

Stephan Elspaß (Augsburg)

Regional Standard Variation in and out of Grammarians' Focus

1. Standard Variation in German

As more and more dialects and regiolects in the German-speaking countries have fallen into disuse (except in Switzerland and Liechtenstein), more and more people are unable to speak any other variety of their national language than its standard variety. Another consequence of this change is that the standard variety increasingly has to provide for formal as well as informal communicative contexts, whereas only half a century ago, the standard was more or less restricted to writing or to formal discourse. Inevitably, Standard German has developed more register variation in recent decades (Schwitalla 2008).

Informal registers of 'everyday' spoken German, in particular, display regional variation to a considerable extent – the more informal, the more regional they are (Kappel 2007). But even standard languages are not free from variation. They can have more than one standard variety, and yet formal registers of standard varieties are full of variants, as the plethora of 'Englishes' and their standard variation shows. Contrary to a widespread folk linguistic belief, there is no such thing as a completely homogeneous speech-community, as "the only fully standardised language is a dead language" (Milroy & Milroy 1985: 22).

In German linguistics, the notion of "standard varieties" has met with some approval. In the last two decades, it has become widely accepted that mainly Switzerland, Austria and Germany have developed "national varieties of German" in a pluricentric setting after World War II (von Polenz 1999: 412–453), although this politically very correct view may not quite have reached speakers' minds and influenced their own beliefs about their standard (Scharloth 2005). Still under debate, therefore, is whether this concept does full justice to the actual language situation *within* the German-speaking countries. Some linguists argue that variants of 'national varieties' do not stop at national borders, that there is, for instance, not much more linguistic difference between Standard German in the northern and the southern parts of Germany than between German in Southern Germany and German in Switzerland or Austria. They favour models of 'pluri-areal German' ("pluriareales Deutsch", Wolf 1994: 74, Scheuringer 1997: 343–344) or 'regional pluricentricity' ("regionale Plurizentrität", Reiffenstein 2001: 88; cf. also Koller 1999: 154).

Research into the variation of Standard German has largely been restricted to pronunciation and lexis, and it has resulted in authoritative handbooks, such

as Ammon et al. (2004) and König (1989), to name the two most prominent works.¹ Variation in grammar, however, has gone almost unnoticed. There is no work on grammar comparable to these two handbooks. The lack of a codex or handbook does not mean that speaker-writers do not use different variants in standard grammar, even if folk linguistic belief – itself being deeply rooted in a standard language ideology (Milroy & Milroy 1985: 22–23) – will have it that a fully standardised German language does exist. As for grammar, one sometimes gets the impression that even grammarians wish that their field of research was free from variation.

The present paper will explore the extent of regional grammatical variation in Standard German and investigate how regional variants in grammar get into grammarians' focus (if they do at all). I will present two brief case studies and discuss the possible consequences for the study of present-day grammar.

2. Regional Variation in Standard German Grammar

Ursula Götz' (1995) article on regional variants of Standard German in Germany was probably the first exclusive study on this topic. Having leafed through three contemporary grammars of German, she identified 46 grammatical phenomena which were marked as being regional. Five of them she then checked against ten other grammars. The result of her study was that, in general, grammars did not or not sufficiently consider regional variation. Three of Götz' examples, which can also be found in later editions of the Duden grammar and other grammars, are the use of double perfect and double past perfect (1), plural forms (2), or strong instead of weak verb forms (3).

- (1) *Wir **haben** uns alle schon so daran **gewöhnt gehabt***
we have us all already so PRO-to used (to it) had
'All of us had already got used to it so much.'
standard variants: *hatten ... gewöhnt* or *haben ... gewöhnt*
(“im Oberdeutschen” ‘in upper German’, Duden 1984: 152, 1998: 153)
- (2) *Wägen*
carriage-PL
'carriages'
standard variant: *Wagen*
(“südd.” ‘southern German’, Duden 1984: 243, 1998: 234)

¹ A second edition of Ammon et al. (2004) is in preparation. A new survey on standard regional pronunciation in all German-speaking countries is presently being undertaken in the “Deutsch heute” project at the *Institut für Deutsche Sprache* in Mannheim, cf. <http://www.ids-mannheim.de/prag/AusVar/Deutsch_heute/> (24 April 2010).

