

Two-dimensional variation in Swiss German morphosyntax

PHILIPP STÖCKLE
PÉTER JESZENSZKY
University of Zurich

This paper deals with variation in Swiss German morphosyntax from two perspectives: 1. geographic variation between different survey points or areas, and 2. interpersonal variation between different speakers at certain survey points or areas. The data basis for this study is provided by the Syntactic Atlas of Swiss German Dialects (SADS) (cf. Bucheli & Glaser 2002), which was conducted in 383 municipalities. Unlike most traditional dialect atlas projects which focussed on the investigation of the old rural dialects and therefore only included one or two older speakers as 'representatives' of these dialects, in the SADS multiple informants (median 5-6) at each location answered four questionnaires which contained 118 questions about 50 (morpho-)syntactic phenomena. The resulting maps clearly show a high variability of answers at some places (i.e. different informants giving different answers to the same question), while other places seem to be more 'stable' with high agreement between the answers of the different speakers (cf. Seiler 2005).

The goal of this paper is to take a closer look at the interpersonal variation and to classify the whole research area into regions according to this variation. A variation index will be developed in order to address the following questions: Which regions show the most variation and can therefore be seen as linguistically *dynamic*, which regions show little variation and can therefore be regarded as linguistically *static*? How do the resulting geographic patterns correlate with findings from other linguistic surveys such as the Linguistic Atlas of German-speaking Switzerland (SDS) (cf. Hotzenköcherle et al. 1962-1997) as well as with extra-linguistic factors (topography, political or cultural borders)? Which syntactic variables show the highest variability, which variables show the lowest? We will address the question of how these results can contribute to a better understanding of dialectal variation and the variability of grammar.