Subjective and objective parameters determining 'salience' in long-term dialect accommodation[1]

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ABSTRACT

In this article, we will present empirical results of a longitudinal study on long-term dialect accommodation in a German dialect setting. An important model of explaining which linguistic structures undergo such convergence and which do not makes use of the notion of 'salience'. Dialect features which are perceived by the speakers as 'salient' are taken up and given up more easily and faster than those which are perceived as 'less salient'. The notion of salience has a tradition which goes back to the 1920s. We will discuss this research tradition, apply the criteria for salience that played a role in it to our results, and discuss the question of whether perceived (subjective) salience can be explained in objective (structural-phono logical or phonetic) terms.

KEYWORDS: Long-term dialect accommodation, salience, upper Saxonian vernacular, migration

1. INTRODUCTION

Dialect or language contact often leads to the structural assimilation of one variety towards the other, or the assimilation of the two. There are various alternatives for explaining which linguistic structures undergo such convergence and which do not. One of them predicts that what is perceived by the speakers as 'salient' in one variety is taken over more easily and faster by the other than what is perceived as 'less salient', and that 'more salient' features of

the assimilating variety may be given up more readily than 'less salient' ones. In this article, we will present empirical results of a longitudinal study on long-term dialect accommodation in a German dialect setting and investigate the relevance of the notion of 'salience' in explaining this accommodation. In particular, we will discuss the following issues:

1. Is salience a good predictor of the loss and acquisition of a given dialect by speakers of another dialect?
2. Can perceived salience be explained in objective (structural-phonological or phonetic) terms?

2. THE NOTION OF SALIENCE IN RESEARCH ON LINGUISTIC CHANGE AND DIALECT ACCOMMODATION

Dialect levelling (as one particular type of dialect convergence) was first analysed using the notion of 'salience' (*Auffälligkeit*) in a systematic way by the Russian dialectologist Victor Schirmunski in the 1920s. Schirmunski (1928/1929: 167ff; 1930) investigated the structural changes in the German speaking dialect enclaves (*Sprachinseln*) in Russia, in which massive convergence between west-middle and west-upper German dialects, Franconian and Alemannic (horizontal convergence), and between these dialects and a variety of standard German (vertical convergence), had occurred over a period of 100–150 years. In order to describe which dialect features were given up in the course of such levelling, Schirmunski developed a distinction between 'primary' and 'secondary' dialect features which proved to be highly influential in German dialectology at least (cf. the overview in Hinskens 1986). More recently, the notion of salience has also played an important role in social-dialectological work on long-term dialect accommodation outside the Schirmunskian tradition (above all, in Trudgill 1986). We will therefore begin with a short discussion of what is meant by salience in these traditions of research.

Salience for Schirmunski is a gradual issue. On the basis of the following criteria (which should be seen rather as a checklist, not as a definition), a given dialect feature can be judged to be more or less salient/primary:

1. The degree of articulatory and perceptual distinctness between the dialect feature in question and its structural corresponding feature in the con-verged-to dialect (or standard variety). Phonetically close variants tend to be secondary features and are usually given up/acquired late.
2. Lexicalization: following the distinction between rule-governed phonological changes in the sense of a Neo-grammarian, mechanical sound law on the one hand, and lexicalized changes, which may affect each word containing the 'sound' in question individually on the other (*Wortverdrängung* – lexical diffusion – in the 'cultural-sociological' Marburg tradition of German dialectology), Schirmunski equates the first with secondary features, the second with primary (more salient) ones.

3. Phonetic dichotomy vs. phonetic continuum: secondary variables tend to show intermediate forms.
4. Awareness: linguistically untrained speakers can identify (and list) primary but not secondary dialect features. Therefore, only the first may become dialect stereotypes and may be used in mimicry and teasing (*Sprachspott*).
5. Writing: as long as a given dialect feature may be 'read into' the orthographic representation of the word, it will be of low salience. However, if the written representation of a dialect feature (e.g. in dialect prose) changes German orthography (by use of a different symbol of the alphabet in the cognate), the feature will most likely be a primary one.
6. Mutual comprehensibility: only primary dialect features may (but need not) impede comprehension.

Of Schirmunski's six criteria, the first three are located on what might be called an objective level of analysis. They may be employed by the linguist-dialectologist on the basis of a structural (phonetic and phonological, diachronic and synchronic) description of the data at hand, and they may be said to be the actual reason for which a certain feature is salient. This is not the case for the second three criteria: they refer to a subjective level of analysis, i.e. to how lay speakers-hearers perceive (and therefore 'handle') the feature in question. This subjectivity obviously holds for Schirmunski's fourth criterion, which alludes to the attitudinal dimension (by reference to dialect mimicry). But the criteria of mutual comprehensibility (which is not a reflex of phonetic distance alone, but is largely determined by additional attitudinal factors) and of dialect writing clearly refer to how dialect features are perceived as well. Subjective criteria cannot be said to cause salience. Rather, they are symptoms of salience which may be used in a sociolinguistic study in order to turn this fundamentally cognitive notion into an observable one.

While Schirmunski and subsequent researchers in his tradition have focused on dialect change in the traditional sense (i.e. structural changes in the repertoire of a speech community over a longer period of time), Trudgill (1986) resorted to a similar notion of salience in an investigation of long-term dialect accommodation of American speakers living in England or vice versa (similar studies have been carried out by Chambers 1992 on Canadian/British English, Shockey 1984 on British/American English, and Payne 1980 on dialect accommodation within the U.S.A.). Here, the focus is shifted away from community-based language change and onto individual adaptations to new linguistic environments over a shorter period of time.

Without explicit reference to Schirmunski's work, Trudgill defines salience in terms of the following three criteria:

1. speaker's awareness of the variable (in the extreme case, stigmatization), cf. Schirmunski's criterion (4);
2. phonetic difference between the two variants, cf. Schirmunski's criterion (1); and

3. phonemicity: a variable which has phonemic status is more salient than a
    subphonemic one.

