



WESTFÄLISCHE
WILHELMS-UNIVERSITÄT
MÜNSTER

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Acquiring attitudes towards varieties of German

A quantitative perspective

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Acquiring attitudes towards varieties of German

A quantitative perspective

On **Dutch**:

De Vogelaer, Gunther & Jolien Toye (to appear).
Acquiring attitudes towards varieties of Dutch: a
quantitative perspective. In: De Vogelaer, Gunther
& Matthias Katerbow (eds.). *Acquiring sociolinguistic
variation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins

<https://uni-muenster.academia.edu/GuntherDeVogelaer/Papers>



1. Introduction: sociolinguistic vs. social development
2. Method: speaker evaluation experiment
3. Structure of sociolinguistic attitudes
4. Developmental perspective
5. Conclusions

- Sociolinguistic development:

#Labov (1964): “acquisition of the full range of spoken English” only by “college educated persons with special interest in speech”

#Chambers (2003), De Houwer (2003), Smith, Durham & Fortune (2007): fine sociolinguistic competences in children (method: lg. usage)

#Van Hofwegen & Wolfram (2010): ‘rollercoaster trajectory’ in many (but not all) children

1. childhood: ‘vernacular-reduction’ trajectory (trigger: schooling)

2. adolescence: increased vernacularity (vernacular as **peer group variety**)

cf. USA: Eckert (1989); Flanders: Rys (2007) (cf. De Vogelaer & Toye, to appear); Netherlands: Swanenberg & Backus (2013), Italy (Sardinia): Depau (2011, 2012)

- Sociolinguistic development:

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>>> correlates with developing attitudes?

STAGE 1: emerging prestige variety: e.g., Cremona & Bates (1977), Day (1982), Floccia et al. (2009), Kinzler & DeJesus (2014),...

STAGE 2: Blum-Kulka (2004:197): “Most **sociolinguistic studies lack a developmental agenda**, and they are concerned with toddlers and preschoolers rather than with school-age children.”

1. Introduction

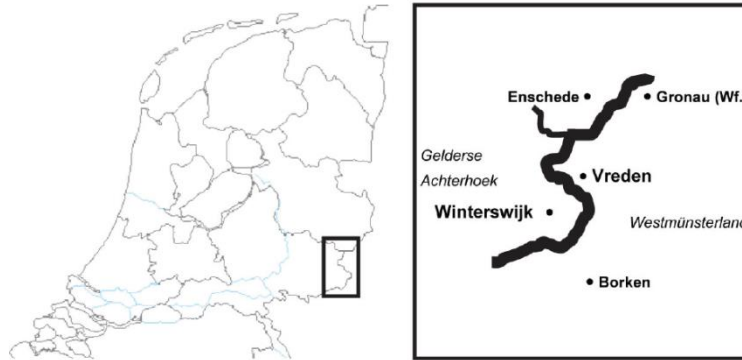
- Sociolinguistic development: lack of developmental agenda
- Social development in adolescence, esp. re. **peer group influence**
 - #thinking in terms of ‘perceived’ rather than ‘sociometric popularity’ in early adolescence (Cillessen & Rose 2005)
 - #age 16: ‘peak’ in conventional and social-clique dominated reasoning about friendship (Turiel 1983, Horn 2003)
 - >>> **correlations** in (socio)linguistic development?

2. Method

- ‘Speaker evaluation paradigm’ (Lambert et al. 1960)

- ‘Speaker evaluation paradigm’
- Concrete:

#Vreden:



Map: Smits (2011:180)

- °Context: dissolution of dialect continuum (Kremer 1979, Niebaum 1990, Smits 2011) through dialect levelling and loss (language death?)
- °Border area: dialect is relatively resilient (Goossens 1997, Smits 2011)
- °(Complex) correlation with attitudes, which is poorly researched (cf. Kremer 2005:41)



- ‘Speaker evaluation paradigm’
- Concrete:

#Vreden

#**199 pupils** from 5th – 12th class (**Age: 9-18**)

#**3** (or rather: 5) **fragments**: regional colloquial German, High German, dialect (‘Vredener Platt’) (+ Standard Dutch, ‘Nedersaksisch’) by 5 males (age 20-25)

#Questionnaire: **14 questions** re. ‘overt’ and ‘covert’ prestige + eligibility as a friend and as a model for own language usage

