

Language Variation – European perspectives III

Edited by
Frans Gregersen
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7

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Selected papers from the 5th International Conference
on Language Variation in Europe (ICLaVE 5),
Copenhagen, June 2009

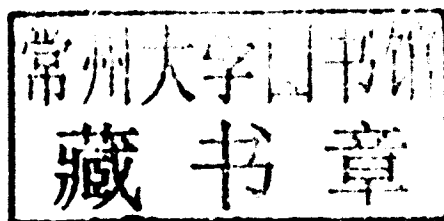
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Introduction*

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The 2 plenaries and 16 papers that you will find in this volume were all given in some version at the 5th International Conference of Language Variation in Europe. The plenary by Penelope Eckert started the conference, as it starts this volume, while the plenary by Brit Mæhlum, which finishes it, was given midway. The other contributions originated as papers given during the main conference sessions, or as contributions to one of the five workshops organized during the conference. We have tried to organize the papers as pearls on a string, so that there is at least one connection between adjoining papers, in the hope that we may tempt the reader to read the whole volume as a sort of feuilleton novel in 18 installments.

1. History of ICLaVE

The International Conference of Language Variation in Europe (ICLaVE for short) is a comparatively new event but nonetheless an important one in the community of sociolinguistic variationists. The first ICLaVE was held at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona from the 29th of June to the 1st of July, 2000.¹ It was explicit then, and is obvious now, that the early history of ICLaVE is tightly bound to the trail blazing project *Convergence and Divergence of Dialect in a Changing Europe*, which was financed by the European Science Foundation from 1995–1998 and directed by Peter Auer and Frans Hinskens. The ICLaVE conference itself was actually founded on the last day of the last event that the network organised, namely the ‘summer’ school chaired by Juan Villena Ponsoda at Malaga, Spain in November 1998. A number of the researchers who were affiliated with the network joined the organizing committee of the ICLaVE conferences, including Teresa Turell,

*Acknowledgements: This introduction has benefited immensely from the help of Peter Auer, Frans Hinskens, Pia Quist and last but not least Jeffrey K. Parrott. I thank them all but have to take full responsibility for what remains of the original.

1. At the time of writing, the conference program could be found at: <http://www.iula.upf.edu/agenda/atvhist/iclaveuk.htm>.

Paul Kerswill, Inge Lise Pedersen, and Mats Thelander. Papers from the first conference appeared in a limited edition: Josep M. Fontana, Louise McNally, M. Teresa Turell and Enric Vallduvi, (eds), 2001, ICLaVE 1. *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Language Variation in Europe. Barcelona (Spain) June 29–30/ July 1, 2000*. Barcelona (Unitat de Recerca de Variació Lingüística (UVAL), Institut Universitari de Lingüística Aplicada, Universitat Pompeu Fabra).

The second ICLaVE was held in Uppsala, Sweden from the 12th to the 14th of June 2003, and a selection of papers was published by Britt Louise Gunnarsson, Lena Bergström, Gerd Eklund, Staffan Fridell, Lise H. Hansen, Angela Karstadt, Bengt Nordberg, Eva Sundgren, and Mats Thelander (eds.) under the title *Language Variation in Europe*. The book was published by the Department of Scandinavian Languages, Uppsala University, in 2004.

ICLaVE 3 was staged by the Meertens Instituut (KNAW) in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, June 23–25, 2005.² Frans Hinskens, a prominent member of the scientific committee, edited the selected papers and established the title *Language Variation – European Perspectives*. The book spearheaded the John Benjamins series titled *Studies in Language Variation*, and had already appeared in 2006.

So it was only logical that when Stavroula Tsiplakou, Marilena Karyolemou, and Pavlos Pavlou edited the selection of papers from the 4th ICLaVE in Nicosia, Cyprus June 17–19 2007, they chose the same title, merely adding a Roman numeral. Thus, here we are with *Language Variation – European Perspectives III*, giving you a selection of the papers from ICLaVE 5, which was held at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark June 25–27, 2009.

