

# Preface

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**Variation, Change, and Phonological Theory**

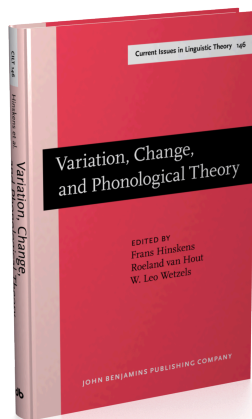
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## Preface

This book grew out of a workshop on language variation and linguistic theory, held at the University of Nijmegen, September 3-5, 1995. The workshop concentrated on a small set of theoretical, empirical and methodological questions regarding the relationship between, on the one hand, theoretical linguistics (here understood in its narrow meaning of the study of synchronic grammar) and, on the other hand, variation in language, here understood in its broad sense of comprising temporal, geographical and social dimensions: historical linguistics, dialectology, and sociolinguistics. The contributions to the workshop focused on phonological variation and change. We are grateful to all the participants in the workshop for their presentations and for their constructive participation in the discussions, as well as to Jacqueline Berns for providing the administrative and organisational support needed to make the workshop successful.

Unfortunately, not all the contributors to the workshop succeeded in preparing their paper for publication in this volume. Out of the papers submitted, the contributions that are here presented were chosen after being reviewed by the editors. Whenever doubt or disagreement justified such action, outside reviewers were consulted. The introductory paper that we have added intends to provide the background information necessary for the non-specialist interested in the topics discussed, as well as to tie together the themes treated in the various contributions by briefly pointing out a number of issues in connection with the balance (or lack thereof) between theory and data in the study of phonological variation and change.

We wish to thank Anne Cutler, Peter Gilles, Ben Hermans, Henk van den Heuvel, Beth Hume, Haike Jacobs, Judith Schoonenboom, and Laura Walsh Dickey for discussing the contributions of the key-note speakers at the workshop and/or reviewing some of the submissions. We are indebted to Bernard Bichakjian for checking our introductory contribution for grammar and style. Many thanks also go to Jeroen van de Weijer for correcting the English in some of the papers, helping to prepare the indexes, as well as for preparing the camera-ready manuscript.

The organisation of the workshop was made possible thanks to the financial assistance of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Netherlands Foundation for Scientific Research, the Center for Language Studies, the Foundation for Applied Linguistic Congresses, the Department of General Linguistics and Dialectology, the Faculty of Arts, as well as the University Board of the University of Nijmegen and the Research Group on Lan-

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The editors  
Nijmegen, July 1997