

# **Demotisation of the standard variety or destandardisation? The changing status of German in late modernity (with special reference to south-western Germany)**

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## **DESTANDARDISATION AND DEMOTISATION: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS**

Recently, Tore Kristiansen (MS) has suggested that the development of European standard languages in late modernity can be characterised by two alternative developments. He calls these two developments destandardisation and demotisation, the latter being more widespread than the former, and defines them as follows:

(i) Destandardisation: We will use this term to refer to a possible development whereby the established standard language loses its position as the one and only ‘best language’. (...) Such a development would be equal to a radical weakening, and eventual abandonment, of the ‘standard ideology’ itself. (...).

(ii) Demotisation: We choose this term (...) to signal the possibility that the ‘standard ideology’ as such stays intact while the valorisation of ways of speaking changes. (...) The belief that there is, and should be, a ‘best language’ is not abandoned (Kristiansen 2003), but the idea of what this ‘best language’ is, or sounds like, changes. (...) Demotisation is [the] revalorisation, ideological upgrading, of [a] ‘low-status’ language to ‘best-language’ status. (...) To the extent that this upgrading is linked to the development of the media universe, as the new and dominant public space of late modernity, one might argue that the media are instrumental in creating, ideologically, a new standard for ‘language excellence’, and also instrumental in its elaboration (spread to new usages) and implementation (spread to new users).

Both destandardisation and demotisation, according to Kristiansen’s view, weaken the status of the *traditional* standard languages which emerged, became codified, and spread throughout the general population in the age of modernity, i.e. – for linguists – from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is compatible – as Kristiansen argues – with Giddens’ (1991) conception of late modernity as an age in which traditional values and authorities are no longer accepted. However, only demotisation is compatible with the other central ingredients of that particular economic-political-cultural mixture of developments which make up late modernity, including the prevalence of a certain kind of media culture which creates and disseminates ways of speaking characterised both by supra-regionality (even globalisation) and informality. Kristiansen sees the sociolinguistic – structural and ideological – trends in Denmark with regard to the Danish standard variety as prototypical of demotisation, whereas Norway exemplifies the opposite extreme of destandardisation. He also argues that the ‘Danish model’ (demotisation) is more typical of the European trend in general, while the ‘Norwegian model’ (destandardisation) is marginal.

Kristiansen’s proposal is based on his extensive research on language attitudes in Denmark (cf. Kristiansen 2001, 2003, among others) and against the background of a sociolinguistic situation in which the traditional dialects are no longer used by younger people, and regional ways of speaking are largely reduced to differences in prosody (see Gregersen this volume). This indicates a strong standard ideology (which we will discuss in more detail below). In contrast, Norway is known for the strong position of the dialects in everyday and even formal situations, and an ideology which favours regional ways of speaking (local dialects, regional dialects) over the use of a spoken standard variety which does not exist in the same way as it exists in Denmark (cf. Røyneland 2009; Sandøy this volume). In this paper, we will discuss

the applicability of the demotisation/destandardisation distinction to the situation in the German language area. More specifically, we will focus on the south-western part of Germany (the state of Baden-Württemberg), for which empirical data have been analysed in detail by the second author (cf. Spiekermann 2005, 2008). We will start with a discussion of the terms demotisation and destandardisation, and then zoom in on southwest Germany, presenting some results on the changes of the standard language there.

### DEMOTISATION OF THE STANDARD VARIETY AND DESTANDARDISATION: OPPOSITE DEVELOPMENTS?

Although the first two letters of the two terms suggest some kind of parallel, *demotisation* and *destandardisation* refer to two different processes. If a variety (such as the standard) becomes demotivated, it becomes popular (*demōs* = *populus* ‘people’), i.e. it is used by the masses of the people. This, as we shall see, can imply both large-scale structural and attitudinal reorganisations. The term itself, however, does not imply any kind of strengthening or weakening of the status of that variety. ‘Destandardisation’, on the other hand, denotes some kind of structural dissolution or attitudinal debasement of the (once more focussed or more esteemed) standard variety. In theory, then, destandardisation does not exclude the demotivation of the standard variety, and vice versa. We argue that both terms are useful for the description of the European standard languages, but they should not be seen as opposite developments.

