Report on AG 13 "Register in linguistic theory: Modeling functional variation", organized by Anke Lüdeling and Aria Adli

Following the introduction to "Register and Variation" by the organizers Aria Adli and Anke Lüdeling, **Elisabeth Verhoeven** and **Nico Lehmann** gave a talk on „Recursive Embedding and register variation" that tackled the question of whether speakers modulate syntactic complexity (in terms of depth of embedding) in speech production depending on speech situations. Their research showed that register (in terms of public vs. non-public speech production) significantly influences the occurrence of structures of embedding in C, V, and N projections and that center embedding is especially sensitive to register. The speakers' choice regarding the depth of embedding was shown to be dependent on the factor public vs. non-public speech situations.

The next talk by **Jason Grafmiller** dealt with „Register specificity in English genitive alternation. Do variable clues reflect different grammars?" The presenter argued that this variation in written registers is a clear example of complex code switching and proceeded to discuss the relationship between grammatical representation and quantitative variability in constraints across styles. After tracking the phenomenon in different genres of written language, the results suggested that there was little intra-author variability in the constraint effects, while inter-author rates of genitive use varied considerably across registers.

„Register-specific interference in translation" by **Stella Neumann**, **Stefan Evert**, and **Gert de Sutter** focused on whether translators are aware of and react to register-specific translation requirements. They presented evidence of direction-specific shining-through based on comparable register features. This disproved the hypothesis that parallel activation of both language systems was responsible, given that the effect should in that case be the same in both directions and independent of register. Diverging prestige proved crucial and could be modulated by register.

The presenters **Kerstin Kunz**, **Erich Steiner**, **Ekaterina Lapshinova-Koltunski, José Martinez**, and **Katrin Menzel** discussed „Patterns of cohesion as dependent variables in a contrastive study of registers in English and German". They argued that cohesion has to be viewed as a linguistic level in modelling register and that lexical as well as grammatical properties can be viewed as interacting with principles of cohesion when comparing various text types and modeling functional variation. They demonstrated that inter-register variation is visible in all five main types of cohesion in terms of Halliday & Hasan (1976).

The second day of the conference started with a presentation by **Felix Bildhauer** and **Roland Schäfer** on „Automatic register annotation for linguistic research?" as a necessity in very large corpora. They explored the usefulness of automatically annotated register categories for modeling alternation phenomena utilizing a number of computational techniques and comparing the quality of the thusly obtained models and their implications.

Thomas Haider and **Alexis Palmer** evaluated "Functional stylistics for register and genre" as the function between situational context and linguistic analysis as well as functional stylistics. They modeled prototypical text classes by using document size, topic distribution and genre-specific dominant registers. The results might also form the basis for a machine learning system for register and text genre classification that rivals state-of-the-art software tailored to English.

"Prosodic aspects of style and register of live sports commentaries in radio and television" by **Jürgen Trouvain** and **Friederike Kern** focused on phonetic features in soccer reports. German radio soccer reports were (manually) divided into pre-dramatic (regular situations within a game), dramatic (the situation just before a goal up to the goal), and post-dramatic phases, which were then analyzed for

pitch contours and other phonetic properties. Trouvain and Kern showed that the speakers vary phonetic properties according to the situation.

In "Prosodic variation in French: self-repairs in conceptual distance and proximity" **Johanna Stahnke** discussed register variation as a precursor of language change through focusing on the intonational structure of repairs coding for function, register and prosodic structure. She pointed out that deaccentuation was influenced by conceptual variation while functional variation produced no comparable effect. To explain those findings, Stahnke pointed toward speaker-strategic routinization, relating them to proximity that may eventually lead to linguistic change.

"The talk on Register-dependency of deliberate metaphor" by **Markus Egg** analyzed the use of metaphors in sermons. Egg gave some background on metaphor theory and explained that sermons are good sources for research on deliberate metaphors because the rare phenomenon can be observed in didactic discourse (e.g. sermons, lectures) as it aims to change an audience's perspective on a topic through introducing an unfamiliar perspective on the target domain. The different instantiations of metaphor were viewed as variants and source domains of the metaphor were distinguished following the master metaphor list in terms of Lakoff (1991).

In "Assessing the role of intraspeaker variation for language change" **Richard Waltereit** investigated reinforced negation in the Old French *Song of Roland* and showed a significant correlation with the Labovian thematic "centres of interest" indicative of the vernacular (Labov 2013) thus confirming the initial prediction of these discourse contexts as indicative of an early spread of innovations in diachronic change. The presenter then debated implications for automation when dealing with historical linguistics.

The second day of talks was concluded by **Gohar Schnelle** and Karin Donhauser, who also spoke on historical linguistics with regard to "Register Variation in OHG. Evidence for Register-Based Variation in the Recordings of OHG". They explored options for finding evidence for register variation in the recordings of Old High German employing a variationist approach. They generalized functional backgrounds and were able to show that within these systematic distributions among the texts differing functional backgrounds do exist.

The third day started with the keynote delivered by **Benedikt Szmrecsanyi** on "The register-specificity of variation grammars", who showcased state-of-the-art techniques, milestone's and key figures of the field. Register in variationist linguistics in the view of the presenter is under-researched, but theoretically loaded as Labov's (2010:265) supposition that "internal constraints [...] are normally independent of social and stylistic factors" is challenged by empirical evidence to the contrary. Szmrecsanyi outlined a methodology for drawing on observational corpus evidence and supplementary task experience.

The talk was followed by **Ines Rehbein**'s presentation on "Register variation in argumentative texts": as these linguistic devices vary across different dimensions such as medium, discourse situation as well as purpose of communication. They offer valuable insight when considering dimensions of variation affecting the linguistic behavior of an individual speaker. Rehbein investigated highly to less edited political articles, interviews and talks by Noam Chomsky to demonstrate register specific strategies used to pursue a communicative purpose in argumentative texts.

"Register Variation across Social Media" by **Tatjana Scheffler** focused on frequency of variation in common non-standard phenomena of teen-language (e.g. across-the-board capitalization, abbreviations, novel sound and emotion words) across two types of social media-platforms. She demonstrated inter-speaker variation as well as intra-speaker variation across the platforms and concluded that each speaker adapted to the platform both consciously and unconsciously showing a

stable directionality of variation, which she found to be indicative of the development of register norms.

The last presentation in AG13 was delivered by **Roland Meyer** and **Luka Szucsich** on "Factor analysis of Russian register and linguistic variation" who used register distinctions, which were obtained via a bottom-up approach to be compared to the distribution of well-defined linguistic variables. Their research demonstrated that frequency of variation in terms of register does not depend on written vs. spoken language, but rather distinguishes "reporting actions" from "static argumentative" as discussions and conversations were shown to differ extensively. The presenters thereby offered insight into an opposite-scalar-position-phenomenon that traditional fixed functional styles had been unable to elucidate.

In sum, the workshop brought together researchers that are engaged in state of the art projects on register variation. We identified the following challenges for future research: (i) Variationist studies on register remain a highly under-researched field. (ii) The definition of variable and variants, and the subsequent application of adequate quantitative methods remains a challenge with regard to register. (iii) The exact relation between intra-individual and inter-individual (or inter-group) variation remains an open question.

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