

## Explicitness of requests and complaints in Germany Theoretical considerations and (geo)statistical modeling

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Variational pragmatics (Schneider & Barron 2008) investigates the effect of macro- and micro-social factors on pragmatic behavior within one language. While research within this field has particularly focused on regional variation, contrasting different varieties of multi-standard languages (Auer 2021), intra-lingual variation based on other sociological factors (e.g., age, gender, or interpersonal speaker relations) is equally crucial when investigating pragmatic variation. In contrast to languages such as English or Spanish (for an overview see, e.g., Schneider & Félix-Brasdefer 2022), only a few studies have examined the variational pragmatics of German. These studies mainly compared national varieties, e.g., German German and Austrian German in request realization (Warga 2008). More recently, Leemann et al. (accepted) examined both intra-lingual *and* intra-national variation of pragmatic behavior, analyzing saying goodbye to and thanking bus drivers in German-speaking Switzerland. Likewise, Ackermann (2021) argued that a more fine-grained intra-national perspective could be worthwhile when comparing request strategies in Germany and German-speaking Switzerland.

In my talk, I will present preliminary results from an online study with more than 1,000 participants from Germany that strives to explore the pragmatic variation of explicitness in politeness-sensitive speech acts from an intra-lingual and intra-national perspective. The speech act REQUEST may be expressed explicitly by means of impositives (e.g., imperative forms) or implicitly through (non-)conventionally indirect strategies (e.g., ability questions such as *Can you VP?*). According to Decock and Depraetere (2018), a COMPLAINT situation consists of four constitutive components that may be conveyed implicitly or explicitly each: (A) the complainable, i.e., a past or ongoing action or occurrence, (B) the disapproval or negative evaluation of the complainable, (C) the assumed agentive involvement of the complaine, and (D) a request for repair, i.e., the wish for the offense to be remedied. For both speech acts, the correlation between explicitness and (im)politeness is controversial. Discourse completion tasks were used to elicit six different REQUEST and eight COMPLAINT situations. The data were manually annotated for explicitness (e.g., conventionally indirectness). In addition to the speech act data, rich sociodemographic data is available for each participant (i.e., age, gender, regional origin, mobility, and personality traits). Applying (geo)statistical modeling, these data will be investigated for intra-lingual and intra-national variation regarding explicitness.

### References

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