In (German) historical sociolinguistics, the term *demotivation* usually refers to the spread of literacy in the educated classes of (late) medieval and early modern societies (cf. e.g. Maas 1985; Knoop 1988). Kristiansen, however, links its definition to a short article by Mattheier (1997) – *Über Destandardisierung, Umstandardisierung und Standardisierung in modernen europäischen Standardsprachen* ‘About destandardisation, restandardisation and standardisation in modern European standard languages’ – in which he uses it (for the first time) to refer to the situation of the European standard languages in Europe (1997: 7). Pedersen (2009a, b) has applied Mattheier’s ideas to the Danish situation. Let us have a brief look at Mattheier’s and Pedersen’s uses of the term ‘demotivation’ (of the standard language) first.

Mattheier observes that in some European countries, the codified standard language undergoes a loss of prestige, which also implies a loss of *Autoritätsloyalität*, i.e. an unwillingness to accept the standard as prescribed by the authorities. He links this tendency to the spread of the spoken standard language to all layers of society in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, while its original codification was the work of small circles of intellectuals, and its acceptance in the 19<sup>th</sup> century restricted to the middle classes. The new popularisation turned the standard variety from a middle-class symbol of national unity into a ‘multi-functional new standard’, ideally mastered by all members of a language community and used in all ‘socio-communicative constellations’ (Mattheier 1997: 6). As the standard spreads across speakers and situations, it takes away domains of use from the older oral varieties, the dialects, i.e. the demotivation of the oral standard has as its necessary corollary the disappearance of the dialects. On the other hand, the old standard is also bound to change while it becomes demotivated. It develops the kind of internal variability which is necessary to serve its manifold functions, and becomes stylistically and socially stratified (Trudgill’s ‘reallocation’, 1986). It even shows diatopic variation, thereby displaying the regional affiliation of its speakers as well. Mattheier makes another important point with regard to the demotivation of the oral standard: once it was no longer under the control of the bourgeoisie and its normative institutions, for the first time in its existence it ceased to be influenced by the written standard language. On the contrary, for the first time, the opposite happened: the written language began to be influenced by the spoken language (p. 8).

Since normative institutions such as schools still cling to the traditional, non-variable codified standard, a clash between authoritative norms and factual standard use emerges as a con-

sequence of this demotisation. The language communities may react in two different ways. If the codified standard has a strong position (as Mattheier claims for Spain and France), all divergence from it is stigmatised as ‘mistakes’. If a society follows a usage-based idea of a standard, the standard will be adapted and variation within the standard will be accepted (as Mattheier claims for England and presumably Germany). Note that Mattheier uses the term *destandardisation* to refer to these developments which *result from* the demotisation of the oral standard variety.

The short sketch given by Mattheier is fully compatible with what we know about the development of the spoken standard variety of German. The written standard was firmly established and codified throughout the German-speaking countries by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but only a small section of the population (the educated, urban bourgeoisie) used it for oral communication, and presumably only in very few, often official situations. This spoken standard usually (i.e., in most areas) mingled standard morphology and phonology (where coded by orthography) with dialectal phonetics, i.e. it was still highly variable in geographical terms. It was also deeply influenced by writing, and since only few people used it on few occasions (in addition to their dialect, or a foreign language such as French), this was unproblematic (cf. Schmidt 2005): the oral standard could ‘afford’ to be close to the written language from which it had originated and to which it was still linked in many ways (for instance, through reading texts aloud). Remnants of the regional standard varieties of spoken German that emerged in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and assumed some normative status in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century are still reflected today in ways of speaking that are considered non-standard, and even regiolectal (cf. Mihm 2000). For instance, they are documented in recordings of the regional standards as spoken in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in those areas of Germany, Austria and Switzerland in which the dialects were still relatively strong at that time (i.e. the southern part of Germany, see next section).

