commodified) to express a particular localness or locally defined persona (Johnstone, Bhasin, & Wittkofski, 2002; Johnstone, Andrus, & Danielson, 2006; Johnstone & Kiesling, 2008). The commodification arises from what Agha calls *enregisterment* (Agha, 2003), where a feature become socially linked to particular meanings (in this case, place), and in the case of Pittsburgh, a particular type of Pittsburgher. It is important to note that the associations may be different for the speaker and the hearer. One may hear/produce the local variant that means local; others may hear/produce "working class" or even some other association like "incorrect" or "uneducated." Further, there could be differences within a speaker/hearer, in that they hear a variant and have multiple reactions simultaneously, and these reactions may be contradictory.

Following this vein, where linguistic features not only are influenced by place, but also by the possibilities of certain types of personae associated with particular places is found in King's work in Rochester, NY. King (2018) noted that certain community members utilized various vocalic realizations depending upon certain personae adopted by the speaker, that is, The Mobile Black Professional, The Hood Kid, or The Black Biker. Each of these personae related to place differently, and this affected their productions, and the particular personae arose from a particular place (here, Rochester) and the speakers relationship to that place and the meanings of certain vocalic variants in that place. Other work that incorporates the different social meaning of variants associated with place are Podesva, D'Onofrio, Hofwegen, and Kim (2015) and D'Onofrio (2016). The former investigates how participation or lack thereof in the California Vowel Shift (Eckert, 2004) reflects a speakers "country" orientation as opposed to a more coastal orientation. The latter investigates how TRAP-backing not only is associated with California, but particular personae within California. Thus, place is not only a *locale* or a *location*, but the *sense of place* can include certain social types that arise within that place.

Contrastedly, some speakers may also want to avoid using features, or use features that are related to a different place, because of negative associations with a place. In Valladolid, Yucatán, Solomon (1999) noted that a speaker's orientations toward urban centers explained the variation in (*y*). Those speakers who oriented toward urban areas used the variant [ʒ], which is associated with urbanity. These speakers rejected features linked to rurality, where some lived. Features associated with rurality also connoted poverty, lack of education, backwardness, and so on which speakers presumably wanted to avoid. Rather, they utilized features associated with a different urban *locale*, with the social associations of urbanity, that is, education, cosmopolitanism, and so on.

Certain events can highlight the orientation to place and the concomitant social meanings of that place. Both Schoux-Casey (2013) and Carmichael (2014) show how New Orleans and a speaker's locally based orientation, that is, their *sense of place*, affect a speaker's realization of marked features. In the post-Katrina landscape, saving and rebuilding the city became a focus for many residents, and thus linguistic features associated with being from New Orleans gained a particular importance. Schoux-Casey (2013) observed that /r/-lessness was transformed from being merely a feature of most of the varieties of the city to a critical "floating cultural variable, serving as a semiotic resource on which speakers can draw on to perform localness" (v). Carmichael (2014), in a similar fashion, observed that the speech of speakers who were more oriented toward a particular neighborhood (Chalmette) utilized more locally salient features in their speech. In particular, speakers who were forced to relocate from Chalmette to another neighborhood post-Katrina used language as a vehicle to express their allegiance toward their former home. Both of these studies demonstrate that not only is place important, but also that a speaker's view of and orientation toward place is crucial to understanding the use of linguistic features linked to place.

Here, I want to note that there are two overarching methods of understanding the *sense of place*. In much of the work, such as in Martha's Vineyard to Denmark to New Orleans, some researchers assigned various orientations to place to participants via observation and interpretation. However, Carmichael utilized a measure of orientation to Chalmette, quantifying the measure based on responses from the participant's themselves. Below, I utilized a measure incorporating several methods, including a participant's own self-identified local orientation. These two methods, researcher assignation and participant identification are both useful.

The reader will have noticed that much of the more recent work cited in the previous paragraphs has focused primarily on urban areas. This shift in focus primarily emerged as a response to the previous generation's (i.e., linguistic atlas) focus on rural speakers. In fact, much of the modern sociolinguistic research has focused on urban areas. Britain (2017) attributes this to the effect of the discourses around variation, wherein most of the processes of variation and change are theorized in and postulated to occur in urban areas due to the potential for more demographic groups to come into contact. He critiques this assumption, noting that the same processes of variation and change occur in both. And, he critiques the idea that we see places as defined usually by some governmental entity, and much research starts from this notion of this named place. Thus, research into various places must be undertaken. Additionally, place is a social construction, and a speaker's orientation to place arises from interaction with this social construction.

The present author's own work does shift the research gaze to a rural area, and focuses on rootedness, a term for local place-based attachment. Rootedness is a conception of the relative strength of this local place-based attachment, where certain individuals may have a stronger connection to particular place. And, rootedness can intersect and interact with other social factors, which will be discussed below. Rootedness was quantified using a combination of methods including how a participant responded to interview questions, survey questions, and also how they self-identified with the region. Reed (2014), comparing four members of the same family across two generations, found differences within this family. Hazel, the grandmother, was almost categorically monophthongal in her realization of the /aɪ/ phoneme.[3] However, among the granddaughters, sisters from the same family, differences in the monophthongization of /aɪ/ were apparent, stemming partially from different connections to the local region. Two sisters mirrored the local usage of the monophthongization of /aɪ/, whereas one sister (Suzanne) was categorically diphthongal. Suzanne cited her weaker connection to place as one possible reason. Figure 1 shows the differing rates of monophthongization of /aɪ/.