- (3) *Dann frug er ...*
 Then ask-PST-SG he ...
 'Then he asked ...'
 standard variants: *fragte*
 ('landsch.' 'regional', Duden 1984: 135, 1998: 136)

There are four general problems with entries in grammars of the kind shown here. Firstly, they are usually not based on corpora or other empirical studies. One simple reason for this is that to date nobody has undertaken to build a corpus of regional Standard German, nor has anybody so far carried out a systematic survey of non-dialectal regional variation in German grammar. Secondly, handbook entries such as "im Oberdeutschen" 'in upper German' or "südd[deutsch]" 'southern German' do not disclose whether the regional variant in question is considered *Standard* German or not. "Oberdeutsch", for instance, usually refers to dialect. Example (1), however, certainly is a sentence written in (literary) Standard German. Thirdly, from unspecific entries such as "landsch[aftlich]" 'regional' it is not even clear in which specific region the variant is supposed to be employed. And fourthly, the entry notes are often simply incorrect. *Wägen* is not only a variant of 'southern German', but also of German in Austria and probably also in Switzerland (cf. AdA 2003ff.: "Plural").

In recent years, Austrian and Swiss scholars have presented further evidence of grammatical variation of Standard German in Austria and Switzerland. Works on Standard German grammar in Austria remain scattered, however, and concentrate on rather specific phenomena (e.g. Sellner 2006). Dürscheid & Hefti (2006) devote an entire paper to syntactical features of Standard German in Switzerland such as filling the *vorfeld* with the adverb *bereits* 'already' (4), the use of subordinate clauses with verb-first position and without *dass* 'that' (5), or ellipsis of correlating *es* 'it' in the *vorfeld* (6):

- (4) *Bereits liegt in den Alpen Schnee*
 Already lies in the Alps snow
 'There is snow already in the Alps.'
 standard variant: *In den Alpen liegt bereits Schnee*
- (5) *Gut, gibt's Karton*
 good (that) exists it cardboard
 'It's a good thing that there is/we have cardboard.'
 standard variant: *Gut, dass es Karton gibt*
- (6) *Kommt dazu, dass ...*
 (it) comes in addition that ...
 'There is also the fact that .../Moreover, ...'
 standard variant: *Es kommt dazu, dass ...*

To sum up, regional grammatical variation in Standard German has been rather neglected in grammaticography, particularly in Germany, and its study has only recently emerged as a field of research in its own right.

3. Pinpointing ‘Standard Language’

To give the reader an idea of the range of grammatical variation in Standard German, I will first present an exemplary list of phenomena. The variants listed here are established as being standard by employing a restrictive definition of standard language: A standard form is a linguistic form which is commonly used in printed or online newspaper texts. The list comprises examples of the different use of linking elements in compounds (7), verb complements (8), prepositions in verb complements (9), reflexive pronouns (10), gender (11), deverbal noun formation (12), and auxiliaries with analytical tense forms of the stative verbs *sitzen* ‘(to) sit’, *stehen* ‘(to) stand’, *liegen* ‘(to) lie’ (13).

- (7) *Zugmitte/Zugsmitte*
train + middle/train + s-LINK + middle
‘centre/middle of the train’
- (8) *etw. bei jdm beantragen/etw. jdm beantragen*
sth. PREP OBJ (bei) apply/sth. DAT OBJ apply
‘to apply for sth. to sb.’
- (9) *für das Examen lernen/auf das Examen lernen*
PREP OBJ (für) the exams work/PREP OBJ (auf) the exams work
‘to study for the exams’
- (10) *das Wetter ändert/das Wetter ändert sich*
the weather changes/the weather changes REFL PRON
‘the weather changes’
- (11) *das E-Mail/die E-Mail*
the-NEUTR e-mail/the-FEM e-mail
‘the e-mail’
- (12) *der Entscheid/die Entscheidung*
the-MASK decide-ROOT/the-FEM decide-ROOT + DER-SUFF -ung
‘the decision’
- (13) *ich bin gesessen/ich habe gesessen*
I sein-FIN sit-PAST PART/I have-FIN sit-PAST PART
‘I have sat’

A narrower view of standard language would only consider the language use in non-regional newspapers (Eisenberg 2007: 217). This view is not adopted here, as there are no clear criteria to establish whether a given newspaper can be regarded as regional or not, and as it is not clear whether the local news section of a given newspaper would then have to be rated ‘non-standard’ in contrast to the

money section or the national sports section of the same newspaper. A wider notion of standard language includes other printed or online texts, or even spoken language. If we embraced this notion, it would extend our list considerably, e.g. to phenomena like the *tun*-construction (*ich tu ... sammeln* 'I will collect/will be collecting/am collecting ...'), which can be heard in all regions, or e.g. the use of the auxiliary verb with analytical forms of the verb *anfangen* '(to) begin, start'. (The use of *sein* '(to) be' with *anfangen*, e.g. *ich bin angefangen zu...* 'I have started to ...' is typical of spoken German in the north-west of Germany.)