In these regional standards spoken, e.g., in Baden-Württemberg, the influence of the *Schriftsprache* is as easily detected as the influence of the dialectal (Alemannic) substrate. One example of how the oral regional standard norm was influenced by the written standard is the non-reduction of non-accented /e/ in native affixes which, according to orthoepic (and northern German spoken standard) pronunciation, should be reduced to schwa. An example is the participle prefix *ge-* (*ge+sagt*, *ge+standen*, *ge+nommen*, ‘said’, ‘stood’, ‘taken’, etc.). In the High German dialects (e.g. in Bavarian and Alemannic), the vowel in this prefix is elided altogether (cf. Bav. *gsagt*, *gstandn*, *gnumma*), but in the ‘elevated’ style typical of 19<sup>th</sup>-century middle class and 20<sup>th</sup>-century lower class standard speakers, it is pronounced as a full [e]. This is because these full forms were only learned at school together with the writing system. They were therefore pronounced in a way which made them maximally distinct from the dialectal zero vowels and as close as possible to the written letter <e> (which in isolation is pronounced [e:] in primary school). Today, we observe the opposite tendencies of these spelling pronunciations, as a consequence of the new role of demotivated writing in the new media (social networks, e-mail, text messages, online auctions). Here, function (and sometimes performance, creativity and identity-management) takes precedence over correctness. Although visual-graphic innovations are observed in this kind of writing, its modelling on the spoken (standard or dialect) vernacular is obvious. However, oral-based writing practices also seem to be spilling over more and more into written text genres in which normativity used to prevail. An example is the increasing number of phonetically-induced reductive writings (still considered mistakes) for the suffix *-en* after hiatus, stem-final /b/ and nasals. Thus, traditional (and orthographic) *mein+en*, *hau+en*, *hab+en* ‘to mean, to hit, to have’ are written <mein>, <haun>, <ham> which is exactly the way they are spoken in modern Standard German.

Pedersen (2009a) has taken up Mattheier’s notion of demotivation which, in her opinion, is applicable to Denmark as well as Germany (2009a: 162f.). As Denmark belongs to the group of countries with a usage-based type of standard ideology, the norms of the standard are

adapted to the new spoken vernacular. She also notes that in Denmark as in Germany, for the first time in its history, the spoken standard is no longer influenced by the written standard (also cf. Pedersen 2009b). Pedersen also underlines that the demoticised standard has found a new medium to ensure its spread, since written texts have lost that function: the mass media. There is, however, one important aspect in which Pedersen's account of the modern Danish situation differs from Mattheier's account: she insists that the recent Danish developments instantiated another step in the *standardisation* of Danish, whereas Mattheier speaks of *de-standardisation*. As we have seen, the demotisation of a standard variety does not imply *eo ipso* its destandardisation or standardisation, as the two terms refer to different phenomena. In order to come to a better understanding of the problem, we now turn to the definition of destandardisation (and standardisation).

*Destandardisation* can mean a variety of things, depending on what we mean by 'standard'. In Auer (2005) a definition of standard is used which refers to a variety (not a norm) that has three features: (1) It is a common language, i.e. it is valid across a territory in which various regional (non-standard) varieties are present. (2) It is an H-variety, i.e. one which is taught in school, used for writing and in formal, public situations, and therefore has official prestige. (3) It is at least to some degree codified (which doesn't necessarily imply the existence of a state-administered codex). These three features can be present to a greater or lesser degree, i.e. standardness (of a spoken variety) is a gradable notion:

(1) A (spoken) variety's 'standardness' is maximal if it covers all of a language area (the area in which the regional varieties can be perceived as being structurally related, e.g. dialects) in terms of its normative reach, i.e. speakers in this area accept it as the appropriate way of speaking in formal, public situations (even though they may not be fully competent in it themselves). This defines the geographical dimension of standardisation. As a consequence, standardisation means that a certain variety widens its reach. Destandardisation, then, means that within a language area, certain regions leave the roof of the established standard variety and establish their own standard instead (or remain without any standard variety, i.e. roofless).<sup>1</sup>

(2) A variety's standardness increases with its official prestige. Accordingly, standardisation means that the status of the standard is enhanced. Since we are speaking of overt prestige here, this implies that speakers of the standard variety are considered to be more intelligent, powerful, authoritative, etc. than speakers of the non-standard varieties (such as the dialects or regional dialects). In Europe, the official prestige of the standard is often connected with its being a symbol of national unity. In this sense, its prestige is usually enhanced if the leading classes accept it as 'their' national symbol of identity. Destandardisation in this sense means that the standard variety loses (official, overt) prestige.

(3) A variety's standardness increases with its internal consistency. As a consequence, standardisation increases to the degree that internal variation is eliminated (this includes but is not restricted to geographical variability). Destandardisation from this view refers to processes of increased variability within the standard variety. It may imply that several regional alternates are all equally accepted as norm-conforming (i.e. adequate for use in formal situations, and supporting the prestige of its speakers), or that former non-standard forms (e.g. those used by the working classes) are promoted to alternative standard forms.

