

Educated Poznań speech 30 years later

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One of the recurring themes of dialect research is the issue of dialect levelling, i.e. the disappearance of regional or social dialectal variants in favor of standard dialect forms. This paper looks at a potential case of dialect leveling by comparing the prevalence of eight dialectal variants in Poznań speech in the 1980's and in the present day.

Witaszek-Samborska (1986) surveys features typical of Polish spoken by educated speakers from Poznań ('mowa Poznańskiej inteligencji'). One set of features is claimed to be present in the speech of all generations. This set includes: voicing of obstruents before heterolexical sonorants (*okszycemoci, poczontegnocy*), realization of word-final <-ą> as [-ɔm] (*idom tom drogom*), realization of /stʃtʃ dz/ as /ʃtʃ tʃ dz/ (*szczelać, czynacie, dżewo*) and the presence of the velar nasal [ŋ] before a heteromorphemic velar plosive /k/ (*Hanka, okienko*). Another set is claimed to be absent from the speech of younger speakers. It includes traits such as: realization of word-final <-ej> as /-i(j)/ or /-i(j)/ (*lepi(j), mni(j), droży(j)*), presence of prothetic [w] before word-initial /ɔ/ (*łokno, łojciec*), presence of voiced /v/ in clusters with preceding voiceless consonants (*świat, trwały*), and realization of <-śmy> as [-zmi], coupled with penultimate stress (*widziel 'izmy, słyszel 'izmy*). Such age-driven stratification in apparent-time data might indicate change in progress (cf. Labov 1994), and so local pronunciation variants could be disappearing in favor of Warsaw-based standard ones.

Using a subset of the nascent Greater Poland Speech Corpus (GPSC) (wa.amu.edu.pl/korpuswlp/), this pilot study provides real-time data by investigating the realization of the eight above-mentioned variables in the speech of sixteen young speakers from Poznań. The relevant contexts are retrieved automatically from force-aligned interview speech, and annotated manually as to their actual phonetic realization. The extent of the prevalence of the local variant of each variable can thus be measured. These results can then be set against the categorization of the variables as 'widespread' and 'recessive' in Witaszek-Samborska (1986). One possible application of the GPSC, namely studying present-day variation in Poznań Polish, with implications for language change in this variety, will thus be demonstrated.

References

- Labov, William. 1994. *Principles of linguistic change*. Vol1. *Internal factors*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
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