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Spoken and Written Discourse in Historical Sources

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Keynotes

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Book of Abstracts HiSoN 2026

Monday, 28 September

Plenary 1 (E.001) 09:30–10:30

Sybille Große – Research on letters in Romance languages: Navigating between 'immediacy', 'orality' and 'discourse traditions'

Rutten and Vosters (2026, IX) characterize historical sociolinguistics as a "vibrant field." This presentation aims to demonstrate that the study of handwritten letters and their writers makes a substantial contribution to this research agenda. For several centuries, letters represented the predominant mode of written communication. A notable achievement of historical sociolinguistics, exemplified by works such as Fairman (2000), Elspaß (2005, 2015) and Rutten & van der Wal (2014), is the systematic attention to the heterogeneity and variability of extant correspondence and its writers. This approach moves the discipline beyond an exclusive focus on documents produced by writers with high literacy and high writing experience. Furthermore, this contribution, in a broad sense, seeks to assess the use of epistolary corpora as a data source in historical sociolinguistics of Romance languages, while simultaneously exploring a set of selected research questions.

To begin, we will revisit the issue of distinguishing between privacy and immediacy in epistolary discourse. Conventional descriptions of personal letters emphasize the intimate relationship between correspondents (e.g., their familiarity, the private setting of their exchange), the specific topics addressed (family, daily life, health, emotions, etc.) and the communicative intentions involved. These factors are considered essential criteria for classifying a document as a private letter. However, when specific letter corpora are analysed, this dichotomy often proves to be less useful than initially assumed. The separation between personal literacy and functional literacy frequently fails to capture the complexity of the respective material. As a result, we encounter not only a greater heterogeneity among the letter writers—who may possess multiple social identities (Auer 2015)—but also a need to reconceptualise the typologies or classifications of the letters themselves. Rather than imposing rigid, discrete categories, it is more appropriate to regard the corpus as comprising continua that reflect hybrid and overlapping forms of written practice (cf. also Bergeron- Maguire/Greub 2020). Private letters are also hybrid in another sense: they incorporate formulaic language (and often formal written features) that is discourse-traditional and thus socioculturally conditioned, while simultaneously employing linguistic features associated with language of immediacy.

Since the well-known definition of the letter as a "conversation among the absent," scholars have repeatedly revisited the notion of orality in epistolary texts. Some affirm it vigorously (in terms of written orality and dialogical communication), while others reject it—particularly when orality is narrowly construed as face-to-face interaction. The debate on the 'oralization' of letters typically draws on features such as vernacular style, speech-like patterns, exclamatory particles and discourse markers; elements that evoke spoken or conceptually oral communication. However, the information- structural dimension—i.e., the way syntactic, lexical and semantic choices encode discourse organization—has received comparatively little attention. This leads to an unresolved question: to what extent do structures traditionally associated with spoken discourse, such as cleft constructions, left- or right-dislocation, and specific topic markers, serve as indicators of written orality in private letters as well as in letters that are less private?

To illustrate these points, examples will be drawn from French and Spanish letters found in several distinct corpora. These primary sources include soldiers' correspondence (First World War) from the Franco-German border region and the Prize Papers collection located at the National Archives in London. The latter comprises a heterogeneous assortment of letters, such as, French-language correspondence sent from New York to France in 1793.

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Session: Immediacy & Distance (1.006+1.007) 11:00–13:00

Katharina Gunkler-Frank – Variation in the use of syntactic connector classes on the immediacy-distance continuum

Koch & Oesterreicher (1985: 22, 27) argue that various linguistic features are universal characteristics of the language of immediacy or the language of distance, among them parataxis as typical of immediacy and hypotaxis as typical of distance. Consequently, Ágel (2010) and Ágel & Diegelmann (2010) place connectors from different syntactic classes at different positions on the conceptual continuum. The aim of this study is to examine whether these theoretical assumptions are reflected in sociolinguistic variation in historical language use. I focus on audience design (cf. Bell 1984), i.e. how writers adapt their language use to different addressees, and how this factor interacts with writing experience (cf. Elspaß 2005: 46).

For this study, I analyse 202 letters written by 12 patients of a psychiatric hospital in Southern Germany in the 19th and early 20th centuries, taken from the Corpus of Patient Documents. With this corpus, it is possible to investigate how the same writers use connectors when addressing different types of addressees, while other factors remain relatively stable. Based on a manual annotation of all connectors as well as their syntactic and semantic classes, I compare the use of different syntactic classes of connectors in private and official letters as well as in texts written by experienced and inexperienced writers, as these conditions represent different positions on the continuum between immediacy and distance.

Surprisingly, the frequencies of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions as well as adverbial connectors are very similar in letters written by experienced and inexperienced writers, and

likewise in private and official letters. When the addressee-based variation is analysed separately for the two writer groups, the differences become somewhat more pronounced and indicate different tendencies: In line with the theoretical model, the experienced writers use more coordinating conjunctions and adverbial connectors in private letters and more subordinating conjunctions in official letters. In contrast, the inexperienced writers use coordinating conjunctions more frequently in official letters, while adverbial connectors and subordinating conjunctions occur more often in private letters. This diverging pattern may be related to different processes of language change in the two letters types. These findings show that patterns of variation in historical language use can be more complex than expected based on general models.

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Michael Prinz & Lauri Marjamäki – Historical German lectures between immediacy and distance

A lecture is essentially "an institutionalized extended holding of the floor in which one speaker imparts his views on a subject" (Goffman 1981: 165), often in a way that is aimed at providing a systematic overview of a certain topic. However, lectures are more than just words spoken in a lecture theatre. A comprehensive multimodal representation of the genre would have to cover various oral and written practices of announcing and delivering lectures, the setting of the event in the interactional space of the lecture theatre, the use of blackboards, pictures, diagrams and objects as communicative resources, the body language of the persons involved, and student note-taking.

This complex academic procedure was institutionalized as a fixed teaching format upon the founding of universities from the High Middle Ages onwards. However, historical lecturing styles varied considerably: reports from audiences indicate that some professors delivered their lectures without any written prompts, while others read them word for word from a prepared text. Others again worked with pieces of paper containing key words or with annotated textbooks, using these as a basis for the lecture which would then be delivered more or less freely, often with considerable use of code-switching (Prinz 2021a/b). Texts of lectures are, accordingly, handed down in different forms which only give a partial impression of what went on in the lecture theatre: freely improvised sections are missing from the professors' manuscripts. They may have found their way into handwritten student lecture notes, the most common form in which lectures have been transmitted, though these notes often contain a large number of errors on account of the cognitive strain experienced by the note taker (Blair 2004; Bohr 2019).

Lecture notes have rarely been discussed from a sociolinguistic perspective to date, as their characteristics in terms of spoken and written discourse are difficult to assess. Such texts generally contain no more than 20 % of the likely number of words of a lecture and cannot simply be taken as an authentic record of a professor's spoken words. Our paper introduces these rare and little-known texts, situating them in the conceptual continuum between immediacy and distance (Ágel & Hennig 2006, Schiegg 2022).

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Eleonora Cattafi & Dalia Pratali Maffei – Tracing sociolinguistic shifts in Koine Greek sources: dialects, prestige, and the relative marker

This paper investigates, from a sociolinguistic perspective, the shift in the relative marker in Koine Greek through the alternation between the relative pronoun hos and the relative article ho. While this alternation is well documented, its sociolinguistic conditioning has not yet been systematically examined (Cattafi 2023). In this paper, we analyse this variation across different types of sources and argue that the distribution of variants is constrained by register and reflects changing prestige relations between dialect features.

In the Archaic and Classical periods (8th – 4th c. BC), the relative article ho occurs mostly in literary, and especially poetic, texts, and is closely associated to the Ionic dialect, while remaining rare in other dialects or contexts (Threatte 1996, 331-32; Probert 2015, 315- 326; Gignac 1981 II, 179-82). In Koine Greek (3rd c. BC – 4th c. AD) its use in literature declines sharply, being absent from sources such as the New Testament, suggesting a shift in its sociolinguistic status and prestige (Horrocks 2010: 113). To account for this change, we analyse a corpus of Greek texts from Egypt spanning the 3rd c. BC to the 4th c. AD and covering a range of registers.

Adopting the framework of 'language of immediacy' and 'language of distance' (Koch & Oesterreicher 1985), we treat private correspondence on papyrus (ca. 800 texts belonging to archives, with ca. 350 occurrences of the relative) and inscribed local poetry (ca. 250 texts, with ca. 70 occurrences of the relative) as proxies for the two ends of this continuum. The analysis shows that the relative article ho occurs mainly in texts with closer proximity to speech, such as private letters, while it is systematically avoided in carefully planned texts such as literary prose and most inscribed poetry, with limited exceptions in epigrams displaying Ionic features. Hence, we argue that register functions as strong predictor for variant choice, and the relative article ho underwent reallocation: while increasingly avoided in most contexts as a low-prestige feature, its usage in poetry was fossilised as stylistic marker of Ionic dialect.

By shedding new light into the sociolinguistic developments of the relative article, this paper shows how the prestige of a linguistic feature can shift in diachrony, and how the investigation of written sources representing both language of immediacy and distance allows for the reconstruction of this process.

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Nicola McLelland – Written and conceptually spoken discourse in the transmission of practical knowledge to women around 1800: the case of Emilie Berrin's guide to plaiting hair

This paper explores the language and discourse of a text intended to convey practical knowledge: an early nineteenth-century instruction manual for women, a significant but hitherto under-studied text-type in historical sociolinguistics. Its case study is an 1818 instruction manual for plaiting hair, the *Gründliche Anweisung für Frauen, auf alle mögliche Art Haargeflechte nach der jetzigen Mode zu fertigen*.

The text is intriguing from several perspectives:

- First, it exemplifies how practical, procedural knowledge was made explicit and communicated through language in instruction manuals, a genre that had expanded considerably and flourished in the course of the eighteenth century, finding an audience in an expanding bourgeoisie keen to educate itself, and thus making technical knowledge explicit, testable and so ripe for improvement (cf. Dehrmann 2026 in press).
- Second, the text is aimed explicitly at women, and is also authored by a woman, Emilie Berrin (or at least notionally by her – a number of works were published in Leipzig under that name in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century). It therefore allows us to explore to what extent the text exhibits content (e.g. the focus on fashion) and linguistic features of what one might identify as "women's text-types" or "women's language" - and by what criteria one might answer that question) (see e.g. McLelland 2007, 2020).
- Third, as well as using the kind of instructional language one might expect in an instruction manual, the text also draws on an intriguing mix of genre conventions, including those of novelistic writing. That includes fictional dialogue, in which scenarios for the plaiting of hair are presented, from which both practical and moral lessons are drawn; and macrostructural features, e.g. breaking down of the knowledge to be conveyed into chapters imagined as taking place over ten evenings.

Berrin's *Gründliche Anweisung für Frauen* thus offers an opportunity to explore, in an instruction manual for women, questions of orality vs writtenness; language of intimacy and of distance; the

relationship between text and illustration (multimodality). This paper examines both the textual features and the language at the macro and micro-level, including under the three themes outlined above.

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Session: Ego-documents & Correspondence (1.008+1.009) 11:00–13:00

Giulia Rovelli – Ego-documents and the dialect roots of Canadian English

As contacts with the indigenous populations in settlement colonies were rather limited and generally characterized by the logic of assimilation and elimination (Denis and D'Arcy 2019), dialect contact and its sociolinguistics have been pinpointed as key factors in the development of new varieties of English in such contexts (Schreier 2019), present-day Canada included. Indeed, the origins of Canadian English have been traced to the linguistic input of two main waves of settlers: the Loyalists (and late-Loyalists), who relocated from the former American colonies in the wake of the American Revolutionary War between 1776 and 1812, and government-sponsored immigrants from Ireland, Northern England and Scotland between 1812 and 1865 (Dollinger 2019). Following a mixed-method approach that combines corpus linguistics (Biber & Reppen 2015) and historical sociolinguistics (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2012), the paper attempts to reconstruct the linguistic makeup of early Canadian English, paying particular attention to the presence and distribution of dialectal features. To do so, it interrogates the *Corpus of Canadian English Letters and Diaries* (*CCanDL*, Rovelli 2023), a second-generation corpus of early Canadian ego-documents written in English which is being developed at the University of Bergamo (Italy) in collaboration with the *Rural Diary Archive* (https://ruraldiaries.uoguelph.ca/), the *McLaughlin Library* of the University of Guelph and the *Marilyn & Charles Baillie Special Collections Centre* of the Toronto Public Library. Since such prototypical texts of immediacy as the ones included in the corpus are generally characterized by oral features and less monitored linguistic choices, which may thus provide a close approximation of vernacular language use (Elspaß 2012), the investigation is expected to offer an interesting insight into not only the linguistic features of early Canadian English, but also into the contributions of its input varieties. The analysis may thus allow a clearer assessment of the role of dialect contact and mixing in the early development of one of the more widespread, if still relatively under-researched, varieties of English.

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Aurelija Tamošiūnaitė – Tracing writing experience in Cyrillic-Lithuanian egodocuments: conventionalization of scripting practices 'from below'

Egodocuments such as letters, diaries, and notes exhibit different degrees of orality and textuality determined by various factors, including supralocalization, standardization, genre, register, formality, and – crucially for investigating writing practices 'from below' – writing experience (Amador Moreno 2019; Gardner 2023; Rutten & van der Wal 2014). Nevertheless, obtaining direct evidence on access to education and gained writing experience is often problematic for lower-class writers, where biographical data is typically absent and the writing evidence fragmentary. Hence, textual features such as formulaic expressions, text segmentation, spelling or punctuation patterns often serve as proxies in assessing a writer's familiarity with penmanship (Auer 2015; Elspaß 2012; Rutten & van der Wal 2014).

In this presentation I approach the issue of writing experience through the lenses of conventionalization, encompassing processes of usualization and diffusion (Schmid 2020). Drawing on a small corpus of Cyrillic-Lithuanian egodocuments (29 texts, ~ 6221 word tokens, 22 hands), I seek to map how ordinary writers establish, routinize, and sustain their scripting practices in the absence of larger community-wide norms at the end of the long nineteenth century. The main focus of this presentation lies on tracing the decision-making processes as observed in Cyrillic-Lithuanian data across several scripting dimensions: a) graphic repertoire choices; b) form-function mappings (spelling variants), c) graphotactic conditioning (graphic cotext and context), and d) processual traces (self-corrections, insertions, omissions). Specifically, I address the following questions: 1) to what extent do individual Lithuanian writers develop stable scripting conventions through usualization and routinization; 2) which dimensions of scripting show evidence of emerging regularization patterns, and which remain more variable across writers and texts; and finally, 3) what do processual traces, such as corrections, omissions, insertions, reveal about writers' metalinguistic awareness and their level of writing experience. I will argue that refocusing attention to the 'how', i.e., usualization and routinization (Schmid 2020) of scripting practices in the context of emerging literacies, as Cyrillic-Lithuanian data suggests, has the potential to enrich the methodological toolkit for operationalizing and assessing writing experience in historical sociolinguistic research.

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Stephan Bowles – What are LOLIs made of? Breaking down the function and features of Lone Other-Language Items in Italian Merchant texts, c.1389-1400.

This paper focuses on Lone Other-Language Items (LOLI) "which are by far the predominant manifestation of bilingual mixing in every language pair empirically studied" (Poplack and Dion 2012: 280-281). LOLIs are single use lexemes that are integrated from a donor language into a recipient language. In this research LOLIs are identified from a historical corpus and analysed to discern the level of integration. The project centres on late medieval English and Italian contact, looking at English words borrowed into Tuscan writing. The aim of the paper is to understand multilingual influence on native Italian speakers living in England. The chosen corpus consists of published materials from the trade network of the fourteenth-century "merchant of Prato" Francesco di Marco Datini. The case study consists of 122 items of correspondence written by the Mannini company in London (c.1389-1400). Firstly, LOLIs are identified in the corpus by consulting a reference list of loanwords from previous investigations of English-Italian language contact (Cella 2007, 2010; Tiddeman 2017, 2018). Secondly, LOLIs are analysed to discern the level of assimilation. Using Haugen's (1950) descriptive and comparative framework, each LOLI's form and meaning are described to compare the differences between the donor and recipient languages. Historical dictionaries such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Tesoro Della Lingua Italiana delle Origini* are consulted to discern etymology and timeline of use. The chosen approach allows loanwords to be examined not only as isolated lexical items but as socially meaningful features whose morphological behaviour offers insight into the pathways of integration.

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Elisabetta Cecconi – Voices in Print: Orality and Argumentation in Eighteenth-Century British Letters to the Editor

This paper presents a corpus-assisted discourse analysis of eighteenth-century British letters to the editor addressing male–female relationships, a topic that frequently ignited public debate in early modern newspapers. Letters to the editor occupy a particularly productive position on the continuum between spoken and written discourse: while they are printed and editorially curated texts, they often strive to simulate conversational immediacy in order to persuade, entertain, and instruct a heterogeneous readership (Cavanagh & Steel 2019). As such, they offer a valuable testing ground for exploring the interplay between language of immediacy and language of distance (Koch & Oesterreicher 2012) within a highly mediated public genre.

The study draws on a specialised corpus of letters to the editor published in major British newspapers across the eighteenth century. Focusing on discussions of courtship, marriage, morality, and gender roles, the paper investigates how features associated with orality are retained, stylised, and functionally exploited in these printed texts. Two interrelated discourse levels are considered. At the monologic level, the correspondent's discourse is examined in terms of punctuation practices—such as exclamation marks, question marks, brackets, and parenthetical expressions—using concordance lines (Partington 2004). These features are interpreted as visual and pragmatic cues that simulate prosody, stance, and affect, thereby enhancing reader engagement (Biber 1988).

At the dialogic level, the paper explores how correspondents re-enact past interactions and other voices through reported speech (Collins 2001). Particular attention is paid to the use of interjections, exclamations, abbreviations, and idiomatic expressions, which contribute to the representation of speech-like discourse within an otherwise carefully controlled written format (Culpeper & Kytö 2010). These dialogic insertions frequently serve argumentative and polemical purposes, allowing writers to dramatise gendered conflicts and to position themselves authoritatively within ongoing public debates.

By combining corpus methodology with qualitative discourse analysis, the paper argues that the persistence of oral features in letters to the editor is not accidental residue but a strategic resource. The selective maintenance of orality within an edited, printed genre illuminates broader processes of standardisation, public sociability, and "language history from below," while highlighting how newspapers actively shaped eighteenth-century debates on gender relations through a calibrated balance of immediacy and distance.

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Corpora & Methods (1) (1.004) 11:00–13:00

Emma Lambrecht – Linguistic Variation and Change in Fin-de-Siècle Brussels: The Flemish Immigrant Letter Corpus and Early Findings

Due to continued waves of immigration, Brussels experienced substantial demographic and social transformation during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many newcomers from France, Wallonia, and especially Flanders moved to Brussels and its surrounding municipalities for work, contributing to the urban agglomeration now known as the Brussels Capital Region (De Metsenaere & Witte 1990, Gunst 2008). As French gradually replaced Dutch as the city's dominant language, Flemish immigrants were not only exposed to varieties of Dutch from other towns and provinces, but also to the pressure of French as an exogenous prestige language. This created an environment of intense dialect and language contact – two phenomena which are often treated separately in (historical) sociolinguistics (cf. Wilson 2019, Hendriks 2024).

This paper introduces the newly compiled *Flemish Immigrant Letter Corpus*, a collection of letters written by Flemish immigrants in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Brussels (c. 1865–1914) and explores its potential for studying linguistic variation and change in the city. We outline the composition of the corpus, the social and regional profiles of its writers, and the nature of the letters. We also present early findings from a pilot study of inter-individual variation in a subset of letters, focusing on how linguistic behaviour relates to macro-level social categories such as region of origin, age and gender. Using a quantitative variationist approach, we analyse a set of both dialect contact and language contact features. By examining these patterns, we aim to shed light on how the interplay of these two contact types shaped the linguistic practices of Brussels' Flemish immigrant community around the turn of the century.

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Hanna Fischer – From Text to Practice: Reassessing a Nineteenth-Century's Dialect Collection for Historical Sociolinguistics

A central challenge in historical sociolinguistics is the reconstruction of historical language practices from available written sources. This is particularly difficult for dialectal language usage, as historical writing is closely tied to processes of levelling and standardisation. In this context, collections of German dialect texts from the early and mid-nineteenth century are especially valuable. Initially used as source material for philologically oriented German dialectology, these collections later fell into oblivion with the rise of dialect geography and Neogrammarian methods. To this day, they remain largely unexplored, despite promising initial studies (cf. Elmentaler 2015; Langhanke 2011, 2011b; Schäfer 2024).

The most comprehensive collection of this period is that of Firmenich (1843–1867), which contains dialect texts from across the Germanic-speaking area. Alongside traditional genres such as songs, sayings, and folktales, it includes texts composed in dialect or translated into dialect (e.g. reports, narratives, dialogues, parables). All texts are regionally anchored and extensively commented on by the editor, who selected them to represent local dialects. The collection also contains numerous interactional texts—dialogues, drama texts, and "antiphonal songs"—which can be classified as "speech-purposed" (cf. Culpeper & Kytö 2010). Their suitability for reconstructing historical dialectal language practice, however, remains unclear. Do they provide sufficient contextual information for sociolinguistic analysis? Can they inform research on historical dialect pragmatics, enregisterment, metalinguistic reflection, and editorial discourse?

This paper addresses these questions through two case studies based on the Firmenich collection. First, an analysis of dialectal pronominal address examines whether the texts allow insights into the pragmatic regulation of pronoun use. For nineteenth-century dialects, an older developmental stage than that of the written standard can be assumed, with social hierarchy outweighing personal relationships (cf. Besch 2003; Simon 2003; Schiegg & Elspaß 2025). Second, the paper investigates how interactions between dialect and standard speakers are staged in dialogues, focusing on how speakers evaluate different varieties and how this relates to contemporary metalinguistic discourses (cf. Ruoss 2019).

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Annika Viht – Linguistic variation in Estonian Moravian manuscripts as a tool for authorship attribution

From the 1730s to the 1850s, the Moravian Brethren movement exerted a profound influence in Estonia. By the 1850s, approximately 7% of the Estonian population identified as the Brethren (Plaat 2001: 164). The movement contributed significantly to the expansion of native literacy: alongside missionaries from Germany, Estonians themselves were involved in scribal activities such as writing reports, letters, and biographies; translating and editing devotional books and hymns; and copying speeches and sermons, similarly to neighboring Latvia (Daija & Paškevica 2022).

The language of these manuscripts varies considerably and often displays features not found in contemporary printed texts. For example, at the orthographic level, some manuscripts lack punctuation altogether, while others exhibit idiosyncratic or inconsistent punctuation practices. Certain texts are written entirely in lowercase, whereas others make extensive use of capitalization, including on verbs and conjunctions. Non-standard practices of word segmentation and compounding occur, and spelling conventions may fluctuate even within a single manuscript.

This linguistic variation can be used as a source of information for authorship attribution and for the analysis of scribal agency. In contrast to contemporary printed books, which were subject to editorial control and normative pressures, handwritten manuscripts often preserve features reflecting individual writers' native dialects, levels of literacy, and positions within social and religious networks. It can be hypothesized that different linguistic levels point to different layers of authorship: while morphological and lexical features may primarily reflect the language use of the original author, orthographic and phonologically motivated features may more strongly reflect the linguistic background of the copyist.

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Verónica Domínguez & Benjamin Molineaux – Mapping language ecologies and histories in the toponymic record of Fuegopatagonia

With the exception of the endangered languages Mapudungun [ARN] and Kawésqar [ALC], most of the languages of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego – wich include Selk'nam [ONA], Aonekko 'a'ien [TEH], Teushen [teus1236], Günün a Yajüch [PUE], Yaghan [YAG], Haush [haus1240] and Chono [chon1248] – are considered dormant today (Crevels 2012). Nevertheless, traditional and official place names throughout this vast region attest to the rich linguistic ecologies (cf. Ludwig, Mühlhäusler & Pagel, 2019) that must have existed here prior to European colonialism. Access to this information, furthermore, holds important heritage and territorial implications for the indigenous communities of the region today, allowing them a window to cultural associations, histories of migration and displacement, and a chance to reclaim traditional naming practices in their ongoing processes of language revitalisation. Such information, however, is not easily accessed and is often riddled with difficulties of interpretation, especially in the face of centuries of community marginalisation, displacement and language loss.

The current paper reports on an ongoing project to compile and map a repository of such place names, as attested in official reports, maps, vocabularies, dictionaries, toponymic studies, travel diaries and other historical sources. The result is the WAX corpus website, which allows academic and non-academic users to identify and spatially locate toponyms, providing insights into their meaning in the ancestral languages. The recovery and systematisation of toponymy attested in historical sources has enabled us to georeference place names and to visualise them spatially. This, in turn, has made it possible to identify relationships that are not readily apparent in the sources themselves, such as cases in which a single site bears multiple names in different languages, or how landscape features are encoded in these names. Crucially, the corpus includes careful analysis of the source materials for each place name, which reflect the double edged sword that was the process of documentation of these languages, going hand-in-hand with cultural and territorial displacement of their speakers.

Several challenges encountered during the construction of the corpus will be discussed, including the temporal dimension, the assessment of a toponym's current validity, recent processes of imposed naming, the phonetic variation found in historical sources, and the subsequent normalization of the data. The documentary reconstruction of the region's onomastics goes beyond simple compilation: it enables an interpretation of the historicity and dynamism of the territories and the identities linked to them, fostering new interdisciplinary approaches. Given the paucity of historical materials for the area, these sources also play a key role in our understanding of the past of the languages, including endogenous changes, contact, genetic affiliation and aerial dispersion.

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Grammars vs. Usage (1.005) 11:00–13:00

Zuzanna Witt & Radosław Dylewski – Questioning Proximity to Speech: Recalled and Imagined Texts in Schneider's Continuum

A critical understanding of historical sources is crucial for the study of vernacular language and dialect. Because not all sources are equally informative, Schneider's (2002, 2013) categorization of text types according to their proximity to speech has become a useful heuristic for assessing their suitability for dialect research, as well as their advantages and limitations.

Among these text types are *recalled texts* (also termed *recall protocols*) and *imagined texts*. Recalled texts are defined as "renderings of specific speech events not taken down on the spot but at some later time from memory, possibly supported by notes" (Schneider 2013: 63). Typical examples include slave narratives and travel accounts. Their presumed value lies in their reference to real speech events, while their main limitation is the potential distortion introduced by memory. Imagined texts, by contrast, are texts produced by semi-literate writers that were never actually uttered; private letters and diaries constitute their primary examples.

In Schneider's (2013) continuum, recalled texts are understood to represent a closer proximity between the original speech event and its written record than imagined texts and are therefore considered more valuable for the study of the vernacular. This paper challenges that assumption

by asking whether imagined writing may, in fact, offer more reliable evidence of vernacular features than recalled sources.

The analysis draws on three 19th-century Alabama sources identified by Montgomery (2018) as particularly valuable for dialect research in a region rich in largely unexplored manuscript material. The recalled source examined is *Letters from Alabama* by Anne Newport Royall (1830–31). Imagined texts are drawn from private correspondence included in *Private Voices* and the *Southern Plantation Overseer Corpus* (Schneider and Montgomery 2001). Selected phonological, morphosyntactic, and lexical features are analyzed and compared across these datasets.

The presentation highlights the strengths and limitations of each source type and argues against the uncritical privileging of recalled texts in linguistic investigation; depending on the linguistic feature under examination, imagined texts may prove equally valuable, or even methodologically preferable. This conclusion is further supported by the fact that imagined texts are typically produced contemporaneously with the mental formulation of the message, without the temporal distance characteristic of recalled texts. Consequently, they are less susceptible to memory-related distortion or retrospective bias and may offer more direct access to everyday language practices.

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Chiara Monaco – Between spoken usage and written description: Missionary Grammars as sources for Early Modern Greek variation

The Early Modern period marked a crucial turning point in the history of European vernaculars with the emergence of grammars of vernacular languages. In the Greek-speaking world, however, the dominance of the archaizing variety delayed the systematic production of vernacular grammars until the late eighteenth century. As a result, the earliest published and circulating descriptions of Early Modern Greek were produced not by Greek scholars but mainly by non-Greek Catholic missionaries active in the Eastern Mediterranean. These grammars, written in multiple languages as pedagogical tools for missionaries in colonial contexts, aimed to enable communication with Greek Orthodox populations and to facilitate the spread of Catholic doctrine. This paper explores the potential of these missionary grammars as sources for the study of the relationship between spoken and written discourse in Early Modern Greek and as evidence for historical sociolinguistic variation. Trained primarily in Ancient Greek, the missionaries were compelled to acquire the spoken vernacular through direct interaction with local communities. Their grammars, therefore, represent written artefacts that mediate between learned linguistic traditions and living spoken practices. The authors frequently comment on pronunciation, usage, register, and regional variation, while at the same time negotiating their own competence as non-native speakers and

the distance between Ancient and contemporary Greek. These texts contain rich sociolinguistic material: explicit statements on register distribution ("use X in formal contexts"), evaluations of socially stratified variants ("the common people say X, whereas clerics prefer Y"), regional attributions ("this form is characteristic of Chios"), and metalinguistic comparisons with Ancient Greek ("use the subjunctive instead of the Ancient Greek infinitive"). Moreover, the prefaces offer rare authorial self-reflection on language learning, interaction with native speakers, and teaching practices. Such explicit commentary on spoken usage and linguistic authority is seldom available in historical sources. Despite their importance, these grammars remain significantly underexploited, with only a limited number of studies addressing their sociolinguistic implications (e.g. Katsouda 2003; Manolessou 2012; Kakoulidou-Panou et al. 2023).

To address this gap, the present paper analyses four case studies drawn from phonology (palatalization processes), morphology (alternative future formations), syntax (case syncretism), and lexicon (the use of derivational suffixes) across four missionary grammars published between 1622 and 1732 (Germano, Portius, Thomas Parisinus, and Mercado), produced in contexts such as Chios, Constantinople, and Cyprus. By examining how these features are described, evaluated, and contextualized by the authors, the paper investigates how spoken variation is selectively represented and normalized in written grammatical discourse. The analysis demonstrates how missionary grammars function not only as descriptions of language but also as sites where spoken practice, linguistic ideology, and pedagogical aims intersect. The study highlights the value of non-native grammatical traditions for reconstructing Early Modern Greek variation and for understanding how early modern scholars conceptualized the boundary between spoken and written language.

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Eva Skafte Jensen & Jørgen Schack – Older than I or ME in Danish and the discrepancy between grammars and authentic texts

In modern standard Danish, the oblique case is generally used in comparative constructions such as *Han var noget ældre end mig* (He was somewhat older than me); *Der er kun få der er så heldige som hende* (There are only a few as lucky as her), i.e., constructions in which the pronoun in the comparative phrase refers to the subject of the sentence (Jensen et al. 2023). Traditionally, the nominative case was used in such constructions, i.e., *Han var noget ældre end jeg* (He was somewhat older than I); *Der er kun få der er så heldige som hun* (There are only a few as lucky as she) (Schack 2025). According to Danish contemporary grammars from the late 19th century and early 20th century, the shift from the nominative case to the oblique case had already begun in the latter half of the 19th century. Thus, Lefolii (1871:90) notes that in spoken language the oblique case is often used instead of the nominative case in comparative constructions; Mikkelsen (1911:238) similarly observes that in everyday speech, and in imitations of everyday speech, the oblique case is often used in such constructions.