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<sup>1</sup> An indirect way of measuring the status of a national standard variety along this dimension is to look at its impact on ongoing processes of change in the dialects or regional dialects. Maintenance of the old dialects and/or interdialectal contact-induced change (e.g. levelling) without any influence of the standard is obviously a corollary and therefore a symptom of a weak standard, while vertical advergence towards the standard is a corollary and therefore a symptom of a strong standard (cf. Auer 1997; Auer, Baumann and Schwarz in press).

Note that there is one process which does not count as destandardisation according to this model, namely language change which Mattheier calls *Umstandardisierung* ('restandardisation'). Like most cases of language change, it may imply variation, but this variation is temporary and transitional. Even though changes in the standard variety may promote former non-standard features to the level of accepted standard features, and even though these changes may come from below and imply the introduction of articulatory lenition in phonology ('sloppiness'), restandardisation is not destandardisation. It is simply language change, even though proponents of the older standard tend to evaluate it as a debasement of the old standard (and therefore negatively).

We can now come back to the situation in Germany and to the fate of the phonology and phonetics of the spoken German standard variety. Its codification came late (shortly before 1900), and its spread over the German language area at large ('implementation') took place in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century only. It was promoted by the new mass media and certainly also by the fascist formation of the state in the 30s and 40s. Before that, regional standards were used. However, we claim that this process was not yet completed in the second half of the century, i.e. despite the existence of a 'media standard' (the orthoepic variety agreed upon around 1900 was dubbed *Bühnenaussprache* ('stage pronunciation') not by chance when it was invented shortly before 1900, and then used in movies, radio broadcasts, and political speeches), there continued to exist a multitude of regional standard varieties. As the orthoepy was based on the northern standards (cf. Mihm 2007), the more southern standard varieties diverged most from it. Nevertheless, all regional standard varieties avoided the forced over-articulation which was characteristic of the nation-wide media standard (and justified in its use on stage and in the media at times of poor recording and transmission equipment). An example is the orthoepic realisation of /r/ in all positions as an apical [r], while the regional standards mostly realise coda-/r/ as a low schwa, and the uvular, sometimes fricative realisation of /r/ as [R] or [ʀ] is preferred over the older apical one. (The exact realisation is often a copy of the dominant substrate dialects.)

Around 1970, the situation changed, and a split occurred which reinforced the relevance of the state borders: the Austrian and Swiss German standards ceased to converge with the German German standard and formed their own norms, which are relatively well established today and are the reason why German is considered a polycentric language (but cf. Auer in press on the problems surrounding this term). Alsace and Luxembourg left the roof of the German standard entirely. Thus, the German language became destandardised with respect to its territorial reach. However, at the same time, standardisation within the national borders of Germany continued so that, at least for the younger generations, it is doubtful whether regional standards still exist (perhaps with the exception of Bavaria).<sup>2</sup> This modern standard is no longer the old media standard, i.e. it lacks the typical over-articulations. This means that despite the divergence of the German, Austrian and Swiss German spoken standard varieties, the trend within Germany continued toward standardisation; this standardisation implies language change, as the old media standard is no longer in use and has been replaced by a new standard (which, of course, is also reinforced by its use in the media, but is by no means restricted to them).

The second dimension of (de)standardisation, i.e. changes on the attitudinal level, is more difficult to evaluate. There can be no doubt that the German standard has lost much of its symbolic value of national unity in public discourse. Other than in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Germany's unity is a reality today, and is not perceived as threatened, and it seems that the nation does not need strong symbols at all. It is simply taken for granted that the language of

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<sup>2</sup> We do not question the fact that, at a sufficient level of phonetic detail, it is still possible to tell young standard speakers of Standard German in Germany apart, but the cues that can be used for this localisation are no longer the traditional dialect features (see below).

Germany is Standard German. The picture is slightly different in Austria and Switzerland. Particularly in Austria, the new, Austrian standard is increasingly used as a symbol of national identity and as a way of distancing Austria from Germany. In Switzerland, the symbol of national unity is multilinguality and multidialectality, i.e. the status of the Swiss German standard is different. Since it does not fulfil the function of a national symbol, its prestige is lower and seems to have deteriorated over the past decades. This surely implies an (attitudinal) process of destandardisation.

