

**REVIEW ON THE 6th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LANGUAGE
VARIATION IN EUROPE (ICLaVE6)**

FRIAS – Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg

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Gotzon AURREKOETXEA

University of the Basque Country (UPV-EHU)

gotzon.aurrekoetxea@ehu.es

The University of Freiburg hosted the sixth edition of the International Conference on Language Variation in Europe (ICLaVE), which is organised every two years. Most recent editions have been held at Copenhagen (2007) and Nicosia (2005). ICLaVE is “one of the most important fora for research in the area of language variation in Europe. It aims at bringing together scholars of languages or language varieties spoken in Europe with the purpose of discussing empirical, methodological and theoretical issues in the study of language variation and change on the continent” (from the website).

The local organizing team leaded by Peter Auer made this scientific meeting a remarkable event for current updates in sociolinguistic variation in Europe.

Attendance at the congress was fairly high and diverse (around 200 researchers), bringing together different generations of sociolinguistics and other scholars interested in the study of the subject, from all Europe.

The conference lasted for 3 days, as usual, and it assembled a collection of 3 plenary lectures, 87 paper presentations divided in 30 sessions, 16 poster presentations and 5 panels (in which 22 papers were presented), summing up 128 papers.

The plenary lectures focused on different areas of sociolinguistic variation: It was Joan Bresnan (Stanford University) who opened the conference with the topic *Acquiring syntactic variation in English: A cross-constructional study*. The second invited speaker was Sjef Barbiers (Meertens Institut and Utrecht University), who expounded on *Syntactic doubling and deletion as a source of variation*. The last day Arnulf Deppermann (IDS Mannheim) spoke about *Standard usage: Dimensions, problems and uses of a contested concept with respect to German*.

Paper presentations featured a wide collection of papers which were grouped by sessions. This report does not represent an exhaustive review. A great many papers that

were equally significant and important to the field of sociolinguistic variation were also presented but they are not reported on here. Instead, we will consider a new partition, accounting different areas and aspects of sociolinguistic variation (for seeing abstracts of the papers see the website of the conference: <http://www.iclave.uni-freiburg.de/programmeiclave6>).

In this report we have made a selection paying attention to the subject instead of the methodology or other point of view.

1. Syntactic variation

In the last years syntactic variation is one of the most studied fields from the sociolinguistic variation point of view. In this conference it has also been one of the subjects that most researchers have gathered together. More than 20 papers have been presented concerning this subject. Some of them were about pronouns (*The second-person pronoun across the socio-interactional continuum: Variation and iconicity of Spanish tú*; *Using intra-linguistic variability to gauge inter-linguistic functional equivalence: Subject pronoun stress in English and expression in Spanish*; *On the use of gender-marked pronouns in Dutch: Towards a semantic system*; *Diaphasic variation and change in French pronouns: On/nous/nous, on in different kinds of spoken French*; *Variation in ways of referring to oneself*); other were about demonstratives (*On the status of “peripheral” neuter demonstratives: New evidence from a Portuguese dialect corpus*); about experimental approaches (*Experimental approaches to the variation of syntax*); about determiners (*Variation in use of the Dutch determiners de and het by bilingual youngsters: Lack of knowledge of stylistic practices?*; *The relation between plural suffixes and linking elements in regional speech variants of Dutch*; *Agreement on numerals in the Alpine space*; *The case of nen: A current change in colloquial German*); or about the most usual syntactic changes in different languages or regions (*Syntactic change in Early Modern Swedish*; *Syntactic variation in varieties of Western Iberian Romance as seen in the materials for ALPI (Atlas Lingüístico de la Península Ibérica)*; *Constructional prototypes and morphosyntactic change. On the loss of agreement with nominative objects in Icelandic*; *Collostructional analysis of verbal constructions in Estonian dialects*); about specific sentences (*Tangled: Interaction of intralinguistic and*

extralinguistic factors in the use of Dutch causative constructions with doen and laten; Maltese restrictive relative constructions: A source of intra-language variation, Word order variation in subordinate clauses in spoken Danish; Gender and education in coordinate structures in European Portuguese).

Other papers were about grammatical variation: *Discovering the syntactic world beyond verb clusters; On the universality of complementizer agreement, And the beat goes on –VR and VPR at the syntax/phonology interface; It takes two to tango and three to huayno: Strange lo as a (syn)tactic move; The case of nen: A current change in colloquial German; Microvariation as diachrony: On how a minuscule grammatical change led to an elaborate pattern of synchronic variation, Par à travers: A rare combination of two rival prepositions in the group of analytic spatial prepositions containing French travers, Microvariation typologically geographically and sociolinguistically.*

The following researchers participated in this section: Carrilho, Kallenborn, Hakansson, Sousa, Kaufmann, Brandner, Rothmayr, Schäfer, Uiboed, Mayer, Serrano & Aijón-Oliva, Torres & Travis, De Vos, Hansen, Ziegler, Lappalainen, Lohndal et al., Leyshina et al., Camilleri, Jensen, Cornips & Hulk, Hanssen et al., Aguiar, Hoelbeek and Dai Negro.