#**Structure** of attitudes: Principal Components Analysis (PCA), cf. Zahn & Hopper (1985)



Sprecher 1:

01) Meiner Meinung nach ist der Sprecher dieses Fragments eine **intelligente** Person.

stimme völlig zu stimme eher zu neutral eher nicht überhaupt nicht

02) Der Sprecher dieses Fragments ist eine Person, die anderen Menschen **hilft**.

stimme völlig zu stimme eher zu neutral eher nicht überhaupt nicht

03) Der Sprecher dieses Fragments ist eine Person, die **intelligent** spricht.

stimme völlig zu stimme eher zu neutral eher nicht überhaupt nicht

04) Der Sprecher dieses Fragments ist eine Person, die **hilft**.

stimme völlig zu stimme eher zu neutral eher nicht überhaupt nicht

05) Ich würde gerne **genauso** wie der Sprecher dieses Fragments sein.

stimme völlig zu stimme eher zu neutral eher nicht überhaupt nicht

Attributes:

- intelligent
- helpful
- (un)intelligible
- leader
- speak.like
- trustworthy
- funny
- friendly
- TV-presenter
- popular
- well-paid
- my.friend
- beautiful



2. Method

- ‘Speaker evaluation paradigm’
- Concrete: Vreden (D), 3 varieties of German, 9-18 yrs. old
- Controversial method?
 - #Criticism: naive assumption that stimuli can be decontextualised
 - #Soukup (2013): reconceptualise experiments as “discursive events”, revealing “social meaning”
 - #Grondelaers & Kristiansen (eds., 2013): results robust enough to warrant cross-linguistic comparison



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3. Structure of sociolinguistic attitudes

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3. Structure of sociolinguistic attitudes

- Context of language death?

Das Vredener Platt spreche ich ...		Häufigkeit	Prozent	Kumulative Prozente
Gültig	<i>Sehr gut</i>	2	1,0	1,0
	<i>Gut</i>	15	7,5	8,5
	<i>Neutral</i>	32	16,1	24,6
	<i>Schlecht</i>	62	31,2	55,8
	<i>Gar nicht</i>	88	44,2	100,0
Gesamtsumme		199	100,0	

(Very) good active competences:

8,5%



(Very) good passive competences:

55,8%

Das Vredener Platt verstehe ich ...		Häufigkeit	Prozent	Kumulative Prozente
Gültig	<i>Sehr gut</i>	42	21,1	21,1
	<i>Gut</i>	69	34,7	55,8
	<i>Neutral</i>	42	21,1	76,9
	<i>Schlecht</i>	33	16,6	93,5
	<i>Gar nicht</i>	13	6,5	100,0
Gesamtsumme		199	100,0	



3. Structure of sociolinguistic attitudes

- Context of language death?

Plus: #First language = dialect ('Platt'): 4/199

#Second language = dialect: 107/199

of which 17:

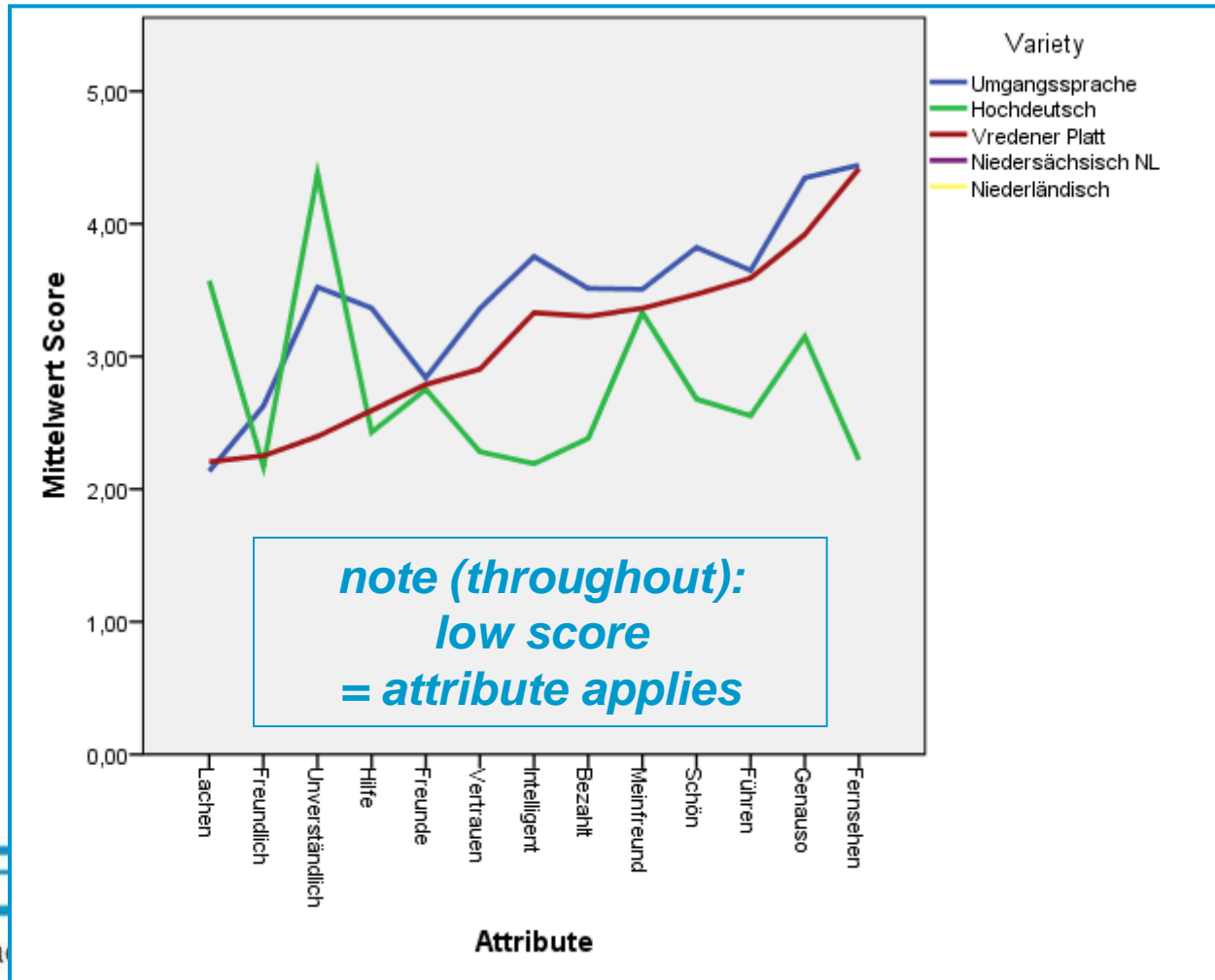
*(bei Oma) Platt
bei Papa ein bisschen platt
meine Verwandten reden platt aber mit mir Hochdeutsch
Plattdeutsch (meine Eltern)
etc., etc.*



#Fragment in Vreden dialect = rather unintelligible

3. Structure of sociolinguistic attitudes

- Context of language death?
- Attitudes:





3. Structure of sociolinguistic attitudes

- Context of language death?
- Attitudes: PCA with *varimax*-Rotation > 2 dimensions (overall data)

	Component	
	1	2
intelligent	.803	
helpful	.432	.474
intelligible	.592	
leader	.666	
speak.like	.609	.413
trustworthy	.562	.510
funny	-.609	.574
friendly		.711
TV-presenter	.836	
popular		.691
well-paid	.744	
my.friend		.772
beautiful	.548	.556

NB.