Despite the disappearance of the old discourse of the unity of Germany being based on its common language (a discourse that went hand in hand with the discourse of German nation building), the prestige of (spoken) Standard German is nevertheless high. There is hardly any empirical research on this matter, but the national spoken standard which prevails today seems to be more a symbolic expression of a modern, young lifestyle than of the German nation. First results of experimental studies to elicit the covert prestige of Standard German by Svenstrup (2011) indicate that the regional standard is evaluated negatively (by young southwest German speakers), even if they speak it themselves. This negative evaluation applies to all dimensions tested, i.e. the ‘superiority’ dimension as well as the ‘dynamism’ dimension. This issue needs further research, but it seems fair to conclude that although the ideology attached to the standard variety in Germany may have changed, the prestige of the standard has not suffered.

Finally, we turn to the question of variability within the spoken standard variety. Here we can resort to our empirical data and report on a diachronic comparison, taking southwest Germany as the prototypical case of a region in which the dialects used to be strong and today the traditional dialects are under strong pressure from the standard. In the final section, we will again take up the question of destandardisation in German and link it back to the demotivation of the standard variety.

### **CHANGES IN THE SOUTHWEST GERMAN STANDARD VARIETY IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY FROM A DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVE**

The following discussion of variability and change in the southwest German standard variety (as spoken in Baden-Württemberg) is a summary of Spiekermann (2008). The study is based on a comparison of two corpora of rather formal interview data (i.e. done by a standard-speaking linguist who interviews an informant he does not know personally).

The older corpus is a subset of the so-called Pfeffer corpus which was recorded in 1961 (and is available from the Institut für Deutsche Sprache – IDS – in Mannheim) (cf. Pfeffer and Lohnes 1984). Following the initiative of the American Germanist Alan Pfeffer, the recordings were made in 57 urban centres in the German-speaking area. The sample is mixed with regard to age, gender and educational background. Pfeffer’s intention was to document German in toto, i.e. not only Standard German, but also local ways of speaking (dialects, regional dialects). We selected those recordings in which the speaker was (a) able to speak Standard German and (b) intended to speak it. Therefore, only those southwest German recordings were used in which the speaker had a higher level of education (*Abitur* or higher) and which were classified by Pfeffer and his colleagues as ‘standard speakers’. This led to the inclusion of 29 recordings from Freiburg (5 informants), Heidelberg (5), Karlsruhe (6), Mannheim (4), Stuttgart (5) and Tübingen (4). All these urban centres are located in Baden-Württemberg, but their dialectal substrates vary: Mannheim, Heidelberg and Karlsruhe are part of the South Franconian dialect zone, while the remaining locations are in the Alemannic dialect zone (Low Alemannic in the case of Freiburg, Swabian in the case of Stuttgart and Tübingen).

The modern corpus (called SW-standard corpus and collected by the second author in 2001–2003) was chosen so as to make comparison possible. It consists of interviews with 34

male and female speakers of different age groups from the same urban centres (Freiburg (7), Heidelberg (6), Karlsruhe (4), Mannheim (6), Stuttgart (5) and Tübingen (6)). All speakers were teachers or would-be teachers.

For a German speaker who is able to adapt his or her language at all, the situation of an interview with an unknown researcher is clearly one in which it is appropriate to use the standard. We can assume that all informants, both in the older and the recent data set, aimed at the standard. Although this ensures the closest-possible comparability of the two corpora, there are some factors that cannot be controlled. In particular, it is obvious that the speech activity of the ‘interview’ has changed over the decades. Sitting in front of a microphone and being recorded on tape was a different social encounter in the early 1960s than it is today, and constituted a more formal type of interaction. (This was due to the obtrusiveness of the recording equipment in the 60s.) All other things being equal, we would therefore expect the speakers in the older data to more closely approximate the standard and avoid non-standard features. However, as we will show, the difference between the two corpora is not the amount of non-standard features but their quality: i.e., it is not the overall frequency of these non-standard features that has changed but their type. This cannot be explained on the basis of the ‘formality’ of the interview situation alone.