2. Mission of ICLaVE

The Amsterdam organizers of ICLaVE 3 express the conference's role nicely:

The International Conference on Language Variation in Europe (ICLaVE) is a biannual meeting addressing any aspect of linguistic variation observed in languages spoken in present-day Europe. The conference is intended to provide a platform for every scholar interested in issues related to this topic, be it as a historical linguist, a sociolinguist, a specialist in grammatical theory, a dialectologist, a psycholinguist or from any other point of view.

Obviously, this is a mission which makes for an interesting breadth of perspectives, but in practice we might summarize the status of ICLaVE much more succinctly

2. At the time of writing, the conference program could be found at: <http://www.iclave.org/2005/programme.html>.

by stating that it has established itself as one of the most important venues for European sociolinguists, and on a broader view, for anyone interested in language variation (as you will see below, affiliations range over a wide spectrum); it is second in importance only to the Sociolinguistics Symposium, which is a much older and much larger conference with many parallel sessions. In contrast, ICLaVE is relatively small, usually attracting some 200 participants on average, and at 3 days, it does not last too long.

It cost us some blood, sweat, and tears to keep things like this, however, since so many good suggestions for papers were sent to the organizers of ICLaVE 5. Consequently, we had to refuse a fair number of good suggestions.³ The selection process was tough on us, and even tougher on the many hopeful people who had their suggestions refused. Fortunately, this did not scare too many away from coming to Copenhagen.⁴

3. The papers introduced

Pearls need a string. Strings order pearls in sequences. Papers have to follow a strict order. But some of the pearls have family resemblances to each other as to method and/or linguistic issues and we have tried to group them together in the volume. I bring these family resemblances to the fore below by the use of CAPs.

Penelope Eckert stands out as one of the most influential sociolinguists at the beginning of the 21st century. When reviewing proposals for papers, the organizing committee noticed that many researchers feel Eckert's so-called 'three-wave' model fits their perception of the field perfectly (Eckert *ftbc.*). In particular, many align with the third wave of sociolinguistics. Eckert herself takes us into this new territory with her keynote lecture, which sent the conference off with the best possible ambitions to make history once again. In the lecture, Eckert focuses on the truly fascinating interface where emotion meets cognition, and speaker strategies

3. At the time of writing, the conference program could be found at: http://iclave5.nfi.ku.dk/upload/application/pdf/f51d6748/ICLaVE%20program%202023-06-09_med%20chair.pdf.

4. The history of this particular volume reflects the following state of affairs: In total, 32 papers were sent in response to our call for contributions, many of them co-authored. The 32 papers were peer reviewed by two anonymous reviewers (in one case only, we had to make do with only one reviewer, but this was the sole exception). We are thoroughly grateful to the many colleagues who, despite their having other things to do, took the time to review a paper. The result of the first round of reviewing was that 7 papers were rejected, 11 accepted, and 15 invited to resubmit. The result of the second round was the selection of 16 papers that you will find below. The two plenaries were reviewed by the editors. Of course we were never in doubt as to their publishability.

for expressing a particular persona blend in with universal constraints on the language faculty – as well as cultural constraints on its interpretations.

In the paper by Zhaleh Feizollahi and Barbara Soukoup, the first of two PHONETIC STUDIES of variation, the issue is precisely the strategic use of language variation, in particular the use of intonation to signal an Austrian dialect to speakers of Austrian German. The authors report on an ingenious way to control intonation in an experiment on the perception of linguistic variation, the idea being that if strategic language use is to make a difference, listeners must be able to decode the social meaning of the variants used: The authors filtered the segmental information from the speech signal and played it to a number of Austrian native speakers. Apparently intonation alone does not do the trick, for the speakers were under these conditions unable to correctly identify standard and dialect samples.