values < .400 suppressed



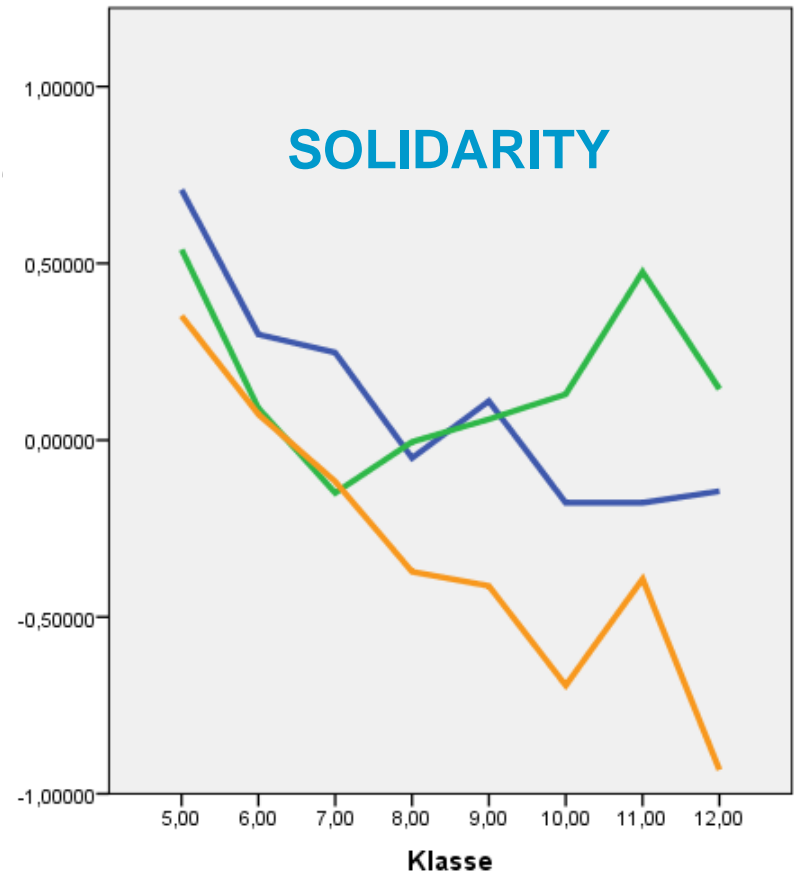
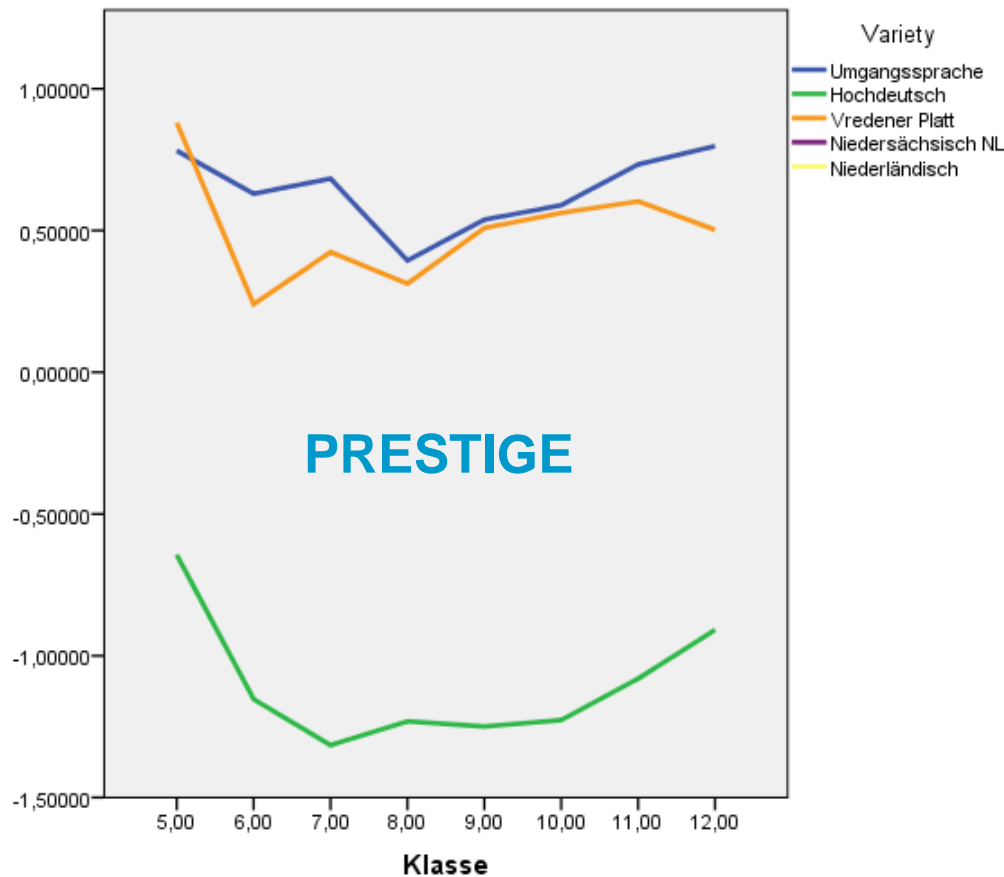
3. Structure of sociolinguistic attitudes

- Context of language death?
- Attitudes: PCA with *varimax*-Rotation > 2 dimensions (overall data)

