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Dialect levelling in German Alemannic and a possible impact of Alsatian Alemannic

The aim of our paper is to apply quantitative variationist sociolinguistic techniques combined with traditional methods in dialectology to a language contact and dialect levelling situation in southwestern Germany. Combining production data (sociolinguistic interviews and dialect questionnaires) with attitudinal data in a socially stratified sample of Alemannic speakers collected in Southwest German locations close to the state border with France, we investigate phonological dialect levelling (cf. Auer et al. 2017). In particular, we focus on the lowering of MHG *ë* and the fricativization of intervocalic /g/. These variables occur in German Alemannic only in a small border zone with the Alsace, while they are widely used in Alsatian Alemannic, where no levelling occurs. From a German perspective, then, these western features thus have a strong hinterland on the French side of the border. Are these variables, one may ask, less prone to be levelled out than phonological features that traditionally show a different geographical distribution (north/south divide instead of west/east)? Two such variables considered in our paper are the southern back fricative [x] after front vowels and the northern fricativization of intervocalic /b/. These variables are also part of the traditional dialects in the Upper Rhine area but occur equally on both sides of the border and are therefore not unique to Alsatian Alemannic.

To investigate this hypothesis, we ask whether German speakers of Alemannic dialect with more pro-Alsatian attitudes and more contacts with the Alsace (Pfeiffer 2019) or speakers who live in regions that are historically oriented toward the Alsace, are more conservative in their realization of variables that are backed by the Alsatian hinterland (lowering of MHG *ë* and fricativization of intervocalic /g/). We would expect this effect not to be observed in the realization of variables that are not typically Alsatian (back fricative [x] and fricativization of intervocalic /b/). This hypothesis is indeed supported – but more in the case of the northern variable pair 'fricativization of /g/' vs. 'fricativization of /b/' than in the case of the southern variable pair 'lowering of *ë*' vs. 'backing of /x/'. Our results show that the German/French state border (the Rhine), which nowadays cuts across the Alemannic dialect area, has a huge impact but that, at the same time, trans-border affiliations and orientations still play a role.

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Sociolinguistic variation in Kiezdeutsch and Namdeutsch

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This paper investigates sociolinguistic variation in multilingual speech communities, focusing on Kiezdeutsch and Namdeutsch, two German varieties spoken in distinct contact settings. Traditional sociolinguistics primarily focused on variables such as age, gender, and register (that this, formal vs. informal communicative contexts) in analysing variation. However, language contact is also known to boost linguistic dynamics, leading to new variants and varieties. Therefore, we target its impact on linguistic variation, and we do so at different levels: (a) speakers: multilingualism, i.e., speakers from multilingual vs. monolingual families, (b) languages: minority/heritage vs. majority language, (c) societal macro context: monolingualvs. multilingual habitus. Kiezdeutsch and Namdeutsch both emerged in multilingual settings, but differ with respect to (b) and (c) above: Kiezdeutsch is spoken in urban Germany, with German as the majority language and a monolingual habitus at the societal level, while Namdeutsch is spoken as a heritage language in the multilingual context of Namibia. We compare Kiezdeutsch and Namdeutsch data with that in monolingual settings, in order to evaluate the relevance of (a), and with heritage German in the US, – that is, German as a minority language in an environment with a societal monolingual habitus – in order to tease apartthe impact of (b) and (c). As our empirical basis, we use the Kiezdeutsch-corpus (KiDKo, Wieseat al. 2010ff), the DNam corpus of German in Namibia (Wiese et al. 2017, Zimmer et al. 2020),and the RUEG corpus of register-differentiated productions from mono- and bilingual speakers in Germany and the US (Wiese et al. 2020).

We investigate these factors and their possible interaction with traditional sociolinguistic variables by looking at the distribution of modal particles (MPs). We target the distribution of two MPs, "eben" and "halt" that are near- synonyms, both signalling evidentiality, and have been observed to change their distribution in ongoing developments. While "halt" is traditionally associated with southern varieties of German, and "eben" with northern ones, "halt" is currently gradually replacing "eben" in northern Germany (Elspaß 2005), suggesting an influence of sociolinguistic factors.

