**Something old, something new – Dialect contact in West Sweden**

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The project ‘Dialect leveling in West Sweden’ is concerned with today’s dialect situation in the western parts of Sweden and how the dialects in this area have changed since the 1950s. The project has investigated dialect use in nine villages and small towns located 50–100 kilometers outside Gothenburg, Sweden’s second largest city, and in this presentation some of the main results from the project are presented (see also Nilsson 2009, Svahn & Nilsson, to appear).

In total, 110 informants have been recorded in two different traditional dialect areas. Their realization of between 30 and 40 linguistic variables (depending on location) as standard, dialect or ‘new’ variants is analyzed. It turns out that today’s dialect situation in West Sweden is characterized by extensive inter-and intra-individual variation. For example, two informants with similar backgrounds, having lived within close proximity of one another for a whole life still has separate linguistic varieties; one might be a traditional dialect speaker and the other a representative of the ‘new’ (to this area) Gothenburg variety. As for the intra-individual variation it is apparent that most informants switch between dialect, standard and new variants within the same recording. In a way, this could be seen as a new ‘mixed’ variety or a new regiolectal variety (cf. Chambers & Trudgill 1986, Hinskens, Auer & Kerswill 2005).

In my presentation I will discuss in which ways new variants might change the linguistic system in an area and how we can theoretically treat this fact.

**References**