   This third criterion, not mentioned by Schirmunski, should be grouped with
the objective criteria in the sense in which it is used by Trudgill.[2] Although he is
not entirely explicit, it may be defined as follows: a given variable is phonemic if
it implies the addition and/or deletion of at least one contrastive feature of one
variety to/from the sound's feature constellation. This equates phonemicity
either with lexical sound substitution (*lexikalische Umbesetzungen* or 'dialect
switch rules'/'rules of correspondence' as described e.g. in Dressler and Wodak
1982, Auer 1990: 273ff) or with phoneme mergers/splits. Since the first is
already captured by Schirmunski's criterion (2), the more interesting part of
phonemicity as a criterion for salience may be equated with mergers and splits.
Thus, for instance, if A is a vowel with the distinctive feature $[\pm\text{round}]$ while B
is not, the variable {A,B} implies the merger of /y/ $\sim$ /i/ into /i/, etc.[3]
   The phonemicity criterion is in many ways a difficult one. First of all, it is
obviously a highly theoretical construct: what counts as 'phonemic' will be
answered very differently in the various schools of phonology. As a conse-
quence, its empirical use is not without problems. For instance, in a strictly
structuralist approach, the American English merger of /d/ and /t/ in inter-
vocalic flapping surely involves (and neutralizes) a phonemic contrast.
Although, according to Trudgill (1986: 19), this feature is quickly taken up
by speakers of British English in the United States (a fact which would support a
close link between phonemicity and salience/long term dialect accommoda-
tion), he nevertheless sees this change as a 'purely phonetic one', presumably
because it is highly natural. He also mentions that flapping may be restricted to
/t/ in accommodating British speakers, so that the /t/ $\sim$ /d/ contrast is
maintained in their 'learner variety' as [ɾ] $\sim$ [d]. This complicates the picture
further, since the criterion of phonemicity is now transferred from the two
contrasting structural systems to the interim phonology of the speaker.
   On the other hand, Trudgill (1986: 47) assumes that the spread of the
vocalization of velarized /ɫ/ from London into East Anglia is a consequence of
this feature's salience, although 'it does not, of course, in its early stages involve
loss of surface phonemic contrasts'. Here, a very liberal extension of the
meaning of 'phonemic' is accepted, because 'in its later stages', the vocalization
leads 'to a complex series of neutralizations and the development of a whole new
set of diphthongs' (1986: 47). In any case, what constitutes a phonological
merger in the acquisition of variety A by speakers of variety B constitutes a
phonological split in the opposite acquisition process. There is evidence that
splits (e.g. the acquisition of the non-neutralizing British system by speakers of
flapping American English varieties, cf. Shockey 1984) are acquired more
slowly than mergers (Trudgill 1986: 22), although both are phonemic – a
difference that will be of some importance later on in our discussion.
   Two additional criteria used in research on dialect change are worth

mentioning here. One is areal distribution: Hinskens (1992), Thelander (1980), Schwob (1969: 316ff) and van Bree (1992: 181) show that dialect features which are used only in a geographically restricted area will be given up earlier than geographically widespread ones. This criterion is intended to be objective, although the question remains whether dialect speakers' knowledge of the areal distribution of certain variables is identical with the dialectologist's objective data. Finally, as a subjective criterion, it has been suggested that code-alternation between one variety and the other will affect salient features more than non-salient ones. In dialect accommodation or change, the variables used in such dialect switching should be more readily lost than others (cf. Auer 1990: 204ff; 1997b).

This short overview of the criteria used for determining a variable's salience may be summarized as follows:

Objective criteria	*Subjective criteria*
articulatory distance	perceptual distance
areal distribution	usage in code-alternation
phonemicity	representation in lay dialect writing
continuous vs. dichotomous	stereotyping/mimicking
lexicalization	comprehensibility

An important question to be asked is whether the speakers' ('subjective') criteria lead to the same results as those of the linguist. If so, subjective salience could be said to be explained by objective (structural, areal and phonetic) facts. Before we present our empirical study which will shed some light on this issue, two problems in the discussion have to be mentioned at this point.

The first problem is that it is not *a priori* clear why a feature (in the sense of the above criteria) should be given up or adopted simply because it is salient. In fact Trudgill (1986) mentions a number of overriding factors which keep a form from being picked up in long-term dialect accommodation. For instance, he shows that r-vocalizing speakers of British English do not accommodate American /r/-pronunciation despite its salience and explains this exceptional behaviour by an inhibiting phonotactic constraint. He also notes that the danger of vowel mergers (such as the quasi-merger of some variants of AmE *hot* and BrE *heart*) – although it is one of the important structural criteria for determining salience – can at the same time prevent a form from being accommodated. Finally, and most importantly, Trudgill argues that a feature may be too stereotypically linked to the variety accommodated to be acquired. This, so he argues, holds for AmE raised /æ/ as in *dance, can't* which is not taken over easily according to his observations of British speakers, although it certainly is very salient. It seems, then, that salience is only a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for a linguistic feature to be affected in accommodation. If such a salient feature of the new dialect is to be adopted, then we would expect this feature to hold some prestige or, at least, not to be negatively evaluated in the old or new speech community.

A second problem with the notion of salience becomes apparent when we look again at lexicalization as a criterion. For Schirmunski, it increases a variable's salience and hence its learnability. In an article on dialect acquisition by Canadian youngsters in Britain, Chambers (1992) also lists lexicalization (his principle 1, 2 and 3) as a decisive criterion. But for him, lexicalized ('complex') phonological rules are acquired *later* and with more difficulty than 'simple' rules (cf. Kerswill and Williams 1992 and Payne 1980 for evidence for the same point). What looks like a contradiction at first, in fact points to a more general problem underlying Schirmunski's primary vs. secondary features: they are supposed to apply equally in dialect acquisition and dialect loss. The problem of lexicalization shows that this postulate cannot be correct. For although there is good reason to believe that lexicalized and therefore more salient 'rules' of one's own dialect will be given up early, the *acquisition* of lexicalized rules seems to be an entirely different issue. Since they have to be learned word by word, a perfect native-like mastery is unlikely (cf. Payne 1980). Depending on the nature of the lexicalized rule, accommodating speakers may refrain from using such a 'difficult' variable at all; they may use it in a few highly frequent lexical items only; or they may turn this lexicalized variable into a productive, non-lexicalized phonological rule and then overshoot the target (leading to over-generalizations in the sense of 'adaptive rules', cf. Andersen 1973). But lexicalized rules will surely not be treated in the same way in dialect acquisition as they are in dialect loss.

As a methodological consequence, we suggest distinguishing more strictly between dialect loss and dialect acquisition as two components of long-term dialect accommodation. This distinction is particularly easy to make in cases where the two dialectal varieties in contact are overarched by a third, standard variety. This is the case in Schirmunski's example, and even more so in the dialect data we turn to in the following section, but not in the case of the data discussed by Trudgill or Chambers in which two national standard varieties of English are involved.

3. THE STUDY: DIALECT ACCOMMODATION BY SAXONIAN SPEAKERS AFTER WORK MIGRATION TO WEST GERMANY

In this section, we will report on some findings of a research project on long-term dialect accommodation in real time (for more details, particularly on the social dimension of the project, cf. Großkopf, Barden and Auer 1996; Barden and Großkopf 1998). In a longitudinal study carried out in 1990–1992, data were collected from a group of 56 speakers aged from 12 to 52 years, each of whom was interviewed 8 times over a two-year period by speakers of standard German. The study contrasts with the earlier ones mentioned above which were either restricted to a small number of informants or did not include a longitudinal dimension. Informants were native speakers of the Upper Saxonian Vernacular spoken around/between Leipzig and Dresden, i.e. only in East Germany, the

former German Democratic Republic. During or shortly after the collapse of the GDR, many East Germans left and settled in West Germany for political and/or economic reasons. Our informants were recruited from among these migrants.

Two receiving dialect regions were selected: the region around and including the city of Constance in the extreme southwest of Germany (an Alemannic-speaking, Upper German dialect area); and the city of Saarbrücken in the westernmost part of Germany (a mixed Rheno-Palatian/Moselle-Franconian, i.e. Middle German dialect area). Given the traditionally very low prestige of the Upper Saxonian Vernacular (henceforth USV; cf. Becker and Bergmann 1969), a high degree of pressure to accommodate to the local dialect of the receiving area or to the standard variety of German was expected, particularly in an 'out-group' interview situation in which the interviewer came from West Germany and used the standard variety. In this article, we will restrict ourselves to discussing accommodation of this latter type (i.e. loss of USV features), disregarding dialect acquisition which was also observed through the two years' investigation period (cf. Auer (1997b). Differences between the two receiving areas will also be disregarded.

