Stepping into the same river twice on the discourse context analysis in the LANCHART project

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The question of comparability in sociolinguistic studies is both obviously methodologically crucial and rarely addressed. If not addressed at all in sociolinguistic investigations of language change in real time, the analyst will invariably run the risk of comparing inherently different pieces of data material. But the question is, whether it is at all possible to achieve comparability? In this paper we argue that methodological considerations of comparability are necessary ingredients in any study of change in real time, and we present the apparatus used to achieve comparability in the LANCHART study, viz. the so-called Discourse Context Analysis (DCA). The DCA is the basis for the phonetic analysis in the LANCHART study since it selects maximally comparable sections of passages for analysis. However, in this paper it is also shown to function as a fruitful analytic tool in its own right, illuminating changing interactional patterns in sociolinguistic interviews which are likely to reflect changes in how people interact with one another in society at large.

\textbf{Keywords:} language variation and change; comparability; discourse context; interaction analysis

\begin{center}
\textit{You cannot step into the same river twice}
\textit{Heraclitus}
\end{center}

1. Introduction

All investigations of language change in real time involve at least two different studies, in the following called S1 and S2. S1 and S2 may diverge in a number of ways but they necessarily have to stem from two different points in time. The LANCHART project thus compares S1s with S2s. Due to the historical coincidence that the Danish Research Council for the Humanities in 1986 launched a five year project on Spoken Danish in its varieties, the majority of the LANCHART S1 studies stem from the middle of the 1980s and thus belong at the same point in time. This means that the distance in time between S1 and S2 in the LANCHART project is 20 years since the S2 recordings began 2005 and...
continued through 2007. A distance of 20 years is at once large and somewhat problematic. For the younger informants involved in the S1s this would necessarily entail their having changed life phase: They would have been outside the labour market in the S1 studies but would firmly belong to it in the S2s. In other words, they would have crossed at least one and perhaps several of the age limits thought to be of importance for any sociolinguistic study (Eckert 1997). In this paper we only deal with the informants who were already adults at the time of the S1. Generation 1, viz. those who were born between 1946 and 1963 make up the so-called core group of informants in the LANCHART study (cf. the Gregersen paper on the data and design of the study, this volume). At the S1 point in time they were all between 25 and 40 years of age and they were thus in the first phase of their lives as grown ups. At S2 they are still active and have not changed life phase. It is of some importance that they were all at the time of S1 past any critical age for the acquisition and formation of language habits and thus not prone to develop in the usual sense of this word. However we choose to view the controversial concept of a critical period (Chambers 2001, 368), they were to all intents and purposes past it.

2. On comparability
S1 and S2 ideally need not be different at all but in the real world they often are. The studies may differ in various ways:

*Sampling:*

- Trend studies: equivalent samples
- Panel studies: same persons

*Methodology:*

- Dialect studies
  - on standardization
  - on traditional dialects
- Urban sociolinguistic studies

The LANCHART S1 and S2 studies reported here include only 6 of the possible 16 data sets, viz. the Odder, Næstved and Copenhagen old and new data sets. All the 16 LANCHART data sets are presented and discussed in the introduction on Data and Design, this volume. In the following we give a short description of the old (S1) and new (S2) data sets from the three sites analyzed in this paper. The Odder S1 data set, created by Jul Nielsen and Nyberg (cf. the description at http://lanchart.hum.ku.dk/study_areas/odder/ and the bibliography (comprising exclusively papers in Danish) at: http://dgcss.hum.ku.dk/undersogelsesomraader/odder/) diverges somewhat in design, interview style and purpose from the 5 other data sets. The Odder study is about dialect leveling in a Jutland community close to the main Jutland city of Århus. The researchers interviewed 82 inhabitants of the Odder community, including informants from the rural countryside as well as from the
city of Odder itself in order to diagnose the levelling process. The results are best summarized as follows: The dialect levelling process in this particular community had almost gone to completion already at the time of S1 (1986–89). The Odder S1 is a dialectological study but it is in this context important to note two further characteristics: The researchers performed all interviews together, so that all the Odder S1 recordings feature two interviewers but only one informant. Furthermore, the researchers explicitly do not believe in trying to manipulate discourse contexts within the interview situation and thus do not attempt to bring forth the differences of formality presumed to lead to intra-individual variation so characteristic of the Labovian sociolinguistic interviews (Jul Nielsen and Nyberg 1992, 53ff.). The remainder of the data sets, the Næstved S1 and S2 as well as the Copenhagen S1 and S2 and the Odder S2 are all of them heavily influenced by Labovian techniques as given for example in Labov 1984 (cf. Kristiansen 1997, 1998 and Gregersen and Pedersen 1991). The difference between the two S1s of Næstved and Copenhagen respectively is simply that the Næstved study by Tore Kristiansen was focussed on language attitudes and thus diverged from Labovian methodology in making ‘language’ a prevalent theme – though by all means not the only one – in the interviews, whereas the Copenhagen Study in Urban sociolinguistics was a regular community study trying to disguise its interest in language by appealing instead to the (in general very interesting) history of the community and most of all by getting informants to tell their life story so far. For more information on the data sets, e.g. the number of informants and recordings, we refer to the introduction on the data and design, this volume.

In sum, the data sets analyzed in this paper do not diverge very much. If the LANCHART project had only included these three S1 and S2 data sets, the issue of comparability had not been so pressing. This is, however, not the case.

2.1 Two traditions in Danish sociolinguistics

The earliest sociolinguistic investigation of style is Kristensen 1980. Kjeld Kristensen had carried out an investigation in Vinderup in Western Jutland some years before (Kristensen 1977) and now wanted to know to what extent the situation determined pupils’ use of the two main varieties of Jutland Danish, i.e. traditional West Jutland dialect and regional Standard Danish, in Vinderup. Kristensen places his research firmly in a situation-based research tradition, referring not to Labov but instead to the Blom and Gumperz Hemnisberget study as one of his sources of inspiration, Thelander’s Burträsk study being the other one (Blom and Gumperz 1972; for a recent trenchant critique cf. Mæhlum 1996, Thelander 1979). The tradition that Kristensen thereby founds in Danish sociolinguistics takes as the starting point that the interview is a formal occasion. It even attempts to make this occasion more formal by keeping the interviews very short (in this case a mean duration of 7–8 minutes!) and as asymmetrical as could be (Kristensen 1980, 51ff.). The alternate situation, taken to be a context which calls forth an informal or casual variety, is the group discussion.
The idea is that an unsupervised discussion among, preferably self-recruited, solidary informants, in this case pupils from the 8th grade in the (only) Vinderup school, is the ideal breeding ground for the kind of language characteristic of the sphere of life to which the interviewer does not normally have access.