When we wish to verify the statements made by grammarians about case usage in spoken language, we have to make do with examining how the matter appears in representations of spoken language. We have made use of a corpora that contains 2.75 million words and consists

mainly of novels and drama texts from the entire 19th century. Our studies have shown that the language use in the 19th century texts examined does not correspond with the observations described in the older grammars. In our 19th century data, the oblique case is used very rarely in comparative constructions: the nominative case occurs in 97–99% of the instances found.

In our presentation, we report on our empirical studies and discuss, from a sociolinguistic perspective, possible explanations for the discrepancy between, on the one hand, the descriptions of language use in grammars and, on the other hand, our empirical results. We also discuss the notion of "everyday speech" as Lefolii and Mikkelsen understood it, cf. Pedersen 2024.

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Alena A. Fidlerová – Children, Peasants, and the Educated: Linguistic Variation in the Texts of Czech Language Reformer František Jan Tomsa

This paper examines the extent to which the language of prose works and translations of František Jan Tomsa (1753–1814), an original philologist of the early Czech National Revival, was adapted to their intended audiences and whether Tomsa's linguistic usage differed in this respect – or more generally – from that of his contemporaries. Tomsa was initially a close associate of Josef Dobrovský (1753–1829) but later diverged from him in his views on the emerging Modern Standard Czech. In his theoretical writings, Tomsa advocated script and orthographic reforms and, unlike most of his contemporaries, tended to favor features associated with the language of immediacy rather than the language of distance.

Based on these theoretical positions and evidence from Tomsa's correspondence and family background, it can be hypothesized that his language use aligned more closely with the language of immediacy than that of his peers, either overall or in specific genres. This can be tested using Tomsa's genre-diverse literary output, including texts for children and peasants, which – given the limited reading proficiency and familiarity with the language of distance among these audiences – might be expected to show a higher frequency of features characteristic of everyday speech.

Since existing diachronic corpora of Czech are insufficiently representative for this period, they do not provide a reliable basis for comparison. Consequently, Tomsa's usage is compared with that of selected contemporaries – Aleš Vincenc Pařízek (1748–1822), Jan Rulík (1744–1812), Václav Matěj Kramerius (1753–1808), and Bohumír Jan Dlabač (1758–1820) – who worked in similar genres, addressed comparable audiences, but generally adhered to the language of distance and did not participate in language-reform initiatives.

The paper compares selected texts by Tomsa falling within the genre of didactic children's prose, educational texts for peasants, and works addressed to educated or general audiences. The analysis is based on a dedicated corpus comprising complete works or representative excerpts. It focuses on linguistic variables in which the language of immediacy is assumed to diverge from the language of distance and whose status in the emerging modern standard Czech remained uncertain. Particular attention is paid to infinitive endings (*-ti* vs. *-t*; *-ci* vs. *-cti* vs. *-ct*), whose use was explicitly discussed by Tomsa and his contemporaries. In addition, selected phonological, morphological, and lexical variables are examined, including the diphthongization of *-ý-* > *-ej-* in the relevant forms of the verb *být* 'to be'; first-person plural present endings (*-m* vs. *-me*); third-person singular present of *být* (*jest* vs. *je*); relative pronouns (*jenž* vs. *který*); and adverbs (*také* vs. *taky* 'too'; *vždycky* vs. *dycky* 'always').

The aim of the paper is to determine whether theoretical philological positions can be taken as indicators of actual language practice, and specifically, whether Tomsa's usage was generally closer to the language of immediacy than that of his peers and whether he systematically adapted his language to the presumed audience of his texts.

Variation & Change (1.003) 11:00–12:30

Kazuko Matsumoto & David Britain – Tracing Pacific Japanese from the early twentieth century to its obsolescence: A panel study

Real-time studies undertaken on obsolescing languages are vanishingly rare. We furnish here one of the first such studies and probe both what real time studies can tell us about obsolescence, and also how investigations of obsolescence in real-time can shed light on the validity of the apparent-time model.

Here we use real-time methodologies to ask whether, as the Japanese colonial koiné of Palau in the Pacific (PJ), which formed during the early half of the twentieth century (Matsumoto & Britain 2022), obsolesces, the individual surviving elderly speakers, both fluent and semi-speakers, all follow the same linguistic path to attrition. Recordings of 71 fluent speakers of PJ, collected in the 1990s, were analysed to establish the community norm at a time when a sizable and active speech community still existed. Our subsequent panel study analyses 17 fluent speakers from this original sample who were recorded again in 2010, by which time very few PJ speakers were still alive. In addition, 9 semi-speakers (Dorian 1977, Romaine 2010) are analysed; their spoken data were also collected in the 1990s and again in 2010. The linguistic variable we investigate is (g): [g], [ŋ], [k] - each variant can be accounted for by the diffusion of contemporary Japanese, the legacy of colonial Japanese koiné and the Palauan substrate. This enables us to examine three potential routes of language loss: Nativisation (Dorian 1978), concentration and dissipation (Schilling-Estes and Wolfram 1999). We take into account a wide range of linguistic and social constraints on variability in almost 10,000 tokens of the variable.

Our real-time analysis of (g) among the 26 speakers of PJ enables us to address a number of pertinent questions: To what extent is there post-adolescent lifespan change in the command of a dying language? What kinds of change take place over the lifespan, and are they the same for fluent and semi-speakers? To what extent does the real-time behaviour of individuals match community-wide patterns? To what extent is the apparent-time model appropriate for investigating change in communities undergoing obsolescence?

A series of statistical analyses highlight several significant facts about language obsolescence in real-time. First, in terms of speaker gender and sensitivity to morphophonological position, fluent-

speakers remained typical of the speech community as a whole, whereas semi-speakers did not demonstrate social or linguistic patterning at any point in time. Second, even though there was no apparent real-time change in overall frequency word-medially, results of logistic regression point to a simplification of the structural conditioning of (g) word-medially over the 12 years, with fewer linguistic constraints on the variability of (g), both among fluent-speakers but also especially among semi-speakers. Third, semi-speakers behave much more similarly to each other at a phonetic level than fluent speakers at both points in time, a finding we explain in the historical context of the duration of Japanese administration and post-1945 mobility among fluent speakers. We argue that apparent time investigations should not assume that the future state of fluent speakers can necessarily be interpreted from the present-state of semi-speakers.

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Ruth Miguel Franco – Destination in Context. Textual Variation and Discourse Traditions in the Use of Spanish Preposition en

This paper examines the use of the Spanish preposition *en* in the expression of spatial goal (quo) from a historical sociolinguistic perspective, with a focus on textual and stylistic variation rather than on chronological change. While previous research has mainly addressed the alternation of *en* with other prepositions, especially *a*, in locative and directional contexts, its destination use has received comparatively little systematic attention (Rodríguez Gallardo 1998; Hernández Díaz 2014). The present study approaches this phenomenon through the lens of discourse traditions, text types, and registers in medieval Spanish.

The analysis is conducted within the framework of the Atlas Histórico del Español and is based on data from the CODEA+2022 corpus, which consists primarily of archival documentary texts. To compensate for the limited presence of motion predicates in documentary prose, the dataset is complemented with selected biblical translations that provide a wider range of discourse settings. These include two 13th-century Castilian translations of the Latin Vulgate (Escorial I.i.6–8 and the General Estoria) and two 15th-century translations from Hebrew (Escorial I.i.5 and the Bible of Arragel). Following the methodology proposed by Enrique-Arias (2015, 2018), narrative sections (Daniel 1–6; Judges 13–16; and 1 Samuel 1–17) are analyzed separately from lyrical books (Song of Songs and Lamentations), which differ substantially in discourse organization and pragmatic structure.

All verbal complements introduced by *en* that encode spatial goal are identified and annotated according to syntactic and semantic criteria. The resulting dataset is examined comparatively across text types, genres, and discourse traditions, with particular attention to stylistic preferences and register-sensitive patterns.

The results reveal significant variation linked to textual domain and discourse tradition. Narrative and translated texts show a higher tolerance for goal-marking *en*, whereas documentary prose displays more restricted and formulaic distributions. These findings highlight the central role of textual variation and discourse traditions in shaping grammatical variation and contribute to current discussions on historical sociolinguistics.

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Niyaz Kireyev – Variation and language change in the history of Italian stress-conditioned palatalisation

Standard Italian features a synchronically active morphophonological alternation of velar stops [k] and [g] with affricates [tʃ] and [dʒ], respectively. It is restricted to the boundary between root and masculine plural ending -[i] in adjectives and nouns. Furthermore, it is stress-conditioned: it occurs in (all) words with antepenultimate stress (*médico — médici*) and is much rarer in words with penultimate stress (e.g.: *cuóco — cuóchi*), although amongst the few exceptions there is a very frequent word *amíco — amíci*.

This phenomenon, misleadingly simple, poses major problems. Certain scholars trace this alternation back to the Late Latin palatalisation (this presupposes that Italian -i is the direct continuation of Latin nominative plural *-i*). However, this process differs from the Standard Italian alternation in important ways:

- It was not stress-conditioned.
- It happened before all front vowels, not only [i].

Other scholars, who deny continuity between Latin and Italian plural masculine ending—e.g., (Maiden, 1996; Faraoni, 2019)—also fail to provide a proper explanation for the emergence of the Standard Italian alternation.

Standard Italian was codified starting from the 16th century, based on the works of the "three crowns of Florence" of the 14th century. The traditional teleological approach of the historiography of Italian regards this standardised version more as a baseline, and compares it directly with Late Latin or Modern Italian. However, the variation that preceded the standardisation is largely neglected, because this approach "has left an entire period of language history unexplored" (Brown, 2020, p. 4) in historical sociolinguistics.

Recently, (Bressler & Giavazzi, 2024) explored the plural forms of 284 lexemes on *-co* and *-go* in Tuscan texts of the 13th and 14th centuries. They have found that while in general the same tendency holds for Modern Italian and for the studied corpus (*OVI dell'Italiano antico*, http://www.ovi.cnr.it/en/Il-Corpus-Testuale.html), the amount of variation in the corpus is (unsurprisingly) larger.

This paper aims to continue the research program of Bressler and Giavazzi. Their preliminary analysis shows that expanding the chronological scope and focusing more on the variation inside the earliest surviving Florentine texts can contribute to elucidating the emergence of the observed stress-conditioned palatalisation. This study's ambition is to fill this lacuna.

This problem is intertwined with major problems of Italian historical phonology (such as the origin of nominal plural endings) and historical sociolinguistics (such as the pre-history of the "fiorentino aureo" and coineization).

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Panel: Speech and written discourse in Romance: historical sociolinguistic variation "from below" in professional contexts (1) (1.006+1.007) 14:30–16:00

Josh Brown & Katharina Fezer – Introduction

The introduction to this session focusses on two objectives. Firstly, it provides a rationale for the panel discussion and reasons for a thematic discussion on speech and written discourse in Romance. Although this distinction has long featured in the literature, particularly in terms of periodisation of Romance vernaculars and the transition from Latin to Romance, few works have investigated the specific question of historical sociolinguistic variation 'from below' with a focus on professional contexts. The introductory session will discuss both the reasons why this gap exists, as well as the reasons why focussing on data 'from below' can be a useful methodological tool to investigate speech and writing in Romance vernaculars.

Secondly, this introductory session aims to describe some of this secondary literature in some detail, i.e. it will set the scene for what has been done before and introduce the research questions (see above). We will introduce the speakers of the individual papers to be presented, as well as motivate the reasons for why the panel is focussing specifically on this subset of Romance varieties. Some previous work of the panel organisers (including Brown 2024, in press; Fezer 2023, 2025, among others) will be referred to in order to provide context for the session and to introduce the papers to come.

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Eleonora Serra – Official writing and histories from below in late medieval Florence: citizens' use of formulae in the 1427 Catasto

Focusing on fifteenth-century Florence – in all likelihood the most literate city in late medieval Europe (Kent 2002: 111) – this paper investigates how everyday citizens from different social classes made use of formulae associated with administrative and official discourse. In 1427, the Florentine Republic introduced a fiscal reform, known as Catasto, which obliged all heads of household, from the destitute to the richest, to submit a written declaration detailing their assets, along with a range of personal information. The numerous volumes of *portate*, i.e. the original returns written by citizens, are preserved to this day at the Florentine State Archive. These documents offer a unique source for the reconstruction of "histories from below", both because of their high autograph rates (69% according to Black 2007: 1–42), and because of the richness and homogeneity of the information they provide on each writer's social profile, including wealth, age, occupation, and other personal details.

Presenting the first insights from a corpus of *portate* currently under construction, I examine how, in structuring their declarations, writers from different social classes reproduced, adapted, or simplified formulaic elements associated with administrative/official discourse. Considering how ordinary citizens of a medieval urban setting adapted their linguistic practices to the requirements of a bureaucratic genre, the paper explores the intersection between "histories from below" and models of language emanating from above.

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Israel Sanz Sánchez – Municipal notaries as sociolinguistic agents of lexical integration in early colonial Spanish

Loanwords from Indigenous languages are often quoted as the most widespread linguistic outcome of bi/multilingual encounters in Latin American Spanish (Adelaar and Muysken 2004; Dworkin 2012). Sociohistorical approaches to the process have focused on how bilingual brokers initially adopted these loanwords (Company Company 2021; Parodi 2005). By contrast, research on the sociolinguistic actuation and integration (Poplack 2018) of these bilingual innovations in the emergent local Spanish sociolinguistic norms is much scarcer.

In this presentation, I study the role played by escribanos de cabildo ('town council scribes'), notaries public in Spanish colonial municipalities, as agents in this process. More specifically, I zero in on their deployment of contact-based lexical innovations in several textual subtypes within

the broader administrative register of the town council actas 'minutes' genre as an area of diachronic variation (Ayres-Bennett 2018; Biber and Conrad 2009). These notaries' professional activity has been identified as instrumental to the Spanish colonial enterprise because they were key to the administrative processes that materialized the colonial sociopolitical hierarchies (Burns 2005). Therefore, cabildo notaries were influential figures in colonial societies (León 2022), and their lexical choices are of interest to an understanding of the sociolinguistic development of an administrative colonial Spanish register.

The data are obtained from the actas of the cabildos in Mexico-Tenochtitlan (MEX) and Lima (LIM). The analysis covers roughly the first century of Spanish presence in these cities (1524-1630 for MEX, 1534-1630 for LIM). A sample of 2,600,000 words yielded some 600 tokens (60 lexical types) of local Indigenous loanwords, mostly from Nahuatl (MEX) and Quechua (LIM). The presentation addresses three main questions: (1) how are these loanwords distributed chronologically; (2) does their use signal sociolinguistic integration, as indicated by the use of glosses and other flagging strategies (Cáceres-Lorenzo 2014; Levendis and Calude 2019); and (3) is the use of these loanwords associated to specific textual subtypes within the actas, and if so, which and how?

Results show that a range of "cultural" (Myers-Scotton 2002) loanwords were used in both cities, with some quantitative differences that are likely the result of the local sociolinguistic embedding in MEX and LIM. In both cases, loanwords appear to be highly integrated, with most types not exhibiting any flagging even since the earliest decades. This finding contradicts previous reconstructions of early forms of colonial Spanish (Company Company 2021). Lastly, while the use of loanwords in the corpus is primarily associated with the least formulaic textual subtypes (e.g. descriptions of proceedings and deliberations, mostly in reference to the materiality of everyday life), they eventually start appearing in more formulaic contexts, including royal and vice-regal appointment confirmations. I will argue that this expanding use of loanwords operates as a strategy by these notaries to negotiate the tension between two constraints: on the one hand, their professional role as representatives of Spanish legal authority, and on the other, the need to legitimize this authority in a sociocultural context that challenged the European referential frameworks that Spanish legality was predicated upon.

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Language contact (1) (1.008+1.009) 14:30–16:00

Andreas Krogull & Gijsbert J. Rutten – Practices and hierarchies in transnational language histories: The case of Swiss-Dutch encounters

Historical connections between the present-day Netherlands and Switzerland have long remained under the radar in traditional narratives of the European past. Recent research by (Swiss) historians, however, has shed new light on the important role of Swiss mercenaries serving in the Dutch Colonial Army from the mid-19th to the early 20th centuries (e.g. Krauer 2024, Schär 2022). It is also known that even earlier, in the 17th and 18th centuries, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) employed considerable numbers of non-Dutch workers, including many Swiss. Millions of documents from these VOC archives are currently being made accessible digitally.

These multilingual contact situations from the 17th to the early 20th centuries are absent from canonical language historiography. In fact, many of these hitherto overlooked sites of multilingual encounters involve underrepresented communities 'from below', such as soldiers, mercenaries, labourers, as well as their private and professional networks. Tying in with recent trends in historical multilingualism (e.g. Krogull & Rutten 2025), as well as early sociolinguistic scholarship (e.g. Fishman 1965), we aim to investigate which languages were used by whom, to whom, and in which contexts. In what ways did written discourse reflect power relations and underlying (language) ideologies in transnational relations (e.g. Rindler Schjerve 2003)?

Based on newly collected data from various archival institutions in Switzerland and the Netherlands, this paper aims to present an exploratory case study focussing on two types of communicative settings that give evidence of Swiss-Dutch encounters: (1) request letters written by young Swiss soldiers applying to join the Dutch Colonial Army (kept in the Dutch National Archives), and (2) personal letters from Swiss employees serving in the Dutch East Indies sent to their families back home (kept in Swiss archives). Through an analysis of linguistic practices and choices as well as metalinguistic reflections, this paper therefore seeks to contribute to an unwritten chapter in Early and Late Modern language history, both on the European continent and in colonial settings.

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Lena Aristarkhova-Schmidtkunz & Simon Pröll – Diverging orthographic conventions shape the phonological documentation of contact languages – evidence from Russenorsk and Unserdeutsch

Phonological adaptation in multilingual encounters reflects both articulatory constraints and sociolinguistic factors. Russenorsk (see Jahr 2005) and Unserdeutsch (see Maitz/Lindenfelser 2018), two historically oral contact varieties, provide unique perspectives on how phonological simplification and cross-linguistic accommodation in settings of intense contact are reflected in written sources.

Russenorsk phonology, as a result of symmetric contact between Norwegian and Russian, is reconstructed primarily from traders', travellers' and court members' notations of spoken forms (see Broch / Jahr 1984: 9–10; Lunden 1978: 213). They reveal both reduction (loss of inflectional endings) and hybridisation (Norwegian phonotactics applied to Russian lexemes and vice versa, resulting in L1-dependent variation, cf. Broch 1927: 213). Unserdeutsch, by contrast, shows a convergence towards phonotactic simplicity: High German consonant clusters are frequently reduced, vowels are not centralised, and syllable structures simplified, in part influenced by Tok Pisin and local substrate languages (cf. Lindenfelser 2021). Both varieties, therefore, follow different pathways toward their resulting phonological systems, and accordingly different kinds of variation.

In our talk, we investigate how the emergence and variation of such phonological patterns are mediated by written sources: Laymens' orthographic renderings of Russenorsk may reflect their native norms rather than actual phonetic reality, while missionaries' descriptions of Unserdeutsch frequently mark „incorrect pronunciation" as a sign of deficiency. Both cases demonstrate that social evaluation and literacy practices systematically shape the transcription of spoken phonology, a factor that must be accounted for in any subsequent analysis.

The comparison highlights the methodological potential of phonological analyses for historical sociolinguistics: phonetic traces not only point to oral discourse traditions, but also reveal how language ideologies mediate the transmission of spoken varieties into written form.

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Monica Huțanu – Writing the Vernacular: Contact-Induced Features in the Vlach Romanian Newspaper 'Vorba noastră' (1945-1949)

This paper examines the incipient literacy practices of the Vlachs from Eastern Serbia, a mainly rural and small-town bilingual community, speaking both Serbian (the official state language) and a regional, archaic variety of Romanian which in recent years has been undergoing a process of *Ausbauization*.

The focus of the study is the newspaper „Vorba noastră" („Our word"), published in Zaječar (Serbia) between 1945 and 1949. This publication represents the first newspaper written in Vlach Romanian, using the Cyrillic alphabet, and was produced with the aim to disseminate the new communist ideology among the Vlach community from Eastern Serbia.

The newspaper was created primarily by amateur, anonymous contributors, generally with no prior writing experience and no exposure to standard Romanian. It represents one of the first experiments in writing by the community, for the community, and marks the first attempt to render this spoken variety into print. As such, it provides a historical record of grassroots literacy (Blommaert 2008), in which spoken linguistic practices are transferred directly into writing and print, and can also be seen as an example of incipient, circumstantial standardization of Vlach Romanian (Sorescu-Marinković and Huțanu 2024).

In this presentation, I will concentrate on contact-induced features arising from the community's bilingual practices, due to the prolonged interaction with Serbian. I will focus on the morpho-syntactic level (aspectual prefixes, morphological integration, word order, discourse markers, syntactic calques). The analysis will show that these contact-induced features display a notable degree of variability and inconsistency, reflecting both the processes of emergent literacy in the vernacular and the linguistic characteristics of a variety that developed independently of its roof language. At the same time, the presence of the Serbian-influenced linguistic features aligns with an ideological stance that rejects affiliation with Romania, as evidenced in several articles, and can be interpreted as a strategy for asserting inclusion within Yugoslavia and for constructing a distinct Vlach identity.

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Corpora & Methods (2) (1.004) 14:30–16:00

Sara Budts, Yoshi Malaise & Rik Vosters – Standardization and orthographic variation: Using large language models to avoid teleological bias in quantifying historical spelling change

Many studies quantifying the standardization of spelling as a broad diachronic process work with lemmatized corpus data, measuring edit distances between historical observations and normalized equivalents in the modern standard spelling (e.g. Tyrkkö 2020). Such corpus-based approaches invariably observe that historical spelling practices move in the direction of the modern standard. However, as modern normative spellings are taken as the point of reference, the conclusion that historical variation is reduced over time only to gradually move closer to an

invariable present-day standard is inevitable. Such approaches are rooted in a teleological model of standardization, and reinforce the idea of standardization as a linear trajectory from variable 'dialect' to an invariable 'standard' — criticized by Watts (2011) as the 'funnel view' of standardization.

After unpacking this teleological bias in studies of orthographical change more generally, this contribution proposes a novel heuristic to avoid the pitfall. We will outline a cookbook recipe to analyze orthographic variation and standardization both synchronically and diachronically using a wordpiece tokenization-based transformer model (GysBERT – Manjavacas & Fonteyn 2022). We will show how we can exploit the language model's existing familiarity with orthographic variation and iteratively finetune it based on manual labelling of word pairs to succesfully identify pairwise clusterings of orthographic variants of the same lexical item in a specific collection of texts.

As a case in point, we will apply our approach to data from the Getuigenissen corpus, a collection of 18th- and 19th-century Flemish witness depositions. We will demonstrate how the proposed method allows us to quantify the orthographic variation across the texts in the corpus, unveiling diachronic patterns as well as charting out inter- and intraindividual differences from a sociolinguistic perspective. Although our heuristic provides us with relatively coarse-grained quantitative metrics of orthographic variation in historical texts, we will show how our findings align with earlier work on spelling change in Dutch, focusing on features undergoing standardization-driven changes in the same period. While our approach originated in a study on Late Modern Dutch, our recipe can be applied to other languages as well, using any bidirectional transformer that works with sub-word tokenization.

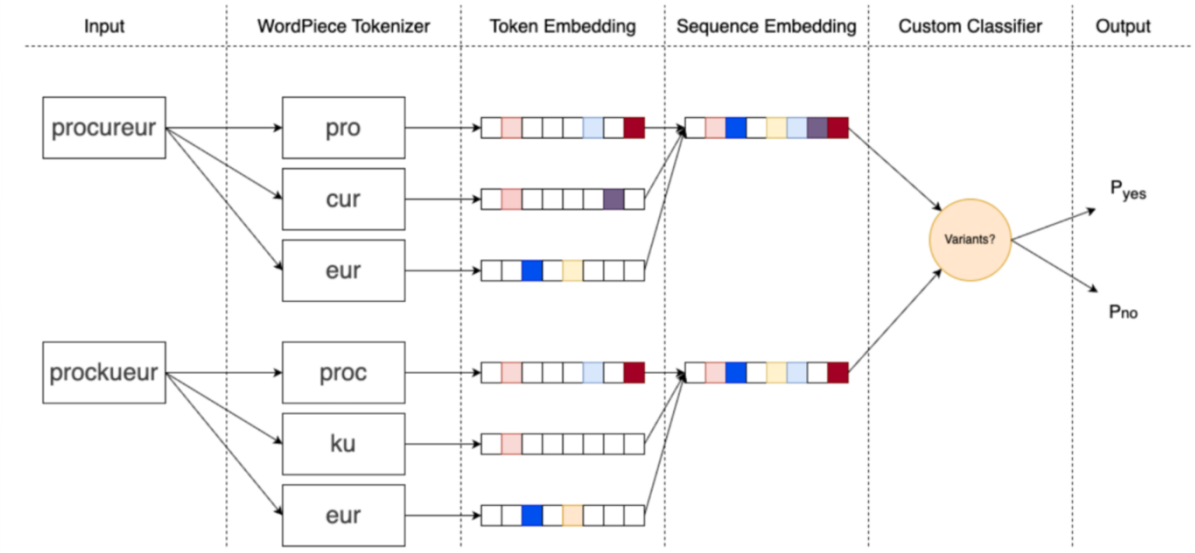


Figure 1 – Architecture of GysBERT finetuned to identify orthographic variation

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Alfred Lameli – Evaluation of Large Language Models for the Translation of historical German dialects

This paper deals with historical dialect collections from Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century. As Langhanke (2011) demonstrates, collections such as Firmenich (1843) or Stalder (1819) represent a rich yet under-explored category of historical speech practice. While documenting local and regional speech practices, they vary in scope—from broad regional to locally focused description—by including literary texts in both verse and prose that often reflect everyday discourse. However, with the rise of national linguistic atlases, these collections were progressively overshadowed in dialectology and sociolinguistics (Knoop 1982).

We briefly introduce a corpus drawn from these early dialect collections, emphasizing their potential to illuminate informal, interpersonal communication patterns that often escape conventional sources. The corpus comprises texts from five major dialect areas of the German-speaking region. However, these historical dialect texts are largely inaccessible to contemporary audiences—including many scholars—because of dramatic shifts in dialect competence and orthographic conventions over the past two centuries. To bridge this gap, the project explores computational translation of these dialect texts into contemporary standard German using large language models (LLMs). We present a systematic evaluation framework that assesses: (i) prompt design and fine-tuning strategies tailored to historical dialect features; (ii) the fidelity of model outputs with respect to (primarily) lexical precision; and (iii) comparative performance across models with differing architectures and training contexts.

Our evaluation reveals significant divergences among LLM outputs in handling morphological, syntactic, and pragmatic features characteristic of historical dialectal discourse. Some models demonstrate promising capacity to reconstruct plausible contemporary renditions, while others reveal systematic shortcomings in capturing idiomatic usage and interactional subtleties. These findings underscore the importance of methodological transparency, rigorous benchmarking, and domain-specific prompt engineering when deploying LLMs on historical sociolinguistic data.

Building on these results, we discuss implications for efficient text processing workflows and outline prospects for the development of a regional-language LLM attuned to historical dialect variation. Such a model would support not only translation but also annotation, classification, and quantitative analyses that foreground the interplay between social action and linguistic form in historical discourse. The project thereby contributes to methodological innovation in historical sociolinguistics while reclaiming neglected source material that enriches our understanding of spoken and written discourse in the past.

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Tatsiana Nazaranka – Belarusian Standardization under AI Mediation

Across Europe and beyond, small languages are increasingly engaging in linguistic decolonization – the process of reclaiming autonomy from historically dominant languages. This process goes beyond cultural or national identity and addresses structural linguistic dependencies shaping language development.

Belarusian, classified as vulnerable by UNESCO (Moseley 2012), is a low-resource language (Micallef et al., 2022) with limited digital and media representation. While machine translation and AI have increased its digital visibility, this visibility often remains inauthentic, taking the form of what Koščanka & Martysjuk (2024) describe as "Russian with Belarusian words." This phenomenon is closely related to what is commonly referred to as *Trasianka*, albeit in a technologically mediated and linguistically masked form. This AI-mediated Trasianka is not the result of an intrinsic inability of AI systems to generate Belarusian per se, but rather of the predominance of unedited machine-translated Russian-source texts in Belarusian training data.

The paper tests the hypothesis that, alongside processes of standardization from below (Elspaß 2021), associated with *Taraškievica*, and standardization from above (Rutten & Vosters 2021), associated with *Narkamaŭka*, AI acts as a third mode of standardization, actively shaping contemporary Belarusian norms by legitimizing Trasianka-like structures.

The official suspension of work on the synchronic component of the National Corpus of the Belarusian Language (Koščanka & Martysjuk 2024) serves both as an indirect acknowledgment of the distortive impact of machine-translated Russian-source texts on contemporary Belarusian and as an attempt to counteract this new algorithm-driven standardization. The present study seeks to substantiate this move empirically by analyzing Belarusian collocations that diverge from Russian, with particular attention to verb-case government. Russian-structured patterns are first identified in AI-generated Belarusian and then compared with Instagram posts, YouTube interviews, and user comments. This comparison allows us to assess whether such patterns are not only algorithmically reproduced but also increasingly entrenched in contemporary usage.

By integrating historical and contemporary data, the paper demonstrates how historical sociolinguistics can illuminate both past and present pressures on low-resource languages, revealing that technological mediation is now part of the *longue durée* of Belarusian standardization.

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Written vs. spoken (1) (1.005) 14:30–16:00

Kaidi Hõbejõgi – From Speech to Record: Tracing Orality in the Senate Minutes of the 17th-Century Tartu Academy

The Senate minutes of the 17th-century *Academia Gustaviana* in Tartu are a rich but still underexplored source for studying multilingual practices in early modern academic communities. As a genre at the intersection of spoken interaction and written records, which were recorded *in situ* without (much) preparation, i.e. the way participants expressed themselves, offers insights into how orality interacts with the written word (McLelland 2004: 508). An excerpt from the first bilingual entry, dated 30 October 1632 – "Erscheinet Fiscalis im Nahmen der Wittwen Fischalin, beschweret sich in puncto violentae turbationis vber 2 studiosos …" – shows Latin's dominance as the academic *lingua franca* while also reflecting the use of vernaculars, particularly German (Tering, 1978: 15). This also reflects the linguistic practice most commonly used in the minute entries.

This paper aims to examine how the Senate minutes reflect orality and language immediacy (Koch & Oesterreicher, 1985: 20). The participants' language choices, communicative purposes, and institutional contexts, including the Academy's internal and external communication, will be considered (Kriisa, 2021: 275).