USV is a regional dialect koinè easily described (and recognized) by a small number of phonological features, most of which are listed below with examples:

Vocalic variables:

/A:/ vernacular velarized (rounded, back) long low vowel
      std. [ɑː] vs. USV [ɔ̈ː]
      example: std. [vɑːɐ] vs. USV [vɔ̈ːᴵ] *wahr* 'true'

/E:/ vernacular low long mid front vowel
      std. [eː] vs. USV [ɛ̈ː]
      example: std. [leːbm̩] vs. USV [1ɛ̈ːbm̩] *leben* 'to live'

/Ü:/ vernacular non-rounded long high front vowel
      std. [yː] vs. USV [ïː]
      example: std. [yːbm̩] vs. USV [ïːbm̩] *üben* 'to practice'

/Ü/ vernacular non-rounded short high front vowel[4]
     std. [ʏ] vs. USV [ï]
     example: std. [hʏtə] vs. USV [hïdə] *Hütte* 'hut'

/O:/ vernacular centralization of long mid back vowel
      std. [oː] vs. USV [ʌː]
      example: std. [bloːs] vs. USV [b1ʌːs] *bloß* 'only'

/U:/ vernacular centralization of long high back vowel[5]
      std. [uː] vs. USV [ʉː]
      example: std. [apso'luːt] vs. USV [äb̥sö'lʉːt] *absolut* 'absolutely'

/OI/ vernacular non-round back outgliding diphthong
      std. [ɔə] vs. USV [aə]
      example: std. [fʀɔənt] vs. USV [fʀaənt] *Freund* 'friend'

/AI/ vernacular monophthong instead of the std. front outgliding diphthong
std. [aə] vs. USV [ɛ̈ː]
example: std. [kaən] vs. USV [kɛ̈ːn] *kein* 'no' (determiner)

/AU/ vernacular monophthong instead of the std. back outgliding diphthong
std. [aʊ] vs. USV [ʌː]
only quantified for: std. [aʊx] vs. USV [ʌːx] *auch* 'also'

Consonantal variables:

/CH/ vernacular coronalization of the palato-alveolar fricative
std. [ç] vs. USV [ʃ]
example: std. [mœnç] vs. USV [mɛ̈nʃ] *Mönch* 'monk'

/G/ vernacular spirantization of the intervocalic velar voiced stop
std. [g] vs. USV [ɣ], [ʃ]
example: std. [vaːgŋ] vs. USV [vɔ̈ːɣŋ] *Wagen* 'car'

/P,T/ vernacular syllable-initial voiceless lenis stops instead of fortes
std. [p], [t] vs. USV [b̥], [d̥][6]
example: std. [paːɐ] vs. USV [b̥ɔ̈ːɐ] *paar* 'some'

For these 12 variables, quantitative indices were calculated referring to the
percentage of non-standard realizations in the interview data.

4. THE SALIENCE OF USV FEATURES

Before reporting on the results of our investigation, i.e. the quantitative changes
in these indices over the two-year period, we will in this section characterize our
variables in terms of the aforementioned criteria for primary and secondary
dialect features (salience).

4.1. Objective criteria

Articulatory distance. This criterion proved impossible to apply since there is no
phonetically satisfactory method to measure phonetic difference *across* vari-
ables. Articulatory distance may be measured *within* one continuous variable. It
is also feasible (although not unproblematic, cf. Auer 1997a) to measure the
'dialectality' of a given unit (e.g. a word) by counting in some way or other the
dialectal features it exhibits. For instance, the difference between the vernacular
and the standard form may be said to be less for the pair USV [zɒːgŋ] vs. std.
German [zaːgŋ] (*sagen* 'to say') than for the pair USV [zɔːgŋ] vs. std. [zaːgŋ],
since the phonetic difference on the non-round/round continuum of the low
vowel is less in the first than it is in the second case. We may also say that the
difference between the USV vernacular form [zɒːxŋ] and std. [zaːgŋ] is greater
than that between USV [zɒːgŋ] and std. [zaːgŋ], for in the first case, two
variables are involved – (A:) and (G) – while only one is involved in the second

case. But according to which criteria should we judge and compare the objective articulatory (and, for that matter, perceptual) differences between the pairs [zɔːgn̩]/[zaːgn̩] and [zaːxn̩]/[zaːgn̩], e.g. differences *within* the variables (A:) and (G) in their strong vernacular realizations? Given these phonetic problems, we decided not to use this criterion at all. (The same applies to the 'subjective' criterion of perceptual distance between the linguistic features in question.)

Areal distribution. This criterion proved to be inapplicable as well, since all the features investigated hold for the whole Upper Saxonian area. The reason is that the Upper Saxonian Vernacular is itself a dialect koinè, i.e. the result of levelling between numerous more local dialects.

Phonemicity. When comparing the phonemic structure of USV and standard German, it is clear that the centralization of the long back vowels (cf. the variables (O:) and (U:)) is subphonemic (/ʉː/:/ʌː/ ~ /uː/:/oː/). In the variable (A:), no phonemic opposition is involved either, since the vernacular opposi- tional pair [ɔ̈ː] ~ [ʌː] may be mapped in a bi-unique way on to the standard pair [oː] vs. [uː] (cf. Figure 1). Also, while standard German has short /ɔ/ and long /oː/, a long vowel (except /ɛː/) can never be lax ([-ATR]) in this variety (*/ɔː/). Therefore, USV /ɔ̈ː/ has no counterpart in standard German other than /ɑː/.

  On the other hand, the variables (P/T), (G), (Ü), (Ü:), (AI), (AU), (OI), (E:) and (CH) clearly involve phonemic oppositions, with the vernacular neutralizing a phonemic contrast of the standard in each case. (The standard phoneme oppositions merged in USV are /p, t/ ~ /b, d/, /g/ ~ /ç/, /ɣ/ ~ /I/, /yː/ ~ /iː/, /ai/ ~ /eː/, /au/ ~ /oː/, /oi/ ~ /ai/, /eː/ ~ /ɛ/ and /ç/ ~ /ʃ/.) A speaker who, starting from a strong USV vowel system, wants to acquire the vowel system of standard German, therefore has to accommodate through a number of vowel splits.

  Problems with the structuralist notion of phonemicity and merging arise in the question of how to handle the continuous variables to which we now turn.

Continuous vs. dichotomous structure. Few gradations between the stop and the fricative realizations are possible for articulatory reasons in the variable (G). The variables (AI) and (AU) do show intermediate forms, but these are clearly much closer to the standard than to the vernacular – monophthongal –

iː	yː		uː	ïː		ʉː
eː	øː		oː	ë̈ː		ʌː
ɛː					ɔ̈ː	
		ɑː				

Long vowels of std. German   Long vowels of USV

Figure 1: Long vowel phonemes of standard German and Upper Saxonian Vernacular

realization (cf. below, lexicalization). Rather than being located on a continuum towards the monophthong, they are better described as variants of the diphthongal realization (mainly due to centralization). All other variables investigated show intermediate forms and are therefore continuous. For one variable – (OI) – the strong vernacular realization [aë] was almost never observed. If a variable neutralizing in USV a phonemic contrast of the standard variety, is realized in a non-standard way but does not phonetically reach the strong (extreme) vernacular form given in the list above, the phonemic distinction in question is not (entirely) lost and there is no (complete) merger, although some kind of phonetic backgrounding occurs. Non-dichotomous variables are therefore hard to judge with regard to their phonemic status: it seems to depend on the number of intermediate forms used (cf. Labov, Yaeger and Steiner 1972: 229ff for a further discussion of quasi-mergers.)

