

Das Schweizerdeutsche der Rätroman*innen im „Unterland“

[The Swiss German spoken by Romansh people living in German-speaking Switzerland]

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This project deals with the currently under-researched variety of Swiss German spoken by Romansh people as L2. Applying a sociolinguistic-variationist framework, I intend to investigate into the societal processes that determine language variation and change in this variety. More specifically, by looking at Romansh speakers who live in the diaspora in Berne, the focus lies on second dialect acquisition in a second language. Thus, the project combines two separate but interrelated fields: 1. dialect contact and accommodation / second dialect acquisition (SDA) and 2. second language acquisition (SLA).

The first research question is concerned with second dialect acquisition. It will be asked which social factors (e.g. social network, length of residence etc.) lead to Romansh speakers maintaining their variety acquired in Grisons or to them accommodating towards Bernese German or other Swiss German varieties encountered in their daily life. The second research question comprises the very fact of Swiss German being an L2 for Romansh speakers and therefore deals with phenomena of second language acquisition and how these interact with the processes of dialect acquisition and/or non-acquisition.

In order to answer these underlying research questions, two groups of speakers will be interviewed in non-structured sociolinguistic interviews. The first group comprises 60 socially heterogeneous speakers of Romansh having lived in Bern for different periods of time. Analysis of their speech will be focused on phonetic-phonological variables which are known to be different in the Alemannic varieties spoken in Grisons and Bern. So as to assess whether change has taken place in Romansh speakers' speech during their time in the diaspora, results will be compared to an already existing corpus which contains recordings in Swiss German by Romansh speakers who have remained in Grisons. The second group consists of a small group of speakers who will move to Bern in summer 2020. They will be interviewed once just after they have arrived and a second time after a period of one year. This longitudinal data will help to explain and verify possible accommodation processes found for the first group of speakers.

KEYWORDS: Swiss German, Bilingualism, Second language acquisition, Second dialect acquisition, social dialectology

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