The tradition founded by Kristensen was developed to perfection by Kristensen and Jørgensen in their Modsjæl study (Jørgensen and Kristensen 1994) and also influenced the field work of the Odder study (Jul Nielsen and Nyberg 1992, 1993) as well as the Køge project, all of which form part of the LANCHART corpus as a whole. This means that the LANCHART corpus includes a number of S1s which are inspired by the Gumperz-Thelander tradition and thus diverge considerably from the Labov-type studies which, however, encompass the rest of the S1s, viz. the Næstved and Copenhagen Bysoc S1s and most, but not all, the S2s. We were faced with the challenge of comparability.

2.2 Creating the DCA

The solution was to develop an apparatus which could distinguish between passages so that we might at once 1 characterize the data sets and the single interviews in a number of dimensions thought to be relevant for language variation (and change?) and thus isolate passages which were both frequent enough to occur in all the data sets as well as broadly enough delimited for the other dimensions to vary.

Accordingly, we created a sample of 20 recordings selected so as to manifest maximal variation in terms of informants, interview types and participants. In practice this meant that we had three recordings from the Copenhagen project, four recordings from the Odder project, three recordings from the Vinderup project, four recordings from the Køge project, four recordings from the Næstved project and two recordings from the Modsjæl project. On the basis of this corpus we developed the coding scheme, starting with a more or less traditional style analysis but creating dimensions and new categories whenever we had the possibility of delimiting in a principled and practicable way a passage which was characteristic of one or the other of the data sets.

2.3 The dual nature of the DCA

We baptized this apparatus the Discourse Context Analysis and placed it firmly at the centre of the project in that it is guiding for the phonetic analysis and has become a project in itself. This is due to the dual nature of the DCA:

On the one hand, the DCA is a handy way of characterizing data sets as a mosaic of Speech events, Interactional structures, Genres and Macro Speech Acts.

1 Siebenhaar 2002 is the only text we have been able to find which explicitly discusses this problem although it must be familiar to any reader of this text as well.
On the other hand, this serves to secure maximally comparable data from data sets which have used partly very different methodologies so that the phoneticians do not come up with results which are an effect of intra-individual differences rather than time. Obviously, the apparatus should ensure optimal comparability if the S1 and S2 data sets do not differ very much.

Thus we have in a way developed a means of responding to both the challenges mentioned above, although we set out to meet only the first one. We do not, however, want to overstate our case. Obviously, the apparatus is in its details tailor made for our specific purposes. What we do want to claim is simply that any real time study will have to create a means of comparing data sets. Whether their solution will be the same as ours is an exciting question. We hope that the DCA solution to one of the challenges by Bayley and Tillery:

As the above examples suggest, the results in sociolinguistic research are sometimes as much a consequence of the methodology used as of the behavior of informants. [...] What makes the situation problematic is that quantitative sociolinguistics has no body of research on methods, no literature (except for the articles cited in this paper) that explores the effects of different interviewers, elicitation strategies, sampling procedures, or analytical strategies. Moreover, the concern with methods that in part motivated the first generation of sociolinguists has not been sustained in more recent research, and many recent studies say little about how the research was done. (Bayley and Tillery 2004, 27f.)

will call forth a lively exchange of ideas.

3. The sociolinguistic interview as a conversational setting

The DCA coding apparatus is developed as an attempt to distinguish different conversational activities from each other; specifically, the apparatus enables us to distinguish between different conversational activities which occur during such interviews, and which indeed are characteristic activities for sociolinguistic interviews as a conversational setting. The main purpose of the DCA coding apparatus is to locate comparable stretches of talk in order to perform, for instance, phonetic or syntactic analyses of variables. However, we shall argue that the apparatus also provides a tool which enables us to describe the conversational characteristics of sociolinguistic interviews, or, in the words of Erving Goffman, the interaction order of sociolinguistic interviews (Goffman 1983). The DCA coding apparatus furthermore thus enables us to illuminate developments over time in how participants interact with each other during sociolinguistic interviews in the LANCHART corpus. Such developments are of general interest for two reasons. Firstly, sociolinguistic interviews are widely used in sociolinguistic studies; arguably, the interview is the single most important method for collecting sociolinguistic data (see e.g. Briggs 1986, Labov 1972, 1984, Feagin 2002, Johnstone 2006, Wilson 1987). So a better understanding of this particular setting and its developments may serve to contextualise sociolinguistic findings.
Secondly, developments in sociolinguistic interviews may reflect changes in interactional behaviour over time in the society at large. Studies in changes in interactional behaviour over time are rare, not least because appropriate data are hard to come by, but, for instance, a study in how American presidents have been asked questions during presidential news conferences from the 1950’es to the present day shows a remarkably clear development from polite and restrained questions to overtly confrontational ones (Clayman and Heritage 2002a, Clayman et al. 2006, Clayman et al. 2007). Such a development presumably reflects a larger ideological societal change concerning loss of authority. Developments in sociolinguistic interviews may reflect and thus illuminate similar or different ideological changes.

What are the conversational characteristics of sociolinguistic interviews? In some important ways sociolinguistic interviews can be compared to news interviews; by and large, a news interview is a practice where participants ask and answer questions respectively (Clayman and Heritage 2002b, Schegloff 1992). As we shall see in this paper, the same cannot be said of all sociolinguistic interviews, but still a very large part of most sociolinguistic interviews consist of sequences of questions and answers. Schiffrin (1994, 160 ff.) distinguishes between three types of questions produced during sociolinguistic interviews: information-seeking questions, information-checking questions and clarification-questions. Schiffrin finds that the use of these question types vary according to the participants’ interests and roles in the interaction and asymmetries regarding the participants’ knowledge; overwhelmingly, questions primarily from the interviewers seek information, whereas questions from both the interviewers to the informants and the informants’ questions to the interviewers check the information being provided and request clarification (ibid., 180). Schiffrin speaks of sociolinguistic interviews as being “‘mixed’ or ‘hybrid’ speech events” in the sense that they in many ways bear resemblance with other, and less formal, forms of conversation (ibid., 163). Most people who have worked with sociolinguistic interviews are presumable likely to agree upon this characterization, but, in fact, the DCA-coding apparatus enables us to test such assumptions against our data. One should not underestimate the institutional features of sociolinguistic interviews, that is, the participants’ goal-orientation (Drew and Heritage 1992). Questions produced during sociolinguistic interviews largely establish a turn-taking environment in which the informant predominantly is forced to take the floor, and the participants thereby cooperate in the achievement of the most important institutional goal of sociolinguistic interviews.

