

The Interdependence of Internal and External Factors inducing Grammatical Innovations in Namdeutsch

New Perspectives on Emerging Grammars, Variation and Change
Virtual Conference | Berlin, February 2021

Structure of my presentation

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

- German in Namibia
- Data basis

GRAMMATICAL INNOVATIONS IN NAMDEUTSCH

- Examples & Explanations:
 - Direct transfer
 - Internal dynamics
- Minor > major use patterns

CONCLUSION

German in Namibia

- ca. 20.000 speakers
- informal language use: *Namdeutsch*
- immigration mainly in the context of colonisation (“German South-West-Africa” 1884-1915)
- speakers are also fluent in Afrikaans and English
- only some speakers have competences in Bantu- and/or Khoisan languages (such as Otjiherero, Khoekhoegowab, or Oshiwambo)



[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Namibia_on_the_globe_\(Africa_centered\).svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Namibia_on_the_globe_(Africa_centered).svg)

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(cf., e.g., Wiese et al. 2017, Kroll-Tjingaete 2018, Shah & Zappen-Thomson 2018, Zimmer 2019)

Our research project (first period)

‘Namdeutsch: The dynamics of German in the multilingual context of Namibia’

TEAM: Heike Wiese, Yannic Bracke,
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Horst Simon, Christian Zimmer, Britta Stuhl (FU Berlin)

COOPERATION PARTNERS: Marianne Zappen-Thomson, Anika Kroll-Tjingaete
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FUNDING: German Research Council (WI 2155/9-1; SI 750/4-1)



www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/namdeutsch

www.linguistik.hu-berlin.de/de/institut/professuren/multilinguale-kontexte/Projekte/Namdeutsch

Our research project (second period)

‘The dynamics of German in the multilingual context of Southern Africa’

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COOPERATION PARTNERS: Ana Deumert (University of Cape Town), Klaas-Hinrich Ehlers (FU Berlin), Institut für Deutsche Sprache (Mannheim), Heike Wiese (HU Berlin)

DURATION: 2020 - 2023

FUNDING: German Research Council (ZI 1793/1-2; SI 750/4-2)



www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/namdeutsch

The corpus *Deutsch in Namibia* (*DNam*, ‘German in Namibia’)

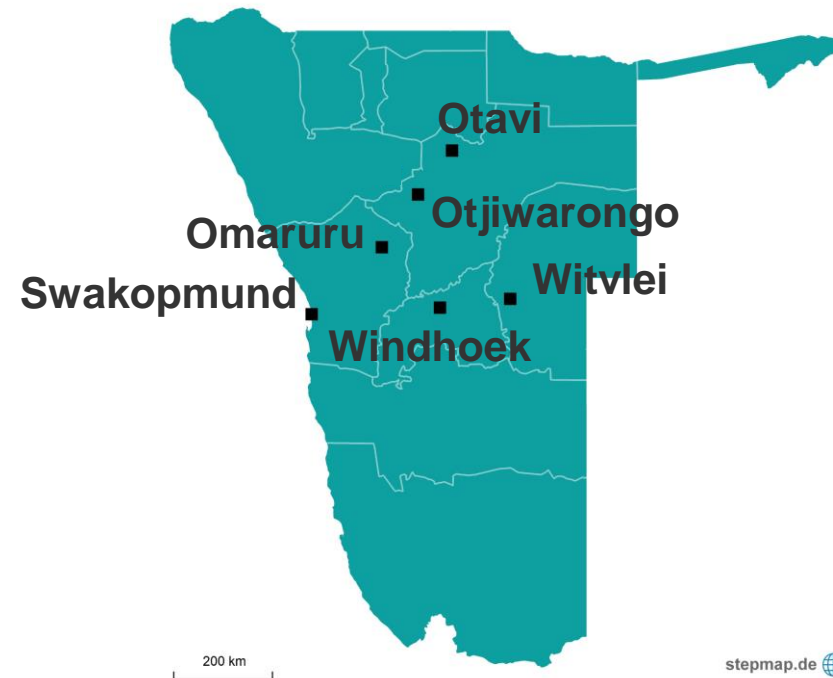
- openly accessible via the *Datenbank für Gesprochenes Deutsch* (*DGD*, ‘Database for Spoken German’)
- cf. Wiese et al. (2017); Zimmer et al. (2020)