2. Phonological variation

There were several presentations related to phonological variation: on vowel variation (*Monophthongization and E-confusion: The development and spread of two sound changes in the city dialects of Salzburg and Vienna; Variation and change in Scottish Gaelic vowels; A ‘ghost variation’ reappearing? On the merger of /ɛ/ and /e/ in certain contexts in Danish; High back vowel fronting in the north-west of England*); papers connected with consonants (*A new sociolinguistic variable in Cypriot Greek: The palatal lateral (ɬ); The variable (r) in Scottish Standard English: Predicting phonetic variability and derhoticisation; (r) variation in the repertoire of Welsh-English bilinguals; Exploring the social meanings of Copenhagen Danish /s/; Ethnic variation in British English coronal stops*); on prosody (*Intonational variation in polar and wh-*

questions across seven varieties of Greek; Intonation in interaction: A case study of the traditional Stockholm dialect; The phonetics and phonology of clitic stress in Patras' dialect); and on general subjects (Language variation from a phonological-typological perspective. The case of Catalan and German dialects)

Papers on phonological variation were presented by Moosmüller and Scheutz, Stoeckle, Schwarz, Caro Reina, Pappas, Nance, Schützler, Morris, Gregersen, Papazachariou, Kristiansen et al., Ziegler, Jansen, Kirkham, Tsiplakou et al. and Öqvist.

3. Acquisition of variation

The acquisition of variation in different contexts was also one of the subjects that many presentations dealt with (*From acquisition of variation to multilingual language acquisition; Roleplaying as an environment for the acquisition of the switching/shifting competence in children; Learning mechanisms in second dialect acquisition; Migrant teenagers' acquisition of sociolinguistic variation: gender and the variables (ing) and (t); The production of sociolinguistic variables in 4-5 year-old children: Social differences and convergence within the peer group; Substandardization at school: is language variation a friend or an enemy?; Adjustments to the interlocutor during childhood: Factors favouring the acquisition of stylistic flexibility*).

The acquisition of the variation was analysed by Berthele, Katerbow, Rys et al., Schleef, Barbu et al., Delarue, Buson et al.

4. Different kinds of variation

In this chapter we place papers about relations between individuals and dialects (*Individuals, dialect and dialect stylisation in Leipzig*), dialectometrical analysis (*Dialectometrics meets sociolinguistics*), apparent time variation (*The present perfect in Cypriot Greek revisited*), variation in song texts (*Pop on paper: Authenticity and traditional, modern, and late modern ways of representing dialect in song texts in Swedish-language Finland*), the relationship between dialect, regional and standard (*What in Regional Italian in Salento?*), the spread of innovations (*Sources of dialect*

influence), intra-individual variation (*An interactional dialectology; Do young people swear more often than other generations?; Reflections from the outside and the inside: Construct resources and “modern RP” in interaction*).

This field was treated among others by Siebenhaar, Hansen, Melissaropoulou et al., Östman, Meierkord, Golovko, Sandøy, Nilsson, Leinonen, Fox & Torgersen, Rathore, Inm et al., Rathje and Fabricius & Morthensen.

5. Dialect levelling and contact-induced variation

The relationship between dialects and the standard variety were studied in different languages: Swedish (*Dialect change in West Sweden*); Basque (*Dialect levelling in the Basque language: Evidence from two age groups*); English in UK (*A town between dialects: Accent levelling, psycho-social orientation and identity in Merseyside, UK*); Faroe Islands (*Dialect change in the Faroe Islands: Levelling and/or standardisation in a small language community*); Scots (*Bidialectalism or dialect attrition? Explaining generational change in the Shetland Islands, Scotland*); German (*Dialectal levelling and contact-induced change in Spanish speaking heritage speakers in Germany; Morphological complexity as a factor of phonological variation and change. The case of Alemannic in Southwest Germany*); in sign language (*Lexical variation and change in British Sign Language (BSL): Evidence for dialect levelling*).

Contact-induced variation has been analysed in four papers (*The locus of contact-induced variation: An articulatory ultrasound study; Code-switching as a trigger for language variation; Code alternation patterns in bilingual family conversations of a bilingual family on the Isles and Skye and Harris -Scotland-; Contact-induced variation of sibilant fricatives in Belarusian-Russian mixed speech*).

Some of the researches that presented papers in this section are: Nilsson & Svahn, Aurrekoetxea et al., Faye, Knooihuizen, Smith et al., Guijarro-Fuentes et al., Stamp, Schwarz, Vietti & Spreafico, Riehl, Celtek et al., Smith-Christmas and Zeller.

6. Perception and attitudes

Seven papers related with perception or attitudes were presented (*The spoken Dutch in Flanders. Perceptions and attitudes of a high-profile generation; Investigating sociophonetic variation in L2 speech perception; Non-influence of nationality labels on the perception of final devoicing; Between social structure and social meaning - Theoretical considerations from the perceptual perspective; The intelligibility of variation in articulation rate and speech reduction; The constitution of subjective dialect areas - Towards a hierarchisation of lay classification strategies; The acquisition of attitudes. A perceptual study in Dutch-speaking adolescents in Belgium*).

Perception and attitudes of the variation were analysed by Lybaert, Deger & Langstrof, Juskan, Vaattovaara, Hilton, Stoeckle, De Vogelaer & Toye.

7. Corpus-based researches

Paying attention to methodological aspects more than to subjects, we can consider four papers which were carried out using Atlases, Corpora and web-based researches (*World Atlas of Variation in English; The Diachronic Electronic Corpus of TynesideEnglish (DECTE): Real time variation in action; Quantifying lexical variation: A corpus-based analysis of semasiological divergence in Dutch; Non-standard inflection in spoken standard Dutch. First findings from a large web-based questionnaire*).

This subject was analysed by Kortman, Buchstaller et al., Heylen & Speelman and Hinskens & Bennis.

8. Poster presentations

This section included 16 posters in a wide range of subjects, from dialect analysis on the web to language attitudes, going through syntactic annotation or word order variation.

9. Panels: 5 panels and 22 presentations

In this section five panels were presented (with 22 presentations in total):

- Panel 1: Language contact and language variation in multilingual urban setting.
- Panel 2: Perception and attitude.
- Panel 3: Non-standard in Slavonic languages.
- Panel 4: Urban dialectology in four Slavic countries.
- Panel 5: The acquisition of variation.