4. Case Studies

In the following sections, I will concentrate on two syntactic phenomena, the *am*-progressive and discontinuous constructions of pronominal adverbs in German. I will not strive at a detailed grammatical analysis of these two phenomena. Although both have come into grammarians' focus only quite recently, a range of studies has been published since (particularly on the *am*-progressive). The aim of the following two case studies is rather to look at the way in which grammars and linguistic studies deal with the two constructions with respect to their normative status and the depiction of their areal distribution.

4.1 The *am*-progressive

From a typological point of view, German usually counts as a language without grammatical means to express aspect. This notion changed when grammarians discovered the *am*-construction and its spreading in contemporary German. Thus, in his 1991 article on grammaticalization phenomena in contemporary German, Lehmann noted that "in a couple of West German dialects [...], a progressive aspect has come into use" (Lehmann 1991: 513). The *am*-construction consists of a merged form of the preposition *an* 'at' and the definite article (*am*), a nominalized infinitive form of mostly durative verbs (e.g. *schlafen* 'to sleep') and a finite form of *sein* 'to be'. It is frequently used to express the progress of an action (e.g. *Sie ist am Schlafen*. 'She is sleeping. '), but can also convey a habitual meaning (e.g. *Sie ist in dieser Fabrik am Arbeiten*. 'She works in this factory.', cf. Reimann 1999: 97, Elspaß 2005a: 271–273).

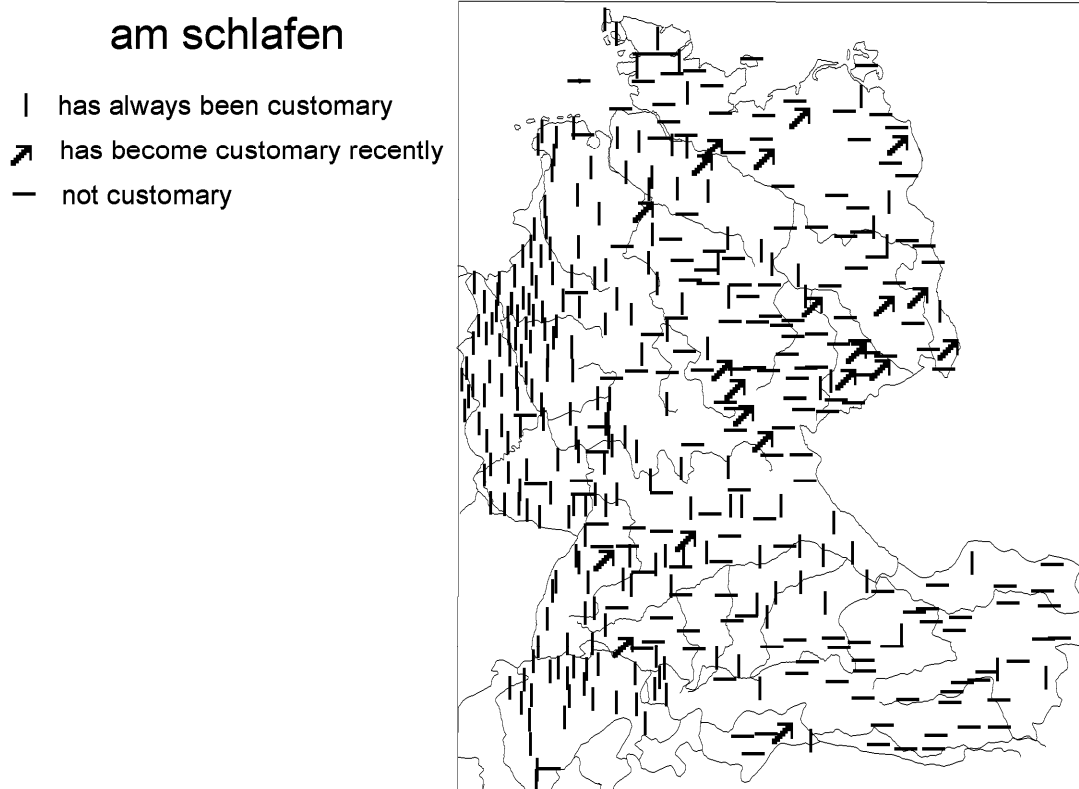
Only few grammars ignore the *am*-progressive altogether (Engel 1996, Wahrig 2002, Weinrich 2003). Most grammars acknowledge its existence and, like Lehmann, some recognize that it provides a means to express progressive aspect (e.g. Zifonun et al. 1997: 1878, Hentschel & Weydt 2003: 44, Wellmann 2008: 245). What the grammars disagree about is whether it is Standard German or not. Zifonun et al. (1997: 1880), Duden (2001: 63), Helbig & Buscha (2001: 80), Hentschel & Weydt (2003: 44) and Eisenberg (2004, vol. I: 200) attribute it