Method	Tokens	Hours
conversations	115.004	9:15:00
„language situations“	51.509	4:41:30
interviews	57.879	4:42:15
sum	224.392	18:38:45

SPEAKERS

- 110
≈ 0.5 % of the German speaking minority)
58 male, 52 female
- Age: 14 – 75

+ transcriptions, pos tagging, normalization, meta data and additional audio files



Internal & external factors

GRAMMATICAL INNOVATIONS IN NAMDEUTSCH

Explanation I: Direct Transfer

Standard German:	<i>ich</i>	<i>probiere, Ø</i>	<i>etwas</i>	<i>zu</i>	<i>tun...</i>
Namdeutsch:	<i>ich</i>	<i>probiere, um</i>	<i>etwas</i>	<i>zu</i>	<i>tun...</i>
Afrikaans:	<i>ek</i>	<i>probeer om</i>	<i>iets</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>doen...</i>
	'I try to do something'				

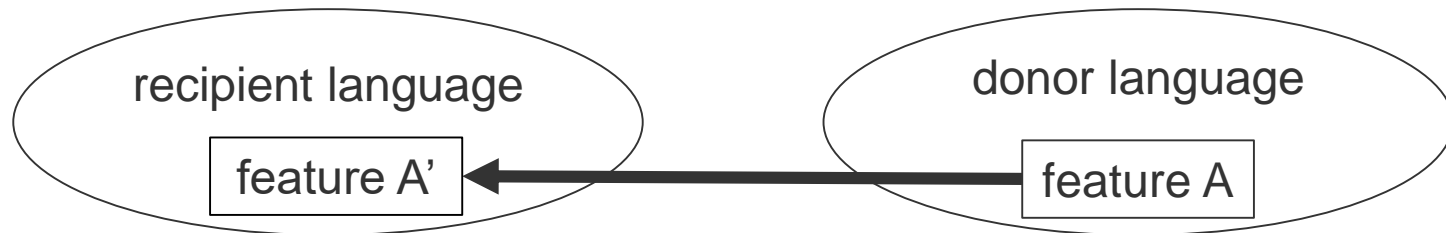
Explanation I: Direct Transfer

Standard German:	<i>ich</i>	<i>probiere, ∅</i>	<i>etwas</i>	<i>zu</i>	<i>tun...</i>
Namdeutsch:	<i>ich</i>	<i>probiere, um</i>	<i>etwas</i>	<i>zu</i>	<i>tun...</i>
Afrikaans:	<i>ek</i>	<i>probeer om</i>	<i>iets</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>doen...</i>
		'I try to do something'			

„Der Grund dafür ist, dass Afrikaans den Infinitiv immer mit *om te* („um zu“) bildet. Diese Form wird einfach ins Deutsche übertragen.“ (Riehl 2014: 108)

[„The reason for this [i.e. the high frequency of standard-divergent infinitives with *um*; CZ] is that Afrikaans always forms the infinitive with *om te* (‘in order to’). This form is simply transferred into German.’]

(see also Shah 2007, further examples in Riehl 2014, and Kellermeier-Rehbein 2015)



Explanation II: Internal Dynamics

Standard German:

Miet+Ø+wagen

Geschenk+Ø+papier

Namdeutsch:

Miet+s+wagen

Geschenk+s+papier

Afrikaans:

huur+Ø+motor

geskenk+Ø+papier

English:

‘rental car’

‘gift wrapping paper’

(Shah & Zimmer in prep.)

