

Schleswig – a region of longitudinal language contact

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Abstract: The topic of this article is the structural similarity of neighbouring language varieties belonging to two different branches of the Germanic languages. The German-Danish border region (Schleswig/Sønderjylland) is characterized by longitudinal language contact between West and North Germanic varieties, which have developed common features not to be found in other varieties of these languages spoken outside the contact area. These shared features are the results of regional multilingualism, language contact, and/or of language shift(s). This paper focuses on syntactical convergences. Examples of different aspects of convergences are presented, covering mainly convergences from the North Germanic regional language of South Jutish to West Germanic varieties (Low German, North Frisian, and Standard German regiolect), and from Standard German to the Standard Danish variety spoken by members of the Danish minority on the German side of the border since 1920.

1. Introduction

For centuries, Schleswig/Sønderjylland was an area of language contact between varieties of five typologically and genetically closely related Germanic languages: South Jutish, North-Frisian, Low German, Standard German (Hochdeutsch), and Standard Danish (Rigsdansk, predominantly as written language until 1920). After a short historical overview, chapter 3 will focus on those linguistic features where South Jutish substrata influenced the spoken regional West German varieties: *und/än*-constructions, prepositions in front of infinitive, stranded prepositions, progressive and durative constructions, and finally inchoative constructions. The hypothesis suggested is that these features are the results of a linguistic situation characterised by widespread (productive and/or receptive) bi- and multilingualism and language shift(s). In chapter 4, the linguistic situation before 1920 will be compared with the development after the division of Schleswig in 1920 which is characterised by an increasing dominance of the standard varieties of German and Danish at the expense of the traditional regional vernaculars, the emergence of a non-focused contact variety based on Standard Danish (Sydslesvigdansk), and a gradual decrease of regional bi- and multilingualism during the last three generations.

2. The historical background – a very short overview

Today Schleswig/Sønderjylland¹ is a divided region situated on both sides of the borderline between Germany and Denmark. From 1232 until 1864, Schleswig was a relatively autonomous duchy – after 1460 closely connected to Holstein. In 1460, the king of Denmark was announced duke of Schleswig and Holstein and this construction (named “a personal union” with the Danish crown) lasted until 1864. In 1848, an independence movement rebelled against the union with the Danish crown, fighting for a free constitution for Schleswig-Holstein. In the following civil war (1848-1850), the insurgents were defeated. During the years 1851-1864, Schleswig came under Danish control. In 1864, a national war between the German Federations (Prussia-Austria) and Denmark resulted in an ultimate defeat

¹ ‘Sønderjylland’ and ‘Slesvig’ (German: ‘Schleswig’) are two names for the same geographical area located between the rivers Kongeå (to the north) and Eider (to the south). Its particular history began in 1232 when the region became a duchy named ‘Jutiae’, later ‘Suder Jutia’. In 1386, the Danish Queen Regent Margrethe I officially renamed the duchy ‘Schleswig’ which was the official name for more than five centuries, but the inhabitants used both names haphazardly (Buch 2005:8). When nationalism arose in the middle of the 19th century, the Danes began to prefer the name ‘Sønderjylland’. After the division in 1920, the German part was called ‘Schleswig’ (‘Landesteil Schleswig’), the northern Danish part officially ‘De sønderjyske Landsdele’, from 1970 ‘Sønderjyllands Amt’. Nowadays the Danish inhabitants of the northern part use the names ‘Sønderjylland’ and/or ‘Nordslesvig’ (North Schleswig), the German minority and the inhabitants of Schleswig-Holstein use the name ‘Nordschleswig’. Due to centralisation in Denmark, ‘Sønderjyllands Amt’ was incorporated into the ‘Region Syd’ in 2007.

of Denmark. In the following war between Prussia and Austria in 1866, Austria was defeated and lost its influence in Holstein. Accordingly, Schleswig and Holstein became Prussian provinces in 1867. In 1871, Schleswig was incorporated into the German Empire, and after 1880, a strict policy of cultural and linguistic Germanization began. After World War I, a referendum took place in the northern and middle parts of Schleswig where the local population could vote on belonging to either Denmark or to Germany. As a result of this referendum, Schleswig became divided in 1920, and the northern part was incorporated into the Kingdom of Denmark. Now the national “re-education” turned around, and the population of North Schleswig had to adapt to Danish norms and standards with respect to economy, infrastructure, culture, and language. Standard Danish substituted Standard German in public institutions such as administration, judiciary, and education. The borderline of 1920 also resulted in historical-national minorities on both side of the border – a German one on the Danish side, and a Danish one on the German side.

Today, the German part of Schleswig is called “Landesteil Schleswig” as the northern region of the Federal Land of Schleswig-Holstein. On the Danish side, however, Sønderjylland ceased to exist as administrative and political region in 2007, but there are still some distinct features of linguistic and cultural differences to be observed compared to the “old” parts of Denmark.

3. South Jutish substrata in spoken regional West German varieties

3.1 The linguistic situation – seen from a historical point of view

For many centuries, Schleswig has been a region of linguistic and cultural contact with several languages and widespread multilingualism. Already in the Viking Age, east-west-bound and north-south-bound trade routes crossed in the trading place Haithabu (Hedeby), situated at the fjord of Schlei. Roughly speaking, the inhabitants of the area belonged to three main groups: the Low German speaking people in the southern part, the North Frisians in the west, and the Anglites and Jutes speaking South Jutish in the eastern, middle, and northern part of Schleswig. But there were other language communities who settled in Schleswig, too: Sephardic Jews (early 17th century), French Huguenots (late 17th century), and in the 18th century, also groups of High German speaking colonists from southern Germany and the pietist community of Herrnhuter from the east of Germany (Oberlausitz) settled here.