The analysis covers three points. First, it looks at the distribution of Latin and vernaculars across agenda items and interlocutors (Kriisa, 2018: 51). Second, it examines the functions of code-switching in the single entries, drawing partly on Grutman's study framing code-switching as a possibly staged discursive resource mediating between speech and writing (Grutman, 2024: 22). Third, it identifies traces of spoken interaction and immediacy strategies in the minutes, such as formulaic expressions marking code-switches, references to other languages, and possible errors made by the protocolling secretary (that, in turn, might reflect the writing either being original *in situ* recorded documents, or being later rewritten texts, in which the level of orality differs) (Kriisa, 2021: 280).

In examining these aspects, the paper discusses whether code-switching was staged to serve rhetorical or pragmatic purposes – enhancing authority, signalling identity, or filling gaps in poor Latin (in case students were involved) – rather than merely reflecting spontaneous speech (Grutman, 2024: 25). Altogether these features illustrate how Senate minutes can preserve elements of spoken interaction, offering a unique peak into the communicative strategies of early modern academics. Overall, the study demonstrates that such records provide a valuable lens for understanding the interplay between orality and literacy in institutional settings.

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Luise Czajkowski – The relationship between written and spoken language in Brandenburg in the mid-20th century

Historical linguistics has long cautioned against equating historical written language (*Schreibsprache*) with the spoken language of earlier periods (see, for example, Frings 1944, 78). While this caveat is well established, the relationship between written and spoken language has rarely been examined in a variable-specific and empirically testable manner. This paper therefore asks to what extent, and for which linguistic variables, historical written sources can be used as reliable evidence for spoken regional language.

Addressing this question, I use language data from Brandenburg from the mid-20th century (Bretschneider et al. 1976–2001), collected for the creation of a Brandenburg dictionary: written language data from questionnaires da.ng back to the 1950s (see BBW questionnaires) and audio recordings from the 1960s (see DR-corpus). By comparing these data, I would like to show the similari.es, but also the differences between spoken language and its wri4en documentation. Because the audio recordings were collected to supplement the questionnaires, there is li4le overlap in content between the two data sets. It is therefore necessary to first identify common variables.

Example Schwarzensee (Brandenburg):

audio: *wie **jeht** et di?* (How are you?)

questionnaire (20-33): *Dat Kleed **jeht** entzwei.*. (The dress is getting ruined.)

audio: *Wat **mökt** din Jung?* (How is your son?)

questionnaire (21-50): *Jeder **mökt** up sin Oart*. (Everyone does it their own way.)

audio: *Ik heb hört, dat **he** sich dat Been broken **het***. (I heard he broke his leg.)

questionnaire (20-29): *Denn Liestenbruch **hett he** doamoals kregn.*. (He got the hernia back then.)

The analysis of a range of phonetic, morphological (pronouns, verbs), and lexical variables will help to determine which variables are consistent across audio recordings and written documentation and can therefore be considered reliable sources. Building on this comparison, the paper further examines the "variation intensity" (Wirtz et al. 2025) exhibited by individual variables in order to assess whether high levels of variation can be interpreted as evidence of language change in the dialects spoken in the Brandenburg area throughout the 20th century.

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Gizem Karaköse & Michał Głuszkowski – Multilingual Practices in the Polish Diaspora of Türkiye from the 19th Century to the Digital Age

This paper examines the linguistic transformation of the Polish community in Polonezköy (Adampol), a settlement founded near Istanbul in 1842 by Polish exiles under Prince Adam Czartoryski. Drawing on a corpus that includes cemetery inscriptions, archival materials, and oral testimonies, the study traces how long-term contact with Turkish reshaped local Polish usage over nearly two centuries, eventually leading to the decline and symbolic preservation of the dialect. Following the approach outlined by Krogull & Rutten (2025), the paper uses their layered framework for historical contact settings: linguistic form, social domain, and metalinguistic reflection. It also adopts Koch and Oesterreicher's (1985) distinction between language of immediacy and language of distance. Polish in Polonezköy gradually moved from an everyday spoken medium to one confined to ritual, memory, and identity work. Early bilingualism encouraged extensive code-switching and borrowing, which appear in both oral and written sources. Lexical items such as *saman*, *çakmak*, or *sürgü* entered local Polish speech (Kowalski 1932). Gravestone inscriptions show similar contact effects: the use of ş in place of Polish ś indicates how phonological interference in speech (Elspaß, 2005) shaped local spelling practices. These orthographic choices point to a broader process in which spoken Polish adapted to the dominant Turkish linguistic environment. As intergenerational transmission weakened, written Polish increasingly functioned as a language of distance. It survived mainly in religious texts, family inscriptions, and commemorative uses, rather than in daily conversation. In this setting, Polish no longer served as the community vernacular but persisted as a symbolic code tied to cultural memory. Agha's (2003) notion of enregisterment helps explain this shift: specific linguistic forms became publicly recognized markers of group identity and historical value. By combining historical documents with present-day accounts, the paper positions Polonezköy as a case study in diasporic language change. Multilingual coexistence produced new forms and borrowings, yet the loss of regular oral use ultimately led to the disappearance of the local dialect.

Keywords: language of immediacy and distance, multilingualism, code-switching, language contact, Polish diaspora, Polonezköy, orthography, language death

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Religious texts (1.003) 14:30–16:00

Valentina Concu – To Give or To Let Enjoy: Offers and Pragmatic Reframing in the Hêliand

This paper examines how the Old Saxon *Hêliand*—a poetic retelling of the Gospels— constructs offers within a written, highly mediated text. Following Culpeper & Kytö's (2010), the *Hêliand* occupies an intermediate position between speech-purposed and speech-like textuality: designed for oral delivery yet crafted within a written poetic tradition. Positioned along this orality–literacy continuum, the poem provides an opportunity to investigate how spoken interaction is represented and reshaped in a historical source.

Using a hybrid form-to-function and function-to-form approach (Jacobs & Jucker 1995) combined with speech-representation theory (Semino & Short 2004), the study identifies ten instances of offers, analyzed using four standard categories. Direct Speech (DS) represents the offer as an explicitly quoted utterance, preserving its structure and illocutionary force. Indirect Speech (IS) paraphrases the content of the offer. Free Indirect Speech (FIS) blends narrator and character perspectives. Narrative Representation of Speech Acts (NRSA) summarizes the act. In the *Hêliand*, offers appear exclusively in DS (6 tokens) and NRSA (4 tokens).

The analysis shows that DS is the only mode in which the negotiability of the act is consistently preserved. In scenes such as Satan's temptation, DS maintains the offer as a performative proposition: the act remains open until recipient validation or refusal, and the interactional stakes are foregrounded. Satan's offer is framed through a shift from narrated to direct speech, a technique that amplifies its performative weight, while the permission-granting formula (*lâten … brûcan: let enjoy*) maps the exchange onto familiar Saxon lordship conventions. DS thus functions as a representational strategy that maximizes immediacy within a literary frame.

NRSA, by contrast, retrospectively fixes outcomes and reduces the interactivity of the exchange. A representative example appears in the episode where Judas attempts to return the silver, described with *biotan* ("offered, proposed"). Here the offer is reported as a completed event whose outcome—a refusal—is supplied immediately by the narrator, compressing what would otherwise be a negotiable act into a single narrative statement. NRSA thus acknowledges that an offer occurred but removes its dialogic openness, transforming agency into a narrative effect rather than a co-constructed process.

Taken together, these findings show that the *Hêliand* does far more than retell its source material: it re-engineers the pragmatics of spoken exchange. By preserving negotiability only in DS and retrospectively fixing outcomes in NRSA, the poem situates the speech act of offering within Saxon structures of authority, reciprocity, and choice. This demonstrates how a premodern written source simulates and reshapes spoken discourse, contributing to broader discussions of orality, writtenness, and historical discourse representation.

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Christopher Lewin – Morphosyntactic variation in the Manx Bible: from manuscript to print

Manx is the Gaelic variety native to the Isle of Man, and the majority language until the mid-nineteenth century. Isolated from the wider Gaelic speech area of Ireland and the Scottish Highlands since the later Middle Ages, Manx was a largely oral language until a written tradition based on English orthographic conventions developed for religious purposes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Lewin 2022; 2025). Despite the small size of the island and of the population of literate speakers, significant linguistic and orthographic variation, as well as gradual norm convergence and standardization, are evident in the extensive corpus of manuscript and printed texts from this period, which include sermons, catechisms, religious and secular verse, and complete printed translations of the Book of Common Prayer (1765) and Bible (1748–1775).

The task of Bible translation was divided up among the island's parish clergy and edited by a small team of senior clerics and published in installments (Grass 2025). Considerable portions of the translators' manuscript drafts survive, incorporating extensive editorial revisions (Broderick 2022). This paper will consider the complex nature of these texts, in which at least seven stages of modification by at least three individuals can be discerned (1. translator's first draft (not extant) > 2. translator's neat draft > 3. translator's own revisions / alternatives > 4. editor's revisions > 5. final copy for the press (not extant) > 6. first printed edition > 7. subsequent printed editions), and the challenges and opportunities these multiple textual layers provide for historical sociolinguistic study.

Eighteenth-century Manx shows extensive variation and change in progress in the verbal system, with semantically interchangeable synthetic and analytic constructions in several tenses and moods and multiple options for the expression and placement of noun and pronoun objects of verbal nouns (Thomson 1951; Lewin 2016). The paper will present a quantitative case study of these constructions in a sample of the Bible drafts and printed editions, considering their relation to spoken variation, diglossia and bilingualism, and emergent processes of standardization, as well as stylistic choices in specific passages.

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Dalia Pratali Maffei – Towards "Standardisation" in religious registers: Dialect-Koine contact at the Hellenistic sanctuary of Lindos, Rhodes

While the spread of Koine Greek in the Hellenistic Greece (4th – 1st c. BC) is well known, the processes leading to dialect loss and the emergence of compromise varieties remain understudied, especially from a sociolinguistic and register-based perspective (Bubeník 1989). This paper presents the first systematic analysis of the inscriptions from the sanctuary of Lindos on Rhodes, one of the most important sanctuaries in the Hellenistic Aegean and central to the Lyndian civic and religious identity (Zachhuber 2024). I argue that these inscriptions attest a stable mixed variety combining local dialect (Doric) and Koine forms, which persisted for several centuries and can be identified as a local religious register. I ask how it developed and which linguistic and cultural factors shaped it.

My corpus consists of 543 inscriptions dated from the 4th to the 1st c. BC, covering different text types (votives in prose or poetry, honorary decrees, sacred laws, catalogues) and issuers (local and foreign, public and private). Likely produced by sanctuary scribes, these texts show remarkably stable patterns of Doric/Koine mixture, with almost no intra- or inter-textual alternation between dialect/Koine variants of the same features except for early stages, unlike other contemporary inscriptions from the island (Thumb 1901). This consistency, independent of text type or issuer, points to codified local writing practices and to the stabilisation of a sactuary-specific written norm.

I show that these inscriptions reflect processes typical of early Koineisation (Thomason & Kaufman 1988; Trudgill 2021). Dialect forms prevail and were likely retained as a marker of local and religious identity, at all linguistic levels (e.g. Doric /ā/, articles *toi/tai*, preposition *potì*, *dēlomai* 'to decide', while Koine forms appear where they promote grammatical regularisation and supra-local intelligibility. Phonology and morphology are more stable than the lexicon, with Koine forms entering through institutional terminology, and dialect/Koine elements alternating mostly in personal names, likely reflecting increased mobility (e.g. Doric /ā/ versus Koine /ē/, /eo/ or /ew/ versus /ō/). Koine forms favour reduced paradigm irregularities (e.g. o-stem accusatives, genitives of nouns in -eus) and lexical transparency (e.g. names for Pan-Hellenic institutions, e.g. *hiereus*, 'priest'), whereas dialect is retained in morphologically regular domains where Koine would introduce irregularity (e.g. a-stem and i-stem genitives).

Overall, this case study demonstrates how inscriptions from specific locations, such as religious contexts, as formal written sources, can provide key insights on both koineisation processes and register formation.

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Panel: Speech and written discourse in Romance: historical sociolinguistic variation "from below" in professional contexts (2) (1.006+1.007) 16:30–17:30

Marina Albers & Laura Linzmeier – Diplomacy in multilingual settings – French epistolographic strategies by a multilingual diplomat in the American War of Independence

Our paper deals with the letters of Charles William Frédéric Dumas (1721–1796), which stem from the Adams Papers Digital Edition of the Massachusetts Historical Society. During the American War of Independence, Dumas served as a diplomat, advisor, secretary, translator, and *chargé d'adaires ad interim* in Europe for Benjamin Franklin and John Adams (cf. Wilson 1938).

On the one hand, the correspondence reveals predictable verbalisation strategies that reflect the required formulaic correspondence practices of diplomacy and politeness, as well as condensation strategies commonly used in diplomacy (cf. Fairman 2012; Amatuzzi 2018; Thomas 2024).

However, it is particularly interesting that the documents – depending on the degree of familiarity with the addressee – may also contain traces of *language of immediacy* (Koch/Oesterreicher 1985). Furthermore, there are indications of a particular approach to multilingualism in the French-language letters, such as code-switching to Latin and English – strategies that serve different functions or are a product of the multilingual diplomatic context of the time.

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Vicente Lledó-Guillem – Final discussion

In the final discussion, we will first identify links between the findings of the individual presentations. This part will be introduced by Vicente Lledó-Guillem as our invited discussant, who will briefly summarise the previous contributions and share his ideas regarding their common threads. He will also bring in some additional aspects based on his own expertise in Spanish and Catalan language history. In this way, we will identify the cross-linguistic and crosscultural

characteristics of the relationship between spoken and written language in professional contexts in Romance.

We will also discuss the differences. Here we will attempt to determine whether the characteristics that can be found in only one or some contexts, but not in all, are specific to a particular language, culture, or era, whether they depend on the profession or discourse tradition under investigation, or whether other factors need to be considered.

The public is, naturally, invited to take an active part in the discussion, both when it comes to linking the content of the previous presentations and when it comes to contributing further perspectives from their own research. The inclusion of further professional contexts and other language areas outside Romance would be most welcome, as this might allow us to identify features that distinguish professional discourse in the Romance-speaking area from that in other language families.

Language contact (2) (1.008+11.009) 16:30–17:30

Henning Klöter – Hokkien in Early Colonial Manila: An Alternative Sinitic Language History

Research on the history of the Chinese language has long been shaped by a strong focus on elite linguistic practices. Classical literary Chinese, alongside reconstructed stages such as Old Chinese and Middle Chinese, has occupied a central position, while the study of historical dialects has primarily served to illuminate broader, unified narratives of Sinitic language development. Much of the widely studied source material is prescriptive and reflects normative ideals rather than everyday language use. As a result, the linguistic histories of marginalized social groups and non-elite speakers have received comparatively little scholarly attention.

One reason for this imbalance lies in the scarcity of historical sources that provide close access to authentic spoken language and sociolectal variation – sources that are broadly comparable to those that have informed historical sociolinguistics in the European context. Nevertheless, important exceptions exist. Among them are linguistic descriptions of Chinese regional languages compiled by Western missionaries from the sixteenth century onward, including dictionaries, grammars, spelling books, and other descriptive accounts. These documents, while shaped by specific ideological and colonial contexts, offer rare insights into non-elite language use, language contact, and variation.

Against this backdrop, this presentation pursues two interrelated objectives. First, it offers a critical assessment of the current state and potential of historical sociolinguistics within Chinese language history, questioning established research paradigms and their implicit social biases. Second, it presents a case study of an alternative language history: Hokkien as spoken by Chinese migrants in the Philippines in the early seventeenth century.

The case study is based on a handwritten Hokkien-Spanish missionary dictionary compiled around 1617, the *Bocabulario de la lengua sangleya*. Consisting of approximately 1,400 alphabetically arranged entries across 223 double-sided folios, the *Bocabulario* provides rich evidence of dialectal and sociolectal variation, actual usage patterns, stylistic and register differences, and instances of language contact. The analysis draws on an ongoing collaborative research project dedicated to the complete translation and digitalization of the *Bocabulario*, and presents first interim findings. Beyond demonstrating the analytical potential of this source for historical sociolinguistics, the presentation also reflects critically on its epistemological limitations, particularly the implications of the missionary outsider perspective and the colonial gaze through which local language data were recorded

Alicja Goczyła Ferreira, Michał Szczyszek, Agnieszka Piotrowska-Wojaczyk & Zuzanna Przybysz – Contact-Induced Language Variation in Advertisements in Polish-Language Press Published in Brazil (19th–20th Centuries)

Polish-language press published in Brazil from 1892 till the late decades of the 20th century constitutes a rich source for understanding the Polish diaspora's political, social, cultural and linguistic reality in this country. Today's Polish community in Brazil is the heir of the immigrant groups, mainly of peasant origin, that settled mostly in the southern region of the country from 1869 till 1938. The Polish-language press, comprising approximately 100 titles of varying longevity (Stephanou 2017), was therefore both a chronicler and a mirror of the successive phases of the Polish diaspora existence and its social and linguistic assimilation into Brazilian society.

In this paper we examine the Polish language variation resulting from language contact with Brazilian Portuguese and potentially other immigrant languages (e.g. German), as evidenced in advertisements placed in Polish press in Brazil. The contact-induced variation is understood here, in accordance with Matras (2009), as the outcome of innovations introduced by bi- or multilingual speakers, arising in the process of linguistic socialization and situated within the context of various social practices.

Our initial analysis of the data (Author, XX) has shown that advertisements were subject to far fewer editorial interventions aimed at language standardization than other textual genres in the Polish-language press in Brazil. We therefore assume that the ad language might reflect more closely the spoken language of the press readers in the 19th and 20th centuries, as a result of the "advertisers attempting to speak to people 'in their own language'", a phenomenon frequently observed in minority-language contexts (Kelly-Holmes 2005: xii), and through the use of a language that made sense in this specific locality in terms of "local diacritics" (Blommaert 2010: 189). At the same time, we also seek to examine the possible intentions and effects of language choices made by advertisers to sell their products.

From the methodological standpoint, the use of particular categories of tokens of contact-induced variation, comprising matter and pattern replication (Matras 2009), is analyzed in relation to factors such as the communicative function of language within the advertisement (informative, expressive, phatic, etc.), the type of ad and the category of product or service advertised. This last variable is closely related to the target audience, which can also be inferred from the periodical profile, since the newspapers examined differed ideologically, functionally and thematically. We also hypothesize that the quantity and quality of contact-induced innovations (matter vs. pattern replication) change when observed in real time, expecting a larger number of contact-induced innovations in general and more matter replication in more recent publications.

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Corpora & Methods (3) (1.004) 16:30–17:30

Belén Almeida Cabrejas & Marina Serrano Marín – Letradas: A Corpus of Documents Written by Women in Spain between 1400 and 1900

The Letradas corpus, which is currently in preparation (it will be completed in 2027), aims to select and edit a total of 1,200 documents written by women in Spain between 1400 and 1900. All documents are handwritten and come from different archives throughout Spain.

The types of documents are varied: personal correspondence, petitions or pleas to civil and ecclesiastical authorities, patrons, etc., lists or utilitarian notes, complaints or statements to the ordinary courts or to the Inquisition, etc. The vast majority of the documents (at least 80%) will be documents written by women, while the rest may be issued by women and written by men, or documents that, being issued by a woman, could have been written by a woman or a man, etc.

Another aim is to ensure that the authors come from as varied a social background as possible: nobles, nuns, and servants of the nobility in the 15th and 16th centuries, and progressively also women of the bourgeoisie, schoolteachers, merchants, administrators, etc., and even young girls, in the 17th to 19th centuries. The documents are presented in both paleographic and regularized editions, and images are also included, as is done in other historical linguistic corpora in the CHARTA network, including CODEA (v. Miguel Franco and Sánchez-Prieto, 2016).

Different types of linguistic searches will be possible thanks to the lemmatization and tagging (TEI). In addition, biographical files will be created for the authors of the texts, with information on the date and place of birth of the author of each document, social class, occupation, etc.

The corpus will allow to increase our knowledge about the speaking and writing of women in the Modern and Contemporary Ages, the state of female literacy and the teaching of reading and writing to girls and adult women; the contexts in which female writing took place, the relationship between female handwriting and the processes of language standardization, as well as the presence of features subject to orthographic shaming (see Meletis, 2018: 378) and women's self-perception as speakers and writers, both those belonging to subordinate groups and those from privileged sectors. It will also allow us to learn more about the processes of commissioned writing, its different causes, and the social rules that prohibited, permitted, or advised it.

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Christa Schneider – Building the witchpaper corpus database. Towards a multidisciplinary resource for historical and linguistic research, and beyond. A work in progress report.

The past decade has seen an increasing interest in digitising and systematically analysing early modern judicial and other administrative texts. Among these, witch trial records represent a uniquely valuable yet in some contexts rather underexplored source for understanding linguistic,

social, and historical practices across time and regions. This paper presents ongoing work towards the creation of a Witch Paper Corpus Database (WCD) - a digital infrastructure project designed to integrate, standardise, and enrich multiple existing, digital and analogue corpora of witch trial documents from Scotland, Switzerland, colonial North America and (hopefully) many more.

The WCD will combine several regional sub-corpora, including collections from Edinburgh and its vicinity, the Swiss Cities of Bern, Basel and Fribourg, and, hopefully, also the Salem witch trial papers. While individual collections have been partially digitised and studied, they remain scattered and heterogeneous in transcription standards, metadata formats, and accessibility. The aim of this project is to establish a unified and extensible database that facilitates both linguistic and interdisciplinary research on witch trial discourse.

The database will include standard bibliographic and contextual metadata (e.g., date, location, case type, archival reference), digitised facsimiles and transcriptions (where archival guidelines permit), possibly enriched with linguistic and other structural annotation. In addition, automatically generated corpus statistics and extracted information (e.g., named entities, sentiment patterns, semantic domains) will be made visible through an interactive web interface. The long-term goal is to create a platform that not only supports linguistic and corpus-based research but also invites collaboration across history, legal studies, gender studies, digital humanities, and beyond.

This paper reports on the conceptual design (the data base is not yet existing) and current development stage of the project, highlighting lessons learned from previous experiments with Named Entity Recognition (NER), Sentiment Analysis (SA) and Part-of-Speech tagging (POS) on the witch trial data. It discusses challenges related to standardisation, multilingualism and the ethical and archival constraints of digitising and sharing judicial records. A particular focus is placed on identifying the core requirements for a sustainable research infrastructure, including interoperability, FAIR data principles, and long-term preservation strategies.

The presentation aims to invite discussion and feedback from specialists in historical sociolinguistics to shape the design of the database before a possible funding proposal (SNF/ERC) is submitted. By presenting this as work in progress, the paper seeks to foster collaboration and to outline a roadmap for developing a comprehensive, open, and methodologically transparent resource that will support future research well beyond linguistics.

Written vs. spoken (2) (1.005) 16:30–17:30

Elias Moncef Bounatirou & Ilia Afanasev – Languaging practices in Old East Slavic society: evidence from birchbark letters

The study investigates linguistic variation in Old Novgorodian birchbark letters. The main hypothesis is that alternations between forms, traditionally labeled as Church Slavonic (CS) and vernacular East Slavic (ES), in the birchbark letters, may be interpreted as acase of translanguaging. The suggested approach is to treat them as linguistically meaningful, rather than being simply random. It allows to coherently explain, why CS forms appear in vernacular texts, and why ES forms occur in sacral texts, instead of labeling these cases as erroneous (Živov, 2017: 176).

The main material for this study consists of the Old Novgorodian birchbark letters corpus, the collection of rather small manuscripts (not a single one is more than 1000 tokens) that attest to various Slavic territorial lects (primarily Old Novgorodian, but also, among others, those of

historical Smolensk, Polack and Moscow), dating from ca. 1000 – 1500 CE (see DND). Even though this corpus creates a unique opportunity for research in historical linguistics, the birchbark letters remain studied relatively scantily (Dekker, 2018: 13). One of the most underresearched aspects of the birchbark letters is alternations between Church Slavonic (CS) and vernacular East Slavic (ES) forms, for instance, *raz-* (CS) – *roz-* (ES) (both stemming from Proto-Slavic **arz-*).

The talk showcases the usage-based analysis of CS/ES forms alternation in the birchbark letters. The acquired evidence suggests that the simultaneous use of CS and ES elements exhibits a socially meaningful practice, analogues of which are present in other pre-modern language cultures (cf. Gallego Garcia's study of Judeo- Arabic 1999: 87–88). This provides crucial evidence in support of the hypothesis that the CS/ES alternation attests not to the illiteracy of scribes, but to translanguaging being a key part of the Old East Slavic language culture (cf. Zaliznâk, 1993; Lebedeva, 2003; Mendoza, 2023).

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Ivar Berg & Markus Schiegg – On the litterarisation of Germanic

In this contribution, we will discuss central aspects of the emergence of written Germanic vernaculars (in the Latin alphabet) by comparing two of them: Old High German and Old (West) Norse. OHG is first attested in writing during the 8th century; ON during the 12th century. We examine how the two vernaculars were put to writing within the Latin writing culture, the conditions for their development, and what we may assume about the relationship between written and spoken discourse in the oldest preserved texts.

The establishment of standard languages was a central topic in 20th century sociolinguistics, with landmark publications like Haugen (1966) and Kloss (1978). Both were based on the emergence of modern (19th century) standard languages, yet their principles have also been applied to the litterarisation of previously oral languages during the Middle Ages (see, e.g., Árnason 2003; Somers 2024). Analysing the litterarisation process using modern models would appear to be an instance of using the present to explain the past (Labov 1994: Ch. 1), i.e., the uniformitarian principle. Nonetheless, we know that the past was different from today, and one task of the historical linguist is to assess *how* different it was.

Some central factors that must have played a role for the emergence of written varieties include the following (not intended to be comprehensive):

- The length and strength of Latinate learning in the relevant society.
- The lexical and structural influence of Latin on vernacular texts and glosses (Schiegg 2015).
- The difficulty in transforming the sounds and syntax of spoken discourse into the Latin alphabet (Seiler 2014).
- The existence of oral registers close to "konzeptionelle Schriftlichkeit" (Koch & Oesterreicher 1985).
- The existence of other forms of writing, in casu runic script.

These factors are not captured by Haugen's four-phase model or Kloss' central terms Abstand and Ausbau. Written language(s) were cultural objects of a different kind in the Middle Ages as compared to modern times, and thus the emergence of written languages in the first place must be treated differently from the modern development of standard languages. By discussing the factors above, we aim to cast more light on how the litterarisation process happened, while at the same time showing some limits to the uniformitarian principle.

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Tuesday, 29 September

Plenary 2 (E.001) 09:00–10:00

Michał Gluszkowski – Spoken language as reflected in gravestone inscriptions. What do the stones of the dead tell us about the language of the living?

Commemorating the dead is one of the oldest forms of ritualized social activity, and as R. Francaviglia (1971, 501) notes, "cemeteries serve both functional and emotional purposes." The cemetery itself is one of the most natural and exemplary places of remembrance (Fr. lieux de mémoire) (Nora, 1989), and the memory is preserved not only in religious symbols and works of art, but also (and perhaps above all) in words. The attention paid to the longevity of gravestones and the long-standing history of many necropolises allows us to trace linguistic and sociolinguistic changes in a given community.

Of course, gravestones are primarily a source for research on written language, as that is the form in which they exist, and moreover, their inscriptions are largely formalized. However, in the case of minority communities, especially small language islands isolated from other speakers of a given language, written sources are closer to the spoken language than in societies using standardized national languages. Users of minority languages, especially those using dialectal varieties, often lack access to grammatical, lexical, and spelling norms, leading to significant variation in these areas. Minorities and language islands live somewhat on the margins of mainstream society (like R. Park's "marginal man"), and their gravestones are more often created by non- specialists or by the representatives of the majority, who do not know the minority language and rely on texts provided to them, but this increases the chance of creating specific forms of inscriptions, including errors and variations. Descriptive inscriptions, such as maxims, words commemorating the deceased, and descriptions of their social roles, are often maintained in a spoken style. Unlike those of the dominant group, gravestones often bear unofficial names or nicknames rather than the full name. This means the inscription reflects what the deceased was called within the community during their lifetime, not their official name (the latter could be entirely different and reflect the culture of the majority).

The paper is based on material from Polish communities in various parts of the world (Ukraine, Russia, Turkey), and Russian Old Believers in Poland, Estonia, and Latvia. These communities operate under a kind of biscriptality (cf. Bunčić et al., 2016), resulting from the different alphabets (Latin and Cyrillic), or different sets of characters within the Latin script, used in the minority language and the surrounding majority language, which intensifies spelling variation. Diachronic analysis of selected cemeteries will allow us to demonstrate the influence of changes in the linguistic situation and social environment on the language of inscriptions, as well as certain aspects of changes in the everyday spoken language of the communities under question.

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Language Policies (1.006+1.007) 10:00–11:00

Álvaro S. Octavio de Toledo y Huerta – Changes from above and discourse traditions in the history of Spanish

The classical sociolinguistic notion of 'change from above' has rarely been examined in conjunction with the research paradigm of Discourse Traditions. Early reflections by Jacob and Kabatek (2001) on the positioning of discourse traditions along the distance–immediacy (*Nähe/Distanz*) continuum were followed by an initial application to fifteenth-century Spanish by Pons (2006, cf. also 2015). However, these pioneering contributions have not generated a sustained line of empirical research. This contribution addresses this gap by exploring the interaction between changes from above and discourse traditions through a series of historical case studies from Spanish. The analysis focuses primarily on the period from the late fifteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, a phase marked by standardisation leading to the emergence of a *Gemeinsprache* (Coseriu 1977). The selected cases illustrate diverse sociolinguistic configurations in which changes from above were promoted, negotiated, or resisted. Particular attention wiil be paid to morphosyntactic phenomena, especially within the domains of polarity (both negative and positive), quantification, and verbal tenses and periphrastic constructions. I will focus especially on incomplete or failed changes. Such changes are especially revealing, as they allow, first, the formulation of hypotheses concerning recurrent social contexts and causal factors underlying the rise and subsequent decline of changes from above, and, second, a more precise assessment of the broader effects of these changes on the diffusion and stabilisation of linguistic features. On the basis of these observations, the paper proposes several conclusions regarding the typology of changes from above, with particular emphasis on their relationship to syntactic borrowing and language contact. Finally, it outlines ways in which a contemporary sociolinguistic approach to change from above can be productively integrated with methodological developments in Discourse Traditions research (cf. Winter-Froemel and Octavio de Toledo 2023) frameworks.