Explanation II: Internal Dynamics

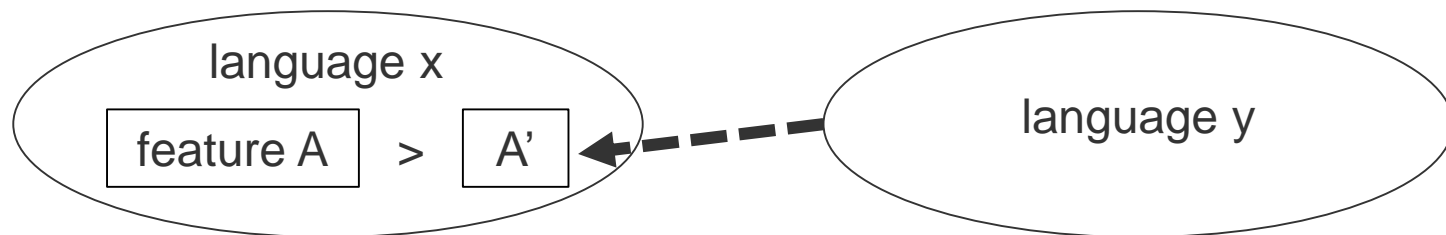
Standard German:	<i>Miet+∅+wagen</i>	<i>Geschenk+∅+papier</i>
Namdeutsch:	<i>Miet+s+wagen</i>	<i>Geschenk+s+papier</i>
Afrikaans:	<i>huur+∅+motor</i>	<i>geskenk+∅+papier</i>
English:	‘rental car’	‘gift wrapping paper’

(Shah & Zimmer in prep.)

basic idea:

- such grammatical innovations draw on language-internal patterns
- the development is supported by the dynamics in multilingual contexts
- the availability of a parallel pattern in a contact language might support the development (no necessary condition)

(see Wiese et al. 2014, 2017, Wiese & Bracke 2021, Zimmer 2020, subm.)



Direct transfer vs. internal dynamics

- innovation in a variety
- innovation resembles the correspondent feature in the contact language(s)



necessary conditions...

sufficient conditions...

for categorising the innovation as direct transfer

Further arguments

- similar developments in varieties of the same language in primarily monolingual environments?
- similar features in other varieties of the same language in other multilingual contexts?
- ...

Namdeutsch feature	Example	possible explanations	
		direct transfer	internal dynamics
infinitives with <i>um zu</i> (expanded)	<i>was das wert is um in der natur sein zu könn</i> 'what it is worth to be in nature'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
reduced case marking	<i>ich war auf ein church camp</i> 'I was on a.≠DAT church camp'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>go</i> as future auxiliary	<i>ich geh den au nie vergessn</i> 'I'll never forget this one either'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
s-construction	<i>ich wollt in mein bruders zimmer schlafen</i> 'I wanted to sleep in my brother's room '	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>have</i> as perfect auxiliary (expanded)	<i>die hat in der straße gelaufn</i> 'she has walked in the street'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	[?]

(see Wiese & Bracke 2021, Zimmer in press, subm.)

Features Namdeutsch does (probably) not have

- **sollen** ('shall') as a future auxiliary

cf. Afrikaans: *Ek sal dit doen as ek tyd het.*
 I shall this do.INF if I have time
 'I'll do it if I have time' (Donaldson 1993: 235)

- double negation
- cf. Afrikaans: *Ek ken nie daardie man nie.*
 I know NEG that man NEG
 'I don't know that man' (Donaldson 1993: 402)

- no clear signs of the reduction of grammatical gender
 - No grammatical gender in English and Afrikaans (apart from pronouns)

From minor to major use patterns

“contact-induced new use patterns do not normally emerge *ex nihilo*”

(Heine & Kuteva 2005: 40-45)

- “Grammatical replication has the effect that the replica language (R) acquires some **new structure (Rx) on the model of another language.**”
- “the new structure Rx is in most cases not entirely new; rather, it is **built on some structure (Ry) that already existed** in the replica language”
- “the process $R_y > R_x$ can be described as leading from **minor to major use pattern**”

→ **context extension** (Heine & Kuteva 2005: 50-58)

Infinitives in Standard German and in Afrikaans

INFINITIVES WITH *um zu* / *om te*

AFRIKAANS

STANDARD GERMAN

complement of the verb [...]