Jane Stuart-Smith, Claire Timmins, and Farhana Alam combine two different samples in their study of how Asian speakers encounter the dialects of Scotland, in this case the dialect of Glasgow, and use phonetic variables in their efforts to create different identities. One sample consists of 6 bilingual Punjabi and English speakers and 4 non-Asian monolingual speakers, all from Glasgow, who read word lists and passages aloud. The second sample was gathered using ethnographic field work. From the 3 different communities of practice identified, the ‘Moderns’, the ‘Conservatives’, and the ‘In-Betweens’, 6 young female speakers were chosen as representative members. The Conservatives are however, split between a ‘Religious’ group and a ‘Cultural’ group, and thus the two members from this group represent these two subgroups respectively. The instrumental phonetic analysis of two vowel variables (FACE and GOAT) and the dark /l/ reveals that in all cases, having an Asian background influences the Glasgow dialect, but the amalgamation is so intimate that the authors, based on the third author’s work, propose a new term: ‘Glaswasian’ (in contrast to ‘Glaswegian’).

The following two papers make up a mini section within the burgeoning field of QUOTATION studies. Marianne Rathje argues for the necessity of a clear and theoretically founded definition of what can be counted as a quotation, and she proposes one (you will have to read the definition yourself). Putting this definition to use in a study of three generations of Danish women, she then demonstrates that quotatives are not only different in number but also in kind. Whether this is age grading or generational change is still unknown.

Sofie Henricson discusses two quotative markers, viz. *vara* ‘be’ and *att* ‘that’ and embeds her discussion in the perennial theme of internal versus external (i.e. contact-induced) change. In view of the fact that a number of similarities seem to place Finland-Swedish closer to Finnish (and English) than to Swedish, she concludes that ‘it could be reasonable to consider both the pulling and pushing potentials of the process, instead of choosing one of them as the primary force’.

Both authors demonstrate convincingly that the old division of ‘direct’ and ‘indirect’ speech, so dear to the tradition of literary scholarship, has lost its meaning in the variationist study of quotations.

A number of memorable papers have excelled in using quotations as titles. Often the quotations illustrate the very fact that a paper sets out to explore: “Sometimes I’ll start a sentence in Spanish y termino en espanol” (Poplack 1980) springs to mind. In the section of four papers exploring SYNTACTIC ISSUES from a variety of variationist perspectives, the second one by Emma Moore and Julia Snell is another case in point. I will begin, however, with Heike Wiese on the role of information structure in a German multiethnolect. Wiese argues that *Kiezdeutsch* (‘neighborhood German’) as the variety is called, is distinguished by its soft constraints on the use of topicalization, i.e. the leftmost field of the sentence. Wiese places her analysis of what could be seen as simplification into a theoretical discussion of the relationship between information packaging and the options made available by the particular variety the speaker is using. The result is that topicalization may be expressed by a broader range of expressions in *Kiezdeutsch* than in the standard.

Topicalization is concerned with the leftmost field of sentence structure, while focus is expressed more often at the rightmost end. Emma Moore and Julia Snell combine insights from fieldwork of the third-wave type in three different school environments, two primary schools and a high school, with a total of six different Communities of Practice, which are interestingly related to class, to create a picture of right dislocation of tags. In this detailed picture of the girls’ language use they exploit both quantitative information about frequency of pronominal tags versus Noun Phrases, and give us an in-depth analysis of stance in interaction. They conclude that right-dislocated tags both reflect specific cultural practices and are used to express specific stances made possible in and by these practices.

The next two papers deal with Dutch. The first one, by Natalia Levshina, Dirk Geeraerts, and Dirk Speelman contrast Dutch in the Netherlands with Flemish by looking at the causative construction with *doen* (‘make’). Geeraerts and his co-workers combine cognitive linguistics and corpus work in their analyses of relationships between semantics and grammar. In this case, they show that the *doen* construction is very specialized in the Netherlands Dutch corpus, whereas it has a much broader range of both complement predicates and causers in Belgian Dutch. The paper also demonstrates a number of methodological innovations.

