The graphic realization of /l/-vocalization in Swiss German WhatsApp messages

Basic information
- Project type: SNF, Snergia
- Project leader: Elisabeth Stark (estark@rom.uzh.ch)
- Project duration: 36 months (1/1/2016 – 31/12/2018)
- 617 chats, 76,630 messages, 5,543,692 tokens that can be used for linguistic research
- Multilingual: German, Swiss German, French, Italian, Romansh
- Cf. Ueberwasser and Stark 2017

Influencing factors

Migration

Where do the people who use /l/-vocalization differently than expected in the place where they lived in 5th grade i.e. do not use /l/-vocalization in the area where it is expected or do use /l/-vocalization in an area where it is not expected live today?

Did they move to the other area? Figure (2) shows that this is mostly not the case.

Phonological context

Phonological context per word form

/l/-Vocalization [%]
no voc.
vocalization

Figure 2: Migration of informants using /l/-vocalization between 5th grade and today

Phonological context per token

/l/-Vocalization [%]
no voc.
vocalization

Figure 4: Phonological context within the area with expected /l/-vocalization

Phonological context: multiple options for /l/-vocalization

There are only two word forms in the corpus with the option for more than one /l/-vocalization: Alkohol (’alcohol’) and Profilbild (’avatar’). The individual forms are shown in figures (4) and (7).

The individual wordforms belong to the classes:
- /l/-V: e.g. /l/ follows a vowel and preceding a consonant: VIC (e.g. ”salz, salt, Salz”, ”saud”)
- /l/-V with a preceding vowel or a word boundary: VI (e.g. ”valley”, ”wall”, ”wallen”)
- /l/-V following a consonant with syllabic /l/: C L-syllabic # (e.g. ”bird, Vogel, Vogu”)
- intervocalic and geminated /l/: V L-geminate V (e.g. ”plate, Tellen, Teuer”)
- /l/-V between two vowels: V V (e.g. ”sole, soule, soule”)

Phonological context

The realization forms for the two composita are extremely different. While the tendency for Alkohol is to either use /l/-vocalization or not while avoiding the mixed form, Profilbild is hardly realized without /l/-vocalization but with a strong tendency to realize with both possible /l/-vocalizations.

Conclusion

/l/-vocalization when observed in a written environment is much more individial than expected. It can be found in enviroments where it is not expected and the realization does often not follow the expected patterns.

Bibliography


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Figure 5: Distribution of /l/-vocalization in the corpus.

Figure 6: Realization forms for Alkohol

Figure 7: Realization forms for Profilbild (’avatar’).