In the late Medieval Ages, the language of administration was Latin, but due to the dominance of the Hansa, the Lübeck variety of Low German took over this function in the early 15th century. After the Lutheran Reformation (1526-1539), High German (later standardized as Standard German) gradually became the language of administration and culture. In the northern parts, where South Jutish was the oral variety, Danish (in writing) became the language of church and of public schools (after 1814). So, we end up with five languages – all of them including dialects or spoken regiolects: the three regional languages Low German, North Frisian and South Jutish on the one hand, and two languages from outside the region: High German (from the middle of the 16th century) and Danish on the other hand; viz. for Danish from the 16th century as written language, after 1920 also as spoken variety to the north. Many inhabitants were (and still are) multilingual, some with a productive command in more than one language whereas others are at least receptive multilinguals.

3.2 The linguistic situation – seen from a contact linguistic point of view

As already mentioned, Schleswig has been an area of longitudinal language contact but is it also a *linguistic (convergence) area* (a *Sprachbund*)? Sarah Thomason has claimed that shared structural features of *linguistic areas* must be a result of contact rather than a result of accident or inheritance from a common ancestor (cf. Thomason 2001: 99). In studies on linguistic areas there seems to be a common ground based on (at least) the three criteria (also mentioned by Roman Jakobson (1931)):

- 1) a common geographical area/geographical neighbourhood/common space or (more abstract) some kind of a common *locus*
- 2) a certain amount of not inherited common traits/structural similarities/shared structural features, and
- 3) minimal or no genetical relationship or typological closeness of the languages involved (cf. Fredsted 2013).

The area described here does **not** constitute a *linguistic convergence area* (*Sprachbund*) in the traditional sense of the term since the languages spoken here do not meet the third criterion of the definition above: Although belonging to different subgroups within the Germanic languages, the languages spoken in Schleswig are typologically closely related, and the lexical and structural similarities through inheritance and long-term borrowing are numerous. All five of them are Germanic languages, the West Germanic languages: Standard German (*Hochdeutsch*), Low German (*Niederdeutsch*), and North Frisian on the one hand, and the North Germanic languages Standard Danish (*rigsdansk*) and South Jutish (*sønderjysk*) on the other hand, the latter showing, however, lexical and structural features of both, e.g., a consequent V2-finite syntax as in the Nordic languages but preposed (and no enclitic) marking of definiteness as this is the case for the West Germanic languages.

Nevertheless, spoken varieties of this region share features which are **not** or **seldom** found in other varieties of these languages spoken outside this area, viz. in Low German in the neighbouring areas of Holstein or in Standard German regiolects in other regions of Germany. Moreover, the traditional South Jutish dialects spoken before 1920 show several features of language contact, especially lexical and phonological loans from Low German and Standard German. At least until some decades ago, bi- and multilingualism was a wide-spread phenomenon, and the bilingual speakers are, of course, the driving force of this process, not the area or region itself.

Until 1920 the town of Flensburg was the geographical and commercial centre of Schleswig, inhabited by people speaking a regional variety of Northern Standard German, Low German and South Jutish (in the northern and western outskirts). Furthermore, the Standard German regiolect of Flensburg is characterised by substratal influence of two language shifts during the past centuries: (A) from South Jutish to Low German and, eventually, (B) to Standard German. In the middle of the 17th century, the language situation in Flensburg could be described as a patchwork of languages with a diastratic and diglossic distribution of the so-called high and low varieties: Standard German had become the new and prestigious language of the administration, church, and culture, although only spoken by the upper class and intelligentsia (Caspar Danckwert (ca. 1650) in Bock 1933: 260). Low German was the language of trade and handicraft, whereas the servants in town and the farmers from the surrounding areas spoke South Jutish. Written sources from the 16th and 17th century report, however, that the languages spoken in Flensburg were “mixtures”; e.g., the later famous Danish botanist Ole/Oluf Borch in 1675:

Nostri Flensburgenses inter Danicam & Germanicam lingvam ambicunt, neutri propemodum similes, quia utriqve. Qvod & ad omnia Nationum diversarum confinia solenne. (Borch 1675)

(‘Our citizens of Flensburg switch between the Danish and German language: none of them similar to one of them, because to both of them, which is usual for all borders of different nations.’) (Translation EF)

Since the end of the 19th century the special town idiom of Flensburg has been called “Petuh”. This variety has Standard German as its base language with substrata from Low German and South Jutish.

North Frisian is spoken by inhabitants of the coastal area of the Wadden Sea and it is still used

on the islands of Föhr and Amrum. Varieties of North Frisian have, of course, locally participated in the general language contact with Low German and South Jutish. Volkert Faltings (Föhr) characterises the contact of North Frisian with its neighbouring languages in the following way:

Die kleinräumige Verwendung des Nordfriesischen führt nicht in die sprachliche Isolation, sondern zwingt ihre Sprecher nolens volens in eine bi-, tri- oder multilinguale Situation, und das wohl von Anfang an. (Faltings p.c. 07.08.2013)
 ('The geographically limited use of the North Frisian language did not lead to linguistic isolation but forced its users nolens volens into a bi-, tri- or multilingual situation, and this probably from the very beginning onwards.') (Translation EF)

Until the beginning of the 19th century, South Jutish was the common vernacular in the rural areas in the north, east and central parts of Schleswig, down to a line marked by the towns Schleswig and Husum. Nowadays South Jutish is almost extinct south of the 1920-border (Fredsted 2009a). On the Danish side of the border, South Jutish is influenced by regional dialect levelling. The inter-generational transmission of the language is rather weak in the towns and towards the north but the use of the South-Jutish vernacular as a language of proximity is still common.

This very complex linguistic situation can be summarized in the following characteristics:

- 1) a longitudinal language contact situation
- 2) bi- and multilingualism and second language acquisition (these two phenomena can, however, not be regarded separate from each other – especially not in recent time)
- 3) individual and regional language shifts
- 4) regional linguistic features with language varieties sharing common features which are not or seldom found in varieties of these languages spoken outside this area.