**Table 1:** Overview of the two corpora

	Date			Speakers
Parts of the Pfeffer-corpus (IDS Mannheim)	1961	29 recordings taken in six towns in southwest Germany	each about 12 minutes	Different ages Different genders Highly educated people
Parts of the Südwest (SW)-Standard-corpus (Freiburg)	2001–2003	34 recordings taken in six towns in southwest Germany	each about 20 minutes	Two different age groups Different genders (future) teachers

Twenty-five phonological features were selected for investigation (Spiekermann 2008). The features represent three types of non-standard forms: (a) regional forms (usually from the dialect substrate), (b) allegro forms of the spoken standard and (c) hypercorrections. The following discussion will focus on regional and allegro forms only.

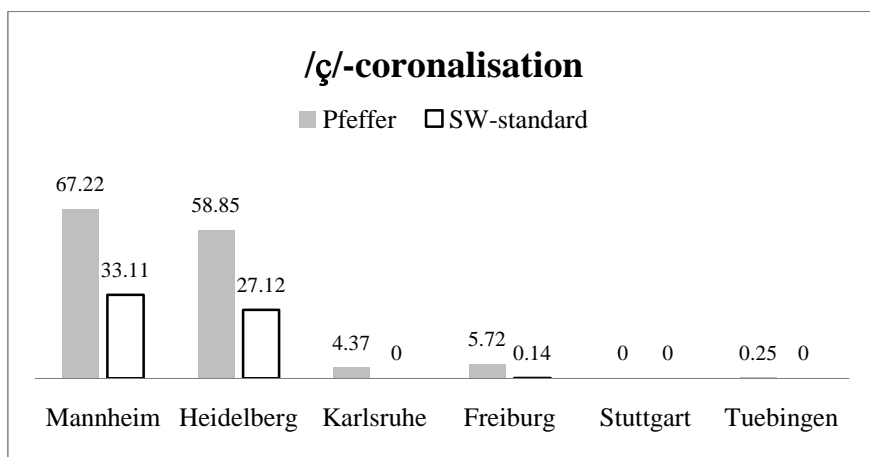
The following dialectal features (or: ‘primary substandard forms’, Albrecht 2005) are discussed in the present paper:

1. coronalisation of /ç/ in coda position after front vowels, as in *dich* ‘you’ (ACC): [dɪʃ] vs. std. [dɪç];
2. lowering of /e:/, as in *lesen* ‘to read’: [ˈlɛːzən] vs. std. [ˈleːzən];
3. palatalisation of /s/ before a tautosyllabic and tautomorphemic obstruent, as in *Fest* ‘feast’: [fɛʃt] vs. std. [fɛst];
4. lenis realisation (lenition) of intervocalic fortis consonants, as in *hatte* ‘had’: [ˈhɑdə] vs. std. [ˈhatə];
5. raising of the vowel /a/ in *das*, i.e. [des] vs. std. [das], in the homophonous forms of the neuter pronoun, neuter article and demonstrative pronoun.

The variables are all highly frequent in the dialects and regional dialects; coronalisation, palatalisation and lenition are regular (post-lexical) phonological processes, while the lowering of /e:/ is a dialectal merger of std. /e:/ und /ɛ:/ and therefore a prelexical process. The raising of /a/ is lexicalised, but concerns a high-frequency grammatical element. The features 1–3 are

highly salient (for Middle German, Swabian and Alemannic as a whole, respectively), whereas features 4 and 5 are not.

The following figures (1)–(5) show that the relative frequencies of the regional forms 1–4 all follow a general tendency when the two corpora are compared: the dialectal substrate features are realised less often today. However, feature 5 is exceptional.<sup>3</sup> Let us look at them in turn.



**Figure 1:** The coronalisation of /ç/ in speakers from six urban centres in Baden-Württemberg in 1961 (Pfeffer = grey) and in 2002–3 (SW-standard = white)