to spoken language and/or colloquial use. Duden (1998: 91) and Duden (2005: 434; 2009: 427) declare it fit for use in Standard German, whereas Duden (2007: 62) is not sure. Several studies have been published in the last ten years which present copious examples from newspapers as well as fictional texts, of the *am*-construction used as a progressive form (Reimann 1999, Krause 2002, Van Pottelberge 2004), thus leaving no doubt that the *am*-progressive actually has achieved the status of ‘norm of use’ (“Gebrauchsnorm”, cf. Eisenberg 2007) in Standard (Written) German. As for its regional distribution and its varietal status, the three studies agree that the *am*-progressive is certainly not restricted to substandard varieties in the west of Germany, as Lehmann stated and as Duden (2001: 63, “landschaftliche Umgangssprache (vor allem im Rheinland und Westfalen)” ‘regional colloquial language/regiolect, particularly in the Rhineland and in Westphalia’) and Eisenberg (2004, vol. I: 200, “bestimmte Varietäten des Gesprochenen („Ruhrgebietsdeutsch“)” ‘certain spoken varieties (“Ruhr area German”)’ have it. Helbig & Buscha (2001: 80), Duden (1998: 91) and Duden (2005: 434; 2009: 427) are right in declaring that the *am*-progressive has become a widespread grammatical form in spoken German, but it may be too generalized to state that the *am*-progressive is accepted as a standard form in *all* German-speaking regions. To shed more light on this aspect, both a look at the history of this construction and the present-day regional distribution of different forms of the *am*-progressive can be helpful. As for its historical development, the *am*-construction in fact spread out from (North) Western parts of Germany (Elspaß 2005a: 269–270), where it can certainly be considered a contact phenomenon (cf. Dutch *aan’t* + INF + *zijn*, Low German *an’t* + INF + *sien/wesen*), and from German in Switzerland (Van Pottelberge 2004: 220–221). It can be argued that its rise is connected to the fall of the *tun*(‘to do’)-construction, which over centuries was used to convey aspectual meaning in German (Elspaß 2005a: 273–275). With respect to its present-day distribution, different forms of the *am*-progressive have to be taken into account. Due to a lack of a corpus or a survey on standard grammatical variation in German (cf. Dürscheid, Elspaß & Ziegler in print), I will present two maps from the *Atlas zur deutschen Alltagssprache* (AdA 2003ff.) ‘Atlas of colloquial everyday language’ (cf. Elspaß 2007), which is the most up-to-date atlas on non-dialectal language variation in the German-speaking countries and regions. Colloquial everyday language is, of course, not the same as Standard German. The maps can nevertheless give an accurate picture of the areal distribution of certain variants. For the purpose of this paper, it suffices to show the different grades of acceptance of two forms of the *am*-progressive which differ in complexity.

Map 1 shows the overall distribution of the ‘simple’ *am*-progressive (*am* + INF + *sein*: *Sie ist am Schlafen*. ‘She is sleeping.’), map 2 the distribution of a more complex “transitive” form (*am* + DIR OBJ to INF + INF + *sein*: *Ich bin die Uhr am Reparieren*. ‘I am repairing the watch.’, cf. Ebert 1996: 49–50).

Whereas map 1 displays a widespread use of the simple form in Germany, East Belgium and Switzerland (but not in Austria, South Tyrolia, and a hesitant acceptance in eastern parts of Germany), the more complex transitive form in map 2 is clearly restricted to the regions in which the *am*-construction originated. The results of this small investigation on the actual use of the *am*-construction combined with the evidence from the studies mentioned above can be summed up as follows:

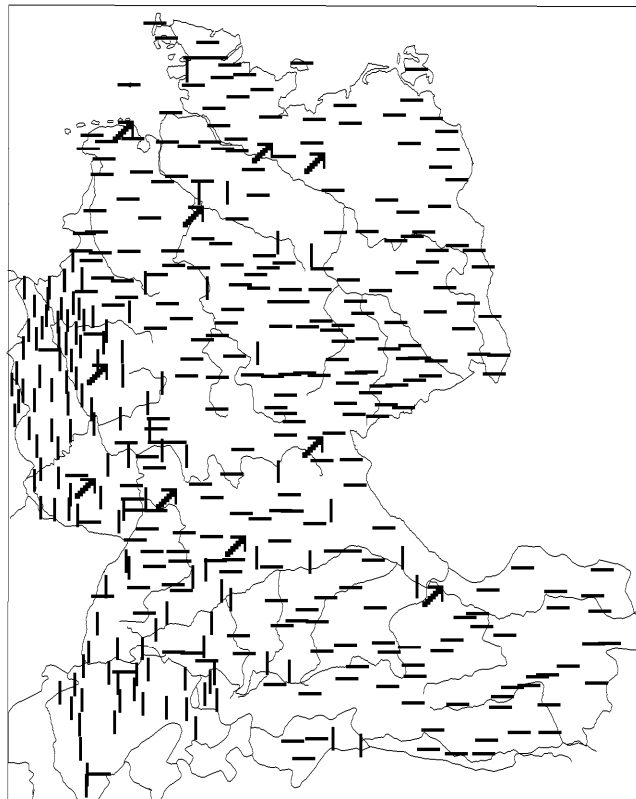
1. The *am*-progressive in its simple form is a variant of Standard German.
2. The result of the comparison between the distribution of the simple and the more complex transitive form indicates an ongoing standardization process. (Whether these can be seen as different stages of a grammaticalization process, is a disputed matter, cf. Lehmann 1991 and Van Pottelberge 2005.)
3. German has a grammatical form 'aspect' (cf. Glück 2001: 13).



Map 1: Progressive construction with *am* + verbal noun + *sein* in colloquial German: *sie ist schon am Schlafen* 'she is already sleeping' (source: AdA 2003ff.)

die Uhr am reparieren

- | has always been customary
- ↗ has become customary recently
- not customary



Map 2: Progressive construction with direct object + *am* + verbal noun + *sein* in colloquial German: *ich bin die Uhr am Reparieren* ‘I am repairing the watch’ (source: AdA 2003ff.)

4.2 Discontinuous Pronominal Adverbs

Pronominal adverbs (PAs), also called ‘prepositional adverbs’ in grammars and the research literature, consist of a PRO-adverb (*da-* ‘there’ *wo-* ‘where’ and, rarely, *hier-* ‘here’) and a preposition. If the preposition begins with a consonant, PAs with *da-* and *wo-* drop historic *-r* (OHG/MHG *dar*, *war*), thus *davon* ‘thereof’, *damit* ‘therewith’, *wofür* ‘wherefore’ etc. PAs containing a preposition beginning with a vowel have retained *-r* as a linking element, e.g. *darauf* ‘thereupon’. Most grammarians consider such univocal PAs as the only standard forms of PAs in German. Historically, it is uncertain whether they derived from discontinuous forms such as *dar ... von*. At any rate, discontinuous forms are well documented in earlier periods of High and Low German (Fleischer 2008, Negele 2010a: 123–144). German dialects in the north(west) and central western areas have preserved the discontinuous forms, mostly in the form *da/wo/hier ... PREP*; they are usually called ‘split PAs’ (cf. Fleischer 2002a: 137–211 for details). This variant has attracted considerable attention from syntacticians, who considered it a form of preposition stranding in German. Whether split PAs in German and similar constructions in Dutch (Haeseryn 1989) are structurally si-

milar to preposition stranding in English, is rather disputed (cf. Fleischer 2002b: 117–120, Negele 2010a: 158–163) and, in any case, not relevant in the context of this paper. More recent structural variants in German dialects include ‘doubling constructions’ with *da-*, which take a ‘long’ form (e.g. *da ... davon, da ... daran*) and a ‘short’ form (e.g. *da davon/dadavon, da daran/dadaran*; cf. Fleischer 2002a: 212–329, 2002b: 125–127). Doubling constructions containing *-r* can be shortened (e.g. *da ... dran, da dran/dadran*).

With the decline of the dialects, however, such alleged ‘non-standard’ forms, i.e. split PAs and doubling constructions, have emerged in standard contexts. Again, standard grammars either totally ignore these variants (e.g. Engel 1996; Duden 1998; Helbig & Buscha 2001; Hentschel & Weydt 2003; Wellmann 2008), or they mark them as colloquial (Duden 2005: 587; Duden 2009: 581) or right away as non-standard (Zifonun et al. 1997: 2085; Duden 2001: 695; Wahrig 2002: 301; Duden 2005: 886, 897; Duden 2007: 739; Duden 2009: 872, 883).