The final paper in this section, by Ankelen Schippers and Jack Hoeksema, again focuses our attention on the leftmost field of the sentence in an analysis of four different constructions that have the feature of long distance dependency in common, viz. wh-questions, relatives, comparatives, and topicalization. The authors argue that although it is true that both the wh-question construction

and the comparative construction are rather restricted as to lexical variation, this does not hold for the other two. This means that there are two generalizations to capture: one is that the four constructions are instances of the same process, viz. long-distance movement (to the left), and the other is that two of them seem to be restricted to a narrow range of lexical items. They then turn to diachronic data and show that there are more constructions that have to be taken into account, notably the so-called resumptive prolepsis construction.

In general, the study of syntactic variation may have many sources. What we see documented in these four papers is that empirical work is of the essence. But what kind of empirical methods should be used? Some authors use the corpus-linguistic methods pioneered by Douglas Biber and his associates, which feature frequencies within samples of a particular construction, often detailed as to its various members. A critique of this method has been that it does not see constructions as sociolinguistic variables. If so, the variable's envelope of variation would have to be delimited in advance. In functional terms, the envelope of variation crops up in the use of certain constructions for the same purpose as the one under study (e.g. the resumptive prolepsis construction as a competing way of expressing long distance topicalization). In Levshina, Geeraerts, and Spelman's paper, another strategy is documented, i.e. an automatic search within a construction frame defined on the basis of syntactically parsed corpora, along with the use of balanced corpora when the authors get evidence suspected of bias as to the selection of the original sample. What is at stake here are longstanding and central issues of productivity in terms of rules or construction frames, as well as the 'ever-green' question: where does grammar stop, and become pragmatics or semantics? Methodological issues regarding the use of interactional data vs. corpus searches remain central for the next section as well.

At ICLaVE 5, one of the five workshops was devoted to CORPUS LINGUISTICS and the next three articles originate as papers given at this workshop. Internationally, the Syntactic Atlas of the Netherlands Dialects (SAND) project⁵ has been an inspiration for all later European efforts. This is explicitly acknowledged in the case of the Scandinavian Dialect Syntax (ScanDiaSyn) project, on which Øystein Alexander Vangsnes and Janne Bondi Johannessen report in the first paper (and the same is the case with the second paper by Isabelle Buchstaller and Karen Corrigan, I might add).

Øystein Alexander Vangsnes and Janne Bondi Johannessen discuss the merits of two different types of data, questionnaire data from 4 dialect-speaking informants at 80 sites distributed all over Norway, and a corpus of spoken Norwegian, in

5. <http://www.meertens.knaw.nl/projecten/sand/sandeng.html>

principle from the very same sites. Questionnaire data contain negative instances, in the guise of rejections of constructions exemplified in the stimulus material. In Vangsnes and Johannessen's case the subject is *how* constructions. The distribution of *how* across four different contexts is studied first on the basis of the dialect questionnaire. It is shown that very clear geographical patterns emerge. Secondly, corpus data are brought into the equation. Such data do not, of course, contain negative instances, so we cannot know where the limits of these informants' use lie, but the corpora do contain enough instances to complement the insights offered by the questionnaire, in particular as to the morphology of the *how* manifestation.

The next paper, by Isabelle Buchstaller and Karen Corrigan, who herself pioneered such studies with Cornips (Cornips & Corrigan 2005), shows in detail how such complementation can raise more issues about what it is that we tap with the various methods we use. Comparing use data and questionnaire data from four different tasks – a direct grammaticality judgment task, an indirect grammaticality judgment task, a pictorial elicitation task, and a reformulation task – yields intriguing results: "For every vernacular construction tested, one test contravenes the other three and, unfortunately, it is a different testing method every time." The implication of this result is far reaching, since it seems to indicate that results stemming from different methods may not be compared without the utmost care.

Finally, in Hanne Ruus and Dorte Duncker's paper we are introduced to a methodology developed for the analysis of historical variation. The central problem of historical variation is to find the baseline from which variation can be identified and analyzed. In the proposed solution, the Multi Level Text representation approach, Ruus and Duncker establish a neutral level of lemmas equivalent to the modern Danish orthographical dictionary. One of the obvious advantages of this method is that any historical text is analyzable as a combination of lemmas, with only one form at the level of neutral representation. When this level is mapped onto the original text lemmas, the variation is immediately available for analysis. A further advantage of the proposed methodology is the ingenious exploitation of the incremental nature of philological knowledge, in the guise of an orthographical dictionary that makes educated guesses about which lemma a given new form should be assigned to. The paper argues that this approach is viable and fruitful not only for diachronic, but also for synchronic variation, and it is to be noted that the authors have worked with the framework since the 1990s.