The large amount of conversational work being done in order to achieve the goal of getting the informants to talk, has given rise to criticism from different quarters. Such criticism stands out from the prevalent acceptance of the sociolinguistic interview as an unproblematic or adequate method for the gathering of linguistic data, or, perhaps more common, it stands out from the tendency to barely reflect upon such matters at all; the criticism, however, is substantial. From a sociolinguistic perspective, Labov has pointed to the sociolinguistic interview as...
the prime example of the so-called observer’s paradox; that is, gathering data through interviews interfere with the very same data:

Interview speech is formal speech – not by any absolute measure, but by the comparison with the vernacular of everyday life [...] the investigator may wonder if the responses in a tape-recorded interview are not a special product of the interaction between the interviewer and the subject. (Labov 1972, 43)

Labov assumes a somewhat critical, or at least reflexive, position towards the methodologies he himself more than anyone helped to develop. In some of his other studies, the attempted solution to the observer’s paradox was to rely upon stretches of talk where the informants were likely to pay less attention to their speech, for instance in narratives about near death experiences (Labov 1984). In the publication quoted above, Labov’s answer to the problem was to supplement the investigation with other methods for gathering data. In the Danish milieu, supplementing recordings of sociolinguistic interviews with self-recordings and recordings of in-group conversations have become increasingly popular (Quist 2005, Maegaard 2001, 2007, Møller and Jørgensen this volume, Møller forthc., Madsen to appear).

From a conversation analytic perspective, Emanuel Schegloff has objected that sociolinguistic interviews produce unnatural data (Schegloff 1997). His argument concerns the issue of narratives. In everyday situations, stories are told for a number of practical reasons. In sociolinguistic interviews, however, interviewers tend to make “the elicitation question itself the invariant occasion for telling the story” (ibid., 99–100). This has, according to Schegloff, a large impact on the way the stories are told. It should be stressed here at the outset that the LANCHART field workers never used standard elicitation questions such as the ‘danger of death question’ in order to elicit narratives and yet they succeeded in recording a substantial amount of narratives.

The issue of authenticity easily leads to radical positions; either the interviews are considered to be highly problematic bordering on useless (Wolfson 1976), or their distinctive features are hardly questioned at all. In our view, a dichotomy between assumable inauthentic interviews and authentic everyday speech somewhat oversimplifies the matter; in the words of Charles L. Briggs interviews are, on the one hand, “complex and multifaceted speech events”, and every-day speech used in informal situations is, on the other hand, “much more formally and functionally complex and varied than Labov’s definition would suggest” (Briggs 1986, 18). In the remainder of this paper we shall see some of the ways in which sociolinguistic interviews manifest themselves as complex and multifaceted speech events; a more detailed presentation of the components in the DCA coding apparatus will illustrate some of the central characteristics of sociolinguistic interviews as conversational settings. Furthermore, we shall see some of the changes, in respect to interactional patterns, the interviews in the LANCHART corpus have undergone from the 1980’es till the 2000’es. Such developments in the interactional patterns of sociolinguistic interviews are, as we shall see, analyzable with the use of the DCA coding apparatus.
4. The DCA coding apparatus

The apparatus presented below consists of a total of six components:

- type of Speech event (S)
- Activity type (A)
- type of Interaction structure (I)
- type of Macro speech act (M)
- type of speech Genre (G)
- Enunciation (U for da. “udsigelse”)

The components and subcategories are all data derived, that is, based upon close analyses of what actually goes on during the LANCHART interviews. Each of the six components represents central elements of sociolinguistic interviews. The Speech event type concerns the overall nature of the interaction in respect to the participants: the number of participants and the participants’ degree of acquaintance. The Activity type component revolves around the different phases which typically constitute the sociolinguistic interview, at least the interviews in the LANCHART corpus. The type of Interaction structure concerns the way the conversations unfold turn taking wise: do the interviewers ask questions which the informants answer? Or do the participants depart from this very common interview pattern and, if so, in what ways? The Macro speech act component concerns the nature of the actions being carried out during the interviews; for instance, are the informants at a given moment occupied with providing information which illuminates some state-of-affairs? Or are they, rather, occupied with assessing some state-of-affairs? Macro speech acts, then, largely deal with issues regarding what the participants are conveying in the interaction. The speech Genre type component, in contrast, concerns how participants convey what they do or, rather, which genre resources they draw upon in doing it: narratives, various forms of accounts, political ‘soap boxes’ etc. The final component, Enunciation, covers various ways of representing other voices than the speaker’s own: quotations, imitations, reading aloud and illustrating sounds; mainly so that such utterances can be recognized in or even excluded from the phonetic and grammatical analyses.

It would be naïve to suppose that it is possible to develop a coding practice which is able to categorize, let alone capture, every salient conversational move in sociolinguistic interviews. However, in our view the DCA provides a method for locating comparable stretches of talk, and, on the other hand, allowing substantial descriptions of the internal interactional workings of sociolinguistic interviews.

We distinguish between the more general components in the apparatus (S, A and M), these are so called full codes meaning that every stretch of talk is coded, and the less general and finer tuned components (I, G and U), so called partial codes in the sense that only certain particularly relevant stretches of talk are coded. Each component will be described in detail in the following.
4.1 Types of Speech events and Activity types

Speech event type (S) and Activity type (A) are both full codes. The Speech event type specifies the number of participants and their familiarity with one another. Five different subcodes are used. First we state the abbreviations; they are followed by the codes’ characteristics in Danish in parentheses; finally we state the characteristics in English:

- Siek (interview, enkelt, kendt): Single person interview with informant known to interviewer
- Sieu (interview, enkelt, ubekendt): Single person interview with informant unknown to interviewer
- Sifk (interview, flere, kendt): Group interview with informants known to interviewer
- Sifu (interview, flere, ubekendt): Group interview with informants unknown to interviewer
- Sgfk (gruppesamtale, flere, kendt): Group conversation with no interviewer present

Many of the LANCHART interviews were recorded through network sampling, that is, informants were found through friends of friends (Milroy 1987); a benefit from this method may be that the interviewer has greater chances of talking intimately with the informants. However, in the overwhelming number of cases the interviewers did not know the informants in the least in advance\(^2\). The various codes listed above provide information about whether an interview falls in one category or the other and, in addition, if the recording is indeed to be regarded as a single interview, a group interview or a group conversation; such fundamental differences in the characteristics of the speech event may be supposed to carry great weight in regard to how the interaction develops.