For centuries, close contact of related language varieties has resulted in several language contact phenomena which have been recognized and mentioned in literature since the beginning of the 16th century (e.g., by Christiern Pedersen in 1531). Bi-directional code-copying has resulted in shared lexical units, collocations, phrases, and proverbs but also in shared morpho-syntactic structures. The following part of this paper is an attempt to give some examples of constructions in Low German, the colloquial Standard German (SG) regiolect and in North Frisian which have been influenced by southern varieties of South Jutish (SJ). Thus, these constructions represent a substratum of lost varieties of South Jutish, which do no longer exist in the German part of Schleswig.

3.3 *The data*

The following examples are based on historical and recent data sets comprising the period from the middle of the 19th century up to 2015. The sources referred to are diaries, letters, and oral data.² The North Frisian examples are based on the research of Nils Århammar, Karin Ebert and Jarich Hoekstra. The Low German data from Angeln are collected by Karl Nielsen Bock (1933), the Low German data from Flensburg by Eike Ketelsen (1959), the German regiolect examples are also due to Eike Ketelsen (1959) and are compared to more recent data published by Robert Langhanke (2015). Own notes covering the latest 20 years in Flensburg will be taken into consideration as well. Data sets from two recent research projects financed by the German Research Foundation, DFG, will be used in the 4th chapter of this paper that deals with minority varieties and the linguistic development after 1920.

² Cf. the list of data at the end of the paper.

3.4 Contact induced converging constructions

In the following sections (3.4.1-3.4.5), I will present constructions which can, on the one hand, be characterised linguistically as converging constructions and, on the other hand, geographically as contact induced regionalisms showing substratal influence from the (predominantly) North Germanic variety of South Jutish on West Germanic varieties. Some of these phenomena (e.g., when they add structures to the receiving variety) can be considered a consequence of structural attraction resulting in additive linguistic structures in the receiving language(s) (according to Johanson 1999). Moreover, language contact may also seem to have the opposite effect, namely of reducing or simplifying the structures of the imposed language, e.g., through imperfect learning or due to linguistic economy.

3.4.1 Constructions with *und*, illustrating substratal influence

A common regional trait covering all the traditional oral varieties of the region is the use of verbal constructions consisting of $V_{\text{finite}} + V_{\text{infinitive}}$ coordinated with *und* ('and') where Standard German would expect a syntactically subordinated infinitive construction with (*um*) *zu* ('[in order] to'). Low German in the southern part of Schleswig (south of a line from Schleswig to Husum) and in Holstein would accordingly demand a subordinated infinitive construction with *to*. The regional origin of this coordinating construction is undoubtedly South Jutish, where both 'and' and 'to' are pronounced alike as [ɔ]. Serial congruent verb constructions with coordinating *og* ('and') are frequent in Danish (and other Scandinavian languages), both in oral and written varieties. Some congruent constructions with coordinating *og* (pronounced [ʌ] in Standard Danish) may alternate with subordinated infinitive constructions with the infinitive marker *at* (also [ʌ]) and/or be reinterpretations of syntactically subordinated constructions with the infinitive marker *at* (cf. Hansen & Heltoft 2011: 1000-1009). In any case, these constructions function as pseudo-coordination substituting syntactic subordination when they are transferred to West German varieties.³ The phenomenon is well documented in Low German in the regions of Central Schleswig and Angeln where the dominant vernacular was South Jutish until the beginning of the 19th century.

Low German

- (1a) Ig hef lust un lobm vex. (Bock 1933: 97, Niederdt. Husby)
 'I have lust and [to] run away.' (I want and [to] run away.)
- (1b) Dad nydsd nix un klon. (Bock 1933: 97, Niederdt. Husby)
 'It is no use and [to] complain.'

Similarly, in the Low German variety spoken in the town of Flensburg this construction was still used in the 20th century:

Low German

- (2) Denn güng man bi un buen de Toosbüystraat. (Ketelsen 1959: 14)
 'Then went one by and build the Toosbüystreet.'
 (Then they started and [to] build the Toosbüystreet.)

Coordinated infinitives are found not only in Low German as far south as to the line Schleswig Husum but also in North Frisian varieties (*än/en*):

North Frisian

- (3) Hat es ek sa lecht en liir deensk. (Århammar 2001: 317)
 'It is not so easy and [to] learn Danish.'

³ Cf. the Swedish term: Pseudosamordning av verb.

(cf. SJ: De e it så let å læe dansk.)

Walker (2020: 117) remarks that this *än/en*-construction is very popular among the “new speakers” of North Frisian who suppose that this construction sounds typically “Frisian”, despite its North Germanic substratal origin.

In the middle of the 19th century, this construction also appears in informal written communication in Standard German regiolect. Here are some examples from private letters from the merchant Christian Christiansen, Flensburg:

Standard German regiolect

- (4) Nun sollte ich aber aus und kaufen (Christian Christiansen, 15.1.1854)
 ‘Now I must out and [to] buy [object missing]’
 (cf. Standard German: Nun sollte ich aber hinaus, um [O] zu kaufen)
- (5) Gestern war ich in der Fahrt um und kaufen Buchweizen. (Christian Christiansen, 17.2.1854)
 ‘Yesterday I was busy to and [to] buy buckwheat.’
 (cf. SJ: for å kjøf)

Example (5) is interesting because the coordinating *und*-construction governs the word order of the sentence (with a postposed object: $V_{\text{infinite}}O$). At the syntactic level, the word order pattern from South Jutish neutralizes the syntactical difference between coordination and subordination in German: If there is no formal hierarchical structure, the OV_{infinite} word order can switch back to $V_{\text{infinite}}O$. Standard German would have (*um*) *zu* with a subordinated infinitive construction and obligatory final position of the non-finite verb (OV_{infinite}): *um Buchweizen zu kaufen*. The use of *und* instead of *zu* (Low German *to*) and a North Germanic sentence structure and word order correlate. In the middle of the 19th century, the use of *und*-constructions seems to be unmarked and used habitually by speakers and writers in Flensburg such as the merchant Christian Christiansen. But a parallel analysis of letters written by an educated upper-class woman (Auguste von Bentzen 1842-1899) from the same period and the same town shows no examples of *und*-constructions. We might thus conclude that the use of these constructions – at least in written communication – might have been regarded as non-standard, but nevertheless became conventionalized by speakers and writers up to a certain degree of formal education (Fredsted 2003).