Given their quantitative relevance, intermediate forms enter into our analysis as indices of their own: for each of the dialect features in question (with the exception of (G) and (OI)), two indices were calculated, one referring to the strong vernacular realizations (i.e. without intermediate forms) and one referring to all nonstandard realizations (i.e. including intermediate forms).

In the initial level of vernacular usage in the first interview (which took place 3–6 months after our informants had come to West Germany), there are of course enormous differences among the informants in the relative number of vernacular realizations. Some variables (A:, Ü:, Ü, O:, U:, AU, CH) are more frequently realized in the nonstandard way than others (E:, OI, AI, G and P/T). More importantly, we also find very different percentages of strong vernacular forms. As shown in Figure 2, strong vernacular forms (light grey shading) play a major role in the case of (P/T), (CH) and (AI), (AU) – in the latter two variables, there are in fact no intermediate forms. But few or none occur in (E:), (Ü), (Ü:), (OI) and (U:). (A:) and (O:) hold a middle position. Only in the first group is the difference between our informants' realizations of the variables in question and the standard German forms strong enough to lead to a vowel merger in a substantial number of cases. Nevertheless, the original vernacular or dialectal processes to which these variables owe their existence certainly occur on the phonemic level.

Lexicalization. Here, two issues need to be kept apart. On the one hand, there is what we call *exclusive lexicalization*. In this case, a certain variable occurs exclusively in certain lexical items, while it is never observed in others in the same phonological context. It is this type of lexicalization to which Schirmunski's criterion (2) above refers. In the case of USV, the variables (AI) and (AU) are exclusively lexicalized, for the monophthongal vernacular realizations of the standard diphthongs can occur only in the reflexes of Middle High German /ei/ and /ou/ (New High German /ai/ and /au/ are partly reflexes of MHG /ei/ and /ou/ and partly of MHG /i:/ and /u:/). Present-day speakers have to learn this distribution word by word. Another type of lexicalization is involved if a variable
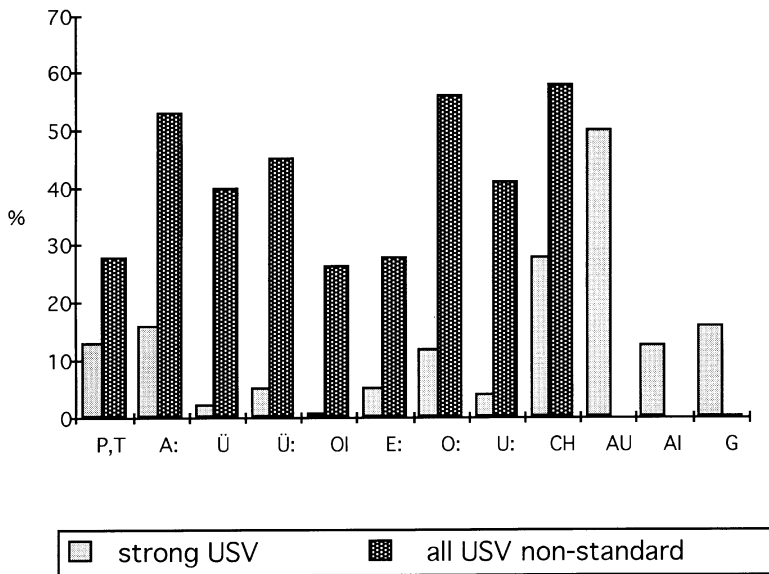
Figure 2: Initial level of USV usage

is quantitatively distributed unevenly among word tokens. This is the case in lexical diffusion. For instance, (G) is realized as a fricative more often in high frequency words than in less frequent ones. This kind of tendential or *statistical lexicalization* is usually part of an ongoing change or accommodation. It is not necessarily a reflex of an older phonological change, although this is possible as well. In our data, the variables (E:, Ü, Ü:, O:, U:, OI, G) show lexical diffusion. Lexical diffusion also holds for the exclusively lexicalized variables (AI, AU) for those words in which a vernacular realization is possible at all.

4.2. Subjective criteria

Code-switching. Since dialect/standard switching did not occur in the interview data, information on this point had to be elicited by more indirect methods. For a preliminary investigation, we resorted to a Labov-type 'style' analysis of the usage of selected variables in reading aloud (R-style) as compared to informal interview style (spontaneous speech, I-style). Reading of a standard German text will provoke usage of a style which is close to standard phonology, i.e. it implies getting rid of perceived sub-standard features. The results of this analysis can be found in Table 1 and Figures 3 and 4.

There are indeed important differences in how the variables (CH, O:, A:, P/T) participate in the contextualization of different 'styles'. As can be seen in Figure 3, strong vernacular realizations are considerably less frequent in reading (dark grey shading) than in interview style (unshaded columns),

Table 1: Realization of selected variables in reading and in informal interview speech

	(A:)		(P/T)		(CH)		(O:)	
	I-style	R-style	I-style	R-style	I-style	R-style	I-style	R-style
N	915	319	23	40	1496	129	750	124
% standard	21.1	59.6	71.2	100	11.0	26.4	17.1	35.5
% intermediate forms	62.3	35.1	17.0	0	47.3	53.5	58.9	54.8
% strong vernacular forms	16.6	5.2	11.2	0	41.8	20.2	24.0	9.7

although it is only in the case of (P/T) that they reach zero values. These results suggest that the strong vernacular realizations have some kind of salience in all variables investigated. The intermediate forms are not affected by this reduction nearly as much as the strong vernacular ones, and to very different degrees. In fact, Figure 4 makes it clear that the intermediate forms of the variable (CH) are even used slightly more frequently in reading than in normal interview style; and for (O:), the difference between the two styles is negligible. On the other hand, both (P/T) and (A:) are much less frequently realized as intermediate forms in reading aloud than in interview style. All non-standard realizations of (P/T) – including the intermediate ones – are lost in this style. This result suggests that these variables (and in particular (P/T)) are perceived as more salient than (CH) and (O) (coronalization and centralization), even in phonetically intermediate realizations.[7]

Representation in writing. Among the numerous publications written in USV, one collection of jokes and anecdotes (Desch 1969) and two popular dictionaries (Kunze 1991, Franke 1988) – one with text samples – were selected. Some USV features cannot be rendered in German writing in a straightforward way and for this reason do not permit any conclusion as to their salience. This state of affairs applies in particular to USV centralization, i.e. the variables (O:) and (U:). Among the remaining variables, the written texts represent the variables (Ü) = ⟨i⟩, (Ü:) = ⟨i(h)⟩, (E:) = ⟨ä⟩, (P/T/K)[8] = ⟨b,d,g⟩, (OI) = ⟨ai⟩, (AI) = ⟨ee⟩, (AU) = ⟨oo⟩ and (G) = ⟨ch⟩, but not (A:) and (CH), although for the latter two, a written representation would have been easy to find (⟨oo⟩/⟨sch⟩).