But are they really *non-standard* (cf. Negele 2010b)? In general, if several grammars bother to mention such variants, this may be a good indicator that the standard question has not yet come to a final conclusion and that it is worth investigating the status of the variants in question. Unlike the *am*-construction, the research literature is not full of examples from printed texts of the mass media. But as (14) to (18) show, examples can be found, although mostly in reported speech.

- (14) Sechzig Jahre. **Da** kann der Schröder sich eine Scheibe **von** abschneiden.
 ... *this can (the) Schröder himself a slice from of-cut*
 ‘Sixty years. Schröder can take a leaf from this book.’
 (Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, 28.06.2002, p. 36, on the diamond wedding anniversary of former chancellor Helmut Schmidt and his wife Loki Schmidt)
- (15) *Da darf man gar nicht drüber nachdenken*
this must one not **this-over** about-think
 ‘You don’t want to think about it.’
 (headline from Osnabrücker Zeitung, 03.06.2003, on the consequences of fowl pest for farmers)
- (16) “*Sein Weg*” heißt das 176-Seiten-Opus der Stern-Redakteure Rüdiger Barth und Bernd Volland. Ein Porträt, keine Autobiografie: “**Da** bin ich einen Tick zu jung **für**”, meint der 29-Jährige.
 ... a portrait, no autobiography: “**this** am I a bit too young **for**”
 ‘... A portrait, no autobiography: “I am a bit too young for this.”’
 (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 15./16./17.4.2006, p. 56, on a book presentation by soccer star Michael Ballack)

- (17) *Die Firma produziert regelmäßig bis zur Ärgerlichkeit platte Unterhaltungsfilme für die ältere Zielgruppe. Keiner der Anwesenden in dieser Runde kann **da** was **dafür**. Aber den Kopf hinhalten müssen jetzt alle. Am meisten natürlich Gudrun Landgrebe.*
 ... nobody of those present in this group can **this** anything **this-for** ...
 ‘... Nobody of those present here can be blamed for this. ...’
 (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 17.06.2005, p. 17, interview by Eva Marz with actress Gudrun Landgrebe about her new film)
- (18) *Ein Wahlrecht mit 16? **Da** halte ich nichts **davon!***
this think I nothing **this-of**
 ‘A right to vote at the age of 16? I don’t think much of this!’
 (Internet edition of Die Oberpfalz, March 2008, transcript of interviews in an opinion poll, <http://www.dieoberpfalz.de/schwandorf/wahlumfrage-2008-kk.html> [24 April 2010])

It appears that these PA variants are becoming ‘norms of use’ in standard contexts via written representations of reported speech, and via phrases containing these forms, in particular. This would by no means be a premature assumption. Language change via reported speech and other forms of orality in newspaper texts, i.e. standard in the narrowest sense (see section 3.1 above), is not unusual (cf. Schwitalla 2008). In a comparative study of newspaper language from 1965, 1982 and 2001/02, Betz (2006) found that various syntactic phenomena which are considered ‘typical’ of spoken German, such as V2 subordinate clauses with *weil* (‘because’), aposiopesis, left and right dislocation etc., appear only or significantly more often in the most recent text group (2001/02). Standard language texts in the new media are even more open to variation. A simple search via one of the internet search engines renders 11,500 hits for *da halte ich nichts davon* (doubling construction) and even 254,000 hits for *da halte ich nichts von* (split construction) alone, all of which seem to have been written by competent speaker-writers in Standard German contexts (24 April 2010).

Why do linguistic forms such as the split PA, which have been stigmatized for at least 250 years (cf. Elspaß 2005b: 39–40), gradually re-emerge in standard contexts? Or why have substandard varieties been so reluctant to adopt the standard form? As with many other substandard variants (e.g. *wie* ‘than’ after comparative, cf. Elspaß 2005b: 35–36), a functional explanation is plausible. From a processual point of view, splitting and the ‘long’ doubling constructions have a clear advantage in that the anaphoric and topical PRO element usually occurs at the beginning of an utterance (and *wo-* has to be in the initial position), thus adjacent to the point of reference, whereas the preposition or the ‘doubled’ constituent containing the preposition tends to appear close to the content word to which the PA is a complement; this is particularly noticeable in examples (14) to (16). Thus, to use splitting or ‘long’ doubling constructions makes it easier to

plan and process a sentence, and an optimal balance between its two functions and syntactic requirements is achieved (cf. Ronneberger-Sibold 1993: 216–218).