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Sung Min Park – Language Policies in Jerusalem during Second Temple Judaism

Bernard Spolsky made a significant contribution to the study of Jewish linguistic ecology based on his language policy model formulated in 2004. His early language policy model, however,

received several critiques, leading him to develop a more systematic and fine-grained framework in his 2021 book, *Rethinking Language Policy*. His revised model shifts the focus of language policy from top-down, government-centered frameworks to bottom-up approaches that investigate the sociopolitical activities of individual authorities. Due to Spolsky's death in 2022, this revised framework has not yet been fully applied to the Jewish linguistic ecology. Building on his later theoretical work, this paper investigates language policy during the *Second Temple* period and analyzes how it shaped the multilingual environment of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem in the Second Temple period functioned within a complex sociopolitical and religious environment and developed a distinctly multilingual environment. Politically, the city was governed by the Hasmonean and Herodian dynasties. Religiously, it was characterized by divisions between rabbinic groups aligned with these dynasties and those opposed to them. Within this context, debates over language policy were continuous and primarily focused on the use of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

This study applies Spolsky's language policy framework to two categories of sources. The first includes historical and literary texts such as the Talmuds (*b. Sota* 49a–b; b. B. *Qam*. 38a, 83a, 116b; *b. B. Bat*. 12b; *b. Abod. Zar*. 17b; *b. Hul*. 80a; *y. B. Mes*. 8d, 12b, 29b; *b. Meg*. 7, 8b, 9a–b, 18a; *y. Shabb*. 15c; *y. Meg*. 71b–c; *y. Ber*. 9c), the Books of the Maccabees (1 Macc 1:14; 1 Macc 8:17–18), and the writings of Josephus (*Ant*. 12.138–46, 239–41, 386–87). These sources illuminate the political and religious power structures of the period and reveal the language ideologies and policies promoted by individuals and groups in positions of authority. The second category consists of inscriptions discovered in Jerusalem and its surrounding areas, which provide direct evidence of language practices influenced by contemporary policies and offer insight into everyday linguistic behavior.

This study suggests that although many rabbis maintained a sacred language ideology centered on Hebrew, a Greek-oriented language policy ultimately achieved significant success. Both the Hasmonean and Herodian dynasties promoted Greek as a political language and also facilitated its use in certain religious contexts. While Aramaic likely functioned as the primary language of daily life for much of the population, inscriptional evidence indicates that Greek may have served as a family language among a substantial segment of Jerusalem's middle class.

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Panel: Historical Sociolinguistic Data: Exploring the Past and Looking ahead (1) 1.008+1.009 10:00–11:00

Carolina P. Amador-Moreno & Anita Auer – Introduction

Following from the panel 'Accessing and Sharing Data in English Historical Sociolinguistics' at the Historical Sociolinguistics Network conference in 2025, we return to the discussion concerning the 'need to learn to use the data', pointed out at the NARNiHS 2024 Research Incubator by Terttu

Nevalainen. Such need, we argue, is directly related to the issue of ethical responsibilities in the use of historical data. The dissemination of data (and the concept of Open Data) raises a number of questions that need to be addressed, in the first instance by project leaders and research teams involved in the collection and dissemination of data, but that could also affect the user (in both academic and non-academic environments). Questions such as 'What do we choose to include in a corpus/database?' have a direct impact on how potential investigations on the history of any language (not just English) are conducted, and potentially major descriptive and theoretical claims will be built on choices made by researchers (and that may not have been made fully transparent by compilers, annotators and data hosts). By selecting, interconnecting and tagging our data we are, to a certain extent, already influencing what can be observed by researchers and shaping how knowledge can be implemented.

The proposed workshop will focus on issues related to Open Science for Historical Sociolinguistics, FAIR compliance in Historical Sociolinguistics, archiving and curating Historical Sociolinguistic data, public engagement, and CARE principles. The workshop will be divided into 4 papers by different contributors, alongside opening and final thoughts sessions, with the aim of sparking some useful discussion in relation to: (i) the compilation and distribution of historical (meta)data, (ii) the use of digital material, comparing practices across countries and setting the pace for the creation of a 'Guide of good practice' for future generations of researchers, and (iii) the development of stable, sustainable digital resources for historical sociolinguistic materials.

Karen P. Corrigan, Alexandra D'Arcy & Joseph Salmons – Ego-documents, dialect and the recovery and preservation of linguistic heritage.

This introductory presentation hones in on FAIR principles and issues related particularly to the anonymization processes and specific research ethics affecting ego-documents. Questions for consideration include the pros and cons of private vs. public corpora, and the rationale for accountable protocols that ensure the preservation, management and ethical exploitation of historical data and metadata. While inspired by Open Science, FAIR principles, as pointed out by Mons et al. (2017: 51), 'explicitly and deliberately do not address moral and ethical issues pertaining to the openness of data', leaving such issues entirely to the discretion of the data controllers. The authors participating in this introductory paper, who are all members of the ReDiaLing (Revisiting linguistic variation in Late Modern English dialects) project, will reflect on current policies and practices in tandem with the need to facilitate the interpretation and reuse of heritage data for diverse user groups. In terms of archiving, curating and future-proofing ego-documents the importance of engaging with the potential range of partners involved in data archiving and storage needs serious consideration. The Endings Project will be our focus in this regard since it has created a raft of interoperable tools, principles, policies and recommendations for re-use by humanities scholars to enable the production of accessible, stable and enduring digital resources. Other such infrastructures and initiatives such as the European Research Infrastructure Consortia CLARIN and DARIAH will also be highlighted. One of CLARIN's principal objectives e.g. is to ensure that all digital linguistic resources and tools within the EU and participating nation states, remain accessible online through a common portal. DARIAH seeks to enhance digitally-enabled research and teaching in the Arts and Humanities, with a focus on driving the production, preservation, and exchange of multimodal data, services, and AI tools, ensuring their long-term accessibility and continued dissemination.

We will discuss how full provenance and data versioning can guarantee reproducibility of the scientific results. In addition, we will report on diverse past experiences of making making data publicly available, providing added value providing added value for funders and policy makers while stimulating diverse users to engage with and reuse the data both ethically and responsibly.

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Purism (1.004) 10:00–11:00

Nelle Simonet – How not to Dutchify loanwords: Purist word lists and their failure in Dutch (1650–1850)

This case study examines a failed attempt at standardization situated in the elaboration stage of Haugen's (1966) standardization model, focusing on the tradition of puristic word lists. Emerging in the sixteenth century, these lists proposed Dutch-origin alternatives to lexical loans labelled as barbarisms in order to expand the expressive resources of Dutch by reducing reliance on words from other languages. An example is *kundtschap* ('knowledge, skill') as a proposed alternative to *intelligentie* ('intelligence'). Supported by influential literary figures such as Hooft and Vondel, this purist tradition flourished in the seventeenth century, yet similar word lists continued to be produced well into the eighteenth and even nineteenth centuries. Although literary authors were rarely the compilers of puristic word lists themselves, figures such as Hooft and Vondel played a pivotal role in legitimizing these undertakings within literary culture and thereby acted as important standardization agents (Rutten, 2007).

To shed light on processes of unsuccessful elaboration, this study first examines a selection of influential purist dictionaries from both the Northern and Southern Netherlands. These works are compared to identify recurring pairs of loanwords and their proposed puristic alternatives, while also exploring more general patterns of continuity and variation across the tradition. The second part of the study confronts these prescriptive norms with actual language use by drawing on digitized historical corpora, including the *Historical Corpus of Dutch* (Van de Voorde et al. 2023). Particular attention is paid to contrasts between literary and non-literary genres, as well as to diachronic developments in the relative distribution of purisms and barbarisms. The findings, which point to a limited diffusion of puristic innovations, contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the elaboration stage by showing how prescriptive ambition, literary authority and actual usage may diverge in processes of standardization.

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Fabian Horrocks – Civilising Words: Linguistic Purism and Epistemic Authority in Latin America

This paper explores the historical multifunctionality of language ideologies, with a particular focus on linguistic purism in Latin America. It argues that linguistic purism —typically seen as a restrictive, prescriptive force —also operated as a "positive" and epistemologically emancipating ideology for Spanish Americans in the postcolonial context. While synchronically, language discourse in Latin America often reflected the purist tendencies inherited from peninsular Spanish traditions (Ludwig, 2001), the ideological function of purism shifted significantly in the nineteenth century. This paper compares debates over linguistic normativity and usage in both

Spanish and Portuguese South America, situating these debates within the enduring civilisation versus barbarism dichotomy, as politically articulated by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento in *Facundo* (1845). Language, in this context, was not merely a communicative medium but a civilising force that marked the boundaries between Europeanised modernity and internal "barbarism". Linguistic purism therefore became a symbolic tool to elevate national language forms aligned with European civilisation, while marginalising indigenous, rural, and Afro-descendent language and registers (Niño-Murcia, 1997; García, 2005).In doing so, this paper engages with Zhang's (2023: 223) notion of the debate trapping users within a 'perpetual barbarian category'; challenging this notion by highlighting how linguistic purism also enabled a discursive space for Latin Americans to exert control over their linguistic features. While purism has long histories in European contexts (Thomas, 1991; Langer & Davies, 2005; Schmid & Robert, 2025), the postcolonial appropriation of purist ideology in Latin America marked a turning point. Latin American intellectuals, educators, and grammarians, acquired symbolic authority (Milroy & Milroy, 2012) to define, shape, and legitimise their own linguistic norms, sometimes in continuity with, but often in tension with, European linguistic centres. Ultimately, this paper demonstrates that linguistic purism in Latin America was not merely a colonial residue, but a strategic instrument of epistemic autonomy, reflecting both alignment with and resistance to Eurocentric linguistic authority.

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Morphology (1.005) 10:00–11:00

Paul O'Neill – The importance of historical sociolinguistics for morphological change: a comparison of transatlantic varieties of Spanish and Portuguese.

Despite the world's languages exhibiting remarkable diversity in their morphological systems, the Linguistic Niche Hypothesis (Lupyan & Dale, 2010) proposes that languages adapt structurally to their social and demographic environments. Evidence from ethnographic, historical, computational, and large-scale statistical studies converges to show that social environments influence morphological complexity. Specifically, languages are purported to be less morphologically complex when they are spoken by large populations (Lupyan and Dale 2010), are

the result of dialect mixing and/or have had extensive contact with other languages (Kerswill, 2013; Trudgill 2011), and extensive L2 adult acquisition (Sinnemäki , 2020). However, a recent study by Shcherbakova et al (2023) has challenged these assumptions, suggesting that morphological complexity is less driven by sociolinguistic niche (i.e., speaker numbers, non-native ratios) and more by historical lineage. The study also highlights that factors such as literacy, language policy, and socio-economic structure might still play roles not captured in current models.

Within this contested academic context, it is informative to analyse transatlantic varieties of Spanish and Portuguese, since the similarities between Spanish varieties contrast starkly with the difference between Brazilian and European Portuguese, to the extent that, with respect to the morphology, the latter have been described as typologically different. American varieties of Spanish and Portuguese both fulfil the aforementioned requirements for the loss of morphological complexity, but whilst spoken varieties of Brazilian Portuguese display many of the characteristic hallmarks of morphological reduction, the same is not true of American varieties of Spanish. In this talk I show that there were both quantitative and qualitative differences between the Spanish and Portuguese empires in terms of the symbolic value of language, as well as differences in the infrastructure and material resources needed to successfully implement language policies. The symbolic value of language is an elusive and intangible concept, but it encompasses notions such as the importance of speaking the European language, the idea of proper language use, and other linguistic ideologies. I suggest that the importance of these social factors has not been fully taken into account in theories of morphological change, but they seem crucial to explaining the differences in and between the transatlantic varieties of Spanish and Portuguese.

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Susumu Kuroda – Deverbal Nouns in Engelbert Kämpfer's Geschichte und Beschreibung von Japan

Engelbert Kämpfer (1651–1716), a German physician, is recognized as one of the few Europeans permitted to reside in Japan during its period of isolation (1633–1853). Following his stay (1690–1692), Kämpfer compiled extensive observations on Japan, which were published posthumously in Britain (1727) and profoundly shaped Europe's perception of Japan well into the nineteenth century. The German edition, *Geschichte und Beschreibung von Japan*, appeared in 1777–1779, based on a manuscript prepared by Kämpfer's nephew Johann Hermann.

This study investigates the characteristics of Kämpfer's text from a sociolinguistic perspective, with particular attention to deverbal nouns formed with the suffix *-ung*. First, we analyzed the distribution of parts of speech in Kämpfer's work and compared it with six literary and six academic texts from the same period. The comparison shows that literary texts exhibit a high frequency of finite verbs, reflecting a dynamic narrative style, whereas academic texts contain more nouns and fewer verbs. Kämpfer's text displays a markedly lower frequency of finite verbs than literary works and a noun frequency closer to academic texts, suggesting a non-narrative, quasi-scientific character.

For a more detailed analysis, the abstract nouns ending in *-ung* in Book V of Kämpfer's work were examined and compared with a parallel corpus of contemporary texts from philosophy and prose literature. The results indicate that philosophical texts display extremely high token frequencies of *-ung* nouns but low type frequencies, resulting in minimal productivity when measured against *hapax legomena*. Literary texts, by contrast, exhibit a higher type-token ratio and greater morphological productivity. Kämpfer's text aligns more closely with literary works in terms of productivity, despite its scientific tone. This suggests that there was an established interaction between text type—here, the travel account with narrative elements—and word formation.

Our findings contribute to diachronic studies of German word formation by demonstrating that morphology can also be influenced by the character of the text. Kämpfer's work occupies an intermediate position between scientific and literary discourse, offering insights into the stylistic hybridity of early modern travel writing.

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Literary texts (1) (1.003) 10:00–10:30

Christoph Winter – How Jutlanders communicated with North Frisians according to mid-19th century literary sources from the islands of Föhr and Amrum

The historical language contact between the five closely related languages South Jutlandic, Standard Danish, North Frisian, Low German, and High German, which converged in what is now the German-Danish border region, is extremely complex in many respects and has yet to be exhaustively researched. This paper is devoted to a small part of this multi-layered topic, namely the question of how Jutlandic seasonal workers and migrants communicated with the native North Frisian-speaking population of the islands of Föhr and Amrum in the mid-19th century. The fact that no studies have as yet been published that address the numerous facets of postmedieval

Jutlandic-North Frisian language contact and its concrete forms of historical orality is certainly due to the lack of primary language data from the period in question. Apart from that, scattered pieces of metalinguistic information cannot provide a sufficiently broad insight into real historical language contact situations.

To approach this object of study despite the lack of primary sources, contemporary literary texts by North Frisian authors can be considered as a secondary source of data. I will therefore use the example of two literary dialogues between North Frisians and Jutlandic migrants or seasonal workers, which – also for reasons of comparison – were taken from different text genres (*Det Skiwsjitten*, a theatrical comedy written by Peter Jansen Backer before 1879, and *Arammud an Dögganhaid bi-rköddar*, a dramatic prose narrative written by Christian Johansen in 1847), to analyse how the authors of these two dialogues shaped the individual language skills of their Jutlandic characters and their concrete situational mixing of different languages (code-mixing). Following a linguistic study by Viola Wilcken (2015a; 2015b), which investigates historical features of Missingsch (a High German vernacular heavily influenced by Low German) and which discusses the value of literary texts as a source of authentic language data, the specific aim of my paper is to identify literary features of code-mixing by Jutlanders that might also have occurred in real language contact situations with North Frisians in the mid-19th century. I will highlight not only the limitations but also the possibilities of this method in order ultimately to be able to make a judgement on the validity of the documented features.

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Panel: Historical newspaper corpora: Challenges and Potentials for Historical Sociolinguistics (1) (1.006+1.007) 11:30–13:00

Konstantin Niehaus & Markus Schiegg – Introduction

The introductory paper to this panel will discuss the complexity of historical newspapers and its existing corpora for sociolinguistic research with both its challenges and potentials.

Our introduction will focus more specifically on these, such as:

1) What actually counts as a state-of-the-art historical newspaper corpus? How can we combine different newspaper corpora with different technical environments (e.g. different search engines) and still get results which are comparable? The number of digitised historical newspapers steadily keeps growing, yet linguists and their specific needs as researchers in terms of filtering options, annotations or OCR precision are

underrepresented in large projects such as *NewsEye* (2018–2022, https://www.newseye.eu).

2) What do we make of the increasing genre variety in newspaper texts? This is especially but not exclusively relevant to the more industrial and professional newspaper production since the end of the 19th century. Which variants, for example quotations or stylisations of spoken language, are typical in terms of genre and how does that help us to develop more precise annotations of historical newspapers? Which genres will typically contain metalinguistic evidence and how can we analyse this more systematically?
3) How can we measure the diffusion of innovative variants in lexis, grammar, and orthography via historical newspapers, and, more specifically, what does that tell us about standardisation processes in actual language use?

By introducing these questions, we open the floor for the individual papers of the panel and delve into details of on-going sociolinguistic analyses.

Laura Fischlhammer & Konstantin Niehaus – Diatopic standards of usage in German via historical newspapers 1870–1950: results and technical challenges

Historiography of German tends to downplay the impact of diatopic variation during standardisation (Elspaß 2021: 102) and suggests a fairly smooth process in which, for example, grammatical norms had been consolidated approx. by 1800. However, recent studies suggest a considerable amount of historical diatopic variation in standard German since 1800 of which we have barely scratched the surface (Schiegg & Niehaus 2017, Niehaus & Elspaß 2018).

In our case study we investigate the diatopic distribution of selected grammatical items, particularly word formation variables such as *Unter-brechung*/*Unter-bruch* 'interruption' or *durchweg*/*durchweg-s* 'throughout' but also word-specific syntactical variation such as the use of *trotzdem* 'nevertheless' as a subordinate conjunction. We will compare the diachronies of codified standards (via school grammar books and style guides) and standards of usage (via newspaper texts) from 1870 to 1950. Although regional newspapers do not reflect spoken language directly, they still provide valuable insights into the actual language use that contributed to later spoken standards.

Based on our results, we will discuss the technical challenges when investigating grammatical variables. This will also concern further non-word-specific variation whose examination needs to draw on reliable POS-tagging or parsing of historical newspaper texts.

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Lucia Assenzi & Lisa Windisch – Text types as predictors for language variation: A methodological framework for historical newspaper corpora

This paper presents a methodological framework for identifying and annotating text types in historical newspaper corpora and demonstrates how genre-sensitive annotation can help explain linguistic variation. Using a corpus of twelve issues (1830–1835) from three major German-language newspapers, annotated for both text type and forms of reported discourse, the study builds on Assenzi & Windisch (forthcoming) and focuses on the annotation process, the statistical analysis and their explanatory potential.

The first part addresses conceptual and practical challenges in identifying text types in early newspapers, where genres were fluid and not yet conventionalised (Schuster & Haaf 2023: 22). The second part illustrates the explanatory value of text-type annotation: multinomial logistic regression confirms that text type significantly influences the linguistic realization of reported discourse.

The paper also discusses other potential text-type-sensitive patterns in language use. For example, the use of foreign words and code-switching appears to correlate with text type and thematic domain. Further domains of interest include traces of orality in opinion pieces and editorials, as well as dialect and reproduction of spoken language in serialized novels and satirical texts.

The study shows that genre distinctions are not merely classificatory tools but explanatory variables in the study of language variation and change. It thus argues for a systematic integration of text-type annotation in historical sociolinguistics.

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Panel: Historical Sociolinguistic Data: Exploring the Past and Looking ahead (2) (1.008+1.009) 11:30–13:00

Mark Richard Lauersdorf – An embarrassment of riches in historical sociolinguistics? – The science of making full use of all the data!

FAs stated in the overarching panel proposal: "Questions such as ‘What do we choose to include in a corpus/database?’ may have a direct impact on how potential investigation on the history of any language (not just English) is conducted… By selecting, interconnecting and tagging our data we are, to a certain extent, already influencing what can be observed by researchers and shaping how knowledge can be implemented."

On the one hand, these statements evoke the spectrum of "maximum rawness" <–> "maximum annotation" of data (Sinclair 1991: 21-22, 2004: 5; Leech 2004: 17), with the accompanying notions that any act of annotation is an act of (analytical) interpretation, and any act of (analytical) interpretation is an act of annotation. And this directly intersects with the spectrum of "inductive approaches" <–> "deductive approaches", which, in turn, intersects with the spectrum of "qualitative approaches" <–> "quantitative approaches". Bound up in this are questions of

structured and unstructured (big) data, a priori research biases, problems with "naming things", and related concepts. These notions will serve in this presentation as the framework for consideration of what data gets shared, why, and in what fashion, involving obligatorily also questions of Open Science, FAIR, and CARE principles.

On the other hand, the above statements from the panel proposal call on us to consider strongly the range of data we work with in historical sociolinguistics. Invoking the "Use all the data!" principle (Lauersdorf 2024), this presentation will highlight specifically the inclusion of non-textual data and information (sometimes termed "material data" in discussions of qualitative approaches in the social sciences [for example Lahman 2025: 307-331]), including everything from physical items, to visual information, to public records, to the non-language aspects of textual documents. The use of "historical language-documentation fieldwork" to gather "all the linguistic data" must be accompanied by "historical ethnographic fieldwork" and "using all the socio-historical data" in order to arrive at a more complete picture of language use in historical social interaction. Examples from multiple languages will illustrate the discussion throughout.

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Marina Dossena – The Compiler's Paradox: Sensitive Data and the Thirst for Knowledge

Acquiring data has become an almost effortless task in recent times. Not only are digital repositories increasingly widespread, but access to primary sources has also been facilitated by (relatively) low-cost travel. However, in many scholarly investigations some questions remain unanswered as far as the selection and use of sources are concerned.

The aim of this presentation is to shed light on what such questions may be, regarding what texts are employed and in what ways they feature in the presentation of research findings. Although significant problems concerning corpus compilation have sometimes been addressed (e.g., see Biber 1993; Leech 2007; Rissanen [1989]/2018), a few caveats may be added in relation to the quotation (if not actual circulation) of unpublished manuscripts. Documents that are available for research purposes in libraries and archives are not necessarily in the public domain; for instance, correspondence may still belong to the writers' family, while the repository provides a safe environment for its preservation. It is therefore indispensable to acquire the owners' permission to use that material, and that may have an impact on what items are (not) included in a corpus. Moreover, attention to sensitive data ought to be paid when private documents are discussed, regardless of their distance in time.

Within that framework, my presentation will centre on some methodological issues, bearing in mind the specificity of historical sociolinguistics in relation to other fields of research, such as

genealogy or social network analysis, and discussing the potential existence of a uniformitarian principle when privacy is concerned.

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Moragh Gordon – Sharing is CARE-ing? Exploring the feasibility of FAIR and CARE principles for a corpus of poor relief correspondence

HThis paper draws on a newly compiled corpus of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Scottish poor relief correspondence (ScotPP) to reflect on the challenges involved in applying the FAIR and CARE principles within historical sociolinguistics. Poor relief materials offer unique insights into the language of the lower classes, as well as the lived experience of poverty.

However, they also raise questions about our ethical responsibilities toward the writers and their descendants, and about who should have a say in how such data are accessed, represented, and reused. For instance, anonymisation may protect individuals but can also reduce research value or diminish findability for descendant communities. In other words, how can we apply CARE principles without compromising FAIR principles? FAIR concerns are further compounded by the layered nature of the data. Digitisation produces different data objects, from potentially restricted archival images, to digital transcriptions, and derivative datasets such as wordlists or more specific sociolinguistic extractions. A common strategy is to provide only the derived layers to sidestep ethical or legal constraints. Yet these choices affect how the data are interpreted by restricting what is visible, searchable, or materially represented.

Ownership adds another complication. Digital facsimiles often fall under archival copyright or donor agreements, while the status of transcriptions and derived datasets is less clear, creating a multilayeredness and fuzziness that is sometimes difficult to navigate.

Finally, interoperability remains a challenge: there is no single standardised way of encoding or structuring historical sociolinguistic data, which makes it difficult to link or reuse datasets in the way FAIR principles encourage.

By reflecting on these issues through the case of the ScotPP corpus, this paper aims to open up a discussion about what reasonable and context-sensitive practices might entail.

Gender (1.004) 11:30–13:00

Marina Serrano-Marín, Marta Puente-González & Lena Sowada – Female voices in transit: a philological study of letters written by women in the Prize Papers (17th–19th centuries)

This proposal presents the preliminary results of research dedicated to analysing a collection of letters written by women that were found on Spanish ships captured by the British Navy and preserved in the documentary collection known as Prize Papers. This archive, exceptional for the material integrity of the documents seized between the 17th and 19th centuries, offers direct

testimony of the everyday, emotional, and practical writing of women linked to the Hispanic world in contexts of transatlantic mobility.

The study focuses on a selected corpus of personal letters, mostly addressed to family members. Using a methodology that combines linguistic-codicological analysis, palaeographic description and historical contextualisation, it examines lexical and morphosyntactic features, epistolary formulas, orthographic uses and marks of orality that reveal the sociolinguistic diversity of the authors.

The aim is to shed light on how these female voices, in many cases from social strata that are underrepresented in traditional archives, reshape our understanding of Hispanic written culture in early modernity. The letters reveal communication practices that range from the intimate and the domestic to the administrative and highlight the active role of women in family and commercial networks on an imperial scale.

The research also addresses the emotional dimension and the record of experiences derived from separation, maritime risk, and political uncertainty, elements that emerge strongly when considering that all these letters never reached their destination. Their involuntary preservation makes the Prize Papers an archive of interrupted silences, the study of which not only recovers historically marginalised voices, but also contributes to broader debates on written circulation, gender and mobility in the Hispanic world.

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Marina Berts – Stitched Words and Silent Voices: Embroidery as Female Literacy 'from below' in Late Modern England

Research on literacy in England has mainly focused on reading and writing practices across gender and different social groups (Cressy 1980; Kintgen 1988; Hailwood 2023). Female literacy, however, remains a complex matter because traditional definitions of literacy privilege pen-and-ink writing and marginalise alternative forms of expression. Conventional literacy studies have

rarely focused on material practices such as needlework, through which lower-class women in Late Modern England could interact with language physically (Teague 2024), developing what may be termed *needle literacy*. In order to contribute to this field of research, this study examines embroidered texts, particularly Elizabeth Parker's stitched life story (Daly Goggin 2002) and texts on samplers, as a form of female literacy that has received little scholarly attention (Calabresi 2009). It explores how lower-class girls and women developed or maintained literacy through needlework and what these practices reveal about language history 'from below'. The analysis draws on Sussex relief requests from the *Language of Artisans and the Labouring Poor* (LALP) corpus (Auer & Laitinen 2014) alongside Parker's stitched text and other sampler texts. These sources allow for a comparison between conventional written discourse and embroidered language produced by the labouring classes. Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, the study investigates similarities and differences across these forms of expression and enables a broader understanding of how female literacy was approached in contexts where little formal schooling existed for the poor and did not include systematic instruction in writing (Gomersall 1997). While results are forthcoming, the aim is to position embroidered language as a speech-based historical source and broaden our understanding of literacy practices 'from below' in the Late Modern English period.

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Olena Synchak – Reconstructing Feminization in Pre-Soviet Ukrainian: Integrating Oral Interviews and Archival Texts of Ukrainian Women's Organizations in Postwar Munich

This paper investigates the feminization of Ukrainian in the 1940s–1950s by integrating spoken and written evidence from displaced communities in postwar Munich. In Ukraine, Soviet-era constraints on the official use of feminine terms continued to shape language standardisation, limiting these forms largely to colloquial or fictional domains. Because scholarship on pre-Soviet feminine terms has relied primarily on dictionaries from central Ukraine (Tomilenko 2019), their broader textual and social usage remains understudied. Little is therefore known about how

earlier feminine forms were maintained in Western Ukraine's multilingual environment or reshaped in the postwar German diaspora, where many displaced Ukrainians preserved pre-Soviet linguistic practices. To address this gap, the study adopts a historical sociolinguistic approach and draws on sources situated along the orality–writtenness continuum, combining oral interviews with second- and third-generation emigrants and archival materials produced by Ukrainian Women's Organisations in Munich in the 1940s–1950s.

The analysis is grounded in the distinction between the 'language of immediacy' and the 'language of distance' (Koch & Oesterreicher 1985/2012), which serves to illuminate how communicative settings shape the expression and preservation of feminine terms. Oral interviews provide speech-based evidence and metalinguistic reflections that offer indirect access to earlier spoken practices, whereas UWO documents represent formal institutional discourse involving deliberate linguistic choices. Positioning these sources along the orality–literacy continuum reveals how feminization patterns surface similarly or differently in spontaneous recollection and in codified documentation.

The dataset comprises three types of material: (1) oral language-biographical interviews; (2) written research-elicited materials, including surveys with visual stimuli and written questionnaires; and (3) institutional archival texts, such as statutes, reports, correspondence, and occupational records. These heterogeneous sources are analysed using qualitative discourse analysis and corpus-informed methods, including typological, stylistic, and language-contact classification of feminine forms. Particular attention is given to the co-existence of masculine and feminine variants referring to women, German-influenced loan formations, hybrid derivational models, and the semantic domains in which feminization proved most stable (e.g., leadership roles, education, administration). The findings reveal a broader functional and lexical range of feminine forms across institutional and community-based texts than in later Soviet lexicography, demonstrating that diaspora discourse functioned as a site of both linguistic conservation and innovation.

The results contribute to debates on language standardization and change by showing how both printed and handwritten institutional texts in exile communities may preserve norms later marginalised within state-based language traditions, while oral evidence highlights selective retention, adaptation, and reinterpretation in postwar memory. By integrating spoken and written sources, the paper challenges linear narratives of feminization as a recent development and offers an empirically grounded account of gendered language practices as historically embedded, socially mediated, and shaped by multilingual environment. More broadly, the study underscores the value of non-canonical archival materials and oral testimony for reconstructing linguistic phenomena underrepresented in official dictionaries, demonstrating the potential of historical sociolinguistics to integrate speech-based and institutional sources beyond the nation-state framework.

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Legal & administrative texts (1) (1.005) 11:30–13:00

Melchior Jakubowski – Reflecting the spoken languages in Eastern European metrical registers from the 17th and 18th centuries

Metrical registration became commonplace in early modern Europe. The Catholic Church adopted it following the Council of Trent, incorporating the registers of baptisms, marriages, and deaths. Apart from demographic studies, they have been used to analyse the interconfessional relations (e.g. Frick 2013), but not so much for the languages. Initially, the registers were held in Latin. However, the state unification and language standardisation processes (Burke 2004; Hüning, Vogl, Moliner 2012) resulted in the majority of registers being filled in with the national languages of the respective states (19th c.). Considering the spoken languages, the most intriguing period is that of transition, wherein Latin remained predominant but vernacular languages were endeavouring to assume its role. In Eastern European multilingual communities this resulted in numerous competing vernaculars (Bömelburg, Kersken 2020).

This paper analyses the cases of spoken languages creeping into the Latin formular in three multilingual regions: Latgale (eastern Latvia), Bukovina (Romania / Ukraine), and Suwałki region (Poland / Lithuania). In all cases, the parishioners spoke at least two languages and their hierarchy reflected the social structure with different language(s) of upper and lower classes (cf. prestige and plebeian multilingualism in Jaspers 2009). In Latgale and Suwałki, the 'elite' language was Polish, while the majority of the peasants spoke Latgalian and Lithuanian, respectively. Consequently, a proportion of the entries were held in Polish, but there were instances of using Latgalian or Lithuanian too. Moreover, 'ethnic' terms could sometimes mean languages, signalling the presence of Belarusian and German. In Bukovina (annexed by the Habsburgs in 1775), the Catholic settlers arrived from German and Polish territories, which resulted in the requirement for bilingual parishes. The spelling of the surnames demonstrates that the priests were familiar with writing in both German and Polish.

This study is part of the ERC-funded project "Multilingual worlds – neglected histories. Uncovering their emergence, continuity and loss in past and present societies". In the absence of direct information regarding the locally spoken languages, metrical registers offer an opportunity to delve beneath the official discourses and employ a bottom-up perspective. The vernaculars infiltrated the Latin formular given that the priests had to use them in their quotidian activities. This finding aligns with the dispersed data concerning the languages of the sermons and church singing.

