

## Abstract

Grönberg, Anna Gunnarsdotter, *Ungdomar och dialekt i Alingsås*. Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 2004. 394 s. (Nordistica Gothoburgensia. 27.) Doktorsavhandling i nordiska språk. Institutionen för svenska språket, Göteborgs universitet.

*Young people and dialect in a small town in West Sweden*. Doctoral dissertation in Scandinavian Languages. Department of Swedish Language, Göteborg University. 2004. 394 pp.

This thesis presents a study of sociolinguistic variation among students from five municipalities, all attending an upper secondary school in Alingsås, a town of 25,000, northeast of Göteborg, Sweden. The material consists of recorded interviews with 97 students.

The informants are categorized according to social variables representing different aspects of background and identity: Sex, type of study programmes (vocational, intermediate, preparatory for university), demogeographical areas and Alingsås neighbourhoods (divided on the basis of urbanization and socio-economic factors), and lifestyle based on two-dimensional mapping (concerning taste, leisure, mobility, plans for the future, etc.). The lifestyle analysis both complements and includes traditional sociolinguistic variables.

Eight phonological and lexical variables are analyzed. The variants are found to be associated with traditional local dialect, regional and supraregional standard, Göteborg vernacular, general and Göteborg youth language.

Correlations with demogeographical area generally show a pattern going from southwest to northeast (along the E20 highway and the railway from Göteborg). One area does not fit into the continuum, in Sollebrunn (NW of Alingsås), where particularly female informants tend to use standard and innovations to a higher extent than informants in Herrljunga, which is situated the same distance from Göteborg (but NE of Alingsås).

Gender is the second most important social factor, in two different ways. There are general differences in linguistic behaviour between sexes, but also differences between groups when gender is combined with study programme and lifestyle. There are major differences from one social group to another when it comes to expressing gendered identity through linguistic means.

Key words: sociolinguistic variation; phonology; dialect levelling; language change; regionalization; urbanization; youth; upper secondary school; high school; youth language; sex and gender; geographic mobility; demogeography; lifestyle.

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Distribution:  
ACTA UNIVERSITATIS GOTHOBURGENSIS  
P.O. Box 222  
SE-405 30 GÖTEBORG, Sweden

Elanders Infologistics AB, Göteborg 2004

ISBN 91-7346-506-2  
ISSN 0078-1134