Sociolinguistic interviews typically progress in more or less regular ways and may, therefore, by divided into different phases. The same can be said of other forms of goal oriented institutional interaction, for instance acute primary care visits (see Heritage & Maynard 2006, 14). We prefer the term ‘activity types’ (inspired by Levinson 1992) over ‘phases’ since all the elements do not necessarily occur during each of the recordings in the LANCHART corpus. We distinguish between the following Activity types:

- Abi (baggrundsinterview): Interview about the informant’s background
- Asa (samtale): Conversation
- Asi (samtale med ikke-deltager): Conversation with a non-participant present or not-present (e.g. calling on the phone)

\(^2\) It should be noted that all field workers when doing an interview with an informant who had been recorded before, listened to the old interview before embarking on the new one. The interviewers in this sense were acquainted with the interviewees but not the other way around.
Ael (eliciteret tale): Elicitation of speech
Asp (sprogholdningsundersøgelse): Language attitude study
Ati (tilsagnserklæring): Informant’s signing a declaration of permission to use the material for research purposes dependent on confidentiality

Practically all our new interviews begin with a series of questions about the informant’s background; apart from ‘getting the conversation started’ this way of opening provides useful information about the informants. The interviews thereafter develops into conversations, more or less managed by the interviewers through their questioning, and frequently interrupted by brief interchanges with family members or other persons who are not officially part of the interview. Two rather special Activity types frequently occur at some point close to the end of the interviews in the LANCHART corpus: an elicitation of speech and a language attitude study section. The former is an Activity type during which the interviewer asks the informant to repeat an utterance or read a sentence aloud. The latter is an Activity type during which the interviewer plays some tape recorded samples to the informants and asks them about their attitudes towards what they hear (see e.g. Kristiansen 2004, 2007). Finally, all interviews end with the informant’s signing of a declaration of permission to use the material for research purposes. If not, the interview is discarded.

4.2 Interaction structure

We also categorize Interaction structures. Our categories are derived from close analyses of how the interaction actually progresses, but they are also informed by studies of the systematics of turn taking in conversational and interview settings (Clayman and Heritage 2002b, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974) and studies of the dynamics of initiatives and responses in various kinds of interactional settings (Linell 1990, Linell and Gustavsson 1987, Sinclair and Coulthard 1975). We operate with five different categories:

- I4: departure from the regular question-answer format and the interviewer’s more or less pronounced and obvious monopoly on strong initiatives
- I5: informant initiative with response by interviewer
- I6: fight for the floor
- I7: informant initiative with response by other informant
- I8: monologue

Each subcategory is operationalized according to guidelines as to how long a stretch of talk has to be in order to be given the code of the particular interaction structure. Such guidelines do of course seem arbitrary, and to some extent they are, but they are nonetheless important devices: firstly, because they provide a

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3 We originally operated with a total of nine categories. However, four were sorted out due to difficulties in operationalization. This is the reason why the abbreviations begin with I4 instead of I1.
practical aid in determining which cases to consider. Secondly, because they prevent us from ending up with too many short passages unfit for further analyses of variables. Thirdly, because relatively lengthy passages or trajectories, we assume, are more likely to represent instances where participants enter a certain mode of speaking and interacting than short passages. Guidelines are presented in the discussion of the different categories in the following.

Overwhelmingly, the most common way of interacting in sociolinguistic interviews is by means of the question-answer format, that is, interviewers ask questions and the informants answer them. Such an interaction structure might be called the default pattern, and it is not a part of the DCA coding apparatus. Questions, in the most general sense, tend to set agendas (see e.g. Boyd and Heritage 2006, 155 ff., Clayman and Heritage 2002b, 191 ff., Raymond 2003, 2006). A condition and an effect of the described pattern is, thus, that the interviewer is the participant who provides the strong initiatives of the interaction. We do, however, find important departures from the question-answer format, the most frequent one being I4 where the participants engage in a more conversation-like manner of interacting. If the participants in an interview depart from the question-answer format (and likewise avoid other ways of realizing strong initiatives) through more than six turns of talk following each other, the stretch of talk is given the code I4.

I5 represents another departure from the default pattern of interviews; the informant asks the questions and the interviewer produces the answers. One might say: in the case of I5, the participants’ roles are reversed, if only for a moment. We code a stretch of talk as I5 if the informant asks the interviewer three, or more than three, questions in a row and the interviewer answers these questions; an instance of I5, thus, contains a minimum of three adjacency pairs (Schegloff 2007).

I7 is found in group interviews and group conversations. The category will be presented here before I6 because it resembles I5 in the sense that the coded trajectory begins with a strong initiative from an informant, typically in an interrogative format. However, the difference is that this strong initiative prompts not a ‘reversed interview’, but a discussion among other participants in the following six turns of talk or more. Characteristically, the interviewer seizes the chance to be a passive participant for a while. I7 is, thus, a category for the temporary bracketing of the interviewer so that he or she is no longer placed as an active participant but, rather, as an overhearer in the participation framework (Goffman 1974, 1981).

In conversation, and in particular in conversations where more than two people participate, interlocutors commonly and on a local basis negotiate who gets to speak next (see e.g. Jefferson 1983, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974, Schegloff 2000). In interview settings negotiations over speakership are quite rare since the allocation of turns to a large degree is given in advance.

4 Earlier in our process, we coded this default pattern as I1-I3, but as already discussed, we sorted these three codes out. The default is thus not coded.
Consequently, most instances of such fights for the floor in the LANCHART corpus are found in group conversations. We code a stretch of talk as I6 if two or more participants (the interviewer included) for three turns of talk or more are engaged in a fight for the floor.

The final element in the interaction structure component, I8, covers informants’ monologues, that is, passages of talk where informants hold the floor throughout a longer period of time, where other participants – in spite of turn transitional relevancies – withhold other sorts of verbalized participation than the production of clarifying questions or listener tokens such as, for instance, continuers (Gardner 2001, Schegloff 1982). In monologues, as we define the code, it is crucial that the informants themselves treat other participants’ contributions as merely clarifying questions or listener tokens; if the informants treat other participants’ contributions as reasons for changing the topic or altering the talk, we do not code the contribution as I8.

