

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 long-term accommodation in a second language. Thus, the project combines two separate but interrelated fields: 1. dialect contact and accommodation and 2. language contact and second language acquisition (SLA).

The first research question is concerned with long-term accommodation. It will be asked which social (e.g. social networks, length of residence etc.) and linguistic factors lead to Romansh speakers maintaining their Swiss German variety acquired in Grisons or to them accommodating towards Bernese German or other, mostly Midland 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 accommodation and/or non-accommodation.

To answer these underlying research questions, sociolinguistic interviews with two groups of speakers have been conducted. The first group comprises 40 (20 females and 20 males), tertiary-educated speakers of Romansh, aged between 20 and 40 years, who have been living in Berne 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 Berne/the Swiss Midlands. The second group (N = 5) consists of speakers who have moved to German-speaking Switzerland in autumn 2020. They have been interviewed once just after they had arrived and will be interviewed a second time after a period of two years. 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, long-term accommodation, social dialectology

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