We compare the distribution of MPs in general and "eben" and "halt" in particular over registers, speaker groups, and language contact settings. We investigate whetherthe dynamics in the use of "eben" and "halt" that we can observe in Germany are reflected in contact varieties and whether these dynamics interact with sociolinguistic factors. Preliminaryfindings indicate that language contact factors, i.e., (a) – (c) above, play a role in the distribution of the two MPs, and that these factors interact with age and (in-)formality.

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Fei schee: The social meaning of intensifier use in Swabian

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Intensifiers are devices which provide speakers with the opportunity to impress, persuade, praise, and generally influence the interlocutor's reception of a message. It therefore comes as no surprise that intensifiers index social meaning, with factors such as gender and age influencing their use (e.g., Fuchs, 2017; Stratton, 2020). While intensifier variation has been explored widely in English (e.g., Tagliamonte, 2008; Fuchs, 2017), to date there has been only one variationist sociolinguistic analysis of German intensifiers (Stratton, 2020), with little to no research on their use in regional German dialects. To this end, the present study uses variationist sociolinguistic methods to examine the use of intensifiers in Swabian German, a variety spoken by about 800,000 speakers in southwestern Germany.

To examine language use across the lifespan, following the traditional sociolinguistic interview, 20 speakers of Swabian German were first recorded in 1982 and then re-recorded in 2017. Speakers originated from two speech communities, Stuttgart, an urban center with approximately one million inhabitants, and Schwäbisch Gmünd, a semi-rural center with a population of around 60,000. Each intensifiable adjective was coded binomially for intensification, as well as linguistic (e.g., syntactic position, semantic classification), social (e.g., gender, age, geographic mobility, education, community origin), and demographic factors (e.g., place of birth, residences lived, years in each location).

Preliminary results from the distributional analysis indicate that *ganz* 'quite', *so* 'so', and *sehr* 'very' were the top three intensifiers, a finding which is consistent with the general distribution of intensifiers in standard German (Stratton, 2020). However, clear changes can be observed over time, with *ganz* 'quite' and *sehr* 'very' decreasing in popularity, and *so* 'so' and *echt* 'really' increasing in frequency over time. Meanwhile, geographic mobility (i.e., the number and length of residential moves over the speaker's lifespan) appears to play a role in lexical decisions, with *gut* (e.g., *die sind gut froh* 'they are very/well happy') and *fei* (*fei schee* 'very nice') retained in the repertoires of speakers with the lowest mobility indices.

For the multivariate analysis, a binary mixed effects logistic regression was run in *Rbrul* (Johnson, 2009), with intensification as the dependent variable. Gender was found to have a significant effect, with women using amplifiers (e.g., *so* 'so', *echt* 'really') more frequently than men, and men using downtoners (e.g., *e bissle* 'a bit') more frequently than women. This finding corroborates Stratton (2020) which found women to have a tendency to scale up the meaning of an adjective more frequently than men, while men tend to scale down the meaning of an adjective more frequently than women. Speaker community also demonstrated a significant effect, with speakers from Stuttgart showing the highest intensification rate, suggesting that speakers in urban environments feel the pressure to intensify more frequently than speakers in semi-rural centers. All in all, this study shows that speakers use intensifiers to index different social meanings (i.e., gender identity, sense of place and belonging) as they construct their own identities.

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What can we learn from microinterviews?
(Re-)Using data from an interdisciplinary survey on the very old

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Although there is no general rule on the length of sociolinguistic interviews, sociolinguists often target 45 minutes or more in order to obtain vernacular speech and collect sufficient instances of less frequent variables. There are, however, situations in which interviews must be conducted in more limited time. One case in point are surveys from neighboring disciplines, e.g., comprehensive sociological questionnaires or medical tests, which are constrained by limited available time, attentional capacities, or participant willingness to cooperate. In this paper, we discuss how microinterviews, i.e., interviews of very short length consisting of just one or two questions, can be used for variationist purposes.

