

**Christian Zimmer** (FU Berlin, Germany): *The interdependence of internal and external factors inducing grammatical innovations in Namdeutsch*

The German-speaking minority in Namibia comprises approximately 20,000 speakers. Almost all of them are also fluent in English (the official language of Namibia) and Afrikaans (which has/had the function of a lingua franca in certain domains). Additionally, some members of the German-speaking community also use Bantu- and/or Khoisan languages on a regular basis (cf., e.g., Shah & Zappen-Thomson 2018, Wiese et al. 2017, Zimmer 2019). In this multilingual setting a variety of German has evolved that is characterised by several grammatical innovations (i.e. Namdeutsch).

For example, GO is used as future auxiliary (cf. (1)). Furthermore, HAVE is used as perfect auxiliary in contexts where it is not used in most other varieties of German (e.g. with atelic manner-of-motion-verbs, cf. (2)) and the um-zu infinitive can be used if no purpose is expressed, which is also not possible in most other German varieties including Standard German (cf. (3)).

(1) ich geh den au nie vergessn (NAM023W1)

I go it either never forget

'I'll never forget it either'

(2) die hat in der straße gelaufn (NAM066M1)

she has in the street walked

'She has walked in the street'

(3) dadurch is es schwierig um zu sagn [...] (NAM164W2)

thus is it hard to tell [...]

'Thus it's hard to tell [...]'

Different explanations have been proposed for such innovations in Namdeutsch. First of all, these features have been explained as a result of transfer from one language to another (cf. Shah 2007, Riehl 2014, Kellermeier-Rehbein 2015). Indeed, there are striking parallels between English and Afrikaans on the one hand and Namdeutsch on the other. For example, both in English and in Afrikaans there is only the HAVE perfect auxiliary and in both languages GO can be used as future auxiliary. Furthermore, the Afrikaans om te construction closely resembles the Namdeutsch um zu (cf., e.g., Shah 2007: 25). However, a significant proportion of the German speaking immigrants came from Northern Germany. These immigrants were speakers of Northern High German and/or Low German dialects (Zimmer forthc.). These varieties influenced the emerging Namdeutsch – and many features of Namdeutsch which have been explained as a result of contact with Afrikaans (which is very closely related with Low German) could also be Northern German features that have survived dialect levelling (e.g. the HAVE perfect auxiliary with atelic manner-of-motion-verbs). Finally, it has been put forward that many characteristics of Namdeutsch are based on language-internal tendencies that are expanded in multilingual speech communities (cf., e.g., Wiese et al. 2014, 2017, Wiese & Bracke forthc.).

In my presentation, these different types of explanations will be contrasted. I will show that it is hardly possible to disentangle internal and external factors in the explanation of innovations in Namdeutsch – and I will scrutinise whether this is a meaningful endeavour at all. My focus will be on interdependencies of language internal tendencies, transfer from the major contact languages, and

substrate influence of Low German (and other German varieties). For this purpose, I will analyse selected grammatical features of Namdeutsch (such as the ones outlined above). My analysis will be based on data taken from a systematically compiled corpus (cf. Zimmer et al. in press) and acceptability judgements of 211 speakers (cf. Zimmer in press). By doing so, I hope to contribute to a better understanding of the interaction of different factors that influence grammatical characteristics of varieties in multilingual settings.

## References

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