

Full Title: DGfS 2012 Workshop: Language Change and Age

Date: 06-Mar-2012 - 09-Mar-2012

Location: Frankfurt/Main, Germany

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Linguistic Field(s): Sociolinguistics

Call Deadline: 31-Aug-2011

## Meeting Description

Workshop: Language Change and Age

The factor age plays a central role in the study of language change. Many analyses - from Hermann Paul to David Lightfoot imply that language change is inherently generation-based. In this workshop we want to challenge the implicitness of this assumption and discuss if, and in how far, generation-based language change is compatible with our understanding of language as a complex diasystem: can language change possibly be determined by the factor speaker generation alone? Which causal factors (language acquisition, the lasting impact of a certain age group's collective experience) justify such an assumption? Are speakers set on particular linguistic features for all of their adulthood lives?

The central reference point of our analyses is Labov's (1994) division of language change into either (1) generation-based change (generational change) or (2) cross-generational change (communal change). Labov suggests that generation-based change typically leads to phonological and morphological change, whereas cross-generational change, which can be detected simultaneously across all speaker generations, tends to be associated with syntactic and lexical change (cf. Labov 1994: 84). We would like to discuss this hypothesis with colleagues from different fields of study and are looking forward to contributions on the following questions:

What experiences have been made with empirical studies of language change - both longitudinal- and cross-sectional (real time/apparent time) and what are reliable variables? In how far do other factors like social and spatial categories affect results? Which methodological implications arise from different applications of the notion of age? In which historical or contemporary contexts is it appropriate to talk about generational styles? Are particular phases during adulthood connected to specific linguistic patterns of language use - and what are the underlying social models of speaker biography? How can statistical-structural analyses be complemented by dynamic and process-like analyses, which take into account a speaker's entire linguistic vita? How can linguistic change be modeled, taking into account correlations between the individual speaker, age group and speaker group?

Labov, William. 1994. Principles of linguistic change. Internal factors. Oxford: Blackwell.

## Call for Papers

We invite anonymous abstracts of no more than 500 words (incl. references) for 30 min papers. The papers should clearly address the questions outlined in the description of the workshop. There are no restrictions in terms of languages studied, but presentations need to be in English or German.

Please send anonymous abstracts (preferably as .doc or .rtf attachments) by 31 August to [dgfs2012@gmail.com](mailto:dgfs2012@gmail.com)

Any personal information (name, email address, affiliation etc.) should be included in the body of the email.

Further information on abstract formatting can be found at <http://homepage.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/annette.gerstenberg/dgfs/dgfs.htm>

## Workshop Organizers

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