As shown elsewhere (Auer 1990: 193ff), representation in writing is not to be equated with (structuralist) phonemicity, since dialect writers often mark subphonemic features as well (e.g. in the Saxon case, the lenis/non-aspirated realization of /st/ as in ⟨ver*schd*ehn⟩ 'to understand' ver*st*ehen). Representation in writing therefore provides independent evidence of how dialect users perceive the variety in question. In the present case, we may conclude that (CH) and (A:)
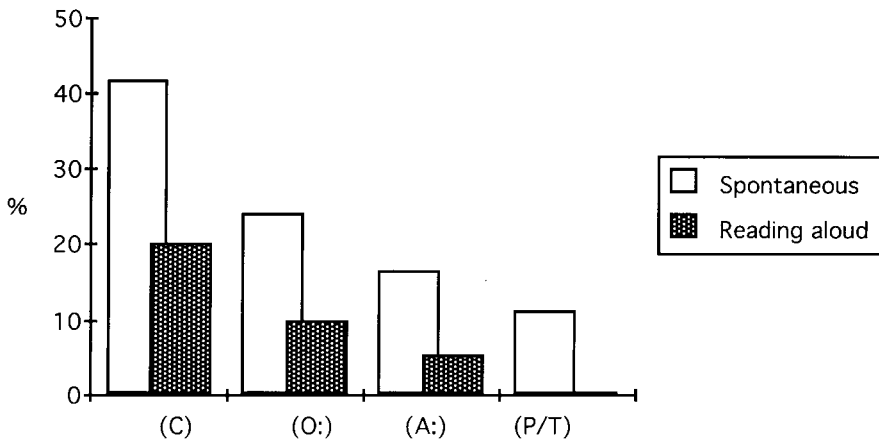
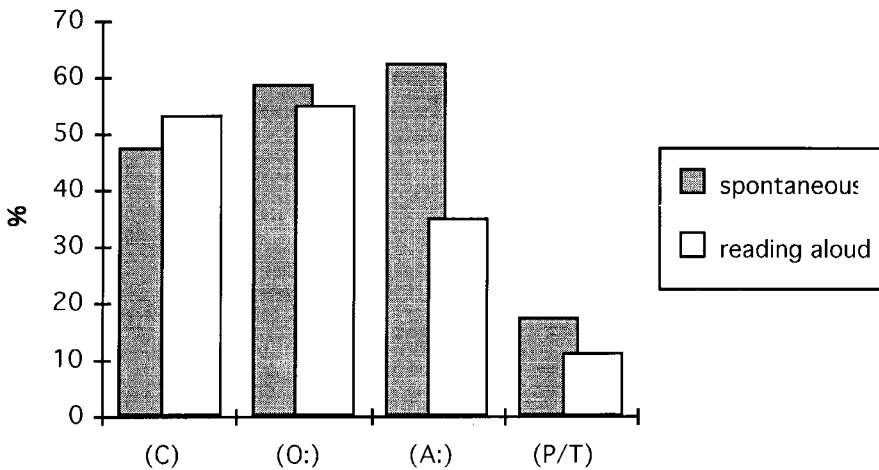**Figure 3:** (Strong) vernacular forms in reading and interview style

Figure 4: Intermediate (weak non-standard) forms in reading and interview style

are not (highly) salient. For (A:), however, another explanation is also possible: representing USV /ʌ:/ as ⟨o(h)⟩ would imply a merger with USV /o:/ which does not represent the phonemic facts correctly (cf. Figure 1). We cannot exclude the possibility that writers refrain from a written representation of the velarized long back vowel for this reason as well.

Stereotyping/mimicking. Stereotyping implies that a dialect feature is conscious. Negatively stereotyped features can be expected to be avoided by vernacular speakers in out-group interaction. When we asked our Saxon

informants about the typical features of their dialect (explicit auto-stereotyping), the variable (P, T, K)[9] was the one most often mentioned. In fact, if informants were able to identify one phonological feature of their vernacular at all, it always was the lenition of syllable-initial stops. Of the other variables, only (AI) and (AU) were occasionally but consistently mentioned as characteristic features of the Saxonian vernacular. Due to the lexicalized status of these variables, words were usually given as examples.

But stereotypes can be gathered not only from asking informants; they may also be inferred from written texts such as jokes and anecdotes (see previous section). As we have seen, for these genres all our USV features seem to be salient, with the exception of (A:) and (CH) and the variables (O:), (U:), for which there is no straightforward way to represent them in German ortho-graphy and which are therefore neutral in this respect. We also elicited stereotypes indirectly by having our informants re-tell a Saxon joke presented to them on tape. Frequently-used strong USV features (which were not part of that speaker's interview style) were:

- (AI) and (AU) as in *heiß* 'hot' [hɛiz], *heim* 'home' [hɛ̝ːmə] or [hɛːm]
- (E) as in *geregnet* 'rained' (participle) [gəʀɛːʃnət], *aufnehmen* 'to take up' [ɔfnɛːm]
- (P/T/K) as in *Tante* 'aunt' [dɑndə], *Platte* 'bald head' [bladə], *Kaffee und Kuchen* 'coffee and cake' [gafe] *und* [guːxn̩]
- (G) as in *sagen* [zaɣn̩].

USV prestige changed from that of the most appreciated variety of German, up to the second half of the 18th century, to that of the most negatively evaluated one according to surveys done in the second half of this century (cf. Eichler and Bergmann 1967; Zimmermann 1992). The historical development reveals an astonishing continuity in the selection of USV features looked upon as salient by commentators and critics. The most consistently noticed feature is the lenition of onset stops (P/T/K) which surely qualifies as a 'stereotype' in the Labovian sense. Of the features investigated in our study, Scioppius (1660: 28, Secunda Consultatio) and Gottsched (1762: 34ff) additionally mention (critic-ally) the monophthongal realization of the diphthongs (AI, AU). Klopstock (1779/1780 [1830: 206ff]) commented negatively on the unrounding of the standard front vowels (Ü, Ü:) and the diphthong /oi/ (our variable /OI/).

No data are available on the final subjective parameter, i.e. comprehens-ibility. Tables 2a and 2b summarize the discussion of salience thus far. Blank cells refer to those cases in which no data were available or in which the criterion cannot be applied. The criteria 'merger' and 'lexicalization' may be equated with 'phonemicity' as used by Trudgill.

Subjective and objective criteria concur in singling out two pairs of variables as particularly salient or non-salient. One of these pairs is (AI)/(AU). Structurally speaking, they are the only lexicalized, dichotomous variables which also involve a merger. In addition, all subjective parameters (rendering in writing, stereo-

Table 2a: Salience of variables – strong USV realizations

	(O:)	(U:)	(A:)	(CH)	(Ü)	(Ü:)	(OI)	(E:)	(P/T)	(G)	(AU)	(AI)
Merger?	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Continuous?	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes		no	no
Excl. lexicalized?	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	yes	yes
Style differences? (reading vs. interview)	yes		yes	yes					yes			
Writing?			(no)	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Stereotype? (other evidence)	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Table 2b: Salience of variables – weak USV realizations

	(O:)	(U:)	(CH)	(A:)	(Ü)	(Ü:)	(OI)	(E:)	(P/T)
Merger?	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Continuous?	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Excl. lexicalized?	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Style differences? (reading vs. interview)	no		no	yes					yes
Writing?			no	(no)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Stereotype? (other evidence)	no	no	no	no				yes	yes

typical knowledge, style differences and usage in mimicry) point to a high degree of awareness. There can be no doubt that these variables must be called highly salient both in the sense of Schirmunski and of Trudgill, since they satisfy all their criteria. By the same token, the pair (O:)/(U:) – i.e. the two variables designed to capture centralization in USV – is unambiguously characterized as the least salient one. In objective terms, they are the only continuous, non-lexicalized and clearly non-merging variables. This status is supported on the subjective side by the fact that their perceived relevance for USV seems to be next to nothing. They were never used in mimicry or mentioned as typical of the Saxon dialect, and only the strongly centralized forms were reduced in reading style. The variable (A:) is sensitive to style shifts, but is not a written feature of the Saxonian vernacular. None of the objective criteria support its salience.