4.3 Macro speech acts

The DCA coding apparatus also includes Macro speech acts and speech Genres. In this section we shall discuss the former. Macro speech acts is a full code. It is derived from the initial observation that participants in the recordings of the LANCHART corpus engage in various sorts of ‘exchanges’ throughout the talk-in-interaction. Among such exchanges we have found five to be particularly salient. These five different sorts of exchanges make up the Macro speech act codings:

- Mvi (vidensudveksling): Exchange of knowledge
- Mho (holdningsudveksling): Exchange of attitudes
- Mfø (følelsesudveksling): Exchange of emotions
- Mha (handlingsbundet tale): Exchange of information regarding physical action accompanying the talk and of information regarding the physical setting
- Mfi (fiktiv og konstrueret tale): Exchange of fiction

The coding for Macro speech acts is intended to catch the essence of what the transactions between the participants are about, that is, the overall pragmatic use of language at any given moment in the interaction. Such a task is, of course, not easy. If the categories are too specific, they are likely to lack the flexibility which is needed in order to range over a wide spectrum of language usage in different interactional environments. If, on the other hand, the categories are too crude, they are not very likely to shed light on any matters of particular interest. The list of categories above represents our balance between these two poles.

By far, the most commonly occurring Macro speech act in the LANCHART corpus is the first one, namely exchange of knowledge; undoubtedly, the interview setting and the fact that interviewers and informants in most cases do not know each other in advance, or merely share common acquaintances, are among the important reasons for its high frequency of usage. The sociolinguistic
interview may, thus, be compared with other situations in which people get acquainted through means of conversation (see e.g. Svennevig 1999); the interviews are filled with trajectories in which informants explain about their upbringing, their education, their family and relatives, their workplace(s), their leisure activities and so on and so forth. One should, however, neither be misled to the false assumption that all exchange of knowledge concerns the informants’ personal background, nor jump to the conclusion that the informants are the only relevant actors in exchanges of knowledge. Very often, the informants and the interviewers discuss states-of-affairs which have nothing or very little to do with the informants’ personal background; the participants may seek to reach an agreement on the name of the first man on the moon, just to give one example. When such information is exchanged, or a common understanding is sought, among the participants in a relatively neutral manner, that is, when the participants withhold verbalized displays of stances (Goodwin 2007, Goodwin & Goodwin 2000, Stivers 2008), we code the piece of interaction as an exchange of knowledge.

If, on the other hand, the participants do put an effort into displaying their stance towards some state-of-affairs we consider the two following categories as possibilities, namely exchange of attitudes and exchange of emotions. Thus, the three categories, exchange of knowledge, exchange of attitudes and exchange of emotions, supplement each other and should be viewed as such. A common way in which participants in conversation may depart from factuality and neutrality is by assessing states-of-affairs and, thereby, displaying the actors’ attitudes (see also Beck Nielsen, Fogtmann & Juel Jensen, this volume). In our data material, we frequently find that participants not only neutrally and factually talk about, for instance, the informants’ childhood or politics, but also evaluate them; in such cases we code the stretch of talk as an exchange of attitude.

There is, of course, a delicate balance to be struck between exchanges of attitudes and exchanges of emotions. However, what we define as ‘emotions’ in the DCA-coding apparatus do seem to be treated somewhat differently from ‘attitudes’ by the participants themselves; display of emotions, that is, expressions of personal sentiments and thoughts regarding personal matters are treated more delicately. In our data material, exchanges of emotions do not occur as frequently as exchanges of attitudes, let alone as exchanges of knowledge. Nevertheless, the participants do sometimes address very personal matters, for instance, regarding the loss of loved ones, experiencing parenthood for the first time or various sorts of crises etc, and when such matters are treated delicately as belonging to the intimacy of inner feelings, we code the talk as an exchange of emotions. Other studies have argued that the most common response to an assessment, that is, a display of attitude, is to show agreement in the following turn of talk (see e.g. Pomerantz 1984, Potter 1998). Our hypothesis, yet to be tested, is that a common response to a display of emotions in the sociolinguistic interview is to show signs of caring, for instance, in displays of sympathy or empathy (see Pudlinski 2005).
The fourth category covers two salient ways of orienting to the physical setting of the current speech event, and to movement and placement in that setting. Orientations towards the setting of a speech event are central elements in the establishment of common understanding in interaction (see e.g. Fillmore 1997, Goodwin 1996, 2003, Schegloff 1972). The first of the category’s two ways of orienting to the physical setting of the current task, concerns the overt voicing of physical actions accompanying or interrupting the activities of the interaction, that is, comments such as ‘may I use the bathroom?’, ‘I’ll just pop down to the drug store’ or ‘would you care for some more coffee?’. The second way concerns observations being made about elements in the physical space of the setting, or requests for information regarding such elements, that is, comments and questions such as ‘wow, that’s a big fly!’ or ‘is it home made?’ (if e.g. a cake is being served).

The final category concerns the exchange of various forms of ‘fictions’. Everyday conversation is rich in various sorts of more or less palpable fictional contributions such as, for instance, carefully coordinated telling of jokes (Sacks 1992a, 95 ff.), language play (Crystal 1998) and other ways to convey, in Goffmanian terms, keyed issues (Goffman 1974, 40 ff.). Jokes, cock-and-bull stories, quotations from fictional universes and sentences read aloud by the informants are given the code Mfi, i.e. exchange of fiction.

4.4 Speech Genres

Whereas Macro speech acts are intended to catch the essence of what the transactions between the participants are about, the next component in the DCA-coding apparatus is intended to catch some of the most salient means by which the transactions are carried out; borrowing a Bakhtinian term, we code for the use of relatively stable types of speech Genres (Bakhtin 1986). The component covers eight subcategories:

- Gna: narratives
- Gsr (specifik redegørelse): Specific accounts
- Ggr (generel redegørelse): General accounts
- Gsb: Soap box
- Gsl (sladder): Gossip
- Gbe (betroelse): Confidences
- Gre: Reflections
- Gvi (vittighed): Jokes

For two important reasons the component speech Genres is a partial code. Firstly, it is not possible to make exhaustive categorizations of the total amount of speech genres in usage simply because the “wealth and diversity of speech genres are boundless because the various possibilities of human activity are inexhaustible” (Bakhtin 1986, 60). Secondly, the component’s subcategories are related to given Macro speech acts; for instance, specific and general accounts are typically used to exchange knowledge and the use of soap box is
often used to exchange attitudes. Instances where the Macro speech acts and the partially coded speech Genres correlate but are not identical, are therefore, potentially, of particular interest for the analyst since their defining features may illuminate one another.