	Component	
	Prestige	Solidarity
intelligent	.803	
helpful	.432	.474
intelligible	.592	
leader	.666	
speak.like	.609	.413
trustworthy	.562	.510
funny	-.609	.574
friendly		.711
TV-presenter	.836	
popular		.691
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3. Structure of sociolinguistic attitudes

- Context of language death?
- Attitudes: PCA with *varimax*-Rotation > 2 dimensions (overall data)





4. Developmental perspective

- PCA per age group

#4 age groups rather than 8 grades: 9-11, 12-13, 14-15, 16+

#In 3 age groups: 3 similar dimensions (age group 12-13: 2 dimensions)

prestige > personal integrity > social attractiveness

(12-13: prestige/integrity > social attractiveness)

4. Developmental perspective

- PCA per age group
- Discussion of the dimensions (*values < .400 suppressed*)

PRESTIGE	Age group			
	9-11	12-13	14-15	16+
intelligent	.584	.802	.765	.726
helpful		.580		
intelligible	.645	.616	.697	.821
leader	.645	.701	.605	.711
speak.like	.739	.618	.706	.660
trustworthy		.766		
funny		-.569	-.523	
friendly		.580		
TV-presenter	.799	.806	.789	.705
popular				
well-paid	.451	.768	.632	.726
my.friend				
beautiful	.534	.612	.666	.578

→ Intelligence as prestige feature

→ Intelligibility as prestige feature
(Davies 2008, Jaspers & Van Hoof 2013)

→ Humor lacks prestige

→ Money as prestige feature

4. Developmental perspective

- PCA per age group
- Discussion of the dimensions (*values < .400 suppressed*)

PERSONAL INTEGRITY	Age group			
	9-11	12-13	14-15	16+
intelligent	.543			
helpful	.777		.844	.795
intelligible				
leader				
speak.like				.422
trustworthy	.749		.698	.726
funny				
friendly	.707		.661	.773
TV-presenter				
popular	.590			
well-paid	.509		.417	.414
my.friend				.513
beautiful	.471			.503

→ Potential for non-standard varieties?

→ } Emerging thinking in terms of 'Perceived' rather than 'Sociometric popularity'? (Cillessen & Rose 2005)

4. Developmental perspective

- PCA per age group
- Discussion of the dimensions

SOCIAL ATTRACTIVENESS	Age group			
	9-11	12-13	14-15	16+
intelligent				
helpful				
intelligible				
leader				
speak.like		.413		
trustworthy				
funny	.782	.652	.672	.768
friendly	.421	.481	.425	
TV-presenter				-.512
popular		.680	.613	.800
well-paid				
my.friend	.710	.790	.814	.515
beautiful	.466	.476	.469	

Potential for non-standard varieties?

16 year as “peak” for conventional reasoning about friendship (Turiel 1983, Horn 2003)

- **Main findings:**

- #Linguistic preferences (SPEAK.LIKE-attribute)

- Overall dominance of prestige as main factor steering (reported) preferences
- In older groups, the SPEAK.LIKE-attribute also gets associated with ‘social attractiveness’ (12-13 (and 14-15)) and ‘personal integrity’ (16+ group), creating higher ‘covert prestige’ potential for non-standard varieties
- This is paralleled by the emergence of the dialect as a solidarity variety

- **Main findings:**

- #Linguistic preferences (SPEAK.LIKE-attribute)

- #Social development: attitudes evolve along lines predictable from developmental research

- ° ‘perceived popularity’ (Cillessen & Rose 2005): from age 12-13, POPULARITY-attribute relates to ‘social attractiveness’ rather than ‘integrity’

- ° conventional > individual friendship choices (Turiel 1983, Horn 2003): MY.FRIEND-attribute aligns with social attractiveness in younger groups, and with personal integrity in 16+ group

5. Conclusions

- **Main findings:**

#Linguistic preferences (SPEAK.LIKE-attribute)

#Social development: attitudes evolve along lines predictable from developmental research

>>> **correlation** between social and (socio)linguistic development

- **To do:**

- #Present data:

- °Further explore relevance for evaluation of varieties
 - °Correlations with dialect proficiency and/or gender

- #Future research:

- °Comparison with data from other age groups (children, adults) and other locations (D and NL, and potentially other countries)
 - °Triangulation: usage data and qualitative investigations



Thank you!

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Questions/comments/draft paper on Dutch:

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