No further differentiations according to objective criteria are possible for the remaining variables, which are all non-lexicalized, continuous (with the

exception of (G), where this criterion does not apply) and merging (at least in the strong USV realizations). In subjective terms, there is most evidence for salience available for (P/T), while (CH) clearly has low subjective salience.

5. RESULTS

The results of our study on long-term dialect accommodation are summarized in Tables 3a and 3b, where the initial index values, the index values after

Table 3a: Loss of all nonstandard USV forms (mean values and standard deviations in %)

	1st interview		5th interview		8th inverview	
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**
(P, T)	27.8	(27.9)	17.6	(27.9)	12.0	(18.2)
(A:)	52.6	(35.8)	43.4	(35.8)	34.8	(31.5)
(Ü)	39.8	(31.9)	31.8	(32.5)	23.3	(24.9)
(Ü:)	45.1	(34.9)	39.2	(34.4)	32.0	(30.6)
(OI)	26.5	(25.7)	23.0	(23.9)	18.7	(22.6)
(E:)	28.2	(24.6)	22.7	(23.5)	19.8	(22.3)
(O:)	56.4	(33.6)	51.2	(34.3)	42.3	(31.0)
(U:)	41.0	(28.5)	38.1	(28.5)	31.3	(25.5)
(CH)	58.1	(35.9)	55.1	(38.2)	48.0	(37.8)

Table 3b: Loss of strong USV features (mean values and standard deviations in %)

	1st interview		5th interview		8th inverview	
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**
(P, T)	12.6	(18.9)	5.4	(9.0)	3.5	(6.2)
(A:)	15.7	(22.6)	8.7	(16.9)	5.5	(11.5)
(Ü)	2.3	(5.6)	0.9	(4.1)	0.1	(0.7)
(Ü:)	4.9	(13.8)	2.1	(6.3)	1.9	(7.7)
(E:)	5.1	(10.9)	3.8	(8.5)	3.5	(8.2)
(O:)	12.2	(20.0)	9.1	(14.9)	6.2	(12.2)
(U:)	3.7	(7.9)	1.9	(5.3)	0.9	(3.6)
(CH)	28.4	(23.9)	22.2	(20.4)	15.9	(15.6)
(AU)	50.4	(42.1)	45.1	(40.4)	40.2	(39.0)
(AI)	15.0	(15.9)	16.1	(18.8)	15.4	(18.5)
(G)	16.2	(17.1)	13.1	(25.2)	12.3	(16.7)

approximately one year and those after two years are given. Table 3a refers to all nonstandard forms (strong and weak USV), Table 3b to the strong USV forms only.

Table 4, derived from Tables 3a and 3b, shows the absolute and relative changes after one and two years. Values in parentheses are not significant and will be ignored in the following discussion. (Changes usually failed to reach the 5% level of significance for those variables for which values were very low from the very start, i.e. in those features which were hardly present in the first interview, cf. Figure 2 above.) Figures 5 and 6 represent these changes visually.

Looking at the development of the strong vernacular forms first (Figure 5), we note a very different development in the monophthong/diphthong variables (AI) and (AU) when compared to the others. There is no loss in (AI) and comparatively little change (20%) in (AU). In the latter case, one must bear in mind that only the realizations of the word *auch* were counted. Since this is one of the words in which the vernacular form is most likely to occur in terms of lexical diffusion, counting all possible phonological contexts in which the monophthong could have occurred would clearly have resulted in a much lower value.

On the other hand, relative loss of strong vernacular realizations is moderately high in (CH) and (O:), and high in (A:) and particularly in (P/T):

Table 4: Absolute and relative changes in % (differences not reaching 5% significance level or more are in parentheses)

	All USV forms				Strong USV forms			
	1/5	5/8	1/8	Relative	1/5	5/8	1/8	Relative
(P, T)	− 10.2	− 5.6	− 15.7	57	− 7.2	− 1.9	− 9.0	72
(Ü:)	− 8.1	− 8.6	− 16.6	42	− 1.3	− 0.8	(− 2.1)	(94)
(A:)	− 9.2	− 8.6	− 17.8	34	− 6.9	− 3.2	− 10.2	65
(E:)	− 5.5	− 2.9	− 8.4	30	− 1.2	− 0.4	(− 1.6)	(31)
(OI)	− 3.5	− 4.3	− 7.8	29	− 0.2	− 0.1	(− 0.3)	(43)
(Ü:)	− 5.9	− 7.2	− 13.1	29	− 2.8	− 0.3	(− 3.0)	(62)
(O:)	− 5.2	− 8.9	− 14.1	25	− 3.2	− 2.9	− 6.0	49
(U:)	− 2.9	− 6.9	− 9.8	24	− 1.7	− 1.0	(− 2.7)	(74)
(CH)	− 3.0	− 7.0	− 10.1	17	− 6.3	− 6.3	− 12.6	44
(G)	− 3.1	− 0.9	(− 3.9)	(24)	− 3.1	− 0.9	(− 3.9)	(24)
(AU)	− 8.2	− 5.5	− 13.6	22	− 5.3	− 4.9	− 10.1	20
(AI)	− 3.2	− 1.8	− 4.9	19	+1.1	− 0.7	+0.4	+3

1st column: in the first year, i.e. absolute difference between the first and fifth interviews
2nd column: in the second year, i.e. absolute difference between the fifth and eighth interviews
3rd column: total change in two years, i.e. absolute difference between the first and eighth interviews
4th column: change in two years relative to the initial USV values

(AI) < (AU) < (CH) < (O:) < (A:) < (P/T)
$-$3%   20%   44%   49%   65%   72%

This ranking of salience of the variables given in Table 2a is hardly congruent
with the high amount of reduction of the strong vernacular forms in (A:) and
clearly contradicts the low amount of change in (AI) and (AU).