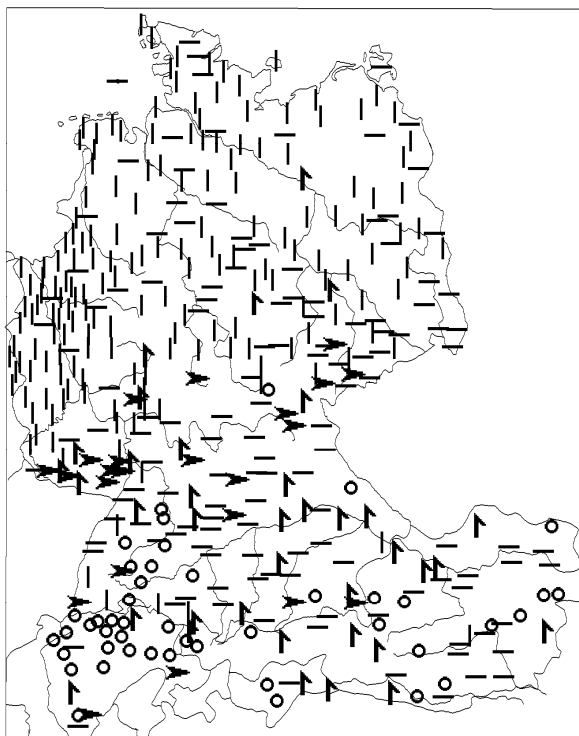
One aspect remains to be addressed in the context of this paper: What do grammarians tell us about the regional distribution of the PA variants, and how do they know about it? Grammars which mention the construction variants of the PA in German concentrate on the split form and the 'long' doubling construction with a dropped *a* (*da ... drin*). As for the regional distribution of the split form alone, we find in grammars as well as in the research literature "strikingly different statements on its occurrence" (Fleischer 2002b: 121). The grammars either contain no information about its distribution (e.g. Wahrig 2002: 301; Eisenberg 2004, vol. II: 198) or rather vague information: the split construction is supposed to be "regional verbreitet, besonders im Nordwesten" 'regionally distributed, particularly in the northwest' (Eroms 2000:136), "umgangssprachlich, besonders norddeutsch" 'colloquial, particularly northern German' (Duden 2001: 695; Duden 2007: 739), or "regionalsprachlich im Norden" 'regiolectal in the north' (Zifonun et al. 1997: 2085).

Again, as we do not have regionally balanced corpora of Standard German (yet), we have to rely on data from colloquial German. Two maps from the *Atlas zur deutschen Alltagssprache* (AdA 2003ff.) can provisionally cast some light on the actual regional distribution of discontinuous pronominal adverb constructions in Standard German. Map 3 shows the distribution of the variants for *davon/...* (*Davon halte ich nichts*. 'I don't think much of this. '), map 4 the distribution of the variants for *daran/...* (*Daran habe ich nicht gedacht*. 'I haven't thought of that.')

Map 3 and map 4 display a clear pattern, which resembles the equivalent dialect maps, but differs in one significant respect: Map 3 and the dialect maps (cf. Fleischer 2002a: Appendix, maps 1 and 4) show a preference for the split construction in the north and for the doubling constructions in the centre and in the south, but the split construction has gained ground. In present-day colloquial 'everyday' language, split PAs cover the entire northern part of Germany north of the Main river. On the other hand, map 4 shows that doubling constructions have moved further to the north, they virtually cover the entire German-speaking countries (cf. Fleischer 2002a: Appendix, maps 4 and 7).

davon (halte ich nichts)

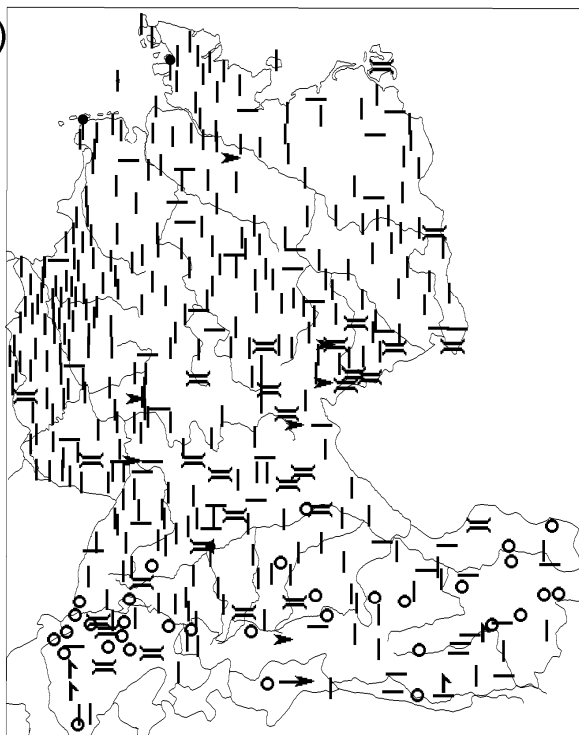
- davon ...
- ▼ dadavon ...
- | da ... von
- ▴ da ... davon
- von dem