Steffen Höder's treatment of areal linguistics, from the point of view of contacts between neighboring varieties of what later became national languages, leads off the three papers we have grouped for their treatment of CONTACT phenomena. Höder argues that traditional grouping of national languages – and typological generalizations based on the resulting groups – may overlook the fact that standard languages are a rather late invention and that there have always been non-

standard varieties which actually featured different constructions in a number of cases. Three examples are examined: so-called pseudocoordination, vowel systems around the Baltic Sea, and finally clause linking in Old Swedish. What these three examples have in common is that a closer look at the areal distribution within the many varieties which are present in the area under study results in a dialect continuum instead of a break between (standard) languages. Moreover, the final example shows that traditional maps of the spread of features cannot do justice to a variety which is typical only of written language.

Niina Kunnas, in her paper on Karelian Finnish dialects, has something to say in the discussion of so-called neogrammarian (unconstrained) sound change versus some kind of diffusion, whether lexical diffusion or morphologically constrained diffusion: "The basic idea of morphological diffusion is that the morphotactic hierarchy of the bound morphemes affects the order of the linguistic change." Being agglutinative languages, Finnish dialects are especially suited for the study of morphologically constrained diffusion. Since there is a clear hierarchy, it is easy to test whether changes in fact obey such constraints or not, and they seem not to. Kunnas discusses whether the relevant distinction is between contact-induced changes and language-internal ones, or whether it is a matter of cognitive focus, which is the beginning of the word in this case. Finally, Kunnas introduces conscious and less-conscious changes as a relevant distinction.

Neither standard languages nor varieties or dialects are actually ever in contact, but their speakers may be. The section's last paper is by Saija Tamminen-Parre, and is again concerned with Finnish. Tamminen-Parre asks what would motivate a speaker to prefer one word from a language which is not her own first language to an equivalent one which actually is from her first language. This is an empirical question and Tamminen-Parre has interviewed a number of Finnish speech community members. In her paper, she reports on a single speaker who is identified as a professional having a particular lifestyle (see also Pedersen 2010). Tamminen-Parre proceeds to demonstrate this speaker's ambivalence toward the use of English loan words. While she openly endorses the Finnish translation equivalents, she consistently evaluates the English word as the most effective when it comes to pragmatic uses such as selling and advertising: English is cool.

The section on contact started out with a geographical look and continued to a view from the theory of language change. It ends with the qualitative analysis of a single speaker's discourse on *the* modern contact, viz. English loans.

Two final papers make up a section on their own before the plenary by Brit Mæhlum. First comes Wojciech Gardela's study of variation in the spelling of Early Scots and Northern Middle English participles. Gardela shows how the various forms, some ending in *-and* and *-ande* on the one hand, and others in *-in*, *-ing*

and *-yng* on the other, may be better understood if we take a look at which type of construction (appositive, adjectival, or progressive) the participle takes part in.

Tjaša Jakob reports on a questionnaire study of dialect geography in Slovene. The focus is on the words for ‘son of one’s uncle or aunt’, i.e. English *cousin*. It turns out that there are 14 different answers, with *bratranec* being the most frequent and geographically by far most widespread term, while its main competitors are *strnič*, *kužin*, and *sestrič*. The lexeme *kužin* is obviously a loan from the Romance dialects close to Slovenia. There is also a Hungarian loan *unukateštver*. In a sense, Jakob’s paper demonstrates both the validity of a computer assisted approach to dialect geography, and in particular, the validity of dialect lexical semantics and the point that Höder makes: the variety and richness is immense.