The use of coordinating *und*-constructions has not disappeared in current local varieties, but nowadays the use of this construction is surely considered as a feature of a local colloquial regiolect. Even though it is possible to follow the traces back to the middle of the 19th century in my data corpora, I am not able to give any date of first the occurrence or any estimation concerning their frequency. The following examples merely show that it is still possible to come across this construction used by (presumably) monolingual speakers in Flensburg today.

- (6) Es ist nämlich so einfach und stecken die Karte in den Automaten. (Assistant at an eye hospital, April 2012; own notes)
 ‘It is, of course, so easy and [to] put the card into the card reader.’

This construction has certainly been “nativized” and is regarded as an indicator of localness. However, *und* + infinitive constructions are probably not to be found in written communication anymore.

3.4.2 Preposition in front of a complement clause or infinitive

One of the syntactical differences between the West Germanic languages on the European continent and the North Germanic languages is that continental West Germanic languages do not allow

prepositions in front of subordinated complements or infinitive clauses. In Danish, prepositions bound to a noun, an adjective or a verb as their head are obligatory in front of complement sentential or infinitive clauses. In Danish varieties, preposition plus subordinate clause or preposition plus infinitive clause build a prepositional phase as a constituent of the main clause: South Jutish: *Han vinte o å få en plads o æ sychhus* or Standard Danish *Han venter på at få en plads på sygehuset*. ('He is waiting for a free bed at the hospital.') (cf. Standard German: *Er wartet darauf, einen Platz im Krankenhaus zu bekommen*.)

Preposition + *än/un/und* + infinitive

North Frisian

- (7) Anke langd jiter än käm wäch fouan e Halie. (Århammar 2001: 318)
 'Anke was longing (for) and [to] get away from the holm.'
 (cf. SG: *Anke sehnte sich danach, von der Hallig wegzukommen*)

Low German

- (8) ick kumm nuch to un hollen in Gesell meer öwe somme. (Bock 1933: 97)
 'I suppose that I will have and [to] hire a journeyman more over the summer.'
 (cf. SG: [lit.] *ich komme noch dazu, über den Sommer einen Gesellen mehr zu halten*.)

German regiolect

- (9) Jetzt sind wir bei und lassen eine Einrichtung machen. (Chr. Christiansen, Flensburg 3.11.1854)
 'Now we are about and [to] build a construction.'

In Standard German, a preposition can only indirectly be connected to a complementary clause or an infinitive. It is not possible to maintain the preposition in front of a complement clause or an infinitive: Either you skip the preposition or change it into an adverb, a so-called pronominal adverb (*wir sind dabei, eine Einrichtung machen zu lassen*)⁴ which is a deictic correlate of the complement clause or the infinitive clause in the main clause. The syntactic results of this are different constructional patterns in West and North Germanic varieties. However, the empirical data for Low German allows us to conclude that preposition + infinitive clause has been very common in the variety of Low German spoken on the peninsula of Angeln in the first half of the 20th century. Bock (1933: 97) writes in his commentary:

§312 Infinitive with *un* appears ... 7. As part of a prepositional phrase (prep + *un* + inf.): this prepositional infinitive is a characteristic feature which our vernacular has in common with the modern North Germanic languages, almost all prepositions can govern a subsequent infinitive. (Translation EF).

Here is just one more of the numerous examples from Bock's data (1933: 97-98):

- (10) hæ ha xrof hild mid un kom afsdé. (Bock 1933: 98)
 'he is very busy with and [to] get away.'
 (cf. SJ: 'han ha grov traflft me å komm aste' and SG: 'er hat es sehr eilig, wegzukommen')

There is no doubt that this is a feature of language contact with North Germanic constructions.

⁴ An exception from this is *ohne* ('without') + infinitive clause.

Example (10) is a relexification of a South Jutish construction, which may be interpreted as a substratum effect due to the language shift from South Jutish to Low German on the peninsula of Angeln in the early 19th century.

3.4.3 Preposition stranding

In the colloquial German regiolect and the regional Low German variety we also find stranded prepositions which are normally not to be found in German varieties in other areas:

- (11) ... und deshalb höher taxieren zu lassen deucht mir ist nich wert, das man das haben soll und sprechen über. (Chr.Christiansen, Flensburg 27.09.1856)
 ‘... and it does not seem worthwhile to me to value it higher, that one should have that and [to] talk about.’
- (12) Na, was soll das zu? (Ketelsen 1959: 65)
 ‘What’s that supposed to be?’
 (cf. SJ: hva ska de te for?)

Or the typical Flensburger collocation about tray-baked cakes:

- (13) Es ist gut und haben was und schneiden von.
 ‘It is good and [to] have something and [to] cut off.’
 (cf. SJ: ‘det er godt å ha nowe å skæe a’)

In Bock’s Low German data from Angeln, numerous examples of preposition stranding can be found as well:

- (14) hə is nix xūd un kōm tored mid. (Bock 1933: 97)
 ‘it is not easy to reach an agreement with him.’
 (cf. SJ: ‘han e it goj å kōmm te ret mæ.’ and SG: ‘es ist nicht leicht, sich mit ihm zu verständigen.’)