Map 3: Variants of the pronominal adverb *davon* in colloquial German: *davon halte ich nichts* ‘I don’t think much of this’ (source: AdA 2003ff.)

daran (habe ich nicht gedacht)

- daran ...
- ▼ dadaran ...
-)(dadran ...
- | da ... dran
- da ... an
- ▴ da ... daran
- an das



Map 4: Variants of the pronominal adverb *daran* in colloquial German: *daran habe ich nicht gedacht* ‘I haven’t thought of that’ (source: AdA 2003ff.)

Together with Fleischer's findings (cf. Fleischer 2002b: 132), these results render strong empirical evidence against Eisenberg's (2004, vol. II: 198) assumption of a complementary distribution. (Interestingly, Eisenberg talks about 'dialects', but gives examples in Standard German in a Standard German grammar.) He supposes that PAs are split when the preposition begins with a consonant (*da ... von*), whereas prepositions with initial vowel lead to the long doubling construction with dropped *a* (*da ... dran*). At first glance, map 4 may support Eisenberg's assumption for prepositions with initial vowel, as the doubling construction occurs in all German-speaking countries and regions. For central and southern German regions, however, the use of the 'short' doubling construction (*dadran ...*) is also reported, and speakers in Switzerland, Austria and South Tyrolia apparently prefer a totally different construction with a preposition and a following demonstrative pronoun (*an das*). As for prepositions with initial consonant, map 3 clearly shows that Eisenberg's assumption cannot be confirmed. In Saxony and south of the river Main line, the split construction is only rarely used. Speakers clearly seem to prefer the univerbal PA, doubling constructions or (again in Switzerland, Austria and South Tyrolia) the construction with a preposition and a following demonstrative pronoun (*dem*).

Considering the little attention these constructions have drawn in grammars, a particular entry in the Wahrig grammar (2002: 301) is noteworthy. The author mentions two 'incorrect' PA variants, the split construction (*da ... für*) and the 'short' doubling construction (*da dafür ...*). As maps 3 and 4 show, the latter variant is indeed a rare one with a rather small regional distribution. Why did the author select this one and why did he not mention the more frequent 'long' doubling construction (*da ... dafür*)? Possibly this is simply due to biographic reasons. The author has, as his CV discloses, actually lived and worked for most of his life in central German regions where he probably has come across the two variants which he mentions, but probably not with the 'long' doubling construction.

5. Conclusion

The decline of regional varieties such as dialects and regiolects in the German-speaking countries (except Switzerland and Liechtenstein) has consequently led to more 'standard variation' and has virtually washed up grammatical forms into standard language use in German, which previously – sometimes merely a few decades ago – were considered non-standard. Grammarians and corpus linguists, however, do not yet seem to have responded adequately to these far-reaching developments. To date, neither a reference work nor even a corpus of regional German grammar exists, and there is still a lack of broad empirical studies on regional variation of Standard German. The lack of empirically based data is particularly noticeable in grammars of Standard German. Grammar book writers

often ignore regional variation in grammar altogether. When regional variants are actually featured in grammar books, their selection seems to be based on a) the adoption of entries from other (or just earlier editions of the same) grammar books or b) the more or less haphazard acquaintance of the grammar book writers with certain variants that happened to be in their linguistic focus at some stage(s) in their lives. It appears that a lot of entry notes on variants' regional distribution are similarly insufficient. Due to a lack of adequate corpora or surveys, such notes are usually not based on empirical, but on rather anecdotal evidence. Finally and more importantly, I would argue that most grammarians have not resolved the standard question in their treatment of regional variants. Grammarians' judgements on the 'standardness' of a given variant often appear to be established on subjective and/or stylistic grounds. The result of such practices is a sometimes confusing array of statements on the normative and stylistic status as well as the distribution of regional variants, as I tried to demonstrate in the two case studies.

The aim of this paper was to address some key grammaticographical problems with regard to regional variation. In conclusion, it is necessary to bring regional standard variation more into grammarians' focus. From a practical point of view, it appears inevitable that a whole new – nationally and regionally balanced – corpus of Standard German will have to be constructed, which can serve as a basis for studies on the grammatical variation in German as well as a variational reference grammar of Standard German (cf. Dürscheid, Elspaß & Ziegler in print [2010]).

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