

A matter of scale only?

FRANS GREGERSEN

University of Copenhagen, Denmark

In discussing methods of analysis in historical linguistics, dialectology and sociolinguistics it is a commonplace to note that the historical time frame is much larger and that we are blessed with the hindsight of actually knowing which processes of variation have gone to completion, i.e. which sounds/letters/constructions/words have in fact changed during the period we are looking at. On the other hand, sociolinguistics may study in detail how the candidates for change are launched and how these sounds/letters/constructions/words vary during the small slice of time we are able to study with the recordings we have at our disposal. Dialectology is placed in the middle here. *Vis a vis* historical linguistics, the dialectologists focus on variation inside the national languages. In contrast to sociolinguistics, however, the dialectologists are often focused on the language (system) and not on portraying the speech communities inside which the variation is found. In my paper I will exemplify the problem we have of fitting all these types of evidence stemming from the use of different methods, into a coherent picture of language change and variation. The data will come from the LANCHART Centre study of changes in Danish