Of the eight subcategories, the first three are the most common and of greatest importance to our analyses. Arguably, narratives are the best described speech genre in the study of interaction; our coding is, thus, informed by well defined narrative features such as, for instance, temporal organization, temporal clauses, reportability and the typical orientation towards trouble (see e.g. Eggins & Slade 1997, Labov 1972, Labov & Waletzky 1967, Møller 1993, Ochs 1997, Ochs, Taylor, Rudolph & Smith 1992, Ochs & Capp 2001).

The two following types of accounts should not be confused with the conversation analytic use of the term ‘account’ which refers to explanations of what social actors are doing at a given moment “in terms of reasons, motives or causes” (Heritage 1988, 128). Specific and general accounts may rather be characterised as “narrative explanations of events that are external to the conversation in which the account occurs” (ibid., 132, our emphasis). Thus, our usage of the term ‘accounts’ is meant to cover “explanations to construct versions of events” (Antaki 1994, 6). Specific and general accounts are used, predominantly by the informants in our corpus, to provide information about events, occurrences and states-of-affairs. Specific accounts are furthermore used to provide explanations of concrete courses of events, localizable to a specific time and place. General accounts, on the other hand, are used to provide explanations of recurrent events, routines, general processes or practices etc. Both types of accounts are related to narratives but lack defining narrative features such as, for instance, temporal clauses and reportable content. Specific accounts are related to the speech Genre described as ‘recounts’ (Eggins & Slade 1997, 259 ff.). But unlike recounts, specific accounts do not necessarily refer to past events. In sociolinguistic interviews, both types of accounts are extremely common, and we suspect that general accounts may be very common as well in, for instance, didactic settings, viz. explaining the general workings of the world.

The last four elements in the speech Genre component are rarer and play a less important role in our analyses and they will be dealt with only briefly here. When picturing the category ‘soap box’ one should imagine a person addressing the public from a soap box in Hyde Park’s speaker’s corner. Labov finds soap box to be a particular type of style:

The soapbox style is characterised as an extended expression of generalised opinion, not spoken directly to the interviewer, but enunciated as if for a more general audience. (Labov 2001, 91)

In the DCA-coding apparatus, soap box is defined as a speech genre which covers political expressions rhetorically presented in the argumentative mode.

The speech Genre gossip, borrowing the words of Harvey Sacks, covers events when “rude” information is “reported to another by one who has collected
it directly himself, or heard it on good authority” (Sacks 1992, 639). Such ‘rude information’ about a third party usually means that a person in a negative way is “cast into a category with associated characteristics or features” (Antaki & Widdicombe 1998, 3, emphasis in original). We were not aware of Kerstin Nordenstam’s course book on the subject (Nordenstam 1998) when we introduced the category, but our conception of gossip tallies well with Nordenstam’s.

The speech Genre confidences is coded in the relatively few instances where participants, usually the informants, explicitly treat some delicate information they are about to provide as confidential.

The category reflection covers the expression of existential thoughts regarding big issues in life such as birth, life, love and death etc.

The category ‘jokes’ includes short humorous stories; they are more or less implied, but usually to some extent “depend upon a community of knowledge and interpretation” (Oring 1987, 278).

### 4.5 *Enunciation (U)*

Talk-in-interaction, and language usage in the most general understanding, is essentially filled with so called *double-voiced discourse* (Bakhtin 1984, 199); participants constantly speak with other voices than their own (see also Goffman 1981, Volosinov 1973, Wertsch 1991). In an attempt, so to speak, to sort some of those other voices out in order to conduct analyses of informants’ language, the code enunciation is given to explicit instances of quotations, imitations, mention of words, illustrative sounds and, finally, reading aloud.

### 5. *Using the apparatus: The distribution of DCA categories in three data sets*

In the following, we shall look at the distribution of DCA categories in LANCHART interviews. The interviews being analysed are the core groups including 24 informants recorded twice from Copenhagen, Næstved and Odder, a total of 104 files. The categories S(peech events) and A(ctivity types) will not be discussed. The main reason for excluding the S category is that it varies very little across the 104 interviews, 90 of which are single person interviews, 14 of which are double interviews. The S categories are better suited for comparing more diverse data sets. The A categories, on the other hand, are excluded because they vary in largely predictable ways across each interview (see the description of Activity types, section 4.1 above). Neither will Enunciation be analysed further, we will just mention here that about 2.3% of the talk of the interviews fall under this category.

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5 The number of files is not exactly 144 (2 recordings of 24 informants in 3 places = 144). Firstly because not all informants were recorded twice, and secondly because a small number of the informants were interviewed two together (so-called double interviews), and two informants thus count as one file only.
As a first description of the remaining DCA categories, we will look at the number of “passages” given each code in the interviews. Later we will look at the number of “intervals” given each code. The difference is that in the first case we get an overview of how many categories are represented; in the second case we get in addition an indication of the category weights in “intervals”. “Passages” and “intervals” are our units of measurement.

Looking at Figures 1–3, it is apparent that the codes are quite unevenly distributed. For the I(nteraction structure) categories in fig. 1, I4 (departure from regular question-answer format) and I8 (monologue) are relatively frequent, whereas I5 (“the reverse interview”) occurs infrequently and I6 (fight for the floor) and I7 (informant initiative with response by other informant) practically never occur in these interviews which are largely single person interviews.

Of course the bulk of the interviews is expected to be comprised of regular question-answer passages, I1–I3. However, only departure from this format is coded, so we cannot say anything about the overall frequency of I4–I8 from this analysis. We can and we will do so when we turn to the distribution of “intervals” below.

For the interpretation of the M(acro speech acts) categories in Figure 2, please remember that this is a full code. Mvi (exchange of knowledge) and Mha (speech regarding actions and physical surroundings) comprise the great majority of the passages. This overshadows that Mha passages are typically short intermezzi whereas Mvi passages typically cover longer stretches, that will become clear from the distribution in terms of “intervals”. Mfi (fiction including read-aloud

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6 “Intervals” are first and foremost words, however transcribed pauses, hesitation markers, false starts etc. are also counted as intervals. It is not likely that the proportion of non-words is linked to the DCA codes, so for all practical purposes the distribution of intervals must be equal to the distribution of words.
sentences) and Mho (attitudes) occur infrequently. Mfø (talk about emotions) is very rare.