3.4.4 Progressive and durative aspect

Generally, varieties of German focus more on perfective/terminative than on progressive and durative – not only compared to English, but also compared to Danish varieties. E.g., South Jutish (and modern Standard Danish) has three different ways of expressing progressive and durative with periphrastic verbal constructions:

Progressive:

- (A) Hun sidde å strikke æ heel daw.
 ‘She sits and knits all day.’ (She is knitting all day long)

The construction (A) is a serial congruent verbal construction with two coordinated finite verbs, the first of which indicates the agentive physical or locative position, the second verb the act itself (cf. section 3.4.1).

- (B) Hun é ve å maal æ hus
 ‘She is by to paint the house.’ (She is painting the house.)

In case (B), the auxiliary (*é*) [is] is followed by a preposition (*ve*) and an infinite verb with the infinitive marker *â* [ɔ] ('to').

Durative:

- (C) Det bliwe ve mæ â regn.
 'It gets on to rain.' (It keeps on raining.)

The construction (C) consists of an auxiliary (*bliwe* 'get on/go on') as finite verb followed by a prepositional phrase consisting of a preposition (*ve mæ*) and an infinitive with the infinitive marker *â* [ɔ].

The variety of German in and around Flensburg has copied progressive expression (B) and durative (C) from South Jutish, but only Low German (in Angeln) has copied the serial verb construction of the first example (A) – as far as I have been able to determine from the historical and recent corpora:

- (15) He lixd un slöbd. (cf. A) (Bock 1933: 99)
 'He lies and sleeps.' (He is sleeping)
 (cf. South Jutish: Han ligge â søve.)

However, I was surprised to come across the construction in Standard German regiolect in the town of Schleswig (located near Angeln) in the summer of 2021:

- (16) Ich konnte den ganzen Tag stehen und schreien. (Own notes, Schleswig-Holm, July 2021)
 'I could stand and cry all day.' (I was crying all day)

The regiolect of Standard German, however, prefers type (B) (*é ve â*):

- (17) Ich bin erst bei und backen die Brötchen auf. (Own notes, shop assistant, Flensburg bakery, 2012)
 'I am just by and [to] crisp the rolls up.' (I have just started crisping up the rolls.)

The durative (C) with *beibleiben* or *bei bleiben*, however, is a very frequent durative construction in my Flensburg data from the 19th and 20th century:

- (18) Der Winter scheint vorläufig noch beibleiben. (Gegersen, 22.01.1940)
 'The winter seems to continue for the present.'

Recently, I had to convince a colleague (from the German minority in North Schleswig) that she did not speak correct "Standard" German, when she used the following expression to her child:

- (19) Du bleibst jetzt bei zu nerven! (Anonymous, German minority)
 'You keep on getting on my nerves!'

Also, in North Frisian we find similar durative constructions:

- (20) hat bleew bi tu snaakin. (Ebert & Hoekstra 1996: 81-82)
 'She went on talking.'

We hardly find the more usual Standard German durative expression with *am* + nominalized infinitive (*ich bin am Stricken*) neither in historical, nor in recent corpora in this region (cf. Langhanke 2015). It should be pointed out, however, that the durative aspect with *bei bleiben* is a feature of imposition from South Jutish with a twofold origin. In Flensburg colloquial German, it seems to be a result of substratum influence seen from a diachronic perspective (two language shifts) but in the German variety spoken by the German minority on the Danish side of the border, it is a synchronic imposition from the L1 (South Jutish) to the L2 (North Schleswig German, cf. section 4.3). This indicates that the durative aspect with *bei bleiben* has some kind of “attractiveness” (Johanson 2000, 2002): It is salient, semantically transparent, and relatively simple.

3.4.5 Inchoative constructions

A former colleague and I used to say good-bye in the following way when we met on the stairs of the university building in the early evening:

- (21) Wir sollen mal sehen und kommen nach Hause. (Own notes, 2000)
 ‘We shall see and come home.’

Also, a hypothetical variety with a modal verb in preterit subjunctive would be possible:

- (22) Wir sollten mal sehen und kommen nach Hause.
 ‘We should see and come home.’

This collocation (and other similar serial verb constructions with a finite V_1 and two coordinated infinite verbs) has been copied from South Jutish: *Vi ska/sku se å komm jæm* (‘We shall/should see and [to] get home’, i.e. ‘It is time to go home’). This construction consists of three verbs: V_1 is a modal verb in present tense or in preterit followed by two coordinated infinite verbs: a semantically weakened verb (*se/sehen*) (‘to see’) and a verb of movement or action (*komm/kommen*) (‘to come’). The semantics of the construction is an invitation to ‘get finished’ and go home: It is an inchoative construction of South Jutish which has found its way into German varieties of the region. As a collocation it has a constant first part, semantically indicating ‘to get started’. Only the last, third verb of the construction (verb of movement or action) is interchangeable, as e.g., *Wir sollen mal sehen und legen los* (‘We shall see and get started’, i.e. ‘It is time to start’). While this serial inchoative verb construction is very productive in South Jutish (where it is considerably shorter and more “economic”: *ska se å*), it seems that only a limited number of phrases have found their way into German varieties, where they have been taken over as fixed collocations, but not been able to gain ground as productive inchoative constructions.

