

Eleonore Schmitt

Unnoticed Variation? Salience and Linguistic Insecurity

Variation can cause linguistic insecurity. In this talk, linguistic insecurity is seen as a speaker's insecurity whether a certain form is appropriate in a given variety. As the standard variety is highly prestigious, deviations from it are sanctioned. Thus, linguistic insecurity mostly arises in respect to the standard variety. However, variation does not need to cause linguistic insecurity as the variation might not be salient enough to be noticed. Genitive endings in contemporary German are varying: Short (des Flugs) and long (des Fluges) endings are possible. Phonetic-prosodic and morphological factors as well as frequency influence a noun's tendency towards an ending. Thus, the distribution of long and short endings is complex and varying heavily from noun to noun. Therefore, it can facilitate linguistic insecurity. This talk aims at investigating the salience of varying genitive endings and their ability to cause linguistic insecurity. The results of a correction test are presented: Participants corrected a text which included different types of mistakes and instances of long and short genitives. Thereby, nouns with equal frequencies of long and short genitives and nouns with a tendency towards a certain ending were tested. The participants' corrections are used to measure the salience of long and short genitive endings. In order to retrieve linguistic insecurity, participants were asked to indicate where they were insecure about their correction.

References:

Baldaquí Esquandelle, Joseph M. (2011): "Relations between formal linguistic insecurity and the perception of linguistic insecurity. A quantitative study on linguistic insecurity in an educational environment at the Valencian Community (Spain)" In: *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 32 (4), 325-342.

Hennig, Mathilde (2012): "Was ist ein Grammatikfehler?" In: Gunthner, Susanne et al. (eds): *Kommunikation und Öffentlichkeit. Sprachwissenschaftliche Potenziale zwischen Empirie und Norm*. Berlin u. a.: Walter de Gruyter, 121-148.

Klein, Wolf Peter (2003): "Sprachliche Zweifelsfälle als linguistischer Gegenstand. Zur Einführung in ein vergessenes Thema der Sprachwissenschaft" In: *Linguistik online* 16 (4), 5-33.

Szczepaniak, Renata (2010): "Während des Flug(es)/Ausflug(es)? German Short and Long Genitiv Endings between Norm and Variation" In: Plewnia, Albrecht et al. (eds): *Grammar between norm and variation*. Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 103- 126.

Szczepaniak, Renata (2014): "Sprachwandel und sprachliche Unsicherheit. Der formale und funktionale Wandel des Genitivs seit dem Frühneuhochdeutschen" In: Witt, Andreas/ Plewnia, Albrecht (eds): *Sprachverfall? Dynamik Wandel Variation. Jahrbuch des Instituts für Deutsche Sprache 2013*. Berlin u. a. : Walter de Gruyter, 33-49.