*ik probeer **om** iets **te** doen...*

ich probeer, **um etwas **zu** tun...*

'I try to do something'

adverbial (of purpose)

*Hy het gekom **om** iets **te** leer.*

*Er ist gekommen, **um** etwas **zu** lernen.*

'He has come (in order) to learn something'

cf., e.g., Donaldson (1993: 272–280), Raidt (1983: 177–179) on Afrikaans

Minor to major use patterns: further examples

Feature	restricted to...	Example
infinitives with <i>um zu</i>	SG adverbials of purpose	<i>Sie übte, um besser zu werden.</i> ‘She practiced (in order) to get better.’
	ND -	<i>was das wert is um in der natur sein zu könn</i> ‘what it is worth to be in nature’
<i>have</i> as perfect auxiliary	SG certain verb classes (e.g. non-motional processes)	<i>Ich habe lange gewartet.</i> ‘I have waited a long time.’
	ND - (but preference for motion verbs)	<i>die hat in der straße gelaufn</i> ‘she has walked in the street’

(see Wiese & Bracke 2021, Zimmer in press, subm.)

Minor to major use patterns: further examples

Feature	restricted to...	Example
s-construction	SG proper names	<i>Das ist Annas Bruder.</i> 'That's Anna's brother.'
	ND animate nouns (+poss art.)	<i>ich wollt in mein bruders zimmer schlafen</i> 'I wanted to sleep in my brother's room '
go as (semi-)auxiliary	SG certain process verbs (Demske 2020)	<i>Ich gehe schlafen.</i> 'I go to sleep'
	ND -	<i>ich geh den au nie vergessn</i> 'I'll never forget this one either'

(see Zimmer in press, subm.)

Minor to major use patterns: further examples

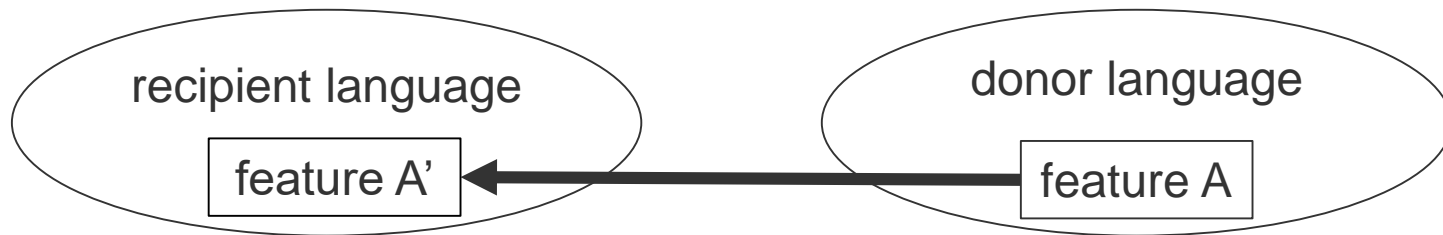
Feature		restricted to...	Example
<i>was</i> ('what') as a relative pronoun	SG	neuter pronouns, ...	<i>Sie sah nur das, was sie sehen wollte.</i> 'She saw only what she wanted to see.'
	ND	-	<i>die komische musik was die hier runter bring</i> 'the weird music they bring down here'
comple- mentiser omission + V2	SG	matrix sentences without negation	<i>Ich denke, das ist interessant.</i> 'I think that's interesting.'
	ND	-	<i>ich denk nich wir redn so</i> 'I don't think we talk like this'

(see Zimmer subm., Höder & Zimmer in prep.)

Conclusion

DIRECT TRANSFER?

“This form is simply transferred into German”



Characteristics of the „recipient language“ are also of great importance:

- “new use patterns do not normally emerge *ex nihilo*” (Heine & Kuteva 2005: 45)
- internal dynamics + minor use patterns
- apparently: preference for innovations that are supported by several factors

Thank you!

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Explanation III: Dialect Contact

Standard German: *es regnet*

Namdeutsch: *das regnet*

Northern German: *das regnet* [Low German: *dat regent*]

Afrikaans: *dit reent*

English: 'it rains'

Namdeutsch, Northern German, Afrikaans: dummy pronoun < demonstrative

Standard German, English: dummy pronoun = pers. pronoun

background:

- German-speaking colonists emigrated from different dialect areas in Europe
- a substantial proportion of immigrants came from Northern German areas

(Zimmer in press, forthc.)

