

Variation of periphrastic *do* in Kansas Plautdietsch

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Many West-Germanic (WG) varieties have a form of periphrastic *do*, i.e. auxiliary *do* + infinite lexical verb. With the exception of standard English, they display an optionality of *do* in that the periphrasis alternates with its finite lexical verb variant (examples 1a–b, Plautdietsch).

- (1a) See doonen enne Menus kjikjen. (*do*-periphrasis)
 they do in-the menus look
- (1b) See kjikjen enne Menus. (lexical variant)
 they look in-the menus
 ‘They are looking at the menus.’

While most studies have focused on language-internal descriptions of the structure, to date, it remains unclear what (extra-)linguistic factors influence the use of the periphrasis over its counterpart in a situation of language contact. This paper presents corpus data of spoken Kansas Plautdietsch from a bilingual community that is analyzed for structural, semantic, and sociolinguistic factors that (dis)favor the use of periphrastic *do*.

Plautdietsch is a diasporic, oral variety spoken mainly by Mennonites (Kaufmann under review). The present corpus consists of conversational data from 22 speakers from Kansas who emigrated from Mexico and Canada in the 1990s. The vast majority of speakers is bilingual in English and Plautdietsch, with the younger generation being immersed in the US public school system and becoming dominant in English.

The variation analysis shows a low, but robust frequency of the periphrasis (12.5%). Parallel to Altai-Plautdietsch (Nieuweboer 1999), loan verbs from English favor the use of *do* in Plautdietsch. Periphrastic *do* is not limited to clause type, and in contrast to other Plautdietsch varieties, it is only used for indicative. A multivariate analysis of intra-linguistic features revealed that lexical aspect, verb class, verb morphology, and tense were significant factors for predicting the occurrence of *do*. On the extra-linguistic level, language use with children was significant in that the use both languages predicted a higher frequency of *do* in Plautdietsch.

These findings challenge previous accounts that have been put forward for other WG varieties, which argue for a more direct connection between periphrastic *do* and its syntactic distribution (Weber 2015) and the general reduction of syntactic complexity in multilingual speakers (Blom & de Korte 2011), and call for a more nuanced analysis on the functions of *do* in Plautdietsch that include semantic, pragmatic, syntactic, and social factors.

References: Blom, E. & de Korte, S. (2011). Dummy auxiliaries in child and adult second language acquisition of Dutch. *Lingua* 121(5), 906–919. Kaufmann, G. (under review). The world beyond verb clusters. Aspects of the syntax of Mennonite Low German (Unpublished habilitation). Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg im Breisgau. Nieuweboer, R. (1999). The Altai dialect of Plautdietsch. West-Siberian Menonite Low German. München: LINCOM EUROPA. Weber, T. (2015). Zur *tun*-Periphrase in niederdeutschen Dialekten. *Deutsche Dialekte. Konzepte, Probleme, Handlungsfelder. Akten des 4. Kongresses der Internationalen Gesellschaft für Dialektologie des Deutschen (IGDD)*, 227–245.