The paper argues that metrical registers provide valuable insights into the local multilingual dynamics and the interplay of spoken and written discourses, operating between the official regulation and pragmatic approaches.

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Rosa H. Yanez Rosales – Spoken Nahuatl in 16th Century Denunciations.

Notarial Nahuatl (Mentz, 2008), is the linguistic register developed between the 16th and 18th centuries, by Indigenous scribes who wrote wills, denunciations, minutes of city hall elections, etc., within the legal and administrative context of colonial Mexico. There are numerous documents written in Nahuatl, the language that holds the highest number of speakers in present-day Mexico.

Nahuatl texts follow a standardized format where we find fixed phrases, and stereotyped statements. The presence of witnesses, date, name of the town, signatures, etc., are recorded. It is information the Indigenous notary was aware the text had to include in order to be accepted in a process. However, in the section where the grievances are described (the core part of the text) we realize that the scribe has been able to retrieve how the speaker actually reports what he has been through and "communicative immediacy" is achieved (Oesterreicher, 1996). There is an oral imprint recorded and it remains in our reading of the text. Let us look at an example:

Nahuatl text	Translation (by Rosa H. Yanez Rosales)
...quinequi **nechmecavitequiz** ybpampa mitsim quinequi san yuqui nitayogoliz yca inun nechcuilia novara **niman nechsilvia** yca ynun vara huel timucinia yquac tigonnana ynun vara timucinia aci **vccepa** amu patchivi yyolo vccepa vnechcichquic ayac haquin vcatca **niman** vnechcalactic calactic **niman** vquinosach ce tlacatl **niman** ychtaca **nechmecavitequic** vnechtolinic... (Sullivan, 2003, p. 24).	...he wanted to **whip me** because of the fish he wanted me to give him. That is why he took my baton from me. **Then** he **told me**: "With the baton, you think you are very important. When you take the baton you think you are very important". **In another occasion** he arrived, and again not satisfied, he grabbed the baton from me. There was nobody, and **then** he took me inside. **Then**, he called a man, **then** he secretly **whipped me**, he tortured me...

The fragment exhibits mainly direct discourse. In the narration of the offenses and injuries inflicted on the plaintiff, the insertions of *niman* "then", and of *vccepa* "in another occasion" function as connectors, they link phrases and introduce new information related to the defendant.

Through the transcription, translation, and analysis of two denunciations of the 16th century produced in the Bishopric of Guadalajara, this paper aims to show how some notarial Nahuatl texts exhibit fragments, and phrases that recorded what may be identified as speech. The way the details of the offenses are scaffolded, provides cohesion to the narration, and allows us to "hear" the person "speak" about how he has been injured.

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Anna D. Havinga – Written discourse and vernacularisation in documentary legal texts from medieval Scotland

Documentary legal texts are texts with a legal function that relate "to a specific situation at a specific point of time, involving specific people, whether or not all of these are explicitly stated" (Stenroos 2020: 43). For Scotland, only few such texts have been preserved from the Middle Ages. The *Aberdeen Council Register* (kept since 1398) are Scotland's oldest and most complete run of civic records, offering a glimpse into medieval life in one of Scotland's most significant towns. For less significant burghs, only a few medieval council records remain accessible, including:

- the *Haddington Common Buke* (21 pages from 1423 to 1470)
- the *Newburgh Burgh Court Book* (218 pages from 1457 to 1480)
- the *Peebles Court and Council Records* (374 pages from 1456 to 1585).

In this talk, I will trace the replacement of Latin by Scots in these four sources by quantitatively analysing the "main", i.e. dominant language (Schipor 2018; Stenroos 2020) of each entry in the records. This will reveal whether the vernacularisation process can first be seen in smaller burghs, in line with Croenen's (2003, p. 117) findings for the Low Countries, where Middle Dutch was adopted by "small, rural courts and institutions of local government" before it was used in medieval cities that had a longer writing tradition. A qualitative analysis of the *Newburgh Burgh Court Book*, which contains almost exclusively Scots entries, then focusses on the written discourse within one of the documentary legal texts to provide explanations for the language choice in this particular source. The combination of these analyses will address the following questions:

- When and how was Latin replaced by Scots in these four documentary legal texts?
- Who drives the vernacularisation process in documentary legal texts from medieval Scotland?
- What explanations for language choice can be gleaned from the written discourse within one of the records?

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Translation (1.003) 11:30–13:00

Olivia Cockburn – Translators as agents of language change in the history of Spanish

This paper will explore the role of translators in language change, focusing on translations from Greek into Latin in late Antiquity and the evolution of Latin into Ibero-Romance. It will examine source text interference in translations of scientific, technical and religious texts and will consider the sociocultural and historical motivations behind certain translation choices.

When transferring texts from one language to another, translators adopt strategies and techniques that leave their imprint on the target text and can ultimately influence the target language itself. Translators are influenced by the sociocultural and historical contexts in which they work and so the study of written language contact in historical sources can offer valuable insights into key moments in a language's history. Over the past few decades, there has been increased scholarly interest in the extralinguistic factors behind textual production in the ancient world, leading to new approaches to the study of historical texts (Adams, Janse & Swain, 2002; Adams, 2003; Mullen & James, 2012; Lavidas, 2022). Recent years have also seen a number of publications exploring translation as a locus of language contact (Kranich, 2014; Ožbot, 2014; Malamatidou, 2017; Kotze, 2020) and others offering case studies of translation-induced language change (see Becher, Kranich, Höder & House, 2011 & Cockburn, 2026). This paper will contribute to this area of study by exploring the impact that translators of scientific, medical and religious texts had on Latin between 4th-6th centuries CE and its subsequent development into Ibero-Romance.

Following a brief overview of the concept of 'translation' in late Antiquity, this paper will explore how translators working from Greek into Latin laid the morphological and syntactic foundations of Spanish technical terminology and religious discourse. In this way, it aims to demonstrate the value of studying translations as sites of contact and catalysts of linguistic change, while highlighting the importance of situating both translators and translated texts within their broader social, cultural, and historical contexts.

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Julia Bacskai-Atkari – Historical revisions: Tracing idiomatic features in Middle English Bible translations

Generally known as the "Wycliffite Bible", the first full Bible translations appearing at the end of Middle English provide interesting insights into idiomatic features of the vernacular in the period. This evidence is indirect since these texts belonging to the written register are translations based on the Latin original. While the authorship of both the later (LV) and especially the earlier (EV) version is subject to debate, there is consensus in the LV being a revised version of the EV (Bruce 1984, Kelly 2023). The deviations between the two versions reflect conscious decisions regarding formulation: in general, the LV is closer to idiomatic English (Bruce 1984), congruent with the plausible assumption that the EV may not have been originally intended for wider use (Kelly 2023).

Based on a corpus study carried out on the two versions, my talk discusses two alternations that represent equivalent options that can occur in the same syntactic environments: (i) the use of whether in polar questions with, (1a), versus without verb fronting, (1b), and (ii) the use of wh-relatives, (2a), versus that-relatives, (2b).

(1) a. **Whether is** God in vs, or noon? (EV)

b. **Whether**. the Lord **is** in vs, ether. Nay.? (LV)

'Is God in us or not?' (Exodus 17:7)

(2) a. Y shal smyte Egipte in alle my merueyles, **that** Y am to do in the mydle of hem (EV)

b. I schal smyte Egipt in alle my marueils, **whiche***. Y schal do in the myddis of hem (LV)

'I will strike Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in its midst.' (Exodus 3:20)

Alternation (i) is no longer active in English, as whether does not occur in main clause questions. My corpus data show that while the pattern with verb fronting is dominant in the EV, its share dramatically decreases in the LV. This indicates that verb fronting was considered a less natural option for the LV, even though it does not mirror the Latin word order and it is more widespread in Middle English in general (Fisher 1992). The difference between the EV and the LV thus reflects historical change in this respect, the LV going for the more innovative pattern.

Alternation (ii) is subject to various sociolinguistic constrains from Early Modern English onwards; in Middle English, though, the *wh*-strategy is innovative and it is considered to have spread from written language, probably also fostered by contact with Latin/French. However, my corpus data indicate a significantly higher proportion of *wh*-relatives in the LV than in the EV, suggesting that the LV again went for the more innovative variant that is thus neither a direct Latin reflex nor a feature alien to the vernacular.

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Gijsbert J. Rutten & Manjusha Kuruppath – Colonial language policies: Discourses on Bible translations as a window on transnational language ideologies in the Dutch East Indies (17th-18th centuries)

The multilingual urban setting of seventeenth- and eighteenth century Batavia (present-day Jakarta), colonized by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in the seventeenth century, was home to extreme linguistic diversity including varieties of Malay, Portuguese as an earlier colonial language (from the sixteenth century onwards), and Dutch as the more recent colonial language (from the early seventeenth century onwards). The strong position of both Malay and Portuguese as contact languages for wider communication between different groups in society made the VOC support Bible translations in Malay and Portuguese as part of its proselytization efforts. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, a dispute arose over a translation of the Bible into Malay, the two opponents and rivaling translators being Melchior Leijdekker (1645-1701) and François Valentijn (1666-1727). In this paper, we explore recently digitized VOC archives, i.e. the GLOBALISE database, to study the language policy discourse in the Indonesian archipelago that the Dutch East India Company engaged in – in the period before the "high colonialism" of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We use the discussions over the translation of the Bible into Malay as our starting point, aiming to reconstruct the knowledge that the VOC had about Malay, more specifically to study how the VOC negotiated and navigated this situation of historical multilingualism in policy and practice, and to analyze the language policy from a language-ideological perspective. The case study will demonstrate how European language ideologies were imposed on the sociolinguistic situation in Batavia and informed the VOC's language policy. As such, our case study links up with the recent interest in multilingualism within historical sociolinguistics as well as with ongoing debates in colonial linguistics.

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Panel: Historical newspaper corpora: Challenges and Potentials for Historical Sociolinguistics (2) (1.006+1.007) 14:30–15:30

Machteld de Vos – Spread the new(s)! Tracing the standardisation of Dutch in seventeenth-century newspapers

The seventeenth century witnessed both the emergence of a Dutch standard language and printed newspapers. In the Dutch Republic, newspapers rapidly developed into what can be regarded as the first mass medium, reaching readers across social classes (Van Oostendorp & Van der Sijs, 2019). These newspapers therefore potentially not only spread the news, but also the newly emerging Dutch standard language.

This paper presents findings from a project investigating the extent to which newspapers played a role in disseminating the developing Dutch standard language. Adopting the concept of standardisation 'from above' as a theoretical starting point, different grammatical features were examined to assess to what extent norms from the early Early Modern normative discourse on Dutch (ca. 1550–1650) were reflected in newspaper language. The case study of third-person plural personal pronouns (*haar*, *heur*, *hen*, *hun* 'them') demonstrates that, whereas codifiers advocated a system aligned with the 'one form, one function'-principle, newspaper usage evolved towards the preferred use of one form, *haar*, for all functions. Compared with contemporary usage

in administrative texts, ego-documents and pamphlets (e.g. Lismont, 2025), newspaper language stands out: in the other genres, *hen* and *hun* had become the dominant plural object forms.

I argue that this uniformity in newspaper language reveals a different yet crucial role for seventeenth-century newspapers in Dutch standardisation: dissemination not through the direct implementation of norms from the normative discourse, but by setting a consistent example of usage.

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Richard West-Soley – "Dear Mr. Heditor...": Phonologies and Ideologies in the Newspaper Letters Column

Reader correspondence written on – and in – dialect provides valuable evidence of both realworld phonologies and the value systems in which they are embedded. Drawing on a corpus of nineteenth- and twentieth-century newspapers from the Black Country region of England, the author's research examines two intersecting press traditions: the parodic "*Dear Mr. Heditor...*" letters from the mid-nineteenth century, and the arguably more authentic "metalinguistic letter volleys" that proliferated decades later.

The earlier, pseudonymous letters employ a formulaic mix of eye dialect, comedy tropes and local phonological cues to stage the voice of the 'person on the street' in social and political commentary. As editorial pieces, these stylised texts nonetheless reveal how local phonologies were enregistered as "*metapragmatic... images of personhood*" (Paulsen 2022, p. 43) that become ciphers of authenticity and common sense.

Conversely, actual readers' letters in the middle decades of the twentieth century reveal community-internal reflection on dialect features, boundaries, and change. Speakers negotiate micro-regional distinctiveness, drawing upon orthographic traditions established by those earlier, parodic precursors.

Both modes of discourse are made authoritative by the same empowering and validating nature of the print institution (Cavanagh 2019). Taken together, they show the importance of the epistle format in mediating folk-linguistic awareness through newsprint, allowing us to unpick changing ideological stances towards dialect, as well as reconstruct the shifting features of spoken varieties across the centuries.

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Panel: Historical Sociolinguistic Data: Exploring the Past and Looking ahead (3) (1.008+1.009) 14:30–15:30

Christa Schneider – Preserving the Past: Towards Storage Solutions for Data in Historical Sociolinguistics

Historical sociolinguistic data - whether archival records, community-generated materials, or reconstructed datasets - create challenges for long-term storage and stewardship. Their heterogeneity, sometimes their sensitivity, and often their fragmentary stage require storage solutions that can flexibly adapt to changing technical standards while maintaining the integrity and interpretability of the underlying materials. This presentation examines the infrastructural challenges that emerge when working with early modern criminal records, currently transcribed and processed in *Transkribus*, a platform whose convenience for annotation and recognition contrasts sharply with its limitations as a durable repository. Using this case, the contribution explores the broader problem of sustainability in the storage of historical sociolinguistic data.

I will outline five current pathways for preserving and disseminating the dataset, each illustrating a distinct configuration of accessibility, curation, and technical risk. Options such as *Zenodo* or *Transcriptiones* provide open access but support only transcripts with limited metadata, raising questions about reproducibility and future interpretability. Conversely, integrating the material into a structured environment such as LaRS (Language Repository of Switzerland) offers expert curation but restricts accessibility and flexibility. Building an independent database - modelled on systems like Mini-Muse - creates possibilities for custom metadata, information extraction, and linguistic enrichment, but at the cost of significant development and maintenance responsibilities. A further alternative involves negotiating a deposit with the respective archive, enabling long-term preservation of both transcriptions and images under institutional care, yet requiring alignment with archival standards and workflows that are themselves subject to change.

By comparing these options, the presentation highlights how storage infrastructures shape not only data longevity but also epistemic possibilities: what kinds of (socio)linguistic analysis become feasible, which metadata can be preserved, and how future scholars will be able to access and reuse historical sociolinguistic resources. The paper ultimately argues for a more explicit dialogue between researchers, archives, and infrastructure providers to ensure sustainable, interoperable solutions for the field.

Karen P. Corrigan – Wrapping up and discussion

Historical pragmatics (1) (1.004) 14:30–15:30

Corinne Denoyelle – Discernement Politeness in Late-Medieval Mystery Plays

Studies in historical pragmatics have often favored the collection of data in literary genres that give the impression of being closer to authentic orality. Thus, in the Middle Ages, fabliaux and farces have often been emphasized (Parussa 2021). However, they feature a small dramatic staff, limited to bourgeois or peasant populations. In this paper, I hypothesize that, despite their highly rhetorical dimension and religious theme, late-medieval mystery plays, which reached their apogee between 1450 and 1550, can also be a good medium for pragmatic research, insofar as they present a more varied personnel and social interactions (Runnalls 1999). The social diversity they portray makes it possible to question the nature of the politeness represented on stage.

Generally, we consider that the society of the ancient régime used forms of politeness that were more "political" than "polite" (according to Watts' concepts) and belonged to the politeness of Discernment (Ide 1989) rather than Brown's and Levinson's volition politeness.

> While today's verbal strategies seem to be guided mostly by the degree of weightiness (the so-called R-factor or rank) generally implied by the personal evaluation of rights and duties on a democratic societal background, medieval societies were predominantly based on fixed power-rules that necessitated ritual wording, which was only somehow softened in relationships of low distance. (Held 2010 : 212).

Discernment politeness is based on a closed repertoire of ritual formulas that are used in relation to the social situation of the addressee and the context (Ridealgh and Jucker 2019). In this paper, I would like to study the formulas of farewell in four mystery plays from the early 16th century in order to identify their distribution according to the social classes of the interlocutors.

References

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Le Mystère de la Sainte Hostie: performed in 1513 in Metz. Printed in Paris in 1522. 26 characters. 1580 verses;

Le Mystère de Saint Julien: written by Nicole Osber. Performed in Carentan. Printed in 1530. 80 characters. 10568 verses.

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Madeleine Clews – I would feel very thankful: transactional politeness 'from below' in Australia's Botanical Letters 1853-1896

Understanding of politeness in English over time has changed in recent years. It has been noted, for example, that Brown & Levinson's ([1978] 1987) concept of 'negative politeness' and its 'conventional indirect requests' (CIRs) is in fact a latter-day development, with the 'positive politeness' of direct petitions being the norm in Early Modern English and remaining prevalent as late as the 19th century (Jucker 2020). Culpeper & Demmen (2011) find that CIRs do not occur prior to 1760, appearing only in the Victorian era alongside an emerging socio-cultural focus on the individual ahead of the collective. Wierzbicka (2006) points out that negative politeness is not universal, but specific to shared understandings within English, where it tends to grammaticalize into 'whimperatives'.

This presentation sheds further light on the changing shape of politeness in English at the intersection of historical sociolinguistics and sociopragmatics, using a dataset of personal correspondence from 19th-century Australia, the 'Botanical Letters' (Clews 2023). Between his appointment as Victorian Government Botanist in 1853 and his death in 1896, German-born scientist 'Baron' Ferdinand von Mueller maintained an extraordinary epistolary connection to hundreds of amateur botanical collectors he had recruited from across the continent. At least a thousand letters written to Mueller survive in National Herbarium library in Melbourne, written by men and women of varying age, birthplace and social status. The letters all seek to enact some transaction in relation to enclosed specimens: either respectfully asking Mueller for information, or offering to provide more samples to him, often both. The dataset comprises a subset of 300 letters transcribed to create a corpus reaching approximately 54,000 words.

Notably, in addition to capability-based CIRs (1), many requests/offers in the corpus show greater indirectness in paired modal statements (2-3). Examined against sociolinguistic/pragmatic variables of date/place of birth and gender of correspondent, date of writing, and the nature of their business, these instances suggest nuanced indirectness, with greater deference expressed by women and writers motivated by curiosity as distinct from official business. Moreover, there is the possibility that the increasing prominence of the individual in late-modern manifestations of politeness (Culpeper & Demmen 2011) may be amplified in the even greater mobility and self-reliance of colonial populations.

1) **Could you** direct me where to obtain a work on Forestry…? (1882, M. b. 1828)
2) **I would** feel very thankful **if you could** kindly inform me… (1879, F. b. 1847)
3) **I should** be glad to know **if you should** think it worthwhile… (1887, M. b. 1858)

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Legal & administrative texts (2) (1.005) 14:30–15:30

Elena Klyachko & Ilia Afanasev – Far-Eastern official documents from the 1920s—1930s as a source in historical sociolinguistics research

The Far-Eastern Krai of Soviet Russia in the 1920s-1930s was a region inhabited by Indigenous peoples (including Tungusic speakers), Koryo-Saram, Chinese migrant workers, and Russian settlers from various regions. In a part of this area, Russian-Chinese pidgin was used, not only by Russians and the Chinese but also by Tungusic speakers [Perekhvalskaya 2013]. Over the

following decades, the sociolinguistic situation changed, with the repressions against the Chinese and the gradual language shift into Russian [Fedorova 2021].

While the oral corpus of Russian as spoken by Tungusic bilingual speakers [Khomchenkova et al. 2019] provides many insights, it comprises more recent data, with most speakers fluent in Russian. There are historical recordings of the Russian-Chinese pidgin but the variety used by Tungusic speakers was systematically documented only from the 1980s onward [Perekhvalskaya 2013]. Are there any sources to reconstruct whether the variety used by Tungusic and Chinese speakers was closer to the pidgin or to contact-induced Russian?

Indigenous local councils and Chinese communist organizations produced extensive amounts of paperwork like meeting proceedings, reports or complaints. While useful to historians [Akhmetova 2014], these documents have remained neglected by linguists. However, these documents provide precise information about authorship and temporal attribution, thus being valuable for sociolinguistic research.

Most documents authored by Tungusic speakers exhibit non-standard Russian with peculiarities such as Russian consonant substitution, non-standard case forms or lack of concord. Some features persist in the more recent oral data [Stoynova 2019], whereas others are no longer present. It may be due to the growing influence of Standard Russian. However, there are few examples of the pidgin influence such as the use of specific personal pronouns. Documents produced by Chinese authors also contain multiple examples of agreement and concord errors, but almost no pidgin features. Nevertheless, the sources capture pidgin use. For example, a Udihe narrator cites a Chinese person speaking pidgin, with his words translated into Standard Russian. This suggests that Tungusic and Chinese speakers clearly distinguished the pidgin from the contact-induced Russian, sticking to the latter in the official documents.

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Robert Dittmann – Prothetic v- in the Early Modern Czech Pardubice Books of Testimonies

The prothetic v- was the most unstable and style-sensitive phenomenon of late medieval phonetic and phonetical changes penetrating into the Czech prints (Porák 1983, Šimečková 2022). Unlike other West Slavic languages it occurs since the 14th c. (Dittmann 2019b) in dialects systematically only before *o-*, e.g. *vokno* for Present-Day Standard Czech okno. In Early Modern prints it was practically eliminated by the authority of the Six-Volume Kralice Bible and the Brethren literary tradition, respected also by Daniel Adam of Veleslavín and the Baroque Jesuits. However, in written records such as books of testimonies and private diaries and in less

prestigious prints the prothetic *v-* was quite frequently used and it occurred not exceptionally even in regions where it had no support in local dialects (such as in eastern Moravia).

The books of testimonies, of which there survive only about 40 manuscripts (from ca 600 estimated Early Modern courts, Francek 2011), were official legal records resulting from application of torture. The scribes recorded the testimonies sometimes on sheets of paper directly in the torture chamber and were bound to record them as faithfully as possible, which resulted in a relatively high degree of proximity to spoken language, specified with respect to territory, time, gender and class (cf. Dittmann 2019a). This configuration of variables offers a unique chance to examine the prothetic v- and its acceptance into records from a sociolinguistic perspective.

The contribution will present analysis of the largest preserved Czech-language books of testimonies, the Pardubice Books, covering the period from 1538 to 1626 (Francek 2016). The following factors, either intralinguistic (a), or extralinguistic (b), will be pursued: a) the position of the prothesis (initial vs. in-word); lemma or word family; the position after a vowel vs. a consonant; parts of speech; in the case of autosemantic parts of speech: belonging to proper nouns (anthroponyms, toponyms) or not, having prefixation or not, being a loanword or not; b) chronology; the scribe; the text unit: a record of the speech on one side vs. correspondence between courts and other text units on the other side; gender. Thousands of occurrences may be expected to be analyzed.

The data will be processed with the help of the General Linear Mixed Model (GLLM) in the RStudio programme, which will enable for assessing mutual interaction of the variables followed and their statistical significance.

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Genres (1.003) 14:30–15:30

Marta Kraus – Genre Stability in Institutional Discourse: The Evolution of Polish Railway Operational Communication in the Twentieth Century

Contemporary research on spoken and written language increasingly focuses on achieving a more nuanced understanding of the similarities and differences between written and spoken modes, as well as on the relationship between language varieties and the interpersonal functions they fulfil (Sánchez-Macarro & Carter 2011). This study is situated at the intersection of historical discourse analysis, studies of language variation, and linguistic genre theory. It examines railway operational formulae as an example of conceptually written structures realised through changing modes of information transmission.

This study focuses on two genres of institutional discourse in Polish railway communication: (1) interaction between station dispatchers at neighbouring signal boxes, and (2) interaction between a station dispatcher and a train driver. Both genres perform a crucial role in train traffic management and rely on formalised linguistic structures established as obligatory norms by twentieth-century Polish railway rulebooks. These documents were designed to regulate operational procedures in the railway sector, including the sanctioning of communication practices.

The first genre analysed originates in telegraphic communication and was shaped by the condensed and elliptical style. Subsequently, these formulae were transferred to telephone communication and thus incorporated into spoken interaction. The second genre initially functioned as written orders addressed to train drivers; in the second half of the twentieth century, these orders began to be dictated orally via radiotelephony. In both cases, the shift in medium from written to spoken did not lead to radical structural transformations. Accordingly, the present study investigates the extent to which the change of communication channel influenced the linguistic structure of the genres under analysis.

Drawing on theoretical approaches to differences between spoken and written language (Biber 1986; Halliday 1989), and incorporating the concept of discourse community (Swales 1990), the paper analyses railway operational genres at the lexical, grammatical, and textual-organisational levels. It also addresses the question of which language variety these forms of communication represent, which features of that variety are dominant, and which elements—despite the overall stability of the genres—underwent genuine diachronic change.

Preliminary findings indicate that although the established schematic patterns underwent minor modifications, the fundamental structure of the textual formulae remained

largely unchanged. The study contributes to current linguistic research on the relationship between spoken and written language, genre persistence, and the constraints on linguistic change in discourses subject to strict normative control. It also highlights the potential of technical and operational utilitarian texts as valuable sources for historical discourse analysis.

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Antje Dammel & Laura Duve – Comparing genres as a key to reconstructing the evolution of usage patterns. A case study on the pronoun man/ein

Genres according to Hanks (1987, cf. also Linke 2014) are „historically specific elements of social practice, whose defining features link them to situated communicative acts“ (668). Since genres, as sedimented communicative patterns, provide ‘solutions’ to specific communicative ‘problems’ – be it thematic or social/institutional (Günthner 2014), we expect that linguistic means serve specific functions in individual genres.

In the proposed talk, we focus on genre-specific differences in the diachronic development of the human impersonal pronoun *man/ein* in (E/e)arly NHG. As this pronoun is extremely open in its potential of referring and includes generic as well as specific, 3rd as well as 1st and 2nd person uses (cf. Zifonun 2000), it is of interest how - retrochronically - today's usage spectre unfolded and - diachronically - which historically frequent uses did NOT survive.

We argue that the functional layering (Kranich 2013) and the full historical usage spectrum of a grammatical ressource can only be revealed by comparing a broad set of genres, since we expect from the above definition that usage patterns originate in genre-specific functions before spreading across genres. Informed by models of literate/orate structures in written language (e.g. Koch/Oesterreicher 1985), we compare usage patterns containing the pronoun *man/ein* across text samples of three monological genres that focus on information transmission and three genres that simulate or document dialogue to take different modes of communication into account.

- monological genres: newspapers, pest treatises, balneological treatises
- dialogical genres: foreign language text books, comedies, protocols of witchcraft trials
- reference corpora as additional resources

We investigate

- when usage patterns prominent today are first attested and how they changed over time,
- which historical patterns are lost (and when),
- which usage patterns are genre-specific, and which are shared (or spread) across genres within the observed time period.

We use *man/ein* as a show case to argue for the necessity of comparing usage patterns across genres in order to realistically reconstruct language change. Though the requirement of genre sensitivity can be generalised to analyses of Modern Spoken German (Günthner 2014), this methodological point is indispensable when it comes to time periods in which analysis has to rely on written sources.

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Panel: Historical newspaper corpora: Challenges and Potentials for Historical Sociolinguistics (3) (1.006+1.007) 16:00–16:30

Markus Schiegg & Konstantin Niehaus – Final discussion

In the concluding discussion, we will compare the different methodical approaches to newspaper corpora from the individual papers and discuss current opportunities and problems when dealing with them. We invite the audience of the panel to contribute their own experiences and problems when working with historical newspaper corpora.

The following questions may play an important role in this discussion:

1) How large should a corpus of historical newspapers be in order to provide sufficient answers to sociolinguistic questions? How does this differ for varying approaches? It would be expected, for example, that structural (variational) linguistic analyses would require a smaller corpus than metalinguistic analyses, and lexical and orthographic variation would require less text than grammatical or genre-specific variation, etc.
2) What are the minimum search functions and annotations required to perform historical sociolinguistic analyses satisfactorily? This applies to lemmatisation and part-ofspeech tagging, but also to text type categories and metalinguistic tags.
3) Which technical features would be desirable and could, for example, be adopted from newspaper portals available for other languages? This applies to sorting and filter functions as well as the possibility of automated statistical tests which, provided they are compatible, can also run with various AI applications outside the original portal framework.
4) How can we exploit the multimodality of digitised copies? This includes the original layout, pictures, and typography which could provide further contextualisations such as additional metalinguistic evidence (e.g., caricatures of speakers) or add to the picture of on-going standardisation (e.g., default layouts for certain genres).

In the end, we hope to take first steps into a systematic sociolinguistic analysis of historical newspapers from which adjoining fields such as historical linguistics, history, or journalism and media studies can also benefit.

Emotions (1.008+1.009) 16:00–17:00

Johannes Lässig & Julian Häde – Tracing the Diachrony of Verbal Aggression in Purpose-Built Corpora of British Drama

This paper seeks to contribute to the field of historical pragmatics by outlining the developmental trajectory of two types of verbal aggression, cursing and threatening, in British drama from the late Middle Ages to the Early Modern period. In so doing, we can draw conclusions about how internal reconceptualizations of British society (Everitt, 1966) influenced the quantity and quality of these acts.

Form-to-function studies have traditionally been preferred in historical pragmatics (e.g. Jucker & Taavitsainen, 2008; Pulham, 1996), owing to their greater feasibility. However, to paint a holistic picture of a speech act, function-to-form studies drawing on as wide an array of language material as possible within the confines of a single genre are unavoidable (Kohnen, 2007). Cursing and threatening are particularly promising targets for such investigations as they lie at the complex interface between expressives, directives, and commissives (Nicoloff, 1989).

Our research utilizes purpose-built corpora of British drama, the long and rich tradition of which enables us to set an earlier starting point than most other studies in the field (e.g. Neumaier, 2025). We sampled them from a frame encompassing all extant 14th–18th century plays of sufficient length – limited to comedies, tragedies, mysteries, and moralities for reasons of practicability and consistency. We regard these dramatic pieces as closely approximating orality in the sense of speech-purposed texts (Culpeper & Kytö, 2000). In line with our function-to-form approach, we extracted all relevant instances through close manual inspection of the corpus material (Landert et al., 2023). The utterances thus identified were subsequently subjected to parameter-guided qualitative evaluation, which considers speech-act specific formal and functional, as well as broader discursive and sociolinguistic dimensions. This systematics allows for insight into the fluctuations in productivity of curses and threats in (dramatic) discourse as well as for large-scale qualitative comparisons within either type of verbal aggression.

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Martina Schmidl – Emotions in Written Discourse: Language Use in Late Babylonian Letters

This presentation focuses on emotional rhetorical strategies (as defined by Jursa and Hackl 2015: 108) and, in particular, on explicit expressions of emotions in Late Babylonian letters from private and institutional archives from the so-called "long sixth century BCE" (Jursa 2010: 5, c. 626–484 BCE). Overall, explicit references to emotions are rare in this corpus, and they remain an underexplored research topic. Jursa (2014: 103) gives an overview of emotions more generally in correspondence from private archives, while institutional letters remain a virtually unexplored source in this regard. I will analyse when and by whom emotions were explicitly introduced in written discourse and the functions of these instances in both private and institutional correspondence.