3.5 Summary

Let me summarize the observations of convergent constructions rooted in South Jutish presented above: In all examples it is possible to detect where a particular construction comes from and to which varieties it has spread, but it is not possible to draw a “road map” and display *how* and *when* or *how often* a specific language contact phenomenon occurs and which way it took. “Areal processes of code-copying may be very complex and difficult to analyze” (Johanson 1999: 57). Indeed, they are! Widespread bi- and multilingualism, substratum effects due to language shifts and varying dominance relations due to historical and political changes are responsible for several complications and a broad variety of scenarios. Just to mention a few of the difficulties:

- 1) It is difficult to explain which historical or social scenario has resulted in a certain linguistic contact feature. Probably very different scenarios might have led to similar or even identical results: Traits of language contact in colloquial Flensburg German (the so-called Flensburg “Petuh”) show similarities with the variety of German spoken by the German minority in North Schleswig. The languages involved in North Schleswig are South Jutish and Standard German, whereas Low German (which was the dominant vernacular in Flensburg until the middle of the 20th century) hardly played any role as a colloquial spoken variety in North Schleswig.
- 2) Some contact features spread into the variety of monolingual language users and thus became a kind of “covert” bilingualism (e.g., the above mentioned *und*-constructions), others did not (e.g., other serial verb constructions). It is not possible to give any explanation based on structural factors alone in terms of which elements will be copied, and which of these copied elements will spread into the language use of monolingual speakers as well and which will eventually become productive. Some linguistic elements might have been attractive for speakers because of their saliency or linguistic economy.
- 3) In all the cases analysed above, the origin of a certain feature is clear, but it is not clear whether this construction has the same origin in Flensburg as on the peninsula of Angeln, where substratal influence in connection with a rapid language shift seems to be the most plausible explanation. In Flensburg the feature might have survived due to South Jutish speaking newcomers from the north in the 19th century, it might have entered the Flensburg regiolect mediated through Low German, or there might rather have been a third source of origin. It is not possible to reconstruct all possible scenarios.
- 4) All participating languages seem to borrow constructions from each other. The circumstances for these processes may depend on a special historical period or on the social-political prestige of the language in a specific historical or local situation. Thus, regions with a rapid language shift seem to develop more substratum influence, which is the case for the peninsula of Angeln whose inhabitants went through two language shifts within less than one and a half century (first from South Jutish to Low German 1800–1830 and then from Low German to Standard German after World War II).

4. The language situation after 1920

One of the consequences of the national and political border of 1920 was that a national (bi- or even trilingual) minority arose on both sides of the border, whereas the traditional regional and local language contact diminished. As a result, the two national minorities, the German minority in the Danish border region and the Danish minority in Schleswig, Germany, have become the main *locus* of language contact since 1920. After the establishment of a controlled border in 1920, the possibility of face-to-face communication with persons from the other side of the border decreased. Accordingly, we can assume that the regional language contact almost stopped at this time.⁵ Nevertheless, German TV-programs were popular north of the borderline during the 1960s and 1970s which may have prolonged a common receptive competence of Standard German in North Schleswig for some decades.

4.1 Two national minorities

Due to the limited space here, I will only give an abridged survey of the linguistic development of the two minorities. Instead, I would like to draw attention to two dissertations with detailed analysis of the structural and pragmatic features of the Standard Danish variety of the minority in Germany,

⁵ The Danish-German border was nearly hermetically closed until 1947 (and, again, for several months on the Danish side from April 2020) (cf. Rasmussen & Schulz Hansen 2022).

known as Sydslesvidgansk (Kühl 2008), and a corresponding analysis of the linguistic development of the German minority in Denmark (Westergaard 2008), respectively. The data used in the following section come from two DFG-projects “Diverging language use among bilingual adolescents” (2004-2006) and “Multilingualism at the interface between oral and written language use” (2010-2014). These projects are part of a longitudinal study of overt and covert linguistic contact phenomena of the two minorities. In both projects the multilingual practice of school children and young people of the Danish minority in Schleswig-Holstein and the German minority on the Danish side of the border, respectively, has been analysed.

4.2 Sydslesvidgansk

After 1920, the Danish minority established itself in the German part of Schleswig and founded its own educational, cultural, and social institutions. Their activities were based exclusively on Standard Danish. In the course of time, however, a new variety emerged among the (at least officially) Standard Danish speaking national minority. But it is important to emphasize that a congruent correspondence between the nationality and the language did not traditionally exist in Schleswig: Before the rise of nationalism in the middle of the 19th century, language choice was predominantly an issue of communication and not one of indicating a person’s national identity. Today, the official language of the Danish minority is a variety of Standard Danish; the dominant informal language of many members of the Danish minority is northern Standard German regiolect. Members of the German minority in North Schleswig (Denmark) are mostly trilingual, speaking South Jutish, Standard German, and Standard Danish regiolect. Typical of both minorities are habitual code switching and instances of linguistic convergence. As far as Sydslesvidgansk and Nordschleswigdeutsch are concerned (both minorities include L2-speakers to a large extent), it is indeed difficult to differentiate systematically between (a) idiosyncratic interlanguages, (b) learner or L2-varieties and (c) more widespread or long-lasting language contact phenomena, respectively.

Sydslesvidgansk can be considered a non-focused contact variety within a linguistically inhomogeneous community, consisting of white-collar employees and teachers from Denmark with Danish as their L1, local persons with an affinity to Danish language and culture, and persons who have different kinds of affiliation to Denmark. In the latter two groups we find mostly L2-speakers who have learned Danish at the local kindergarten and later at school (or even persons who do not make the effort to learn Danish at all!); they speak Standard German at home, at work and in their leisure time (Fredsted 2020a). Due to the lack of internal consistency, it might not even be correct to label Sydslesvidgansk as a variety of Danish in the strict sense of the term. Indeed, it might be more appropriate to define this kind of language use as idiosyncratic. You find a broad variation reaching from correct Standard Danish (with a tendency to hyper-correctness) to mixed varieties in the most literal sense of the word: often convergences of German syntax and Danish lexicon supplied with *ad hoc* borrowings or code-switches based on German (cf. Fredsted 2020a). The following examples from pupils (aged 12) in a Danish minority school are quite typical: A Standard Danish matrix sentence with an inserted German verb stem (*probier-*) as an *ad hoc* translation into Danish which received the Danish infinitive inflexion *-e*:

- (23) så ville jeg *probier-e* at hente den ud
 ‘then I would try to get it out’

Pupil (aged 12) from the Danish minority with German as L1 and Danish as L2:

- (24) mig₁;SG;DAT fejler_V;PRS tre_{NUM} opgaver_N;OBJ (no case marker possible)
 lit.: ‘me lack three exercises.’
 (cf. SG: mir fehlen drei Aufgaben)

The characteristic convergent feature in (24) is the use of syntactic subcategorization of the correspondent cognate German experiencer verb *fehlen* (demanding a dative supplement) which is, however, no longer possible in modern Danish.