The comparison in Figure 7 of the relative loss of strong and intermediate forms
in these variables (except (AI) and (AU), which are dichotomous) shows that the
two developments do not go hand in hand. It is only in (P/T) that all vernacular
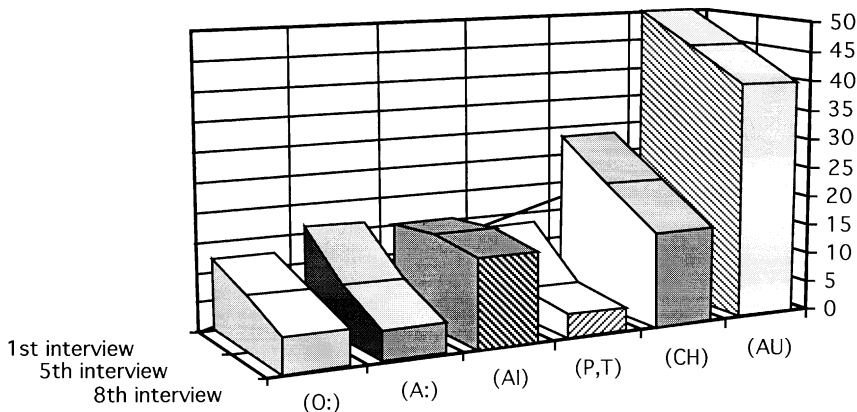
Figure 5: Loss of strong USV forms over two years (significant differences only)
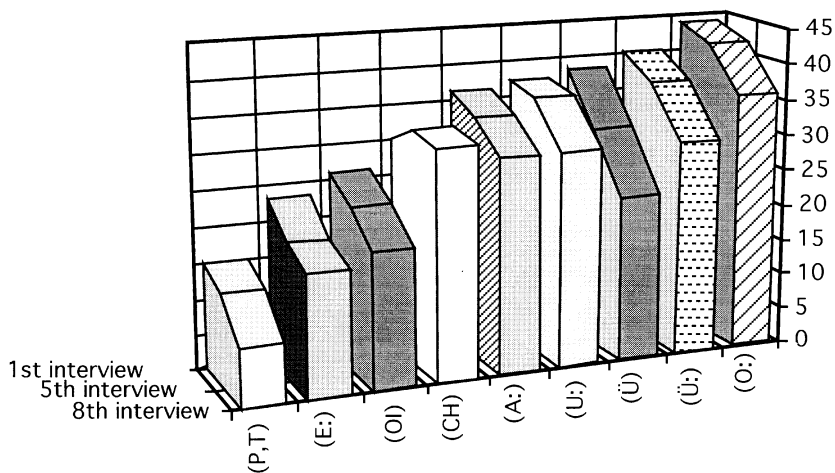
Figure 6: Loss of weak USV forms over two years (significant differences only)
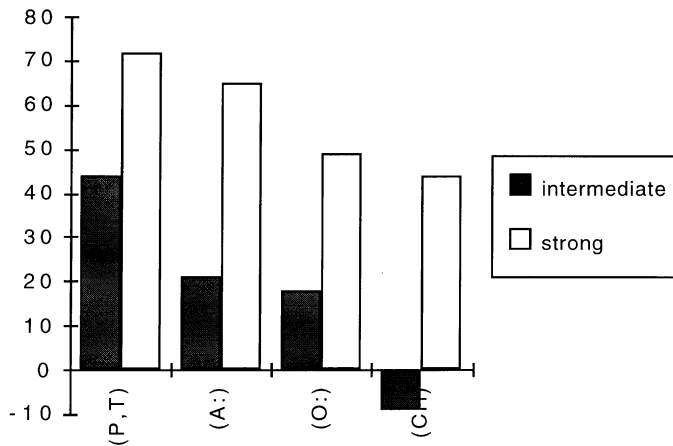
Figure 7: Relative loss of strong and intermediate vernacular forms in selected variables over two years

forms are reduced (but strong forms are lost mostly in the first year, weak USV forms in the second year). Only in this case are strong vernacular realizations replaced by standard forms. In (A:), (O:) and particularly (CH), in which there is even an increase in weak nonstandard realizations, the considerable reduction of strong vernacular forms is not accompanied by an equally large reduction of intermediate forms. Rather, strong vernacular forms seem to be at least partly replaced by intermediate forms. For these variables, the prevalent development is that of loss of strong vernacular forms but not of intermediate forms.

The special status of (CH) is further supported by the atypical age distribution of this variable (cf. Barden and Großkopf 1998: 146ff). While all other variables show a positive correlation of age and USV usage, it is the middle age group which uses the coronalized /ç/ most often, and among the youngest speakers, the values are surprisingly high as well. In this context, it must be taken into account that coronalization is a 'new' Middle German dialect feature which is spreading rather than receding (cf. Herrgen 1986).

Figure 6 includes the intermediate forms for the variables (Ü), (Ü:), (OI), (E:), (U:), for which initial strong vernacular realizations were extremely low (i.e. 1–5% of all possible cases) and for which changes in values therefore did not reach a statistically significant level. Considering only the loss of intermediate USV forms, the variables may be grouped as follows:

(CH) < (A:) < (O:) < (U:) < (Ü:) < (E:) < (OI) < (Ü) < (P,T)
-7% 17%   18%   19%   25%   26%   30%   39%   47%

This ordering – other than in the loss of strong USV forms – agrees perfectly with the predictions of Table 3b. In the intermediate forms, phonemicity does

not play a role since no complete mergers occur. For this reason, the small degree of loss in (CH) does not contradict the predictions.

6. DISCUSSION

Our results support the relevance of 'salience' for predicting long-term dialect accommodation only in the intermediate (weak) USV forms of the continuous variables, but not in the strong USV realizations. In the strong USV forms, it is above all the lexicalized, dichotomous variables (AI) and (AU) which contradict the predictions made by salience. Also, phonemicity in the sense of vowel splits (as one of the objective criteria for establishing salience) does not predict loss well. In the intermediate (weak USV) realizations, however, the fit between observed loss and salience is high. Here (AI) and (AU) do not play a role (being dichotomously structured, they do not have intermediate realizations) and all variables are sub-phonemic, i.e. phonemicity does not enter into the picture as a criterion anyway.

Why are the non-standard realizations of (AI) and (AU), although salient, so resistant to change? It is obvious that neither the objective nor the subjective criteria for salience can explain this result. Their non-accommodation contrasts sharply with the enormous change in the variable (P/T), which is slightly less salient still according to the objective criteria discussed in section 2. The important difference, it seems to us, is the (exclusive) lexicalization of (AI)/ (AU). Thus, as a *first result*, we may note that lexicalization can override the effect of all other criteria. Although lexicalized variables are salient, they are not *ipso facto* given up early. In the case of USV, they rather seem to be particularly sheltered from loss, a result which is supported by the behaviour of another purely lexical variable, i.e. std. *nicht* ~ USV[10] *ni*. The USV form, although clearly salient according to all critera, is only reduced by 16% over two years (cf. Barden and Großkopf 1998: 95ff). It must remain an open question, however, whether it is lexicalization as such which is responsible for this sheltering effect. Possibly, lexicalization functions only as a catalyst for the relatively positive prestige the vernacular realizations of (AI) and (AU) enjoy today among the Saxonian speakers and elsewhere. This relatively positive prestige in turn may be due to the fact that the same monophthongs are a feature of the Berlin city vernacular (cf. Schlobinski 1987), a variety clearly more prestigious than USV.