Reed (2018) using older recordings of Suzanne, found that as a high schooler, Suzanne was almost categorically monophthongal, completely different than the later recordings. The high school recording was collected when Suzanne still lived in her hometown, participated in local events, and was a gregarious teenager. Thus, a speaker's *sense of place* can shift over time. We could conceptualize that Suzanne's rootedness, her place-based attachment, grew weaker over time. As a result, she utilized fewer features that were indexed to place.

Reed (2016) expanded this idea of rootedness, including more speakers from a small Appalachian community. In this study, differences in both the monophthongization of /aɪ/ and the relative frequency and phonetic realization of rising pitch accents correlated with a measure of a speaker's rootedness. More rooted speakers used more monophthongal variants of /aɪ/, more frequent rising pitch accents (where the pitch of that word started at a lower point and rose across the word), and an earlier pitch peak alignment (where the change to the highest pitch occurred earlier in a word). Less rooted speakers, potentially due to the negative connotations of Appalachia, utilized each of these features less.

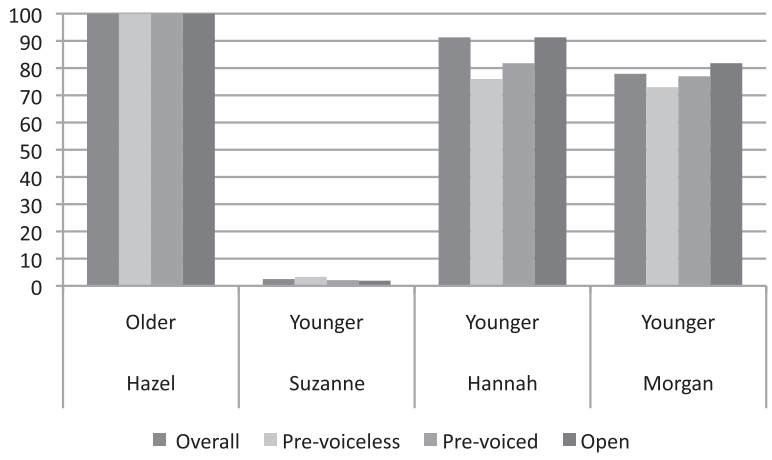

FIGURE 1 This figure, from Reed (2014), displays differences in rates of monophthongization of /aɪ/ within and across two generations from the same family. Note that Suzanne is quite distinct from her sisters in the Younger generation

In a forthcoming paper, Reed (n.d.), I highlight several case studies to demonstrate how rootedness differentiates speakers, even within small geographic areas, and how it interacts with other social factors. Three individuals, Hugh, an 84 year old retiree, Misty, a 37-year-old schoolteacher, and Haley, a 27-year-old schoolteacher, are the case studies. One might think that Haley and Misty would pattern similarly because of their similarity in many demographic factors. However, Misty's rootedness was one of the highest measured in the study, whereas Haley's was one of the lowest. Thus, their realizations of /aɪ/ and also of rising pitch accents are quite different. Hugh, whose rootedness was also one of the highest in the study, patterns quite similarly with respect to both monophthongization and rising pitch accents to Misty. Thus, a speaker's *sense of place*, their rootedness, can explain how very different individuals might pattern similarly; and, rootedness (or a *sense of place*) can provide a rationale why some speakers, who we might see as demographically similar, pattern dissimilarly.

5 | CONCLUSIONS

Place and language are intertwined. We know that people from other places, from different geographic areas, use language slightly differently from us. The ways that we use language, the features of the language, and how others interpret our language express various aspects of our identity, who we are. Where we are and where we are from are from are parts of our identity, and language can express aspects of these places.

Linguistic research has shown that place does matter. The *locale*, *location*, and *sense of place* work together to define and delineate a place. The ancients recognized that place was important, and noted that different areas had slightly different ways of speaking. The linguistic geographers recognized that different areas spoke differently, and that each region was part of a whole, but also separate. Currently, we know that different areas have different language patterns, and that each region fits within a whole and can also be seen as separate, and that a speaker's relationship and evaluation of the place is also very important.

The impact of place on language is a fertile ground for future research. The evidence and implications from Reed (2014), (2016), and (n.d.) on how a speaker's relationship to place is crucial to understanding language variation. More studies will need to determine how a factor like rootedness features into other areas. Further, Reed (2018) demonstrated that a speaker's relationship to place is not static, rather it is a dynamic factor that might be different across the lifespan. Thus, future studies should build upon this work to see if speakers from other regions outside the Southern United States also shift across the lifespan. These future studies should investigate how a dynamic *sense of place* interacts with other social factors (ethnicity, race, gender, etc.) across the lifespan. Such work at the intersection of many social factors is lacking in linguistics as a whole. Speakers are not monodimensional, and any investigation into language should try to incorporate the additive and multiplicative social and cultural aspects of speakers. Additionally, future work should expand to other aspects of language, such as syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. There are many questions yet to be posed about how language variation and place interact. We now have the theoretical footing and tools to begin to pose and answer them.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author has declared no conflicts of interest for this article.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Paul E. Reed: Conceptualization; data curation; formal analysis; investigation; methodology; project administration; resources; validation; visualization; writing-original draft; and writing-review and editing.

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ENDNOTES

[1] If the person produced “sibboleth,” they were slain. This is where we get the modern meaning of shibboleth, that is, a word that indicates an in-group versus out-group status.

[2] A recent volume C. Montgomery and Moore (2017), an insightful collection of research all focused on various aspects of the *sense of place*, demonstrates this shift admirably.

[3] This is the sound in words like “prize,” “pry,” or “price.” In the American South, some speakers only produce one vowel sound, whereas speakers from other regions produce two vowel sounds.

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