We exemplify our arguments using data from the NRW80+ study (Wagner et al. 2018), an inter-disciplinary survey from sociology, gerontology, and psychology, which collected a multitude of social and cognitive data on the very old (i.e., aged 80 years and older). This survey also included a short interview passage on the participants 'living situation and their wishes for the future. From this corpus, we selected our sample of 1,863 native German speakers.

One methodological issue that is pertinent to microinterviews but rarely discussed in similar works, is the fact that we have a large number of speakers but only few observations per speaker, therefore requiring some reflection on if and how the dependent variable can be modelled at the level of the individual participant. This approach has consequences on which variables can be studied and the quantitative approach. With regard to the first point, microinterviews only allow the analysis of highly frequent variables, i.e., the variable should occur in most, if not all, sentences produced by a speaker. For this reason, we chose metrical linguistic variables, namely indicators of syntactic complexity such as sentence length in tokens and depth of embedding, which can be calculated for every full sentence. Second, by reanalyzing data from Adli (2022), we investigate to what degree the results obtained from such microinterviews are dependent on the statistical method employed. We contrast three approaches: (i) average over observations per predictor group, (ii) average over observations per participant, and (iii) multi-level, mixed effects modeling with shrinkage (Gelman & Hill 2007).

The microinterview approach allowed us to detect correlations with both cognitive (DemTect score) and social factors (occupational status, amongst others), which would be challenging to obtain outside of an interdisciplinary survey. Furthermore, including predictors from both the social and the medical sphere allowed us to assess their relative weight, suggesting that social variables such as education and occupational status might be more indicative of linguistic complexity in old age than well-attested medical factors pertaining to cognitive abilities. We therefore emphasize the importance of sociolinguists collaborating with practitioners in related fields, as spontaneous speech data in an interdisciplinary setting can provide valuable empirical insights with respect to language variation on the one hand, and social and cognitive characteristics of the speakers on the other hand.

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Sociolinguistic variation in a non-native variety of Swiss German: Romansh migrants in the city of Berne

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This paper is concerned with the sociolinguistic effects of Swiss intra-national migration involving speakers of the minority language Romansh. Since Switzerland is officially a quadrilingual country characterised by "territorial multilingualism" (cf. Riehl 2014: 64), people often need to acquire an additional language when moving to another region within the country. This also holds true for speakers of Romansh. However, given the strong economic and social prevalence of German-speaking Switzerland, Romansh speakers generally acquire the Grison variety of Swiss German as an L2 already during adolescence. If they move to German-speaking Switzerland (e.g., to attend university), they are confronted with yet other regional varieties of Swiss German, which leads to an intense dialect contact situation.

The Swiss German variety spoken by Romansh speakers as L2 has only recently gained some scholarly attention (cf. Eckhardt 2021). Previously, studies of Swiss German have focused more on regional rather than social variation and hence have excluded non-native speakers, such as Romansh speakers (cf. SDS; Glaser 2021). Furthermore, non-mobile speakers have been favoured. So, to some degree, Swiss dialect studies have adhered to traditional methods of dialectology and hence have only partially investigated the social processes underlying linguistic variation.

The present paper adopts variationist sociolinguistic methods to analyse long-term accommodation involving mobile, non-native speakers of Swiss German. Specifically, this research shows how variationist methods can better explain accommodation processes present in the Swiss German L2-variety of Romansh speakers who have migrated from their rural villages in Grisons to the city of Berne. I present data demonstrating internal as well as external factors to predict speakers' level of accommodation.

The sample consists of sociolinguistic interviews of 40 tertiary-educated Romansh speakers, aged between 20 and 40, who have migrated to Berne. The variationist analysis is based on three phonetic-phonological variables, Germanic word-initial (k), non-Germanic word-initial (k) and word-final (ə), for which the Grison variety of Swiss German has typical local variants. Long-term accommodation means that speakers level out these typical Grison features and approach variants common in most Swiss Midland varieties (that is, the adoption of supralocal variants). Results suggest a high degree of inter-speaker variability. This is no surprise given each speaker's distinct history of acquisition and contact to different varieties of Swiss German. However, variation is not random but constrained by internal factors such as the phonetic environment as well as a number of social factors (e.g., language biography, geographical orientation, network structure, school attended, etc.) which help to explain speakers' varying degrees of accommodation towards more supralocal variants.