We would like to stress in this context that lexicalization may have the opposite effect, i.e. of enhancing dialect accommodation, if dialect *acquisition* is the issue (rather than dialect loss). We mention just one example for this effect. Figure 8 shows that the moderate loss of the (lexicalized) USV realizations of std. *auch* (= variable (AU)) is accompanied by direct accommodation of the equally lexicalized corresponding forms for std. *auch* in the non-standard varieties of the receiving area, i.e. /au/ in the city dialect of Constance, and /aː/ in the city dialect of Saarbrücken. Both seem to be highly salient and are picked up early by our informants. So in this case, in contrast to the case of dialect loss (indirect
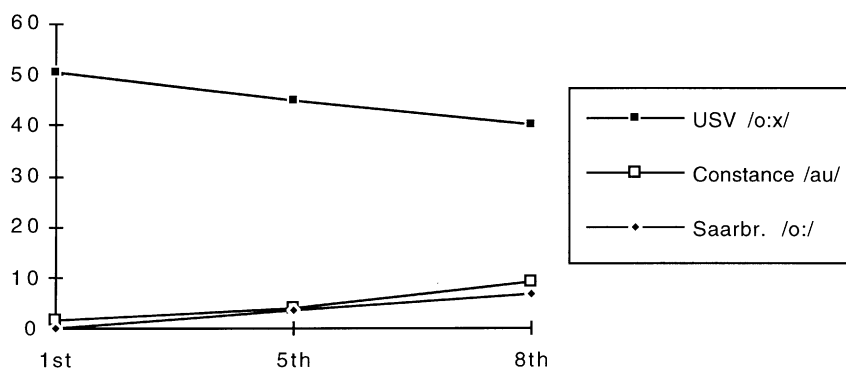
Figure 8: Percentage of non-standard realizations of std. *auch* over time (5th interview after 1 year, 8th interview after 2 years)

accommodation), lexicalization enhances salience and, as predicted, long-term dialect accommodation.

The large degree of loss in the strong vernacular forms of velarized (A:) is not predicted by the criteria for salience either. However, it conforms with the high sensitivity of this variable to style. Strong forms of (A:) are given up in reading, notwithstanding the otherwise low salience of this variable. The fact that (A:) is not merging or splitting and therefore not a phonemic variable seems to be entirely irrelevant. This leads to a second result: subjective and objective salience clearly do not always coincide. The subjective parameters outweigh the objective ones in the relative ranking of loss of strong vernacular forms in (A:) – where it is greater than predicted – and (CH) – where it is less than predicted.

The dominance of subjective over objective criteria for salience receives additional support from the behaviour of the weak (or intermediate) vernacular forms (in which case phonemicity plays no role). Their relative loss can be explained by subjective criteria for salience only.

7. CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this article, we asked the following questions:

1. Can salience be defined such as to make the notion predictive of long-term dialect accommodation?
2. Can perceived (subjective) salience be explained in objective (structural-phonological or phonetic) terms?

The results of our study suggest that the answer to the first question is 'yes' (with qualifications), but to the second question it must be no.

In section 2, we referred to Schirmunski's criterion of lexicalization and

argued that his view, according to which lexicalized variables are both acquired and lost early, cannot be maintained. Loss and acquisition, we maintained against Schirmunski, should not be treated equally. We also argued that salience is a necessary but insufficient condition for dialect loss and acquisition. While the notion of salience implies that a linguistic variable is socially and interactionally significant in some way or other, it does not indicate the attitudinal polarity (positive or negative) of this significance, let alone its precise 'ideological' value. Our results offer empirical support for these claims and criticisms. As our longitudinal study shows, lexicalized variables may be particularly sheltered from loss.

In our study, objective criteria for salience did not play a role in the loss of non-lexicalized features, as long as only the strong vernacular forms were considered. These forms were lost rapidly for *all* the variables investigated (over the two years of our investigation) but particularly for the stigmatized variable (P/T) and (A:), less for (O:) or even (CH). Particularly in the latter case, loss of the strong forms did not always result in the adoption of standard forms, but gave rise to an intermediate variety of 'attenuated' USV. Subjective salience, however, proved to be an important explanation for the loss of intermediate (weak vernacular) forms. Here, more salient variables were given up faster than less salient ones.

Subjective and objective parameters in determining salience are therefore not mutually predictive. While lexicalization is an important structural (objective) factor in determining salience, but cannot be used independently of subjective criteria to predict dialect loss or acquisition, phonemicity in the sense of phoneme splits turned out to be irrelevant in our study. Rather, differences in salience beyond lexicalization were better explained by subjective factors such as stereotyping, usage in style switches, and representation in writing by lay dialect writers.

The decisive relevance of the lexicon is in line with phonological theories such as Lexical Phonology or Natural Phonology, but also with dialectological models such as Bidialectal Phonology (Moosmüller 1988; Auer 1990, 1995). All these models draw a fundamental line between lexical phonological regularities on the one hand (including input switch rules/rules of correspondence in Bidialectal Phonology) which have to be learned word by word, and pre-/post-lexical regularities (redundancy rules/allegro rules) which refer to classes of segments or environments. Our selection of non-lexical phonological variables did not include context-sensitive (post-lexical) backgrounding processes (such as assimilations or deletions) but only context-free segmental features of USV (pre-lexical or redundancy rules). The aforementioned theories would additionally predict that postlexical processes should be less salient than lexical regularities, a prediction which remains to be tested.

NOTES

1. Research on this project was funded by a grant from the Fritz-Thyssen-Stiftung, which is gratefully acknowledged here.
2. Alternative definitions of the phonemic level of representation are possible of course. For instance, defining phonemes as 'sound intentions' as did Baudouin de Courtenay (1895), Sapir (1933) and, more recently, Stampe (1972/1979) would suggest grouping phonemicity with subjective parameters.
3. Trudgill is not the only dialectologist who has used phonemicity as a criterion for salience of course. An (unsuccessful) attempt to redefine Schirmunski's 'primary' vs. 'secondary' features in terms of 'phonemic' vs. 'subphonemic' variables was also made by Reiffenstein (1976). An attempt to define them in terms of mergers and splits is found in Trost (1965) and was developed further by Munske (1983).
4. USV also has non-rounded mid front vowels instead of std. German /œ/ and /øː/. Because of their comparatively low frequency they were not taken into account in the quantitative investigation.
5. Centralization is a general feature of the USV vowel system. However, its effects are most prominent in the long back vowels which, for that reason, were used for a sociolinguistic index only.
6. Lenition of the third unvoiced stop in USV, i.e. /k/, is exceedingly rare in our data. Therefore we decided not to include it in the quantification of this variable.
7. There is indirect support for this analysis of speech styles in a study by Lausberg (1993) on vernacular features in conversation vs. interview by local speakers in an area near Cologne (Erp). This is a Rheno-Franconian (Ripuarian) dialect area in which some of the USV features happen to be present as well. According to this study, the velarized, non-phonemic variant [ɔː] for std. [aː] is used in 88.8% of all possible contexts in conversational speech, but only in 11.3% in the interview. In contrast, coronalization shows no sensitivity to speech style. While coronalized [ʃ] is used in 100% of the possible contexts in the conversation, the percentage for the interview style is only slightly lower at 97% (cf. Lausberg 1993: 45).
8. In the written texts, this variable extends to (K) as well, cf. note 6.
9. Again, the velar stop is included. This stereotype of USV is old and commonly known by all Germans. In Thomas Mann's novel *Doktor Faustus*, to give just one example, a servant/devil in Leipzig introduces himself as a tourist guide with 'a smattering of English and French, satanously spoken, peaudiful puilding and antiquidé exdrème-ment indéressant'. The devil's dialect contains both the typical Saxonian lenitions and hypercorrect fortitions.
10. The realization of the sentence negation as *ni* is restricted to Dresden, a fact which further supports its salience (cf. the discussion in section 2 above).

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