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Synchronic Findings on the Verbal Complex in Subordinate Clauses in *Elsässerditsch*

Introduction

In the last few decades great strides have been made in researching verbal complexes (VCs) in the West Central and High German dialect area from both a synchronic and diachronic perspective. Although particular attention had been given to the High German dialects like Bavarian and those of Swiss German from both diachronic and synchronic perspectives, not all have garnered enough synchronic study, especially in the case of Alsatian.

A synchronic questionnaire study

Extensive corpus research on the verbal complex in subordinate clauses in German dialects was carried out from a diachronic perspective by Sapp (2001a; 2011b). This was also explored in West Central German synchronically by Dubenion-Smith, as well as in Swiss German through the questionnaires sent out as part of the *Syntaktischer Atlas der Deutschen Schweiz (SADS)* and in High German by Schallert (2014). None of these questionnaires, however, made it across to bordering Alsace. It is clear that a gap in the synchronic perspective of the VC in Low Alemmanic German still exists, namely in and about Alsatian dialects. In Dubenion-Smith's 2010 dissertation, information on VCs in Alsatian was only provided for the area of Strasbourg and Kaysersberg, the former being taken from a grammar on Alsatian (Jung: 1983) and the latter from a thesis on the syntax of Kaysersberg (Heitzler: 1974). Even here it was felt that there might be even more variation within the variety of the Strasbourg dialect.

With a nod to Dubenion-Smith's exploratory work on VCs in the West Central German (WCG) area, this talk aims to fill that void by presenting the results of a questionnaire study of VCs in Alsatian dialects carried out online. The study involved 43 participants in over 25 localities in Alsace. These results shed new light not only the areal variation within Alsace, but also support those previous diachronic findings made by Sapp and Dubenion-Smith. In addition, the underlying sociolinguistic factors give insight on the current situation of the language in Alsace and can serve to aid continued study of syntactic phenomena in a dialect area that is often overshadowed by dialect research in neighboring Switzerland and those of Baden-Württemberg, Germany.

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