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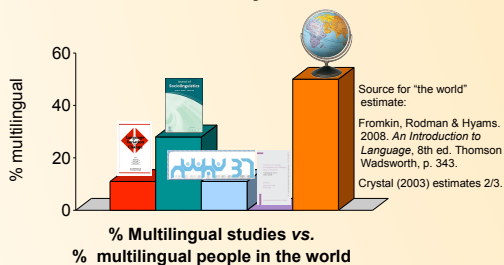
## The love that dare not speak its name: The fascination with monolingual speech communities in sociolinguistics

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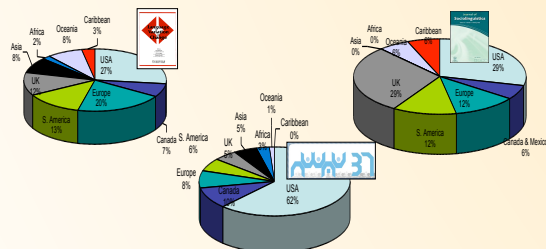
### Our monolingually-oriented past

We report on the trend of focussing on monolingual speakers, or focussing on a single language of multilingual speakers, in variationist/Labovian sociolinguistic research.

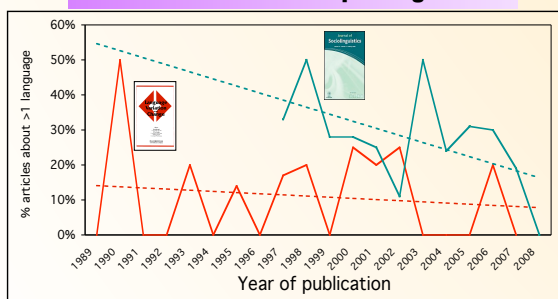


This bias is partially due to the location of many studies.

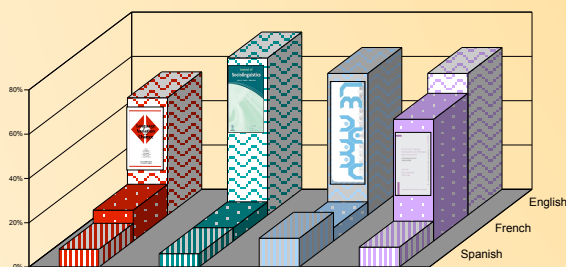
### Where do we conduct studies?



### Have we been improving?



### What languages do we study?



### Implications

Many smaller cultures and languages of the world continue on their path toward endangerment and extinction as an effect of the ever-increasing importance of global languages such as English, French and Spanish.

The implications of this methodological and theoretical bias are far-reaching; they colour the connections sociolinguists are able to make with other fields of research, both in linguistics and in related fields such as sociology and anthropology.

Such interdisciplinarity becomes increasingly necessary.

### Sources of Data

- *Language Variation and Change* (96 articles in 19 issues 1989-2008)
- *Journal of Sociolinguistics* (194 articles published 1997-2008)
- *NWAV 37* (146 papers & posters presented in 2008)
- *Social Lives in Language* (13 papers published in 2008)

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tallying the data!

### Stepping in the right direction

Moving toward a solution requires that

- Linguists increase efforts to make our research accessible to the public and other academics.
- Linguists study more smaller languages.
- Linguists diversify the geographic location of their studies.
- Attitudes and policies regarding the learning of second languages in the US and UK (where most sociolinguistics studies are conducted) change.

This is likely to better prepare researchers for work on home-grown contexts of multilingualism, and also in common, but commonly ignored, contact situations involving lesser-known languages.

See further support of this research approach in

*Social Lives in Language:  
Sociolinguistics and Multilingual Speech Communities*

Please come celebrate  
the launch of this new book,  
written in honour of  
Gillian Sankoff's work  
in multilingual sociolinguistics

Saturday at 8:30 pm  
at the Museum of Fine Arts

Sponsored by John Benjamins

