

German Variation and Change in a diaspora German speech community in Japan: Analysis of the students' conversations in German School

This paper reports on my work-in-progress on German dialect contact, speech accommodation and second dialect acquisition in Japan. Currently, the German speaking population in Japan consists of 12,198 Germans, 1,271 Austrians, and 2,597 Swiss (Ministry of Justice, 2019), as well as international families with a German-speaking spouse. Approximately 500 students attend grades 1-12 of the German School in Yokohama in 2019, forming part of the German speech community in Japan.

In Japan, German-speakers started to reside in the latter half of the 19th century, establishing a German School in Yokohama, a city opened for trade with the West, in 1904. The German-speaking population in Japan increased hand in hand with the advancement of the economic relationship between German-speaking countries and Japan, and so did the student number of the German School. This school is the only school in East Asia that conducts elementary and secondary(gymnasium) education in German. Now it has students not only from Germany but also from Austria, Switzerland and many other countries, and offers various classes including classes of Swiss German and culture.

The only previous study on the German School in Japan was a case study which examined two students' code-switching between Japanese and German (Imamura, 2013). This study, however, did not pay attention to dialectal variation in German. Three main dialect-areas have been distinguished in German dialectology: Low German dialects in the north of Germany, Middle German dialects in the central part of Germany and Upper German dialects in the southern part of Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Besides these dialects, "Standard Germans" have been established in each German-speaking country. There are, as yet, no studies that focus explicitly on German dialect contact in Japan from the perspectives of speech accommodation, second dialect acquisition and koineization.

To address this gap, I conducted a pilot study on German dialect contact in the German School in Japan. Recordings of the reading aloud of a wordlist (50 words) and picture task (17 words), as well as interviews, were collected from 20 students with multiple different ethnic backgrounds (8 Germans, 3 Austrians, 9 Swiss, 11 Japanese) with an age range of 10-17. This paper focuses on the phonological variable (r), prevocalic (s), and (ch) realized in their interviews, adopting "speech accommodation theory" (Giles *et al.* 1987), "koineization processes" (Trudgill, 1986; Britain, 2012), "eight principles of dialect acquisition" (Chambers, 1992), "eight principles that relate the process of koineization to its outcomes" (Kerswill & Williams, 2000) as the theoretical frameworks. This paper takes into consideration where students come from, in what numbers, what dialects they brought with them, and the extent to which social networks affect their speech in a community. Non-parametric statistics and the

logistic regression analysis are applied to verify social factors and linguistic factors affecting the use of each variant quantitatively. This paper also investigates stylistic variation (Schilling, 2013), comparing the results with that of my previous study in which the students' phonological variables in the wordlist are analyzed.

The results provide some evidence of dialect mixing, speech accommodation and second dialect acquisition, although their use of the variants is based upon "Standard German" on the whole, in contrast to my previous study of (-ig) at word-final position realized in their reading aloud of the wordlist, which shows a strong influence of Upper German dialects upon students who do not necessarily originate from that region. The result showing a difference in second dialect acquisition between siblings among the students follows the principles postulated in Kerswill & Williams (2000) that the children who are older and well-integrated into a group of friends are more likely to use a different variant from their parents.

Non-parametric statistics show a significant difference in the students' residence history and the languages/dialects that they use for their daily school life with their friends, indicating there are differences in norm consciousness between students from Germany and students from the outside of the German-speaking countries.

The logistic regression analysis shows a significant difference of their pronunciation between the task-based conversation and the free conversation, indicating their stylistic variation. It also reveals a difference derived from a linguistic factor. Most students assume that they are using "Standard German" in school life, but it shows that they use the non-standard variant [ʃ] for (ch) when it is followed by consonant [ʃ], even in the task-based conversation which they seem to pay more attention to their own speech.

This paper concludes with an emphasis on the importance of taking into consideration the perception of each variant within the context of the German School.

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