Finally, as to Figure 3 showing the G(enre) categories, a partial code, we note that the majority of the passages are either Ggr (general account), Gsr (specific account) or Gna (narratives) respectively with some passages of Gsl (gossiping), Gre (reflections) and Gsb (soap box’ing). Gbe (confidences) are virtually non-existent and Gvi (jokes) occur only twice in all of the 104 interviews.

Next we turn to the distribution of DCA codes in “intervals”. Looking at the intervals under I(nteraction structure) in Figure 4, we note that it confirms the picture previously found but expands it by giving a measure of the relative occurrence of the “deviant” interaction structures. The category is treated as if it was a full coding, because it originally was fully coded. The “residual”, which is roughly synonymous with the default, non-deviant question-answer sequences (sequences that were originally coded as I1–I3 but are no longer coded), comprises almost half of the interviews. Together with I4 and I8 they comprise some 98.3% of the interviews, I5, I6 and I7 comprising only 1.3, 0.1 and 0.2% respectively. Overwhelmingly, what goes on is that the interviewer poses the questions and the informants answer, sometimes exceeding the normal length of what an answer may be like since they are given the (unique?) chance of talking at length on subjects which interest them to a faithfully interested listener, playing the role of the ‘intimate stranger’ (Albris 1991).

What is most remarkable about Figure 5 similarly depicting the Macro speech act results, is the immense predominance of Mvi (exchange of knowledge). Almost 90% of the mass of the interviews belong here, while Mha (speech accompanying action) which has an equal number of passages, only

Figure 2. Macro speech act categories in 104 recordings. Means across recordings. Vertical axis refers to the N of passages.
Figure 3. G(enre) categories in 104 recordings. Means across recordings. Vertical axis refers to the N of passages.
comprises 3.7% of the intervals, the same as Mho (exchange of attitudes). Apparently, the Mha episodes are much, much shorter than the Mvi passages. Since M is a full code, the small “other” category includes intervals which are given other codes than the five mentioned, most often double codes. Only about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the intervals are coded for one of the eight G(ene) categories as is evident from the large “residual” category in Figure 6. Of the Genres coded for, Gna (narrative), Gsr (specific account) and Ggr (general account) are the weighty categories. Gsb (soap box) and Gre (reflexions) are only at 1.7 and 1.8% respectively, Gsl is at 0.9%, Gbe (confidences) and Gvi (joke) are so low as to disappear in the overall comparison. Apparently, the sociolinguistic interview is barren ground for jokes. As for gossip, this most often presupposes more common acquaintances than the informant and the interviewer muster, and one should not be blind to the intrusive effect of audio recording on the interaction.

5.1 Characterising the different data sets

In the following we shall look at the distribution of the DCA categories in the 6 different data sets presented above. This is where we will see how very useful the approach can be. To keep the overall uniformity of the project and the volume, we shall use the LANCHART project names, i.e. Copenhagen S1 and S2 are “Bysoc1Gl” and “Bysoc1Ny” respectively. The S1’s and S2’s from Næstved and Odder are similarly referred to as “Næstved/Odder1Gl” and “Næstved/Odder1Ny”.

Most striking, perhaps, in Figures 7–9 is the general uniformity across the data sets. We never find a code which is prominent in one data set and rare in the others or vice versa. Most deviant, compared to the overall picture, is the Odder S1, Odder1Gl, the interviews we impressionistically rated as considerably more formal than the other interviews. In terms of DCA codes, the “formality” of the Odder S1 interviews comes out firstly as a very low proportion of I4 (departure from regular Q–A format) (54.3% below the average, the other data sets are within $\pm 27\%$) and no I5 (informant initiative, response by interviewer) at all. All the other data sets have at least some I5.

As discussed above, the Odder S1 interviews are the only LANCHART interviews to feature two interviewers. This may be relevant for the complete absence of I5. Secondly, “formality” comes out as a remarkably high proportion of Gsr (45% above the average, the others are within $\pm 27\%$ of the average) coupled with a low proportion of Gna (33.7% below the average, the Copenhagen S2, Bysoc1Ny, is 26.2% above the average, the rest are between $\pm 17\%$) and Gre (87% below the average, the Odder S2 data set is 53.7% above average, the rest are between $\pm 15\%$). The Odder S1 is however not very remarkable with

7 The coders are given the choice to double code a passage, i.e. if they judge that a passage falls between two codes or that two codes apply equally, they can code for that. A passage may for instance be coded Mvi Mha (exchange of knowledge and exchange of attitudes). The double codes, however, are relatively rare.
respect to the M categories. The Mho category is very low (55.8% below average), but the Næstved S1 is equally deviant (52.6% above average) and to a lesser extent the Copenhagen S2 (42.9% above average). All differences are highly statistically significant; in fact due to the very large numbers involved, almost all detectable differences are statistically significant when using the $\chi^2$ test.

All of the findings above can be taken as support for the fruitfulness of the DCA analysis. If the relatively similar data sets did not show uniformity, we
would worry that the DCA codes (or coders) showed too high levels of idiosyncrasy. If, on the other hand, we did not find differences between the Odder S1 data set and the rest, we would be certain that the apparatus was not sensitive enough. Finally, the fact that the Odder S1 data set comes out as very different with respect to the G codes but not with respect to the M codes, lends support to the claim that G(enre) and Macro speech acts) really are separate analytical entities.
5.2 Interrelations between the most important DCA categories

Above we found that the numerically predominant codes were I4 (departure from regular Q–A format) and I8 (monologue), Mvi (exchange of knowledge), Mha (speech accompanying action) and Mho (exchange of attitudes) and Gna (narrative), Gsr (specific account) and Ggr (general account). In constructing the DCA analysis, we assumed that M categories and G categories were exploring...
Figure 7. Distribution of I categories across data sets.
different dimensions of the interaction. However, we also hypothesized that they might be related in intricate ways. That is, it is interesting now to investigate whether, say, narratives are used to exchange emotions more than knowledge. In the following, we will limit the discussion to looking at interrelations between the most dominant M and G categories including also the relatively rare Gsb (soap box’ing) because it could be assumed to be overlapping with Mho (exchange of attitudes). We will exclude Mha for the simple reason that Mha passages are largely short intermezzi of handing out food or passing coffee, passages which cannot fruitfully and validly be ascribed to any Genre at all or make up their own. For the time being, we shall only investigate two-way interrelations between M and G categories and not introduce I and U categories as the third and fourth dimension (but cf. Gregersen et al. in prep.).