Other characteristic features in our data are:

- a) The lack of inflectional forms that do not exist in German (e.g., agreement inflection of predicate adjectives (e.g., *de fleste kan allerede drikke sig fuld et andet sted* ('most of you can already get drunk somewhere else')) (Online data 2010, student, aged 18). Standard Danish morpho-syntax demands a congruent plural marking: *fulde* ('drunk').
- b) The use of the perfect tense instead of the preterit in narratives on past events: *Vi har boet på et hotel (...) og så har vi set pyramider* ('We stayed in a hotel (...) and then we saw the pyramids') (Kühl 2008: 178) instead of preterit *boede* and *så*.
- c) The lack of differentiation between atelic and telic use of motion verbs: *Jeg går til bussen.* ('I walk towards the bus') instead of: *Jeg går hen til bussen* ('I go to the bus').

4.3. Nordschleswigdeutsch and Nordschleswigsønderjysk

The variety of Standard German spoken by the German minority in Denmark shares features with the neighbouring regiolects of Standard German in, e.g., Flensburg. However, habitual code-switching to South Jutish (which is the L1 of many members of the German minority) and well-established borrowed collocations give this variety its linguistic imprint:

- (25) Das kannst du nicht bekannt sein.
'That is not nice.'
(cf. SJ: De ka do it væ bekeen., SG: Das ist nicht nett von dir.)
- (26) Das gie ich nicht.
'I am not keen on that.'
(cf. SJ: De gie æ it., SG: Dazu habe ich keine Lust.)

Members of the German minority explain their language choice in this way: "We talk South Jutish when we sit down, but German when we stand up". In this way, both languages are accepted: South Jutish, however, predominantly as a variety for informal communication, whereas German is the official language of the minority. Members of the German minority are generally considered as the best speakers of South Jutish, because their dialects have not been under strong pressure from Standard Danish (cf. the next section). Nevertheless, the minority variety of South Jutish is also characterised by frequent code-switching to German. This is, however, not a new phenomenon: Insertions of lexemes from Low and Standard German were rather common in traditional South Jutish spoken before 1920, especially in the transition zones between Low German and South Jutish in Central Schleswig. But German insertions and lexical borrowings into South Jutish were also common among speakers in North Schleswig who had attended school in the years between 1888 and 1920 when the school language was Standard German only.

One of the most puzzling results of our first study in 2004-2006 of school children (aged 11-13) is a considerable divergence between the two minorities concerning their use of language contact phenomena: *Classic code-switching* (mainly found as insertions of a single lexical stem from the embedded language into the matrix language) is very frequent in North Schleswig, where the German minority students produce insertions every 48 seconds (on average). This number refers to both oral languages of the students (German and South Jutish), and there is no significant difference of distribution between the two matrix languages or the directions of the code-switching (Westergaard 2008). The Danish minority speakers, however, do not code-switch quite that often. They produce a clause internal code-switch every 120 seconds (on average); most of the code-switches are inserted

lexical stems from the embedded language, but they mainly use these insertions to compensate for lexical gaps in their L2 (Danish).

In the data from North Schleswig, we found 503 items of *convergences* (involving collocations and/or morpho-syntactic structures); many of these are, however, a received part of a local contact variety of German (cf. examples 25 and 26). A spontaneous *ad hoc* convergence occurs every 342 seconds. In comparison to that, the speakers of the Danish minority are frequent users of convergent constructions: In the data from schools with Danish as school language, there are 775 items of convergence, viz. one convergence every 162 seconds on average (Kühl 2008).

	Code-switching	Convergence
Danish minority pupils	every 120 seconds	every 162 seconds
German minority pupils	every 48 seconds	every 342 seconds

To summarize: The students of the German minority use code-switching quite frequently, the speakers of the Danish minority, however, are frequent users of convergent constructions in Danish (cf. example 24). Code-switching seems generally to be more accepted in the German minority. Of course, the constellation of three languages in North Schleswig (South Jutish, German and Standard Danish) compared to two languages (German and Danish) by the Danish minority might play a decisive role. Another issue might be that the pressure laid on school children or students to *only* use the official minority language prevails in the schools of the Danish minority (cf. Fredsted 2020c). It seems that the Danish minority speakers tend to “cover” the German influence, whereas the German minority speakers do not mind code-switching marking their multilingualism overtly.

4.4 *South Jutish in the majority population after 1920*

After 1920, Danish school authorities did “everything they could to substitute South Jutish through Standard Danish”, according to historian Jørn Buch (2005: 152). Not only schools but also media and the administration were strongly committed to suppressing South Jutish, which one of my teachers in the 1960s referred to as some sort of a “half German language used by uneducated peasants”. Even today, where South Jutish generally is on its retreat, some school authorities forbid their teachers to speak South Jutish to their pupils (p.c. with teachers). Nonetheless, South Jutish still represents a living language community, but as far as the north and the towns are concerned the intergenerational transmission of the language is endangered (cf. Fredsted 2020b).