In institutional letters, hierarchies and bureaucratic mentalities play a role in language use and the officials' performance of identities (e.g., Schmidl 2023). As the hitherto missing portion of new

and updated editions of Late Babylonian temple letters from the city of Uruk will be published in 2026 (Jursa forthcoming, available to me as a pre-print version), the temporal distribution of explicit references to emotions can also be investigated. This is of particular interest for temple letters, as Babylonian temples were intricately linked with the crown and affected by considerable political changes – the period includes the fall of the Neo-Assyrian empire, the rise and fall of the Neo-Babylonian empire and the first decades of Achaemenid rule over Babylonia. Aside from better understanding language use and written discourse in Late Babylonian letters in general, I aim to shed light on bureaucratic mentalities, relationships and the performance of identities in temple letters.

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Historical pragmatics (2) (1.004) 16:00–17:00

Manuel Padilla-Moyano & Eneko Zuloaga – Formulae of Addressing in Basque Letters from the 16th to the 19th Centuries

Previous research on formulaic language in ego-documents (e.g., Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 1999; Dossena & Del Lungo, 2012; Elspaß, 2012; Rutten & van der Wal, 2014) has shown that the examination of linguistic formulae yields valuable insights into both linguistic variation and the sociohistorical contexts in which these texts were produced. Beyond documenting their occurrence, analyzing formulae in terms of form and function provides information about authors' socioeducational backgrounds, literacy and writing practices, and their alignment with broader cultural and linguistic trends.

This study investigates formulae in Basque epistolary texts, building on the work of Padilla-Moyano and Zuloaga (forthcoming). The analysis draws on a historical corpus of Basque letters (16th–19th centuries), encompassing private, administrative, and commercial correspondence. We present findings from a combined formal-functional analysis of vocative formulae occurring in letter openings. These intersubjective formulae (e.g., *Ene Estebe maitea* 'My dear Stephan')

index the relationship between sender and addressee (Rutten & van der Wal, 2012). Our results reveal both the high prevalence and considerable variation of addressing formulae, with seven distinct patterns identified. Comparative analyses of private and non-private letters indicate correlations between the use of formulae of addressing, senders' socioeducational profiles, and epistolary genres.

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Hester Groot – Politeness and mitigation in Scottish pauper letters, 1750-1910

The ScotPP corpus (in development, Leiden University) compiles Scottish pauper letters written between 1750-1910. These letters, written by or on behalf of members of lower social classes to apply for poor relief, are characterised by an inherently hierarchical relationship between writer and addressee. The officials overseeing the distribution of poors' funds were in a position of power over the applicants, both in a broader social context and within the specific setting of the poor relief system. As such, the applicants needed to carefully formulate their requests with appropriate levels of politeness and humility, employing a language of humiliative discourse (cf. Fitzmaurice 2002), while simultaneously accentuating their urgency. This paper seeks to investigate how applicants navigated this challenge of identity- and relationship construction by looking at mitigatory devices in the Scottish pauper letters.

Mitigatory devices, or request-internal and -external modification strategies (following e.g. Ackermann 2023), are among a variety of linguistic tools that applicants had at their disposal, allowing them to carefully construct both a personal identity and a relationship to the recipient official in line with both genre conventions and addressee expectations. Downgrading mitigatory devices such as expressing deference, humility, gratitude, and disarmers could be used to downplay the face-threatening value of a request, while upgraders such as intensifiers, vocatives, and commitment indicators served to heighten it. Both types were extensively used by Scottish poor relief applicants; however, how these strategies are employed in the ScotPP varies strongly between letters, communities, and over the full 1750-1910 period.

This paper will map the development of a selection of the above mitigation devices, diachronically and across social axes such as applicants' level of writing experience. Moreover, it will investigate the degree of formulaicity versus spontaneity in their linguistic realisation, drawing on Laitinen's (2015) notion of the local versus the translocal: do applicants, when downgrading and upgrading

their requests, draw on their immediate context and circumstances, or use more decontextualised and broadly recognised stylistic resources? The variation in these mitigatory practices illustrates the changing social positions of, and relationships between applicants and poor relief overseers, while also reflecting broader changes in epistolary practices during this period. Through this historical-pragmatic framework, this study shows how pauper letter writers were, despite their often-limited educational background, able to exert agency over their self-representation and positionality through the linguistic means and genre constraints at their disposal.

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Legal & administrative texts (3) (1.005) 16:00–17:00

Claudia Claridge & Merja Kytö – How (in)formal are phrasal verbs? Sociopragmatic evidence from Late Modern English

The question of the placement of phrasal verbs on the formality cline has so far been approached via their distribution in genres. Phrasal verbs have been found to be more common in the speech-related genres drama, fiction, letters, and trials (Akimoto 1999, Smitterberg 2008, Rodríguez-Puente 2019) than in essays and academic writing. But this does not correlate easily with formality, as trials are more formal than potentially more informal private letters. Also, Rodríguez-Puente found highly fluctuating figures, with sometimes more formal or informal genres leading in frequency. Surveying metalinguistic sources, Thim (2012: 233-244) argued against the assumption of the informality of phrasal verbs altogether. However, in such sources and in Claridge (2000) phrasal verbs have been contrasted with assumedly more formal Romance-derived verbs.

We approach the (in)formality of phrasal verbs by looking at distributions across speakers within the discourse context of the late modern English courtroom. We assume that if phrasal verbs are marked as informal they will be used more by lower-ranking and less educated speakers (lower classes, women) and less by higher-ranking and educated ones (higher classes, legal professionals). We make use of the Old Bailey Corpus (OBC), which provides class, gender and courtroom role data for speakers.

The POS-tagged OBC version is searched for particle uses (RP-tag) of *up*, *out*, *down*, *in*, *back* (highly common in OBC, Rodríguez-Puente 2019), which ensures a wider representativeness of uses than access via frequent verbs. The resulting almost 239,000 hits ensure still sufficient sociolinguistic coverage, as cases with missing sociolinguistic information can be as high as, e.g. 20,000 for class per search item. The sociopragmatic distributions, here illustrated for *out*, speak for a link to informality (frequencies per one million words):

Men: 2548.5 vs. women: 3605.1

Higher: 2215.3 vs. lower classes: 3088.0

Professionals (judges & lawyers): 1705.5 & 1749.90
vs. lay speakers (defendants & victims & witnesses): 2775.1 & 3203.3 & 2660.9

We will pursue the distributions further by more detailed statistical analysis, focusing in on the differences between the lay speakers (vs. the parallel usage of the professionals) and by including a selection of Romance verbs in our analysis.

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Christa Schneider – The Devil's in the Difference: Tracking Phonological Change in Witch Trial Papers

One of my studies on premodern handwritten criminal records explores the evolution of vernacular orthography in Early Modern Bernese German through the lens of historical sociolinguistics. Drawing on a corpus of witch trial papers from the city-state of Bern (Switzerland), dated between 1551 and 1688 and comprising approximately 90,000 tokens, I employ Levenshtein distance as a quantitative method to measure the degree of phonological/orthographic divergence between attested vernacular spellings and lemma forms documented in the *Frühneuhochdeutsches Wörterbuch* (FnhdWb = Early Modern German dictionary). Levenshtein distance is a string metric that calculates the minimum number of single-character edits - insertions, deletions, or substitutions - needed to convert one word into another. In my study, it serves as a proxy for measuring the orthographic and, by extension, phonological distance between vernacular spellings in the corpus and their lemma forms in the *Frühneuhochdeutsches Wörterbuch*.

The corpus, composed of scribal renderings of spoken testimony in high-stakes judicial settings, preserves a rich record of non-standard and regionally marked spellings. These forms are shaped not only by phonological features of the Bernese German dialect but also by scribal practice, orthographic norms (and particularly the lack thereof as there were only little to no written language norms in use), and the broader sociopolitical context of post reformation-era Bern. By aligning word forms in the corpus with their corresponding FnhdWb lemmas and calculating Levenshtein distances, I track proximity as a proxy for phonological/orthographic convergence or divergence from supraregional norms.

I will present a diachronic analysis that examines whether scribal practices became more or less aligned with dictionary-attested forms over the 137-year period. Across this timespan, the education and professionalisation of scribes changed drastically, a shift which likely influenced their approach from phonologically motivated, vernacular orthography towards linguistic standardisation. I will also investigate the potential influence of social, institutional, and political factors on spelling variations. These include the role of religious reform, literacy policy, bureaucratic training, and the interaction between oral testimony and written record.

Methodologically, the paper contributes to the use of distance metrics in historical sociolinguistics by demonstrating how measuring distance can serve not just as a tool for OCR correction or spelling normalisation, but as an empirical measure of linguistic and sociolinguistic change. Additionally, I will discuss the challenges of aligning vernacular and lemma forms in a low-resource, dialect-rich setting.

By quantifying distance between vernacular writing and lexicographic standardisation, this study offers new insight into the historical development of scribal education and practice in a multilingual, transitional linguistic landscape. It highlights the value of computational metrics in tracing the social embedding of linguistic change, and provides a framework for extending such methods to other historical corpora and language varieties.

Wednesday, 30 September

Panel: Go global or go home. Letters as evidence for the history of French (1) (1.006+1.007) 09:00–10:30

Myriam Bergeron-Maguire & Pierre Vermander – Introduction

Non-literary texts, especially handwritten, have played a crucial and often underappreciated role in the history of the French language (Fairman 2015). While literary works have traditionally dominated linguistic historiography due to their prestige and preservation, they remain only a narrow and stylized segment of language use (Elspass 2020). Non-literary documents – such as private and administrative letters – offer invaluable evidence for understanding the diachronic evolution of informal French in its social, regional, and functional diversity (Ayres-Bennett 2021). This panel will include studies of letters written between the 15th and the 18th c., providing unprecedented data for an empirically grounded history of French, especially regarding pragmatics, dialectology and multilingualism.

The letters written during the 15th c. are remission letters issued by the French crown. While they do offer a more rigid format and strictly followed conventions, they nonetheless reflect evidence of informal and/or spontaneous language in reported speech situations grounded in interactions where a variety of speakers, both socially and in terms of gender, are situated within complex power and domination relation, hence differing from literary sources.

The letters written during the 17th and the 18th c. come from the "Prize papers" collection, held at the National Archives of the UK Government. They were produced by a wide range of social actors like women, merchants, artisans and administrators, and therefore reflect great differences linked to social status, profession, gender, education and regional origin. They often exhibit localized linguistic features, offering crucial evidence for the history of regional varieties of French (Thibault 2020) as well as for the history of other languages based in France like Basque and Occitan (Mounole 2023). These features make them a key resource for historical sociolinguistics, enabling to examine how external factors influenced language use and change over time (Lodge 2013).

By studying these types of writing rather than literary material, this panel will show that non-literary texts are no mere subordinates to literary sources: they are fundamental to understand how French and other languages in France were written, used, and transformed across time and space, bringing a global perspective into the history of the French linguistic landscape.

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Pierre Vermander – Strategic politeness in pardon letters

This paper will present and explore a new documentary corpus for linguistic research: the *lettres de rémission* from the Trésor des Chartes (Archives Nationales, série JJ). We will show how these documents are structured and address the issue of discourse representation, given that this type of source must be approached in light of the various layers of filtering it may have undergone.

We will then focus on the issue of politeness and face management in order to highlight the linguistic strategies at work in these letters. Particular attention will be paid to the opposition between T/V address pronouns among the different actors involved, which will be analysed according to the classical model proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). We will also emphasize the need for a dual approach to politeness, contrasting strategic politeness with discernment politeness (Ide 1989; Ridealgh & Unceta Gómez 2020), depending on the different sections of the letters.

Unlike literary texts, in which interactions depend on a social representation largely shaped by the author's stance, documentary texts appear to be better suited to shedding light on a sociolinguistic system closer to everyday, ordinary interaction, one that has not been mediated through a literary filter. Moreover, the situations in which the interlocutors find themselves are only marginally represented in the literary corpus, and documentary sources can therefore offer new perspectives on language of proximity in the Middle Ages.

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Claire de Mareschal – Listening to voices in the Prize Papers letters: between orality and formularity

The Prize Papers are documents, mostly from the 17th- and 18th-centuries, seized by English privateers on French ships they had taken; used as evidence during the trial determining whether the capture was legal or not, they are now held by the National Archives in London (HCA 30 & 32). These non-literary documents, mostly commercial and private letters, were studied first by sociolinguists (Rutten/van der Wal 2014) on Dutch letters, then by linguists (Bergeron-Maguire/Greub 2020; de Mareschal 2024) and by historians (Bouthillier/Guillorel 2022) on the French sub-corpus.

During the classical period, famous letters written by people with a high literacy, such as Madame de Sévigné, give the appearance of a natural conversation between the writer and the recipient, despite distance and time. These letters stand on the line between private documents and literary works. In comparison, the letters from the *Prize Papers* tend to be very formulaic, although semi-literate writers often try to recreate a conversation with their far-away relatives. How do writers deal with formulae while expressing their singular voice? How much do they use of reported speech, and in which circumstances? The aim of this presentation is to examine how voices appear in the French letters from the *Prize Papers*, with special attention on those written by people with less literacy.

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Enregisterment (1.008+1.009) 09:00–10:30

Stian Hårstad – When rumour precedes you. Stylization of "Jews' accent" in Norwegian literature and press 1800–1940

Strictly exclusionary legislation rendered it practically impossible to pursue a Jewish life in Norway until 1851. Even following a change in the law, several decades passed before a Jewish community of some prominence began to develop on Norwegian soil. Yet, despite the fact that the presence of what Bauman (1998) terms "the empirical Jew" was minimal within Norwegian society, cultural imaginaries of "the abstract Jew" (ibid.) flourished – largely as a continuation of a long-standing European tradition of anti-Semitic (or allo-Semitic) representations of the stereotypical "Jew".

In this paper, a central linguistic dimension of these imaginaries is examined: the Norwegian version of a written "Jewish accent" – a stylised practice which, for centuries, has served as a key semiotic marker of "the Jew" as a characterological figure (cf. Agha, 2007). Drawing on a wide range of public texts – including newspapers, magazines, and works of fiction – the paper analyses the characteristic formal features of this stylisation and situates them in relation to a corresponding Danish practice, which demonstrably exerted a significant influence.

A central finding is that the style incorporates a multitude of *eye-dialect elements*, that is, various respellings which do not correspond to actual phonological distinctions, thereby underscoring its close dependence on script-based mediation. It further becomes evident that the Norwegian "Jews' accent" is, in essence, a figment grounded in common – and salient – learner errors, together with numerous features indexing "Germanness" and, by extension, "foreignness." Finally, the paper explores how the considerable linguistic hybridity involved may be linked to efforts to portray "the Jew" as a threat to cultural homogeneity within the Norwegian nation-state, particularly from the latter decades of the nineteenth century.

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Sarah Roberts – Historical documentation of Hawaiian Creole enregisterment: Past tense bin in printed pseudonymous letters and other sources

The formation of Hawai'i Creole English (HCE) as a language distinct from other Pacific pidgins and creoles is thoroughly documented in literary and manuscript sources from the 19th and early 20th centuries (Roberts 1998, 2005). This involved the innovation and regularization of lexical and grammatical features (often at the expense of earlier diffused items from other varieties), stylistic expansion in a continuum approaching and differentiating from the standard taught in the schools, and the indexical linking of linguistic features to salient social categories (Roberts 2004). The historical reconstruction in Roberts (2005) concluded that the creole largely took shape in the speech of the locally-born offspring of Portuguese immigrants and young native Hawaiians in the 1890s and first decade of the 1900s, with this form of speech firmly entrenched in the schools by the 1910s. However, an earlier body of texts — the 'Wrappers' pseudonymous letters — show a similar clustering of features in the late 1880s. This source was probably representative of the speech in certain boarding schools and may lie close to the creole's initiation phase.

The analysis in Roberts (2005) pooled texts from diverse genres into a single corpus but this approach has limitations. One source, court record testimony (CRT), is speech-based and gives more naturalistic representation of language use, while pseudonymous letters (PLs) imitate writing-based conventions (such as eye-dialect spellings) and display basilectal exaggeration, and such contrast is illuminative of linguistic practice. Although PLs as a register inflates the real-life frequencies of features, such exaggeration boosts the signal of rarer features, allowing them to be attested earlier than in more naturalistic data. Also, because PLs do not represent actual linguistic interactions but consist of literary productions attributed to personae, they offer a window into enregisterment processes and the indexing of features to social variables. However, these data complicate a simplistic association between 1) writing and standardness, and 2) orality and informality. CRT, obtained in a formal legal context, actually shows higher standardness than PLs, composed often to express humor and linguistic quaintness.

The past tense marker *bin* was a very low frequency item in the antecedent pidgin (and the later plantation pidgin as well) but underwent a dramatic increase by the 1910s as it stabilized in the grammar of HCE. In this presentation, I will present comments from contemporary sources indexing this feature to specific social identities (Hawaiians, Portuguese, and school-children) and compare with the authors and personae of PLs with high frequencies of *bin*, as well as its use in more naturalistic data.

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Paul Cooper – Unearthing the dialect and identity of 19th century Yorkshire coal miners

There is very little metacommentary on 19th century Yorkshire coalminers despite, as Clark and Jacks (2006: 6) point out, coal was "at the heart of the Industrial Revolution". Paul (2023: 2) echoes this sentiment, noting that in the 19th century "coal came to dominate the economy". Given the extent of coalmining in 19th century Yorkshire, we might expect the characterological figure of the coalminer to have been widely depicted in historical media. Yet, this does not seem to be the case as we cannot observe metapragmatic commentary to the same extent as that which exists for Yorkshire farmers, factory workers, or steelworkers.

In this paper I make use of a corpus of 19th century dialect commentary on Yorkshire dialect to address the issues of how coalminers were depicted to historical audiences, and what social values were indexically associated with their dialect (Silverstein 2003, Cooper 2013), which included elements of enregistered (Agha 2003) Yorkshire repertoires. For example, we see nonstandard respellings suggesting [u:] in <doon>, <coo>; G-dropping; H-dropping; definite article reduction, and /l/-vocalisation, as well as lexical items such as *nowt* "nothing". These were identified as being historically enregistered as "Yorkshire" by Cooper (2020).

Qualitative analysis of metapragmatic commentary on Yorkshire coalminers comes from entries in dialect dictionaries and glossaries, travel writing, and popular magazines, and reveals that in some cases, we can see that representations of coalminers align with stereotypical characterological figures of Yorkshire folk in the nineteenth century. That is, that they were industrious, hardworking, manly, etc. (Cooper 2023). However, we also see some negative evaluations of miners in 19th century Yorkshire. For example, the *Temple Bar* magazine (1868: 496), in discussing "the great coal-field of Yorkshire", states that "life and character come out in thorough depravity", and this aligns with broader perceptions of coalminers in the 19th century. I conclude that the coalminer was not central to the enregisterment of Yorkshire identities in the 19th century, but nevertheless we can observe the genesis of a stereotype that would come to prominence in the mid-late 20th century.

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Orthography & Spelling (1) (1.004) 09:00–10:30

Lars Bülow & Dagobert Höllein – Orthographic Variation and Change in Historical Dialect Data: Social and Regional Conditioning of Misspellings of MHG /oeː/ and /yː/

Processes of vowel unrounding in Upper German dialects challenge the interpretation of lay transcriptions in large-scale indirect conducted dialect corpora such as the Wenker questionnaires (1876–1887), and the Maurer questionnaires (1934). In both datasets, the graphemes ⟨ö⟩ and ⟨ü⟩ are used inconsistently for reflexes of MHG /oeː/ and /yː/, representing either rounded ([øː], [yː]) or unrounded vowels (e.g., [eː], [iː]) depending on the dialect region. The isogloss runs roughly southeast of Würzburg, south of Bamberg, and northward west of Bayreuth and Hof.

Earlier research has interpreted such uses in unrounding areas as *schriftsprachorientierte Fehlschreibungen* (e.g., Ganswindt 2017), yet recent work shows that the frequency of these "misspellings" can differ substantially between datasets (e.g., Strobel 2021). Our study compares the distribution of these *Fehlschreibungen* in the Wenker materials with those in the Maurer data for the Bavarian, Swabian and East Franconia dialect regions. We focus on the reflexes of MHG long /oeː/ and /yː/ in the lexical items *böse* and *neues*, which appear in both corpora, enabling a controlled comparison across time, region, and data type.

This study combines real-time with apparent-time comparisons. In real time, we compare data from the Wenker survey with data from the Maurer survey. Since the Maurer data includes speakers of different age groups, the apparent-time heuristic can additionally be applied to detect potential ongoing change. A key advantage of the Maurer questionnaires is their dense network of 5,000 localities and rich metadata, systematically structured around sociolinguistic factors, unlike the Wenker data. This allows us, for the first time, to examine whether sociolinguistic factors condition variation in the use of ⟨ö⟩ and ⟨ü⟩ in contexts of historical unrounding in the Bavarian, Swabian and East Franconia dialect regions in Bavaria.

To ensure comparability, we analyse a subsample of 1,500 questionnaires from each survey focusing on localities along the unrounding–rounding isogloss. This enables us to test the hypothesis that *Fehlschreibungen* occur more frequently in transition zones where dialect contact and competing grapheme–phoneme correspondences might create (orthographic) uncertainty. Drawing on an initial quantitative analysis (cf. Bülow & Schallert submitted), it shows that approximately 20% of the relevant Maurer spellings of *böse* display *Fehlschreibungen* for reflexes of MHG long /oeː/.

By combining a comparative corpus approach with sociolinguistic modelling, we aim to determine whether these *Fehlschreibungen* reflect regional spellings, emerging Standard

German grapheme–phoneme correspondences, or socially stratified writing practices. The project contributes to discussions on the reliability of historical dialect transcriptions, the role of sociolinguistic variables in writing practices, and the broader interface between phonological change and orthographic reflexes.

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Fred Puss – The adoption of new orthography in Estonian parish registers, 1844-1891

Written Estonian was established by Baltic German clergymen who applied High German orthographic principles (the so-called „old spelling style“) to the language. This system persisted until the early 20th century and remains visible in many modern Estonian family names.

In 1844, a „new spelling style“ was introduced. Inspired by Finnish, this system aligned more closely with Estonian phonology. While previous research on printed texts concludes that the new style became dominant by 1874 – despite the complete Bible not being printed in this style until 1889 – the transition within handwritten documents has remained largely unexamined.

This paper investigates the adoption of the new orthography in Lutheran parish registers, which encompass nearly the entire population of the era. The study analyzes how the timeline of this transition in handwritten records differs from that of printed media, while also identifying significant regional and personal variations among the registrars.

Pia Pratscher – Anglicisation in Scots: A study of long vowel spellings

During the 16c and 17c, Scots experienced strong influence from early Modern English. Socio-political factors such as the Union of Crowns and Parliaments, proliferation of print and the Reformation invited a shift away from Older Scots (OSc) features towards southern standardising English features. The linguistic consequences of these socio-political events are evident in surviving texts in morphological and syntactic features, as well as spelling conventions. Previous works on anglicisation have focused on morphological changes, e.g. Scots *-and* > English *-ing*, and *-it* > *-ed* (Devitt 1989, Meurman-Solin 1997). As of yet, studies on anglicisation in spelling are limited to changes in consonant spellings, particularly *quh* > *wh* (Van Eyndhoven & Lynn 2020).

This paper explores the effect of anglicisation on OSc spellings of the long vowels /ø:/, /ɛ:/ and /e:/, and their geographical and genre diffusion over time. Early Scots /ɛ:/ and /e:/ are consistently spelled <e(i)> until the mid-16c. Similarly, the fronted vowel /ø:/ (< Old English /o:/) is graphically represented by <o(i)>, <u(i)>, <ow> (Aitken & Macafee 2002). Using the *Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots*, these vowel spellings are extracted and analysed to trace their development from 1450 to 1700.

The results show that /ɛ:/ and /e:/ are highly homogenous in their spelling until the mid-16c, when <ea> spellings for both vowels are introduced, which rapidly increase and remain frequent until 1700. This spelling convention of <ea> for /ɛ:/ originates in the West Midlands (Stenbrenden 2016). Further, innovative <oo> spellings for /ø:/ rapidly increase from 1550 onwards. <oo> for /ø:/ is

unconventional in OSc, but tightly associated with the equivalent English vowel /o:/ (later > /u:/) (Aitken & Macafee 2002). Preliminary results of the genre analysis show that ego-documents (private correspondence, diaries, travelogues) show more anglicised vowel spellings than official documents (official correspondence, law, trials).

This paper argues that these spelling innovations are instances of anglicisation because they originate in southern English and rapidly increase following socio-political events promoting English. Most notably, these spelling conventions do not decline towards the end of the 17c as other innovative spellings do; instead they show the effect of standardisation towards southern English.

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Syntax (1) (1.005) 09:00–10:30

Anna Saller & Paul Rössler – Written syntax in Early Modern German: Variation depending on addressee, status, and text type

In addition to the importance of oral texts, written sources play a central role in researching the development of standard German (cf. Mattheier 1995: 6–7). Early Modern German (1650–1800) in particular represents an important transitional phase: Many innovations of Early New High German were already established, while regional writing and speaking habits continued to be influential. It was only through linguistic standardization in the 18th century that a supraregional standard German language emerged (cf. Havinga & Lindner-Bornemann 2022: 15).

Within written sources, the spectrum of (in)formal expressions depends heavily on the type of text (cf. Lötscher 2010: 614–621), the target audience, and the social status of the authors (cf. Hünecke 2010). In the first sub-study (A), four text excerpts are compared: two from the 18th century (1721, 1763) and two from the 19th century (1842, 1872), written by (non-)aristocrats as well as by female and male authors. The texts were taken from the German Text Archive (DTA) and are aimed at a broad audience. They are examined with respect to syntactic complexity, marked topological field positions, and the consistency of verb brackets—with the objective of identifying possible influences of text type, social status, and diachronic change on written syntax.

These results are compared to the second sub-study (B), in which three reports from the Permanent Imperial Diet of Regensburg are analyzed. The reports date from 1664, 1729, and 1802.

The authors of these texts were educated, aristocratic, and politically influential upper-class men—typical representatives of 'language from above'. Since the reports were addressed directly to the emperor, the comparison with study A allows for a differentiated view of the addressee orientation: while the texts in study B are addressed 'upwards', the texts in study A are addressed 'downwards' or 'horizontally'.

The results of both individual studies, as well as their comparison, provide insights into the development of written syntax in Early Modern German and offer perspectives on the influence of gender, social status, addressee orientation, and text type on syntactic structures in historical language use.

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Maitena Duhalde & Sergio Monforte – Dialectal Syntax in a Standardising Landscape

Keywords: dialects; standard variety; Basque; syntactic change.

This paper examines a geolinguistically complex Basque-speaking area located on both sides of the Franco-Spanish border, where the standard language coexists with local varieties. A previous study proposed that the political border had influenced certain changes in neighbouring Basque varieties. However, for the properties analysed here—(a) the particles *ahal* and *ote*; (b) alternation between complementizers under *uste* ('to believe') and in temporal clauses; (c) the marking of embedded polarity questions; and (d) reinforced demonstratives—we reject that hypothesis.

We reassess these features and their current vitality after fifty-five years of the implementation of Standard Basque. We also consider the effects of minority-language status, especially outside areas where Basque remains strong (Fishman's (1991) "physical breathing space"), and examine how age interacts with patterns of syntactic change. Data were collected from native speakers of the Gipuzkoan and Navarrese dialects (Spain) and the Low Navarrese and Labourdin dialects (France), following Bonaparte's (1863) classification.

Regarding the data collected, we identify three tendencies. First, we observe that properties such as the particles *ahal* and *ote*, used across all dialects as well as in the standard language, appear only rarely in the production of younger speakers; younger speakers, particularly those raised outside strongly Basque-speaking areas, use them markedly less than older speakers.

Second, the standard language has contributed to a decrease in properties either absent from the standard variety or not represented there in the same form. Examples include local reinforced

demonstratives (*nihaur* vs. standard *neu*) and the alternation between the complementizers -*ela* and -*en* under *uste* in Eastern Basque, features geographically restricted to areas where only 10.71% of all Basque speakers live. The standard language tends to favour the use of the standard reinforced demonstrative, when employed, and the complementizer -*ela*, which is common across dialects.

Third, some features have spread or been reinforced under the influence of the standard language. This is the case for the complementizer -*enetz* in embedded polarity questions and the differentiation between the temporal complementizers -*elarik* and -*enean*. The former is even more geographically and demographically restricted than the previously mentioned features, yet it appears to have retained its strength.

In conclusion, the properties analysed here indicate that the triggers of language change are multifaceted and cannot be attributed to a single factor. Although age plays a significant role, the vitality of the language and the cohesion of speaker communities are equally decisive in shaping syntactic change.

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Juan Camilo Conde-Silvestre & Javier Calle-Martin – Zero that-clauses in Eighteenth-Century English: A Historical Sociolinguistic Approach

This paper discusses the use of *zero* and *that* as connectors for object clauses in eighteenth-century English. Previous approaches have shown that the use of *zero* increased in late Middle English and became well-established in the second half of the sixteenth century, especially in speech-based text-types (Calle-Martín and Romero-Barranco 2014). Our own research, based on the evidence of *The Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence* for the period 1424-1680 has shown that in the mid-seventeenth century *zero* was well beyond the mid-range stage of lexical diffusion (73%) with the five high frequency verbs *know*, *think*, *say*, *tell* and *hope*. The sociolinguistic analysis of this material showed that in its early stages the innovation was led by merchants and avoided by the professionals and the upper gentry (with the exception of females) (Conde-Silvestre and Calle-Martín 2015). Chronologically, it has been shown that progress of the *zero* innovation was thwarted in the eighteenth century, which has been attributed to the effect of prescriptivism (Conde-Silvestre and Calle-Martín 2024). Even though our sociolinguistic analysis only reached 1681, we also noticed a sensible decline in the use of *zero* during the late seventeenth century in letters by members of all social ranks, except the urban non-gentry. This could be taken as a clue that actual usage preceded the pronouncements of eighteenth-century grammarians who were simply sanctioning contemporary linguistic practices. In this paper, we intend to throw light on this issue by tracking the courses of *zero* and *that* during the eighteenth century. With this aim, the comments by grammarians will be compared with actual usage as attested in different corpora, especially in the Tagg*ed Corpus of Early English Correspondence*

Extension Sampler (TCEECES). We believe that the sociolinguistic orientation of TCEECES will allow us to detect the existence of social stratification for this variant in the eighteenth century, and the social group(s) that led the diffusion (or thwarting) of the change. This could also help us show the incidence of prescriptive comments among different genders and social groups.