*Ms within Gs*

At first glance the distribution of Ms within Gs in Figure 10 looks very uniform. Mvi (exchange of knowledge), which was also overwhelmingly present in the overall picture, comprises between 97 and 99% of the intervals coded as Gna (narrative), Gsr (specific account) and Ggr (general account). When looking at Gsb (soap box), however, the picture changes; 55.4% of the intervals coded as soap box are used to exchange attitudes; only 43.9% are used to exchange information.
There is thus an interrelation between Gsb and Mho, but they do not stand in a one-to-one relationship with each other. We might use the expression that the categories manifest a clear affinity for each other without being in any way automatically connected.

Gs within Ms

Also the distribution of G within M in Figure 11 shows interesting results. Please note that only intervals which have received a G code at all show up in the figure. The 15–20% “other” are thus mainly double codes, not passages with no G code. 79.6% of Mvi (exchange of knowledge) is done through one of the three genres, Gna, Gsr or Ggr. This is in contrast to Mho (exchange of attitudes) where only 12.5% is done through one of these genres. On the other hand, a significant amount of the exchange of attitudes (59.7%) is done through Gsb (soap box’ing), whereas Gsb only comprises 2.7% of Mvi. This seems highly significant and lends credence to two central ideas of the DCA analysis. On the one hand that of having both of the dimensions M and G in the DCA, on the other that of distinguishing between precisely these two M categories.

5.3 DCA as a measure of change in real time

Narrowing our investigation to looking only at the selected eight categories, we will now take a first look at changes in DCA categories over time. We hope to
see whether the DCA categories as well as functioning as a characterisation of different interviews, may also inform the overarching LANCHART project of documenting language change, including changes in pragmatics – here
delimited to changes in patterns of social interaction of the sociolinguistic interview.

Overall, the picture is one of stability. However, all the small changes are in a direction which is consistent with a hypothesis of general “democratization” and “intimization” (Fairclough 1992, 201, Beck Nielsen, Fogtmann & Juel Jensen this volume) of the sociolinguistic interview – if not as well in society at large. Furthermore, all changes are highly statistically significant when tested with the $\chi^2$ test. Least statistically significant is the change in Gna (narrative) ($p = 0.01$), the rest are significant to below 1/1000 of a percent.

The two predominant deviations from the standard question–answer format of the interview, I4 (departure from the ordinary Q–A format) and I8 (monologue), have both increased (while the residual category, largely the default question–answer sequences, has decreased from 47.2% to 43.9%). This could indicate that interviewers and informants do not adhere so strictly to their predetermined institutional roles, but rather conduct a conversation as ordinary interlocutors. Again, hypothetically, this tendency could bear on a more general trend of de-hierarchization in society.

The Mvi category (exchange of knowledge) has decreased, while Mho (exchange of attitudes) is all but stable (increasing from 3.6 to 3.7%). The decrease of the more distanced exchange of knowledge, but not of the more personal exchange of attitude could be taken to imply that more involved and involving topics are being discussed in conversations between relative strangers than was previously the case.
Finally, Gna (narrative) has increased while Gsr (specific account) and Ggr (general account) have both decreased, Ggr more than Gsr (3.1 points as opposed to 1.6 points). Gna in the sociolinguistic literature is regarded the prototypical category which increases the personal involvement and reduces formality (Labov 1984). Ggr, on the other hand, could be taken to be the least involved of the three related “accounts”-categories. An increase in Gna coupled with a decrease in Gsr, and even more so a decrease in Ggr, would go hand-in-hand with the tendency of relatively more involvement between strangers now compared to 20 or 30 years ago.

Admittedly, the neat picture dissolves somewhat when we look at changes in time at the three different localities separately (Gregersen et al. in prep.). We do not consider the hypothesis of democratization and intimization confirmed by the changes in DCA’s – the changes are small and can be caused by a variety of other phenomena. Let us just conclude that the hypothesis is not rejected by the changes found in the DCA category distribution either.

There is one obvious result though which has implications for field work in a post-modern community, and that is that apparently, we cannot take for granted that the interview situation is defined by a hierarchical difference between the university representative and the lay man. The implication is that the reason that this is an asymmetrical situation is not that the layman is in awe of the university but rather that the relationship at least in the beginning is that of a stranger being a guest in the informant’s home. The situation is ripe with possibilities of developing into a conversation between intimate strangers but there is of course no failsafe method of making this happen.

6. Conclusion

We have demonstrated first that any study of real time change has to face up to the challenge of making data sets comparable. We have shown how this can be done using a Discourse Context Analysis apparatus such as the one which has been developed for the LANCHART study but which manifests some general features as well. The detailed presentation of the apparatus hopefully makes it possible to see exactly what we have done in classifying (passages of) sociolinguistic interviews in six dimensions. Finally, we have used the apparatus to describe the interviews from Odder, Næstved and Copenhagen proving that the apparatus adequately distinguishes the Odder S1 interviews from all the rest and finishing by showing how we may corroborate the hypothesis that sociolinguistic interviews are not the same in the S2s as they were in the S1s simply because the place of the interview as a speech event in the general structure of the present society’s speech events has changed.

We have in this paper discussed comparability. It is important to create the possibility for comparisons since comparing an S1 with an S2 is essential to performing real time studies. We are, however, fully aware that history rides quickly in these matters and that in a sense there could be an argument that
history is never possible because the ‘now’ has so quickly become a ‘then’. To
join the band wagon of historical relativism would, however, mean giving up on
history altogether and since we are committed to doing reflexive historical
sociolinguistics we have chosen instead to adopt the stance that there is a
possibility of using a grid so as to make the data sets visible for each other, i.e.
comparable. This is what the DCA is about. The DCA makes it possible for us to
write the history of Danish variation in the period 1978 till 2007.

If, in addition, we have in a small way contributed to operationalizing some of
the many dimensions of the concept of ‘style’, we have also by the same token
made it possible to study the role of the individual more closely. In panel studies
the role of the individual is crucial. Consequently we have to make individual
language use comparable not only diachronically (as in the historical studies) but
also synchronically. This is also what the DCA is about, suggesting six important
dimensions, each subcategorized to fit our data, in which individuals may differ
when they speak to an interviewer or to others.

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