Sociolinguistics is arguably still a young science. But sociolinguistics had its roots in dialectology, and the study of dialects is as old as the study of language. Dialectologists, however, had an ambivalent relation to the cities which gave them their sustenance as university employees and thus was their everyday environment. Cities are not real places, but rather non-places, in the sense that there are too many people to postulate any uniformity of language, and yet it is obviously not a dialect which is spoken. But what is it then? In her plenary, Brit Mæhlum gave us all a HISTORIOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS in the guise of a historical narrative about this tension between attraction and rejection. The Norwegian story is probably intimately tied to the country’s comparatively late emergence into the status of a nation state, as well as the cities being small and dominated by a rather Danish Norwegian speaking elite. Mæhlum shows how this led to the adoption of rural dialects as the epitome of ‘Norwegianhood’. One would expect then that the study of city dialects or ‘citylects’ would be a late invention, but the surprising fact is that with the famous Amund B. Larsen as their pioneer, the Norwegian linguists may boast of a long series of studies. Sociolinguistics on the other hand, after a brilliant start by the TAUS⁶ project in Oslo, soon became much more preoccupied with dialects and regiolects, until in 2000 Mæhlum and her associates created the UPUS⁷ project on urban variation in Oslo, Trondheim, Bodø, and Tromsø. The UPUS studies have adopted third-wave methodology, and have focused on multiethnolects in Oslo and Trondheim. In her concluding remarks, Mæhlum demonstrates how UPUS researchers tend to value the multiethnolects as a new

6. TAUS = Talemålsundersøkelsen i Oslo (The study of spoken language in Oslo). Cf. <http://www.tekstlab.uio.no/nota/taus/index.html> (in Norwegian).

7. UPUS = Utveklingsprosesser i urbane språkmiljø (Developmental processes in urban linguistic miljø), Cf. <http://www.hf.ntnu.no/hf/adm/forskning/prosjekter/UPUS> (in both Norwegian and English).

contribution to language and dialect diversity in Norway. It is not a prerogative of the past to contribute to ideological debates.

4. Themes and perspectives

A conference always offers the organizers a chance to gauge the state of the art. From our point of view, it is rather noteworthy that connections inside this volume mirror connections between perspectives on variation in the real world of the language sciences. For example, it seems to be the case that third-wave sociolinguistics has caught on in Europe as well as the USA, as illustrated by the contributions from Moore and Snell, Henricson, and Stuart-Smith, Timmins, and Alam. The attempt to relate interaction and macro perspectives is also featured in Rathje's and Tamminen-Parre's contributions, though neither of them used fieldwork methods of the third-wave type.

Computer assistance is also notable as a more or less natural, more or less featured part of the research, first of all in the three corpus papers, but certainly also in Levshina, Geeraerts and Speelman, Gardela's, Höder's, and Jakob's papers. As corpus linguistics comes of age, it becomes vital for the treatment of larger masses of data, and it tends to reopen connections to geography (using programmes such as Geographic Information System (GIS) to produce links to maps and geological and archeological records) and history. Studies such as Wiese's and Schippers and Hoeksema's document that theoretical syntax has to come to terms with the facts of variation, and that variationists may contribute to the solution of theoretical problems. Although it would be foolish or naive to hope for the final ecumenical reunion between variationists and formalists in the united family of linguistics, we shall certainly see more of this. Finally, a note on the levels of language: A number of papers treat phonological or graphematical themes (Eckert, Stuart-Smith, Timmins, and Alam, Kunnas, Gardela, and Ruus and Duncker); a fair number are concerned with morphology and syntax (Wiese, Schippers and Hoeksema, Vangsnes and Johannessen, Höder, and Buchstaller and Corrigan); while only a few are concerned with semantics (Jakob, Levshina, Geeraerts, and Speelman, and Tamminen-Parre) or pragmatics (Rathje, Henricson).

I cannot finish this introduction without giving special thanks to Lin Solvang of the LANCHART Centre, who has navigated the book manuscript through all kinds of waters with a steady and skilful hand. Now that the book is close to appearing as a material object, she deserves the grateful thanks of all contributors and I am just happy to be the go-between.

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