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TCEECES = *Tagged Corpus of Early English Correspondence Extension Sampler*. Compiled by Terttu Nevalainen, Helena Raumolin-Brunberg, Samuli Kaislaniemi, Mikko Laitinen, Minna Nevala, Arja Nurmi, Minna Palander-Collin, Tanja Säily and Anni Sairio at the Department of Languages, University of Helsinki. Spelling standardised by Mikko Hakala, Minna Palander-Collin, Minna Nevala, Emanuela Costea, Anne Kingma and Anna-Lina Wallraff. Annotated by Lassi Saario and Tanja Säily. XML conversion and encoding by Lassi Saario. Helsinki: VARIENG, 2022.

Textbooks & manuals (1.003) 09:00–10:30

Iouliani Theodosi & Spiros A. Moschonas – A novelist's ideology of communication: Gregorios Palaiologos' Letter-Writing Manual (1843)

Gregorios Palaiologos (1794–1844) was a polyglot intellectual born in Constantinople. An agronomist by education and profession, he published several manuals aimed at improving agricultural practice in Greece. He was also the author of two novels: "*The Much-Suffering*" (1839) and "*The Painter*" (1842). They are notably "polyphonic", in that their characters are portrayed through distinct speech styles.

His most successful work, however, was the *Epistolárion*, first published in 1843, a year before his death, revised and reissued posthumously at least twenty-one times, culminating in the 1887 edition titled "*Great Letter Writing Manual*".

The editions, context, precedents, and the influence on and of the *Epistolárion* have been documented in Theodosi (2018). Our presentation will concentrate on how the linguistic features of the Epistolárion serve its communicative scope.

All model letters of the Manual are written in *katharevousa* the high, puristic variety of Modern Greek. However, it is a form of *katharevousa* generally described as "light" (ελαφρά). Its syntax is essentially that of the vernacular, with noticable variation in morphology and minimal variation in the vocabulary. Variation is considerable in the forms of address and the closings, in the pronominal system (personal, relative, interrogative pronouns), in verbal endings (e.g., *-un* vs. *-ōsi(n)* or *-usi(n)*), in the marking of the future (*thélō* vs. *tha*), in the auxiliaries *eimi*/*eímai* and *échō*. Palaiologos also makes free use of some features of his native Constantinopolitan variety (e.g., se *dídō* instead of *sou dídō*, 'I give to you').

Apart from using a highly variable *katharevousa*, which is uncommon for a high register in a diglossia situation, the *Epistolárion* first and foremost recommends and promotes an ideology of communication. It is mostly speech acts that this manual prescribes. Most model letters are given titles that specifically name the main speech act of the letter, e.g. "a father advises his son", "a

student asks his uncle for help". The major categories of speech-acts are mentioned already in the full title of the Manual: SUPPLICATORY, COMPLIMENTARY, OF AFFECTION, CONGRATULATORY, CONDOLATORY, CONSOLATORY, CELEBRATORY, INVITATORY, OF RECOMMENDATION... The Introduction makes explicit some of the felicity conditions of speech acts, e.g. "toward superiors and dignitaries you must not appear to advise them or outsmart them".

Palaiologos' flexible *katharevousa* extends across the widest possible domains, encompassing situations considered common or imagined as possible within urban everyday life: from arranging a financial transaction to scolding a prodigal son. The author even makes the daring claim that his model letters cover "all possible occasions" of communication. Linguistic variation is exploited stylistically to serve this communicative variety. Our preliminary results show that linguistic variation correlates with the category of the letter (FAMILIAL, FRIENDLY, COMMERCIAL); the relational status of sender-addressee (but not their gender); the speech act performed through each letter – or, otherwise, its subject matter.

From the analysis there emerges an image of the *Epistolárion* as at once formulaic and variable, conventional and imaginative: both a prescriptive guide and an artistic creation.

Horst J. Simon & Liv Büchler – Early Modern foreign language textbooks as sources for historical spoken language research: investigating 'orality' in model dialogues

Early Modern foreign language textbooks and their model dialogues represent a valuable source for investigating the continuum between historical written and spoken language, as they occupy a position relatively close to its oral end. Within the framework established by Culpeper and Kytö (2010), they exhibit several characteristics of speech related texts – at least to a certain degree. First, they are *speech purposed*, as their primary function is to teach everyday spoken communication. Second, they may be considered as partly *speech based*, as Radtke (1994) claims that authors drew upon remembered conversations when composing these dialogues. Third, and most significantly for our study, they contain *speech-like* features that merit systematic investigation. Previous studies have recognised the proximity of model dialogues to historical spoken language, when characterising them as representatives of 'historical orality' and 'the best we can get' for reconstructing historical spoken language (Simon 2006; see also Pausch 1972; Rossebastiano 1992; Radtke 1994; Franceschini 2002). However, systematic analyses of the specific linguistic means by which textbook authors evoked orality remain limited.

Through exemplary qualitative case studies, this paper investigates how language teachers attempted to create the impression of 'orality' or 'language of immediacy' (Koch & Oesterreicher 1985) in their textbooks. This approach involves briefly examining multiple textbook components for indicators of orality, including pronunciation chapters or phrase collections. The primary focus, however, lies in investigating model dialogues. Based on phenomena of orality known from present-day spoken language, the dialogues are analysed for features commonly associated with spoken language, such as discourse marker, interjections, and other elements typical of oral communication.

The investigation aims to identify linguistic strategies employed by textbook authors to simulate oral discourse. It contributes to our understanding of historical language teaching practices while providing insights into perceptions and representations of spoken language in the Early Modern period.

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Sabina Tsapaeva – Elements of linguistic (im)politeness as a learning object in historical foreign language teaching manuals: The merchant phrasebook by Master George of Nuremberg (1424) and Ein Rusch Boeck (anonymous, 16th century) in comparison

This paper addresses the question of what role elements of linguistic (im)politeness play as learning objects in historical foreign language teaching manuals of the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern period and how these elements are treated in the interplay between spoken and written communication. The analysis focuses on two functionally comparable sources: the merchant phrasebook by Master George of Nuremberg (1424) and the anonymously transmitted *Ein Rusch Boeck* (16th century), both of which are situated in the context of late medieval and early modern commercial exchange.

Over the past decades, historical foreign language teaching manuals have repeatedly been received as linguistically and historically significant sources, as they provide insights into historical linguistic realities, language contact constellations and communicative practices. While previous research has primarily examined these texts from the perspectives of the philosophy of language, foreign language didactics and linguistics in a narrower sense, analyses at the intersection of linguistics, translation and cultural studies have so far remained sporadic. The present paper addresses this research gap by combining approaches from historical sociolinguistics with concepts from (historical) pragmatics, particularly from politeness and impoliteness research.

Starting from the observation that the dialogues presented in foreign language teaching manuals do not merely serve the purpose of goal-oriented information exchange but also fulfil phatic and expressive functions (cf. Jakobson 1985), the paper investigates how interpersonal relationships are linguistically situated and emotionally framed. In addition to polite requests, expressions of thanks and forms of address signalling respect, both manuals also contain explicit forms of linguistic impoliteness, including insults, threats and other face-threatening acts (cf. Brown & Levinson (1978, 1987). These are not presented as communicative failures; rather, within their respective situational and cultural contexts, they appear as expected, acceptable or even functionally adequate.

The comparative approach makes it possible to identify similarities and differences in the conveying of politeness-related patterns between source and target cultures and to examine the

extent to which politeness and respect are grammaticalized or discursively conventionalised. Furthermore, the paper discusses the conditions necessary for humorous communication and (ritualised) insult, as well as the degree to which intercultural politeness competence is conveyed to learners implicitly or explicitly. Overall, the contribution seeks to demonstrate the potential of historical foreign language teaching manuals as sources for the study of historical discursive practices situated between spoken and written language.

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Panel: Go global or go home. Letters as evidence for the history of French (2) (1.006+1.007) 11:00–12:30

Myriam Bergeron-Maguire –More to letters than meets the eye: the Prize Papers as a valuable resource for the History of French in America

This talk explores variation in French in Europe and America during the seventeenth- and eighteenth centuries from a geo-historical perspective. It draws on data from the Macintosh project (2023–2027), which consists of private letters primarily written by semi-literate individuals and addressed to family or close acquaintances located either in Western France or overseas, in the French colonies at the time (in the Caribbean, mainly). The historical significance of this newly available documentation for the description of French varieties in America will be highlighted by the analysis of grammatical, lexical, and grapho-phonetic features that have been excluded from formal written French at an early stage and are attested in these letters for the first time. In order to trace the unique trajectories of these underlying phenomena, several indicators will be examined: their presence in one or more modern varieties of French in America (or French Creoles); their absence from regions that were francised at a relatively recent period (the Occitan and Francoprovençal areas), suggesting early stigmatization; and their representation in popular or comic literature of the period, particularly in plays (Enckell 2017).

This investigation will shed a light on aspects of the French language that have been long overlooked due to the lack of reliable alternative sources: a relatively confidential 'Classical' French used among close acquaintances (especially women, cf. Rézeau 2014) which is at the roots of modern varieties of French in America, as well as French Creoles (Valdman 1979; Martineau 2005).

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Myriam Bergeron-Maguire & Céline Mounole – Contact-induced variation in eighteenth-century French in France

The Prize Papers collection offers a valuable opportunity to examine the linguistic dynamics at work in eighteenth-century France. The bundles of correspondence originating from the main harbours along the Atlantic coastline make it possible to infer the use and status of regional languages such as Gascon, Basque, and Breton in relation to French. While approximately eighty letters and three logbooks in Basque have so far been identified within the collection, the scarcity of Gascon and Breton testimonies is striking (Mounole 2024, Talec/Videgain 2024).

The French-language letters from Basque, Breton, and Gascon-speaking territories in the eighteenth century are, in their own right, equally informative. In addition to allowing an assessment of the spread of French along the Atlantic coastline during this period, they constitute an exceptional source for analysing how French was spoken and written. Several observed linguistic features point, for instance, to very close contact between French and Basque, as well as between French and Breton (Bergeron-Maguire, forthc.).

This paper examines contact-induced variation in eighteenth-century French through an analysis of letters written in the Basque Country, Brittany, and Gascony.

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Myriam Bergeron-Maguire & Pierre Vermander – Final Discussion

Gender & lexicon (1.008–1.009) 11:00–12:30

Christine Wallis – 'Women's Work': Textile Terms in Medieval Vernacular Glossing

John of Garland's *Dictionarius* aims to teach Latin vocabulary by taking readers on an imaginary walk through Paris, describing various traders or manufacturers and their wares. Many of the surviving manuscripts contain glossing in Middle English or Old French, providing vernacular equivalents for the original text. This supplementary material provides a valuable insight into how audiences used the *Dictionarius* to teach Latin (Wallis, Seiler & Pagan 2024).

The *Dictionarius* includes sections devoted to *instrumenta mulieribus* ('instruments belonging to women'), namely implements for weaving, spinning, and other activities related to textile production. In eight of the manuscripts this 'women's vocabulary' contains a comparatively high

level of Middle English glosses, alongside more frequent French glossing. For example, *trahale* ('a skein-winding reel') is glossed six times with the English *rel* ('reel'). A more puzzling term is *calotricatorium* ('?smoothing iron' (*DMLBS*)), which is glossed with a variety of words (*redelere*, *sclikebred*, *ridlingbred*, *ridilbred*), several formed with the English *-bred* ('-board'), but none of which appear in lexicographical resources such as the *AND*, *MED* or the *Lexis of Cloth and Clothing* database.

My paper explores the following research areas:

1. What variation do the textile glosses show? (Is there dialect variation? Do the glosses travel as a group from one manuscript to another, or are they *ad hoc* reader responses? Do the English and French glosses behave in similar or different ways?)
2. Why are so many English glosses associated with textile work in the *Dictionarius*?
3. What evidence is there for these 'women's words' in other Old and Middle English texts or lexicographic resources?

This investigation focuses on social aspects of the textile glosses, such as a) the extent to which this vocabulary may have been under-recorded because of its association with women's work, and b) the relationship of the English glosses with French and continental Germanic languages, given recent evidence from the *Bilingual Thesaurus* that loanwords could make significant contributions to Middle English technical registers (Ingham et al 2019). This study adds to a growing body of work applying historical sociolinguistic methods to Middle English (e.g. Cutillas-Espinosa & Hernandez-Campoy 2020).

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Elisabetta Lonati – Midwifery in 18th-century British lexicography: the sociolinguistics of medical knowledge dissemination

The long eighteenth century represents a turning point in the development of midwifery from an essentially practical activity in the hands of women as midwives to a structured branch of medicine grounded on scientific principles and largely -- if not exclusively -- performed by an increasing number of men-midwives (e.g. physicians and surgeons). This means that midwifery undergoes a process of medicalisation and institutionalisation (e.g. lying-in hospitals, teaching and lecturing, etc.) within an emerging disciplinary community, as well as within late modern British society at large.

In this perspective, the eighteenth-century debate around the status of midwifery as an emerging branch of medicine, along with its general social positioning, becomes central. Male and female authors (e.g. midwives, physicians, surgeons, and practitioners) wrote and published reference works for practical instruction and theoretical reference, in order to provide experts and non-experts with essential or detailed (medical) information, basic principles and new techniques, discoveries, and procedures, but also to frame and establish group identities (e.g. midwives vs. physicians).

In this dynamic context, the aim of this paper is to investigate the lexicographic outcome of this dramatic transformation in midwifery as included and recorded in eighteenth-century British lexicography. In other words, the study will investigate the lexicographic representation of and discourse on midwifery and its sociolinguistic aspects by analysing the lexicon (e.g. headwords, entries, co-text, etc.) which possibly defines and systematise it as a new (male) disciplinary domain across entries and dictionaries. The study will also highlight the relationship between ancient or traditional perspectives and contemporary ones, metacomments and internal debate, if included, as well as the main sources selected by the compilers for their works.

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Blanca Fernández Soriano – "I think of those dear Friends at home": Mapping home across social strata in nineteenth-century colonial women's correspondence

Home is a deeply embedded cultural construct associated with affect, identity, and belonging (Bartmiński, 2009; Benjamin, 2024), and its meanings become particularly multidimensional and dynamic in contexts of displacement. In diasporan settings, the process of writing from and to *home* acquires complex and unique layers of significance (Avila-Ledesma & Amador-Moreno, 2016). Private letters, in particular, offer historically grounded access to affective stance, identity negotiation, and the everyday communicative practices of migrant authors to those at *home* (Fitzpatrick, 2006). Despite the centrality of *home* in sociological, anthropological, and philosophical accounts (Scicluna, 2017), its conceptualisation in historical discourse of migration remains largely unexplored from a sociolinguistic perspective.

Hence, this paper addresses the linguistic construction of the cultural concept home in nineteenth-century English-language private correspondence written by women who migrated to Australia, with a special focus on the variable of social status (Fritz, 2007). The analysis draws on an original machine-readable corpus compiled for this project, comprising 307 letters authored by colonial women. These sources allow for the analysis of semantic, pragmatic, and social patterning within a historical community of authors whose experiences of displacement and settlement shaped their linguistic encoding of *home*.

With this aim, the paper constructs a conceptual-semantic model of *home*, developed inductively from lexicographic, sociohistorical and interdisciplinary sources. This taxonomy is implemented as a cultural semantic map (Rakhilina et al., 2022) and operationalised in qualitative annotation using *ATLAS.ti* (2025). The annotated corpus enables an integrated exploration of semantic frames and nodes, and its correlation with social variables. Results show that, while all correspondents negotiate tensions between origin and host *homes*, class disparities emerge in the linguistic framing of stability, longing, and material and emotional attachments.

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Orthography & Spelling (2) (1.004) 11:00–12:30

Philip C. Vergeiner – On the Decline of the East Upper German Written Language: A Graphematic Analysis of Ecclesiastical Council Records from the Diocese of Passau (1680–1803)

The standardization of German is now widely recognized as a neither linear nor one-dimensional process. Alongside the East Central German (ECG) written language – the principal basis of present-day Standard German – other regional written varieties emerged, most notably in the German-speaking southeast, where an East Upper German (EUG) written language functioned as a supraregional variety from the early sixteenth century onward (Wiesinger 2003; Reiffenstein 2003). Its use was closely linked to confessional divisions between the Catholic south and the Protestant north, with the Counter-Reformation even fostering its usage (Rössler 2005; Wiesinger 2018). A widespread takeover of the ECG written language in the southeast is generally assumed only in the mid-eighteenth century; however, particularly in handwritten texts, the EUG writing tradition appears to have persisted considerably longer (Wiesinger 2018: 223), in some cases even into the early nineteenth century (Reiffenstein 2021: 54). Nevertheless, the decline of the EUG written language – especially in handwritten sources – remains insufficiently researched.

This study addresses this desideratum by examining graphematic features associated with the EUG written language in Upper Ennsian Ecclesiastical Council Records from the Diocese of Passau (see https://www.bavarikon.de/object/bav:BSB-CMS-0000000000011148?lang=de). As these documents consist of handwritten texts produced by an ecclesiastical governing authority, they provide a context in which the EUG writing tradition can be expected to show particular persistence. The analysis is based on a subsample of 1,100 pages spanning five periods (1681–1684; 1706–1710; 1736–1743; 1768–1772; 1797–1803), transliterated as part of the project "Methodology of the Inaccurate" (funded by the Volkswagen Foundation). Using a variable-analytic approach, the study investigates patterns of change in five features considered typical of the EUG written language (Rössler 2005; Wiesinger 2018): (1) lack of umlaut marking for *u/ü* and *au/äu* before specific consonants; (2) differentiation of the graphematic reflexes of MHG *î* and *ei* (⟨ei/ey⟩ vs. ⟨ai/ay⟩); (3) spelling of the reflexes of MHG *üe* as ⟨uo, ue⟩; (4) spelling of the MHG Bavarian velar affricate as ⟨kh, ckh⟩; (5) spelling of MHG *-mb/-mp* as ⟨mb, mp⟩. By tracing the diachronic development of these features, the study contributes to a more fine-grained understanding not only of the decline of the EUG written language but also of German standardization more generally.

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Kristiina Praakli – The making of Estonian Õ: The role of Otto Wilhelm Masing in developing written Estonian

The beginning of the 19th century marked a turning point in the development of written Estonian, as language planning activities gradually shifted from the Baltic German elite to language developers with an Estonian-speaking background. This process was accompanied by extensive debates on written norms, particularly orthographic principles. Earlier forms of written Estonian had been shaped mainly by language developers with a Baltic German background, and several features of Estonian pronunciation were omitted (Praakli & Pae 2021, Praakli 2025).

The presentation focuses on the role of an individual agent in the development of written Estonian. As a case study, it examines the activities of Otto Wilhelm Masing (1763–1832), a Baltic German pastor and language developer, particularly through orthographic innovations. The analysis concentrates on Masing's most significant contribution to written Estonian: the introduction of the letter *Õ*, functioning as a distinct grapheme for the vowel /ɤ/, into the Estonian alphabet (Praakli & Pae 2021).

In earlier written Estonian, the vowel /ɤ/ was marked inconsistently using various orthographic solutions. This can be explained by the absence of the corresponding phoneme from the native language of many earlier developers of written Estonian. Masing's Estonian-Swedish/German background enabled him to recognise the vowel /ɤ/ as a distinct phoneme that distinguishes meanings in spoken Estonian and to identify the existing written system as orthographically deficient. This insight led to the need for a new grapheme intended to make written Estonian more transparent and better aligned with spoken usage.

The addition of the letter *Õ* to the Estonian writing system was not merely a technical innovation, but part of a wider effort to bring the written language closer to pronunciation. Its adoption, however, was not without difficulties: regional variation in pronunciation, printing costs, and opposition from some pastors and language developers slowed its wider spread. Nevertheless, the letter *Õ* became established in the Estonian written language several decades later.

The presentation examines the creation of the letter *Õ* and Masing's arguments for the development of the written language by analysing his metalinguistic discourse. The data consist of Masing's publications (1816, 1820) as well as his correspondence with pastor Johann Heinrich Rosenplänter (Kirjad I-III) and his contributions to the journal *Beiträge zur genauern Kenntniss der ehstnischen Sprache* (1813–1832). The case of *Õ* demonstrates how personal initiative, language ideologies, and an authoritative position, together with a social network, can play a decisive role in the development of a written language (Praakli & Pae 2021).

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Otto Wilhelm Masingu kirjad Johann Heinrich Rosenplänterile 1814–1832. I: 1814–1818 (1995); II: 1819–1820 (1996); III: 1821–1823 (1996). Eds. Leo Anvelt, Eva Aaver, Heli Laanekask, Abel Nagelmaa. Tartu: Eesti Kirjandusmuuseum.

Syntax (2) (1.005) 11:00–12:30

Wolfgang Imo & Valeria Schick – Wer Gutes will, der sei erst gut; | Wer Freude will, besänftige sein Blut: Bipartite relative constructions as positioning routines in historical dramas from the 17th to the 19th century

Our focus is on a particular type of relative constructions, generally involving two clauses – the first one containing a form of the relative pronouns *wer* (*who*) or *was* (*what*) at the beginning and the second one an omittable form of a d-pronoun *der/die/das* (*that/those (one/s).masc./fem./neut*.; Fuß/Grewendorf 2014), referring to *wer/was*. However, it seems that there are no fixed rules for when the resumptive d-pronoun is verbalized and when it is omitted in those clauses, resulting in an elliptic second utterance part (Birkner 2008: 16). This is not only observable in the use of this construction in contemporary (spoken) German (e.g., ***Wem*** *sie hilft,* ***(der)*** *hat nichts zu befürchten*. (Birkner 2008: 16); lit. ***Whom*** *she helps,* ***(that one)*** *has nothing to fear.*) but also in historical speech-purposed sources like dramas (Culpeper/Kytö 2020: 17), e.g., ***Wer*** *Gutes will,* ***der*** *sei erst gut;* | ***Wer*** *Freude will, besänftige sein Blut*; (Goethe, Faust II); lit. ***Who*** *wants good,* ***that one*** *first be good.* | ***Who*** *wants joy, calm his/her blood*.

In the context of the DFG-project Person-referring pronouns in dramas and drawing on the methodological framework of what we call *Historical Interactional Linguistics* (Imo/Schick acc.), we analyzed a diachronic set of 31 German dramas, ranging from the 17th to the 19th century, represented by A. Gryphius, G. E. Lessing, F. Schiller and J. W. v. Goethe. Our findings illustrate that (1) there exist several (non-elliptic, elliptic, basic and expanded) realization variants of the focal construction (n ≈ 510) which (2) on the one hand have partly congealed into formulaic expressions, such as proverbs (e.g. *Wer andern eine Grube gräbt, fällt selbst hinein*. / *Who digs a hole for someone else to fall in, falls in it himself*.; see Birkner 2008: 14), and on the other hand regularly form the basis for idiosyncratic, context specific expressions (see the examples cited above). Furthermore, we will argue that, in terms of its pragmatic functions, this construction type provides a productive means for embedding generalizing or didactic statements (e.g., Zifonun et al. 1997: 2265) in a given interactional context in order to position the characters vis-à-vis one another on a deontic and/or epistemic level and consequently reflect social relations between them. A further question we aim to answer is whether we can find hints for regularities regarding the mentioned formal and functional aspects in our data.

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Carlos Felipe Pinto & Alisson Filipe Sousa Barros – The sociolinguistic network of Medieval Spanish and the loss of V2

Considering the grammatical differences between Medieval and Current Spanish, Fontana (1993) and Wolfe (2015) argued that Medieval Spanish was a symmetrical V2 language like Yiddish and Icelandic. Pinto (2011) suggested that the appearance of V2 in the grammar of Medieval Spanish was due to a process of contact with Germanic languages, but that the loss of the phenomenon at the end of the 15th century was due exclusively to a change in the frequency of the data, which obscured the evidence for the acquisition of the V2 parameter by the child. Tuten (2003) argues that several phenomena known in Current Spanish today are the result of different linguistic mixtures (koineization), divided into three phases: the first, the Burgos phase (9th-11th centuries), in which the northern dialects mixed, forming the first Reconquest front; The second, the Toledo phase (12th-13th centuries), involved the advance to the south-central part of the Peninsula, where these already mixed speakers came into contact with other dialects besides Arabic languages; the third, the Seville phase (14th-15th centuries), concluded the Reconquest process, finalizing the dialectal mixtures. Following Tuten's (2003) proposal, this work aims to present preliminary arguments, contrary to Pinto (2011), that the loss of V2 in the history of Spanish may have been due to the koineization processes during the Reconquest. The hypothesis is that Medieval Spanish up to the 12th century had a V2 flavor due to the Hispano-Gothic heritage, but, upon mixing and expanding southward (as happened with English, according to Kroch 2001), it began to lose the property V2 in speech, preserving it only in writing. Since writing is more conservative than speech, the disappearance of the V2 grammar in written texts in the 15th century may have been a late reflection of grammatical change in spoken language, especially considering the formulaic nature of the texts as well as the restrictions on access to writing during that period. Our work is divided into three parts: 1) we present the grammatical data on linguistic change in relation to the loss of V2; 2) we discuss the socio-historical network of how language contacts may have obscured the phenomenon; 3) we discuss how possible relationships between speech and writing may have contributed to the maintenance of the data in the texts until the 15th century, even though the phenomenon may have already been lost in speech some time before.

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Julian Mader – Dear Mama dont leave me here: Not-contractions in 19th and early 20th-century English patient letters

Not-contractions such as *didn(')t* and *won(')t* instead of did not and will not were proscribed in Late Modern English letter-writing manuals as disrespectful and overly familiar (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2009: 125). Nevertheless, they became increasingly common in ego-documents, including letters, from the 1800s onwards, as shown in two recent ARCHER-based studies by López-Cuoso & Pérez-Guerra (2023: 198) and Pacheco-Franco & Calle-Martín (2024: 191–2). However, the correspondence data in ARCHER only represent the educational elite and published authors, and as yet the social embedding of this change in letter-writing practice remains understudied.

The aim of my paper is to fill this gap with a variationist study of *not*-contractions in the period c.1840–1920 based on the *Corpus of Patient Documents-UK* (CoPaDocs-UK; cf. Author 2025), which provides a rare glimpse into the language use of non-elite letter-writers outside the public sphere. The corpus comprises diplomatic transcriptions of 639 personal letters (c.220,000 running words) written by over 250 patients in British psychiatric hospitals. To investigate usage patterns of contracted versus uncontracted *not*-negated verbs, the 2,168 attestations were classified for various morpho-syntactic factors, such as the operator (CAN, DO, WILL, etc.), its tense and person, its function within the verb phrase, and clause type, as well as for socio-linguistic factors, including year of writing, socio-demographic writer variables (e.g., birth year, gender, writing experience), and writer-addressee relationship.

Preliminary macro-level findings demonstrate that 20% of all attestations are contracted. Despite being proscribed, these forms are found for almost half the informants, many of whom show intra-writer variation. As for linguistic factors, contraction is overall less frequent in the past tense, and lexemes and verb forms differ in their susceptibility to contraction (e.g., BE NOT: 3%, DO NOT: 39%). The exceptional frequency of *don't* (60% versus *do not*) could suggest that contraction was used to mitigate the potentially face-threatening effect of imperatives. There is also considerable socio-linguistic variation in the data: *not*-contractions are more frequent among inexperienced writers, men, and the younger generations. The latter difference is mirrored in a clear real-time spread (1840–59: 5%, after 1900: 28%). Regarding writer-addressee relationship, contracted forms are indeed less widespread in official letters, suggesting some sensitivity to politeness conventions.

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Formulaic language (1.003) 11:00–12:30

Ana Lalic – Italian-language Litterae missionarum between formulaic language and orality in 17th century Ottoman Bosnia and Herzegovina

In this paper, I analyze elements of formulaicity and orality in an epistolary corpus consisting of 1,142 letters written in Latin and Italian between 1572 and 1717. The material comes from the collection *Litterae missionarum*, that is, from letters written by Catholic priests who, from Ottoman territories in the Balkans, addressed their superiors at the seat of the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* in Rome. For the purposes of this study, I focus on 43 letters written in Italian in present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina. These letters offer an insight into administrative language use among speakers whose native language was not Italian. The first aim of my paper is to identify the formulaic language, that is, the ritualized formulas shaped by the tradition of *ars dictaminis*: openings, self-deprecating formulas, travel-hardship tropes, clichés, closing formulae, permits, and protocols. The second aim of my paper is to analyze the language of immediacy, that is, the elements of spoken language in the corpus. These include sequences of dialogue (direct and indirect speech), narration, language errors, spontaneous lexical choices (shifts in register), as well as the inclusion of everyday vocabulary influenced by both Christian and Muslim *realia*. In this way, I can identify the upper-level, formal use of language that is shaped by church bureaucratic expectations and the informal, lower-level use that is spontaneous, local and non-standard. The coexistence of fixed formulaic elements and elements of linguistic immediacy suggests that this epistolary genre can be considered a source for studying the relationship between written and spoken language.

Key words: epistolary discourse, *ars dictaminis*, spoken language features, communicative immediacy, 17th century Balkans

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Multilingualism & Letters (1.006+1.007) 14:00–15:30

Karoline Kühl – Individual vs. conventionalized variation in American Danish family letters (1918-1919)

A focus on speech communities — social groups assumed to share patterns of conventionalised linguistic variation (Schiegg & Huber, 2023: 10) — aligns well with the broader historical sociolinguistic endeavour, as it emphasises language as a social practice. Based on a corpus of 142 letters (52,000 words) produced by the American Danish Pedersen family between 1918 and 1919, this talk discusses the relationship between free intra- and inter-individual variation and socially conditioned variation occurring within the group as a whole, building upon the discussion initiated by Schiegg and Huber (2023).

The letters were written by members of the close Pedersen family to Einar Pedersen, a young American Danish man who had enlisted in the US Army. The writers form a very tight-knit group and report on everyday events, mutual acquaintances, and each other, creating temporally delayed intimate conversations. Einar's parents immigrated to the US at a young age, and the younger writers were born there. However, living in one of the Danish settlement areas in Minnesota, they all received an education in both English and Danish. In terms of language, the texts can be characterized as Standard Danish (with orthographic variation) with Jutish dialect features and lexical and constructional transfer from English. According to Koch and Oesterreicher (2012: 442), using vernacular (dialectal) forms turns discourse into language of immediacy. However, as neither language norms nor linguistic registers may be the same in translocated speaker communities as in the homeland, this does not necessarily apply here as a measure of proximity and distance. This raises the question of whether the measurements proposed by Koch & Oesterreicher are universally applicable.

Linguistic variation occurs in several directions: between Standard Danish and Jutish dialect; between Standard Danish and American Danish influenced by English; and between Danish and English proper. For example, variation between Standard Danish and the Jutish dialect can be observed in the participle suffixes with Standard Danish *-et* vs. dialectal *-en* (*kommet* vs. *kommen*, 'come'), between Danish and American Danish can be seen in constructions such as AmDa *at lide* 'to like' (*han lider at køre* 'he likes to drive') vs. Danish *at kunne lide* 'to be able to like' (*han kan lide at køre* 'he likes to drive'), or in the use of Danish vs. English agricultural terms such as *høst* 'crop' vs. crop.

Based on the Pedersen letters corpus built in *Voyant*, I will investigate the relationship between individual variation and socially-conditioned variation as a constituting feature of a social group. Metalinguistic evidence (comments and markings) will be used to explain the function of variation.

