**Standardization as sociolinguistic change – a comparative study of three traditional dialect areas**

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The aim of the project *Dialect in the Periphery* is to advance our understanding of language standardization in contemporary society by tracking the significance of variation in people’s everyday lives. We do so by presenting a large-scale comparative study of three different rural speech communities – Northern Jutland, Southern Jutland and the island of Bornholm – within the same nation state.

By studying trajectories of language standardization across different geographical places and communicative contexts, we demonstrate how linguistic variation, which appears to diminish more or less uniformly at a national level, is used in myriads of creative ways in local communities. In this manner we argue that even though language standardization may seem as a uniform movement (from a macro perspective), in fact it takes on very different routes when studied and compared at a micro level.

The quantitative variationist measures demonstrate different, but clear, patterns of standardization at the macro-level of language use. We complement this type of analysis with ethnographically informed studies of the linguistic practices, ideologies and socio-historical aspects of local linguistic variation and change. In doing so, we adhere to the notion of *sociolinguistic change* (Coupland 2009, 2014, 2016), which means that we do not see linguistic change and social change as distinct processes, nor as a reflection of each other, but as integrated processes. In this manner, we approach standardization both at the level of language use (e.g. Maegaard et al. 2013, Jensen & Maegaard 2012, Monka 2013) and ideology (e.g. Irvine & Gal 2000, Lippi-Green 1997, Milroy & Milroy 1999, Kristiansen 2009).

We argue that we obtain new insights through the *comparative design* of the study. By diving into a hyper-standardized linguistic society from three different venture points, we can nuance our understanding of change processes and decipher their varying elements and local dynamics. In the presentation we will show the different variation patterns, and offer explanations on why they look so different.

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