During the last two decades, more interest to preserve this language seems to have emerged among its speakers. This development also comprises the use of written South Jutish in the social media on the internet (cf. Westergaard 2014; Fredsted 2018). Other dialects in Denmark have almost disappeared during the 20th century. Thus, it might seem surprising that exactly the most oppressed regional language is still alive. The traditional explanation says that Copenhagen Standard Danish had not been so dominant in the region for such a long period. Another explanation might be that the strong pressure to assimilate linguistically along with the centralizing policy of the Danish administration has caused a bottom-up resistance among citizens of Sønderjylland/Nordslesvig. At least, this was one of the chief motivations for founding an association in order to preserve the South Jutish language and culture in 2000 (“Æ synnejysk Forening” that has more than 2000 members today).

4.5 *The decline of regional multilingualism*

Finally, I would like to note some statistical data from two surveys which have been conducted in the

village of Achtrup (Kreis Nordfriesland, ca. 15 km to the south of the 1920-borderline) in the years 1973 (Ryge Petersen 1975) and 2006 (Nissen 2007). The languages spoken in Achtrup are: Standard German, Low German, South Jutish, North Frisian, and Standard Danish. The data have been gathered in questionnaires in order to display the status of the productive and receptive competence in the languages mentioned above in the same geographical area in 1973 and 2006, respectively. The general tendency is not surprising: Standard German was, of course, understood and spoken by 100% of the population both in 1973 and 2006. The use of North Frisian by only a couple of speakers has remained unchanged. South Jutish and Low German have decreased dramatically: in 1973, 62% of the persons interviewed said that they were able to speak Low German; in 2006, this number had decreased to 28.5%. In 1973, 23.5% stated that they were able to speak South Jutish; in 2006, the number was only 7.5%. Standard Danish (taught as a foreign language in public schools and as L1/L2 in the minority school) has an increasing number of speakers among younger people and rose from almost 10% in 1973 to 20% in 2006. The clear tendency to be seen is that the number of speakers of the regional languages is decreasing, whereas the number of speakers of one (or two) of the standard languages taught at school has increased. But there is another interesting tendency in the data showing a loss of multilingualism: Significant is, e.g., the decrease of trilingual speakers of Standard German, Low German and South Jutish from 18% in 1973 to 2% in 2007. Accordingly, we see a clear tendency towards monolingualism. Among young speakers there is an even greater decrease in the number of speakers identifying themselves as speakers of Low German or South Jutish:

Speakers of Low German:

1973: 62%

2006: 28%. (Persons aged 0 – 30: 3.7%)

Speakers of South Jutish:

1973: 23.5%

2006: 7.5%. (Persons aged 0 - 30: 3.7%)

The present situation can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The dominance of both standard varieties is overwhelming at the expense of the regional languages Low German, South Jutish and North Frisian. Standard Danish and Standard German dominate in all educational institutions (day care, schools, etc.).
- 2) Regional bi- and multilingualism has decreased over the last three decades. Two surveys conducted in the village of Achtrup (Kreis Nordfriesland) 1973 (Ryge Petersen 1975) and 2006 (Nissen 2007) tell this story in a rather clear way.

5. Conclusion

The linguistic situation in Schleswig before 1920 can be characterised in the following way: Schleswig was a region without distinct borders between the three autochthone languages North Frisian, Low German and South Jutish. Widespread productive and receptive multilingualism, language shifts and longitudinal language contact over centuries (including Standard German after ca. 1550) caused intensive lexical borrowing and the development of convergent linguistic features. Especially Low German and South Jutish are characterised by several lexical and morpho-syntactic similarities. They built bridges of understanding and extended the linguistic repertoire of the population. Since the period of the Hansa, Low German can be characterised as a kind of mediating language and was used as a lingua franca, also by the Frisians. In the first part of this paper (chapter 3), the focus has been on the syntactic influence of South Jutish on the neighbouring West Germanic languages, Low German, Standard German, and North Frisian.

After the division of Schleswig in 1920, the linguistic situation changed. Primarily, the school

systems of the two national minorities (the German in Denmark and the Danish minority in Schleswig-Holstein) maintain bi- and multilingualism in the two standard varieties. The minorities have become the *locus* of continued language contact between North and West Germanic varieties. South of the border South Jutish is almost extinct nowadays, whereas Standard Danish is taught as a non-compulsory foreign language in public schools and, of course, strongly supported by the schools of the Danish minority. In North Schleswig, Standard German is taught as a compulsory foreign language, but due to decreasing interest in Denmark for German as a foreign language, knowledge of the neighbouring language is no longer a matter of course. Not taking the three minorities (the German one in Denmark, the Danish one in Schleswig-Holstein, and the Frisian community) into consideration, regional multilingualism is on retreat among the majority populations. Thus, we can conclude that the national-political border has developed into a linguistic border in the course of three generations.

A common feature of both parts of Schleswig is the decline of the autochthonous languages, of which North Frisian has the lowest number of speakers. Low German and (to a limited degree) North Frisian are taught as subjects in some schools in Schleswig-Holstein to revitalize these languages among younger people and encourage “new speakers”. In Denmark, no official or institutional support exists to preserve or encourage the use of South Jutish, although the intergenerational transmission in some areas is rather weak and generally in decline. Nevertheless, the language is still alive as a language of everyday communication in North Schleswig, but only a bottom-up revival might prevent its extinction.

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Recent data corpora

Two data corpora have been audio recorded and transcribed in connection with two DFG-funded research projects:

- Divergierender Sprachgebrauch bei bilingualen Jugendlichen*: DFG 2004–2006. Corpus 2004: Bi- and trilingual pupils at the age of 12–14 years (76 informants). Primarily oral data (interviews, informal peer group conversations), school essays and grammatical tests.
- Mehrsprachigkeit im Spannungsfeld zwischen Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit*: DFG 01.11.2009–31.01.2014. Corpus 2010: Bi- and multilingual adolescents and adults; oral and written data from 56 informants (partly the same informants as in 2004) in different registers.

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