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Madeleine Eppel – Exploring multilingual repertoires in a 20th-century Franco-Manitoban family correspondence

"The relevant locus of contact", writes Matras (2009: 3), "is the processing apparatus of the individual multilingual speaker and the employment of this apparatus in communicative interaction". This statement encapsulates a recent paradigmatic shift, which emphasizes the individual's central role in observed language contact phenomena, rather than the long-held view that portrays languages as separate entities in opposition to one other.

A multilingual repertoire, comprised of various structures and forms (*ibid*. 2009: 4), is not a static linguistic inventory, but shifts and expands in accordance with the individual's immediate surroundings, communicative goals and "*parcours de vie*" – the latter of which includes social factors such as date and place of birth, education, geographic mobility and linguistic attitudes (Martineau 2018: 217). Private, notably family, letters have become a significant source material in historical sociolinguistics due to their "*nähesprachliche*" (Koch/Oesterreicher 1985) and socially diverse nature. This text-type has become especially fruitful for those studying multilingual practices and language contact phenomena (see Sowada 2021).

The *Gaston Bohémier and Joséphine Grégoire* fonds, located in St. Boniface, Manitoba, Canada, is a source for further exploration of this topic. This collection represents an epistolary time capsule, containing 506 letters and postcards, dated from 1939–1999, and including three generations of family members who maintain French as their primary language of communication while living in a predominately English-speaking society. The asymmetrical linguistic setting that frames the family's written exchanges represents the ideal context to study language contact phenomena and multilingual practices. Following a diplomatic transcription of the documents, this research project aims to investigate the relationship between an individual's writing practice and their multilingual environment.

In written communication, the extent to which an individual engages with their multilingual repertoire is reflected in a range of linguistic features observed at lexical, morphological, syntactic, semantic and graphical levels. This phenomenon prompts us to wonder, for example, whether a high tendency towards innovative borrowings or inter-sentential code-switching correlates with an individual's biography or sociolinguistic circumstances. However, before assessing the interplay between social variables and the overt or discreet mixing between languages, instances of multilingualism must be identified and placed on an established code-switching–borrowing continuum.

By adopting a mixed-methods approach that draws on contemporary sociolinguistic studies, deriving their terminologies and models from spoken data, this paper intends to shed light on the difficulties and discoveries that emerge when applying this hybrid methodology to a corpus of 20thcentury letters from a Franco-Manitoban family's correspondence.

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Sarah Newman – Multilingualism in written discourse between siblings during the Holocaust

Multilingualism is a key feature of many letters and diaries written by victims of the Holocaust. Factors contributing to this phenomenon include the massive displacement of populations across Europe, language policies introduced by the Nazis and sympathetic governments, and the significance of language in terms of national or religious identities. In the context of the Holocaust, language was considered a method of expressing oneself under looming 'de-judification' policies that included linguistic alienation (Gubar, 2004, p. 444). However, much of our analysis of Holocaust texts focuses on prose and verse, confining our impressions to the work of a literary minority. I seek to expand analysis from Holocaust verse into personal, everyday texts to gain a more complete picture of contemporary language use. Approaching language history 'from below' (Elspaß 2005) with a focus on multilingualism will be essential to form an understanding of 'who [spoke] what language to whom and when' (Fishman 1965).

The Holocaust tore families apart and many of the personal texts remaining from that time focus heavily on familial relationships. In this paper, I will present findings from a quantitative and qualitative analysis of a diverse range of written discourses between siblings in Germany and Eastern Europe from 1939 to 1945, investigating the use of multilingualism in both practical and playful forms in private diaries and letters. This includes, firstly, the use of language as code, whether in the context of siblings using a shared language to communicate privately and bypass state censorship, or one sibling using an exclusionary language to keep secrets from another. Secondly, I will examine what Otsuji and Pennycook (2010) term 'metrolingualism' – when multilingual individuals use and play with their languages to negotiate identity – demonstrated in Holocaust discourse by siblings revelling in their multilingual identities and using written discourse as a creative translanguaging space, despite their dire circumstances.

Thirdly, I will consider intra-author variation, analysing how siblings' multilingual writing varies across discourses. I seek to identify the extent to which different languages were used in these personal documents, and what the distribution of varieties tells us about the authors' multilingual repertoire. My findings will thus provide first insights into how siblings communicated via different languages for practical purposes or engaged in light-hearted translanguaging in personal texts during the Holocaust.

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Literary texts (2) (1.008+1.009) 14:30–15:30

Dennis Preston – Charles Dickens' Views of American Language

In 1842 Charles Dickens returned from travels in America. Shortly after, in *American Notes* (1842) and *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843-44), negative representations of American culture and language predominate. In both, Dickens comments on and imitates aspects of American speech, an outsider view of it in the mid- to late-19th Century.

Literary scholars have explored these works, but, except for identifying and cataloging the lexical, morphological, syntactic, and phonological features (e.g., Pound 1947), little has been done by linguists to look at such works from a broader point of view. In this paper I make use of Hymes' SPEAKING mnemonic (1972) to consider interactional, genre, and language regard features from these two works, both as commented on and represented by Dickens.

For example, consider Dicken's following report on interaction from *American Notes*: #1 "Everybody talks to you or to anybody else who hits his fancy." In contrast, however, there is this: #2 "At dinner, … [n]obody says anything, at any meal, to anybody. … There is no conversation, no laughter, no cheerfulness, no sociality… ." To follow Hymes' outline of factors (67-68), the above two samples show interesting contrasts.

	Sample #1	Sample #2
S (setting)	Train travel	Meal
P (participation)	Travel strangers	Hotel dining strangers
E (ends)	Camaraderie	Privacy
A (act sequence)	Initiating	Non-initiating
K (key)	Trivial	Trivial
I (instrumentality)	Spoken	Spoken
N (norms)	American	American
G (genres)	Small talk	Small talk

The four contrasting categories suggest that American speakers were more likely to strike up a conversation with traveling companions, even strangers, but that conversations at meals were much less likely. "Camaraderie" and "privacy" capture these contrasting approaches to interaction in the two settings. Recall, however, that, underlying all Dickens' comments. is the fact that what he calls attention to is generally in contrast to British norms, suggesting that privacy in travel situations and camaraderie at mealtime would have been normal English behavior. This large-scale implication is worth looking into; it suggests, as Levinson (2000) would have it, that marked behaviors warrant a closer look for implicata, as would seem to be the case here.

This paper will investigate a number of Dickens' commentaries and imitations of American speech in these two works within a Hymesian framework but will add the pragmatic dimensionality of contrast, allowing an implicated understanding of the "unmarked" English ways of speaking. The paper will include analyses of Dickers' representations of politeness, pulpit speech, legal discourse, coarse language, and gender and seeks to establish further a basis for the sociohistorical investigation of generic, interactional, discoursal, and attitudinal factors derived from written sources (e.g., Preston 2023).

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Oliver Currie – What language did Cinderella speak? The historical sociolinguistic testimony of folktale collections in the nineteenth-century United Kingdom and France

Just as for the fairy-tale Cinderella, nineteenth-century folklore collection more generally offered the promise of a topsy-turvy world where the underdogs among languages – minoritised languages and non-standard dialects – could have their day at the ball. Folklore was defined by contemporary folklorists not as the lore of the population at large but specifically as that of the least educated classes, who largely spoke minoritised languages and non-standard dialects. Folklore is also potentially an excellent source for historical spoken discourse, since it was (largely) orally collected, but it was preserved as written discourse and often underwent significant linguistic transformation in the process. Controversially, folktales collected from peripheral minoritised-language-speaking cultures ("L") were often primarily or exclusively published (in translation) in central languages ("H"): e.g. Irish-language and English-dialect folktales in Standard English; Basque, Breton, Corsican and Occitan-language tales in French.

This paper explores by means of two case studies the historical sociolinguistic interest of nineteenth-century folklore collections, focusing on two research questions:

(1) What does variation in the language of publication (H only — literary form of L —phonetic representation of L — bilingual H and L — style shifting between H and L) reveal about the historical sociolinguistic context?
(2) To what extent are published folklore collections attempted representations of spoken discourse or written (re)creations?

The first case study examines variation in the language of publication between and within two folklorists from Gascony: Jean-Francois Bladé, who published his folksongs bilingually in Gascon (in literary orthography) and French (1881-82) but his folktales only in French, though with the same publisher Maisonneuve (1886); and Félix Arnaudin, who published his folktales bilingually in French and in Gascon/Occitan in an orthography adapted especially to represent the Grande Lande dialect. The second case study examines variation in the use of English regional dialects in folktales published by William Axon, James Bowker (both Lancashire), Richard Blakeborough (Yorkshire), Marie Chlotilde Balfour, Mabel Peacock (both Lincolnshire) and Charlotte Burne (Shropshire). We find variation in the extent of dialect use between not only different folklorists, but also within individual tales, often with the narrative in Standard English and part or all of the dialogue in dialect. The patterns of dialect use seem to reflect attempts to record spoken non-standard speech in some of the folklorists (Balfour and Burne), but established patterns of the literary use of dialect – both literary dialect and dialect literature (Beal 2006; Townend 2024, 114) – in others (Axon, Bowker, Blakeborough, Peacock). By examining the texts as well as folklorists' metatexts and networks/communities of practice, the paper seeks to elucidate the possible competing motivations underlying the variation in use of Gascon vs. French or non-standard English dialects vs. Standard English in the published folklore.

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Modality (1.004) 14:00–15:30

Yael Reshef & Ruth Stern – Expressing necessity in a newly-revived language: a usage-based study of register differentiation in Hebrew texts from the 1920s-1930

This usage-based study investigates the linguistic strategies employed to express necessity in Hebrew texts from the 1920s-1930s, a critical period when Hebrew first emerged as a daily means of communication in a nascent speech community. The study analyzes two large corpora representing opposing poles of the immediacy-distance register continuum (Koch and Oesterreicher 2012, termed 'involved–informational' by Chafe 1982, Biber 1991): official posters issued by the Tel Aviv municipality (est. 1921), which, for the first time, had to develop an administrative register in Hebrew; and personal letters written by first-generation native and near-native speakers of Hebrew. Due to the lack of recordings of spontaneous speech from that early stage (Reshef 2013), these letters provide the closest available representation of involved expression strategies in that formative period in the evolution of Modern Hebrew.

The data reveal a wide array of linguistic devices employed to articulate necessity, including, inter alia, modal adjectives and participles (e.g. *tsarix* 'essential', *naḥuts* 'necessary', *muxraḥ* 'compel.PASS.PRT.M.SG'), verbs (e.g. *histarex* 'need'), nouns (e.g. *me-ḥovat-enu* 'it is our duty' [lit.: from-duty-ours], the preposition '*al* 'on' (e.g. '*al-ay lada'at* 'I must know' [lit.: on-me know.INF]), or the existential *yeš* (e.g. *yeš lišpox* 'it is necessary to pour out [the filth]' (lit.: ex pour.INF) and more.

The aim of the study is to map the distribution of the various strategies, and to explore similarities and differences between the two corpora, focusing on how pragmatic properties influence linguistic choices. Findings indicate that personal letters predominantly utilize direct strategies and first- and second person constructions, whereas official posters rely exclusively on third-person or impersonal forms and may express necessity indirectly via requests (e.g. ha-*tošavim mitbaqšim* 'the citizens are requested' [lit.: DEF.citizens request.PASS.PRS.M.SG), which in this context assume a necessity function. This research elucidates the interplay between pragmatic functions and language use, highlighting the early development of register differentiation in Modern Hebrew in the expression of necessity.

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Christine Elsweiler & Moragh Gordon –Negotiating English prestige norms: a diachronic overview of deontic modals in Scottish correspondence

Despite continuous contact and sustained anglicisation pressures, Scots and Scottish English (SE) reportedly developed a modal system distinct from that of the Southern British Standard English (SBSE) prestige variety (cf. Miller, 2004; Schützler & Herzky, 2021). Specifically, present-day Scots and SE differ in their use of deontic modals such as *must* (Scots *maun*), *have to*, *should* and *need to*. Miller (2004: 52), for instance, finds that even in educated speech "*[s]hould* and not *ought* is used", while deontic *must* is rare and preferred in epistemic uses. Similarly, Tagliamonte and Smith (2006), analysing dialect interviews, hypothesise that deontic *must* and *maun* are virtually absent in some spoken Scots varieties and may have been so historically. In contrast, Schützler and Herzky (2021) report that deontic *must* is common in written registers, though *need to* is more frequent than in SBSE.

The historical depth and the sociolinguistic roots of these differences are not yet well understood, however. Although the distribution of these modals has received some diachronic study (Dossena 2007), a systematic account is still lacking. It remains unclear how and when Scottish usage diverged from or aligned with the Southern prestige model, particularly in written contexts.

This paper adopts a historical-sociolinguistic perspective to trace the diachronic development and interplay of the deontic modal auxiliaries *must*, *maun*, *should*, *have to*, *need to* and *ought to* in Scottish correspondence, exploring both the semantic distribution and the pragmatic use of these modals from the mid 16th-century to the end of the 19th century. Using the *Helsinki Corpus of Scottish Correspondence, 1540-1750*, the *Corpus of Modern Scottish Writing* (1700-1945) and the *Corpus of Scottish Pauper Petitions* (1750-1910), we examine how competing forms patterned over the period 1540-1900 across genders and different Scottish regions. In doing so, we aim to shed light on how Scottish writers negotiated English prestige norms in the context of increasing anglicisation and standardisation pressures.

Preliminary results suggest that the shift from Scottish *maun* to English *must* around 1600 was rapid, with *must* covering the same range of modal meanings and pragmatic uses as *maun*. From the 17th century onwards, *must* is mainly used deontically across different Scottish regions – as was *maun* pre-1600 – and it is represented more frequently in female-authored letters.

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Yoko Iyeiri – Two Verbs of Epistemic Modality in Benjamin Franklin's English: Seem vs. Appear

The present study focuses on the two synonymous verbs *seem* and *appear* in Benjamin Franklin's (1706-1790) English. Both verbs are included in Holmes' (1988: 31) list of lexical verbs indicating

epistemic modality. Quirk et al. (1985: 1183) treat them together, when they discuss verbs that can occur with extraposed *that*-clauses in contemporary English, as in: *it seems that* ... and *it appears that* .... Although these two verbs are often mentioned side by side in existing studies, their differences have not been examined in detail to date, except that Biber et al. (1999: 437-439) suggest, again about contemporary English, that *appear* is perhaps more formal than *seem*, as the former is infrequent in conversation and fiction. The present study extends the research into a historical context, focusing on the eighteenth century, and intends to address the following questions:

1) Are there any usage differences between *seem* and *appear*?
2) Are there any semantic differences between *seem* and *appear* in discourse?
3) Is the choice between *seem* and *appear* conditioned by sociolinguistic and/or stylistic factors?

The dataset explored in this study is a corpus of Benjamin Franklin's English (approximately 600,000 words), which I have compiled for my research, using materials from *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*. I will examine all relevant examples of *seem* and *appear* (excluding examples of the 'come into view' sense) through standard variationist methodology. As the dataset includes Benjamin Franklin's letters to various family members and colleagues as well as his autobiography, it represents different levels of formality and is well suited to historical sociolinguistic analysis.

The findings include, but are not limited to, the following: *seem* is used much more frequently than *appear* in general and belongs everyday vocabulary, while *appear* tends to be more formal; both *seem* and *appear* take similar complement patterns: *that*-clauses (i.e. *seem that* ...; *appear that* ...), infinitives (e.g. *seem to be* ...; *appear to be* ...), adjectives (e.g. *seem happy*; *appear judicious*), and noun phrases (e.g. *seem a clever man*; *appear a sensible man*); and the range of verbs occurring in the infinitival complement is wider with *seem* than with *appear*, suggesting that the former verb serves more general purposes. Overall, *seem* is a step further removed from its original 'appearance' meaning.

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Syntax (3) (1.005) 14:00–15:30

Nicola Swinburne & Peter Petré – A fresh look at an old problem: on variation and pragmatics in the early grammaticalization of do-support in English

Keywords: do-support, grammaticalization, auxiliary verb, specificity, expressivity

Despite centuries of literature, our current understanding of the origin of English 'do'-support is still confused, and myths abound. This research starts afresh, taking guidance from the best of these studies but grounded in today's understanding of how innovations arise and changes are

adopted in the language. It supports the hypothesis that people often innovate for expressive reasons (Haspelmath 1999), resulting in considerable variation. When successful, these innovations spread and become conventionalized as coded grammatical distinctions.

Analysed here are works by four authors writing persuasive religious texts, with different dialectal influences and representing a 40-year time interval, 1529-1569. From these, we have extracted for analysis 70-200 tokens each of do-support (DS), modal-support (modS), and comparable non-supported uses (nDS). The time interval was chosen because (acc. Ellegård, 1953) it is when affirmative uses, which are the uses most strongly associated with rich meaning/functions, are nearing a peak.

Of the 26 factors investigated connected with the syntax and semantics of the DS construction, the following have been found most relevant in distinguishing the uses of DS: 1. nominal vs pronominal subject; 2. subject specificity; 3. tense; 4. Vfin-subj inversion; 5. conjunction of the lexical verb.

The conclusion reached is that affirmative DS is being preferred in this early stage of its development for semantic-pragmatic rather than syntactic reasons. Writers are using DS to make stronger, more expressive statements about the world, which are often contrastive as well as more verbose (Stein, 1990). Such statements favour a nominal over pronominal subject. They may also be associated with a clause-initial modifier (e.g. *now*, *neither*, etc.), which resulted in V-S inversion in the earlier part of the period when there was a lingering use of V2.

In the text from 1529, there is furthermore a positive association between DS and the specificity of the subject. This could be because the 'reality' semantics associated with lexical do persist in its auxiliary uses and the writer has some direct evidence from specific instances. A similar result has been found previously in a northern Italian dialect, where use of DS with certain non-referential subjects is disallowed in the primitive, but not in the more advanced, stages of the construction (Swinburne 2021). Overall DS appears to be associated with the writer's expression of their perception of the truth of the proposition and their wish that the reader take note of this.

In texts written after 1529, the meaning of DS has broadened so that it is increasingly used to make generic statements describing timeless truths. This gives rise to an aspectual association such as found in (later) southwestern and Irish dialects (e.g. Klemola 1994; Fanego et al. 2025), further enhanced by the incoming of progressive to take over non-generic/habitual meanings. It is proposed that it is the expansion in uses, and so loss of the unique, evidence-based, referential properties of DS, that eventually lead to its demise in the affirmative and paved the way for its further grammaticalization.

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Lauri Marjamäki – (East Upper) German Rela8ve Clauses in Historical Orality

The history of the German relative clauses poses several sociolinguistically interesting questions. In recent varieties of German, relative clauses are formed either by the relative pronoun *der* (standard variety) or the relative particles *wo* and *was* (most dialectal varieties). The dialects also use different relativisation strategies depending on the position of the accessibility hierarchy (Fleischer 2004). Prior to the standardisation in the late 18th and 19th century the literary language variated between eg. the pronouns *der*, *welcher* and the relative particle *so*. It also showed a fine-grained variation according to different parameters as region, confession, genre and style (Pickl 2022; Brooks 2006). In my doctoral dissertation *Relativsätze in historischer Mündlichkeit* (to be submitted in February) I describe the relative elements and relative clause strategies used in a corpus of Early modern texts close to orality in order to find out which differences emerge between the historically oral and historically written texts. Another aspect concerns possible characteristics that recent and historical spoken varieties might share, as eg. relative particles. The project corpus consists of private letters by women and comedies with dialectal speech from the East Upper German dialectal area and extends from 1550 to 1800.

The degree of spoken/writtenness of the corpus texts is analyzed as the frequency of immediacy/distance features (Koch/Oesterreicher 1985). These include interaction, situation, syntax and mediality as developed in Ágel/Hennig (2006) and Schiegg (2022) and fitted for the period in question. The results of this "orality check" show that private letters can be highly immediate/oral but at the same time prone to syntactic complexity and formulaic language, whereas the comedies as dialogical texts have mostly high immediacy and low distance rates but differ substantially as to the peasant and noble characters. In the next step I compare the spoken/written character of the texts with the occuring relative strategies, the relative elements and the effect of case hierarchy on them. I show that the differences in the use of relative strategies are linked to the spoken-written-character of the texts, but that at the same time idiolectal choices and more fine-grained stilistical preferences play a role. Interestingly different relative clause profiles emerge, where the more acrolectal and distanced texts show more variation than the more immediate and basilectal texts.

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Sandrine Tailleur & France Martineau – Variable future tense in Quebec French: the medium and the individual

In Canadian (Quebec) French, the expression of the future tense uses three variants, which are roughly equivalent in interpretation, but whose rate of usage is influenced by factors such as the presence of negation or the temporal proximity.

"Tomorrow, I'll call."

a. Demain, **j'appellerai**. Simple future
b. Demain, **je vais appeler**. Periphrastic future
c. Demain, **j'appelle**. Present tense

In this work, we study this well-known variable in a corpus of highly literate Quebec French women between 1845 and 1920. The corpus contains more than 1100 letters by 10 female writers from three generations. Occurrences of future were extracted (variationist approach), including variants usually excluded from studies (like pragmatic or deontic future). We aim to answer the following questions:

I. **Methodologically**, which writer shows a pattern of variation, and what does it tell us about the community grammar at the time?

Little is known about historical usage, but recent works by Martineau (2026) show that the simple future variant loses ground between the 18th (96% use) and the 19th (78% use) centuries. She also shows that during this period, only a few writers exhibit variable usage, which brings the question of the role of the individual in a change in progress (Bergs 2005, etc.).

II. **Empirically**, how does the type of historical data/medium (personal correspondence) compare to modern results, oral or written?

In modern corpora, the simple future is used between 95% of the time in planned written texts (Lesage & Gagnon 1992) and as low as 20% of the time in sociolinguistic interviews (Poplack & Turpin 1999; Blondeau 2006, etc.), with variation according to speech/text type (Tremblay et al. 2025; etc.).

III. **Theoretically**, could "future" variants typical of correspondence (like deontic future) play a role in change in progress/patterns of variation?

The expression of the future tense is one of the rare variables for which usage can be compared between oral and written mediums, since, despite being stylistically indexed (simple future is more formal), it shows a robustly variable pattern of usage across communities and time. It has also been said to be agegraded (Blondeau 2006, etc.), which crucially supports the idea that the individual linguistic behaviour needs to be examined thoroughly before we understand the community patterns.

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Phonology (1.003) 14:00–15:00

Oxel Uribe-Etxebarria – Phonological Variation and Ideological Perceptions: The Case of /ʃ/ in a Basque Variety

One of the most distinctive features of the Basque variety spoken in Oñati (Gipuzkoa, Spain) is the frequent occurrence of the voiceless postalveolar fricative /ʃ/, which arises from specific phonological processes shaping the local dialect. This paper analyzes three primary contexts in which this segment appears: (1) definite declension, where the addition of the article *-a* to nominal stems ending in *-i* triggers the insertion of an epenthetic consonant [j], which subsequently devoices to [ʃ] (e.g., *mendi-a* > *mendi[j]a* > *mendi[ʒ]a* > *mendi[ʃ]a* 'the mountain'); (2) bipersonal verb forms, in which the intransitive auxiliary begins with [ʃ]- (< *dj-) (e.g., *pentsaitten xat*, 'it seems to me'); and (3) tripersonal verb forms, where an auxiliary unique to the Oñati variety likewise begins with [ʃ]- (e.g., *erosi xao*, 'he/she has bought [something] to him/her').

These phonological processes have been documented since the late 19th century through Louis-Lucien Bonaparte's dialectological notes. However, the salient use of /ʃ/ led to a negative self-perception among Oñati speakers during the 20th century, who often regarded their speech as "corrupt" or "inferior" in comparison with the more prestigious Gipuzkoan dialect (Villasante, 1968). As a result, most local writers from Oñati adopted the Gipuzkoan standard in their written production.

This paper examines the work of Manuel Umerez (1757–1818), a writer who constitutes a notable exception in having written in the local variety. Umerez used the grapheme <š> in certain lexical items to represent the /ʃ/ sound, but consistently avoided marking this phoneme in the three contexts described above. This selective orthographic practice suggests an early awareness of the stigma attached to this phonological feature and an attempt to hide that undesirable phonetic variant while still using the local variety. Such behaviour reflects broader patterns of linguistic purism (Langer & Nesse, 2012), whereby speakers of non-standard varieties may develop linguistic insecurity and align their usage with externally prestigious norms.

By situating these phonological phenomena within the framework of historical sociolinguistics, this study explores how standard language ideology and purist attitudes interact to shape dialectal variation and influence speakers' perceptions of linguistic legitimacy (Milroy, 2012).

Keywords: Basque language, Phonological variation, Linguistic purism, Dialectology.

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Christopher Strelluf & Esther Asprey – "An accent exceedingly rare": The historical emergence of a sociolinguistically "liminal" English in Coventry, England

The city of Coventry occupies liminal spaces in the social and sociolinguistic landscapes of England. It features in the British English idiom "sent to Coventry" meaning 'deliberately exiled', and is used as a location for English films like *Nativity!* as evocative of being unaspirationally 'stuck'. Coventrians' metalinguistic evaluations mirror this liminality. For instance, Coventrians often speak of having an unidentifiable accent, but the Coventry City Football Club song includes the lyric, "We speak with an accent exceedingly rare".

Coventry's linguistic liminality is reflected in historical records of socially salient markers of English dialects. Old dialect maps based on the *Survey of English Dialects* (Orton & Barry 1970) mark boundaries for shibboleths of Northern vs Southern Englishes such as the TRAP-BATH vowel split as running through the areas around Coventry (e.g., Wakelin 1972), and transcriptions show seemingly free variation (in the case of TRAP-BATH) of sounds indicative of a Southern vowel system [a:], Northern system [æ], and something in between [a].

In this project, inspired by the conference theme, we attempt to probe Coventry's sociolinguistic liminality by bringing together complementary written and spoken discourses in historical sources: 1) metalinguistic commentary in the British Newspaper Archive and 2) historical sociophonetic data from Coventry-focused archival oral history recordings.

We first interrogate newspaper records for commentary on Coventry and the linguistic variety that is regionally associated with it from the 19th century onwards. We reveal that, in contrast to Coventry's neighbours of Birmingham and the industrial Black Country, newspaper metalinguistic sources are scarce for the city. Strikingly, where collocation string searches for Coventry+accent return results in the British Newspaper Archive, writings discuss criminality rather than a regional accent generally.

We then explore social attitudes and acoustic features in newly digitised oral history recordings that were collected in the 1970s in Coventry. Coventrians born in the early 20th century often invoke anti-authoritarian attitudes, linked to positive affiliation to working-class communities drawn to the city from across England, and reject simplistic definitions of what it means to be "from Coventry". In preliminary acoustic analysis of these speakers' BATH vowels, we find intraspeaker variability that mirrors older surveys' reports of interspeaker variability. We presently suggest that avoidance of a single regionally marked BATH vowel may parallel attitudinal rejection of a simplistic Coventry identity.

We anticipate bringing these spoken and written discourses together to posit that avoidance of selection of a salient regional feature may be linked to bottom-up rejection of normative ideologies that denigrate and delegitimate working-class communities as criminal and insufficiently representative of localness. As such, complementary historical sources may offer a way to make sense of the emergence of sociolinguistic liminality in Coventry, resulting in an accent that is simultaneously unplaceable and unique.

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Benjamin Molineaux – Native phonetics, foreign phonology: 'Language documentation' as historical data in the Southern Cone

For languages with a longstanding sound-based spelling system, historical corpora typically contain textual materials produced by native speakers of these languages, be they professional scribes and writers, or everyday users of the written medium. Depending on genre and degree of standardisation, such writing traditions may more or less transparently represent the spoken variety of the writer (Laing & Lass 2003). Crucially, here the graphemic principle will tend to avoid the representation of non-contrastive (allophonic) elements, so even the most speech-like writing is constrained by the writer's phonological knowledge (Sgall 1987). In such contexts, speakers' social variation— across location, class, gender and register—may be accessed through their non-standard spelling practices.

In cases where no pre-modern native writing tradition exists, the earliest historical texts are usually the result of non-native speakers trying to impose a spelling system on a languages they are acquiring as adults. Therefore, an imperfect application of the phonemic principle may ensue, including the merger of phonological distinctions, the split of allophonic elements across separate graphemic categories and the innovation of characters, all of which may be difficult to interpret at a historical remove, especially preceding a reliable *General Alphabet* (Cram 2018) like the IPA.

This paper examines the challenges and affordances for historical linguistics provided by 'documentation' data, focusing specifically on materials from Native American languages of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. Recorded by missionaries, explorers, government officials and anthropologists, virtually all historical materials for these languages rely on non-native orthography. A substantial body of texts is currently being compiled as the *Comparative-Historical Corpus of the Southern Cone* (CHiCo-SC, 2026), which includes detailed historiographic metadata. Cross-referencing historical spelling practices, the sociolinguistics of the contact situation, the linguistic background of the documentarists and the current state of the languages, we attempt to provide a framework for disentangling the perceived phonetic and phonological categories used by non-native spellers and those used by native speakers.

Case studies include: spelling evidence for the misperception of dental-alveolar contrasts in 17-19c Mapudungun (ARN) texts, and for the over-specification of vowel contrasts in 19c Yahgan. In the first case, this robust consonantal contrast (cf. Molineaux 2022) was absent from the Spanish inventory of Catholic missionary documentarists, leading to a misrepresentation of the consonantal inventory of Mapudungun. In the latter case, Anglican Bible translators used a version of Ellis' phonotypic alphabet, which inflated the number of vowels from 7 to 16, capturing allophonic alternations with characters designed for the contrasts of 19c English Received Pronunciation (Regúnaga 2023).

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Plenary 3 (E.001) 16:00–17:00

Joseph Salmons & G Sorensen – Language on the margins: The indentured and enslaved in colonial American

The issue of immigrants (not) learning English has long been and remains an area of intense debate in the United States. While it was once often claimed that early immigrants quickly learned English, historical sociolinguistic research makes clear that many remained monolingual in languages other than English for generations (Wilkerson and Salmons 2008, work since).

Much of the evidence used in such studies is not available at greater time depths. Still, if we take seriously Lauersdorf's admonition to "use all the data" (2018: 211–212), we can build a picture of monolingualism and bi-/multilingualism back into the colonial era. Anticipating modern historical sociolinguistics, Read (1937, 1941) examined newspaper notices that reported language knowledge of run-away indentured servants or enslaved people. His surveys include about 60 case studies commenting on a range of immigrant and Indigenous languages, and often multilingual individuals.

I am assembling a larger database, using online corpora of early newspapers. Here are early examples from the work to date:

- "a French man born, speaks but little English" (1724),
- A Black man who "talks good English and French" (1724),
- "he has not enough English to discribe where his Master lives" (1726).

These sources also often give overtly ideological or evaluative comments: "an Irish-man, but speak as good French as a French man" (1774), an African-American who "speaks indifferent English", an "Indian" who "speaks English pretty well, and no other Language" (1722), and remarks about dialect, e.g. "a West-country Man and talks like one" (1721).

Quantitative and qualitative analysis of this database opens a new window on language knowledge and ideologies far from elite circles, classic "language history from below" (Elspaß 2005). This work underscores just how multilingual the United States has been since long before it was a country.

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