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Diffusion of Viennese Monophthongization in Austria's traditional dialects

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In this paper, we investigate the geographical and structural diffusion of Viennese Monophthongization (Moosmüller & Vollmann 2001; Moosmüller & Scheutz 2013). By means of a new numerical measure to assess and compare formant movement in 18 lexical items, we provide evidence that Viennese Monophthongization is an ongoing, regular sound change transforming [aɛ] and [aɔ] gradually into [æː] and [ɒː] in the dialects of (Eastern) Austria.

The data are based on direct dialect recordings of 76 speakers in two age-groups in 19 rural locations of eastern and central Austria. Results indicate that [æː] and [ɒː] are diffusing in a wave-like fashion from Vienna (where Viennese Monophthongization originated, cf. Gartner 1900). Even though Viennese Monophthongization is reported to have been established in other bigger cities for more than 30 years (Moosmüller and Vollmann 2001, Moosmüller and Scheutz 2013), the data show no evidence for diffusion from these cities (cf. for different models of spatial diffusion Britain 2012). There are also other factors affecting the degree of formant movement: The phonetic-phonological environment (stress and the following consonant) explains most of the variance in the data, whereas no frequency effects (Phillips 2006) could be found. Furthermore, we identified social identity, cultural space (Horvath and Horvath 2001), and gender-related network structures as language external factors.

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Panel: Advancing Studies in Sociolinguistic Variation and Change in German

From diglossia to diaglossia – Western speech repertoires in Austria revised

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This presentation focuses on the German language area in Austria, more precisely on the hitherto less researched western part of the country. The key element of this talk is a hypothesized transition of the 'vertical' dialect/standard axis from a former diglossic towards a diaglossic structure. While in a diglossic spectrum dialect and standard language are structurally and functionally clearly separated from each other, a diaglossic spectrum is characterized by gradual transitions and 'intermediate' registers between the two extreme poles dialect and standard (cf. Auer 2011; Lenz 2010).

On the one hand, diaglossic spectra are assumed in Austria for the entire Bavarian language area, relying mostly on data from the Central Bavarian east of the country and the area around Austria's capital Vienna (cf. Lenz 2019). On the other hand, a diglossic constellation is generally assumed for the western part of Austria following the variation patterns of the adjacent Alemannic areas in German-speaking Switzerland (cf. Auer 2005: 15; Christen 2019: 273-275). For the neighboring High Alemannic Waldshut-Tiengen in southwestern Germany, however, Kehrein's (2012) results point to a synchronously observable de-diglossization (see analogously West Flemish, cf. Ghyselen 2007). This de-diglossization becomes apparent by an intergenerational comparison as diglossic language patterns are confirmed for the older generation while intersituational shifts on the dialect/standard axis characterize the language repertoires of young speakers.

The empirical basis of this talk, which is dedicated to vertical-social relations on the dialect/standard axis in Austria, is provided by the corpus of the Special Research Program "German in Austria. Variation – Contact – Perception" (cf. Lenz 2018). A total of 24 'autochthonous' speakers (age- and gender-balanced) from three rural locations in western Austria were recorded in six differing survey settings each. The aim of these settings was to evoke various registers of the individual spectra of linguistic variation, which should also enable cross-speaker comparisons. In this mix of methods, rather "free" conversational settings (conversations among friends and interviews) are supplemented by more standardized and controlled translation, reading and sentence completion tasks.

Our quantitative as well as qualitative analyses focusing on the phonetic-phonological level provide evidence for the hypothesis of a restructuring of the vertical spectrum "in vivo" from an older diglossic spectrum to a younger diaglossic model of the dialect/standard repertoires.

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