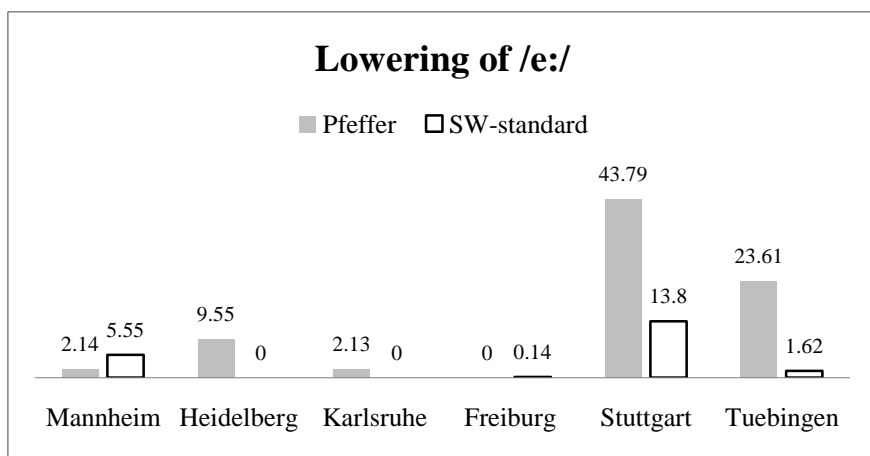
The coronalisation of /ç/ is a feature of the rather small Southern Franconian dialect area in the north of Baden-Württemberg (Lausberg 1993: 150), i.e. it is not usually found in Alemannic (including Swabian). It is ‘backed’, however, by a large area north of Baden-Württemberg, in which the same process is found. In accordance with our claim that in the middle of the last century the German standard language was still regionalized to a high degree, and that the intended standard speech of most members of the educated middle classes showed many regional traces (despite the existence of a national orthoepy), the interviewees in Mannheim and Heidelberg use a considerable amount of coronalized /ç/ in the Pfeffer-corpus of 1961 (grey columns in the diagram). In the other four cities in which the dialect substrate has no coronalisation, it is almost absent, which is of course also predictable. However, in the 2002–3 data set, the relative frequency of /ç/-coronalisation in Mannheim and Heidelberg is reduced by about half. This means that despite the more formal character of an interview in the 1960s, the speakers in the modern data are much closer to the standard than those 40 years earlier.

The same tendency is found in the second variable considered here, the lowering of /e:/. This is a typical feature of the Swabian dialect, i.e. a more restricted area in Baden-Württemberg prototypically associated with the capital (Stuttgart) and its surroundings (Tübingen). It is absent in the non-Swabian Alemannic dialect area (Freiburg) as well as in the Franconian area.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Twelve dialectal substrate features were investigated in total; for details, see Spiekermann (2008: 228). Of these features, 10 show the same pattern as 1–4; all differences between the two corpora are – in nine cases at 0.001-level, in the case of variable 2 only at 0.01-level – significant. One feature (the realisation of std. *nicht* ‘not’ as *ned*) showed the same tendency as 5 but did not reach significance.

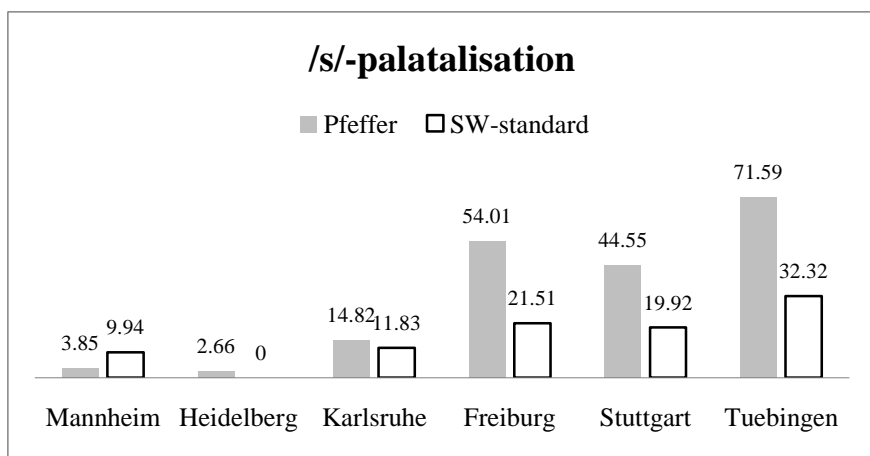
<sup>4</sup> The relatively high number of lowerings in Heidelberg can be seen as a spread of this regional standard feature into neighbouring areas in which it has no dialectal basis, and thus as an indicator of the strength of the regional standard variety, a central feature of the (at the time) well-known *Honoratiorenschwäbisch* (‘Swabian of the dignitaries’) which enjoyed considerable prestige.





**Figure 2:** The lowering of /e:/ in speakers from six urban centres in Baden-Württemberg in 1961 (Pfeffer = grey) and in 2002–3 (SW-standard = white)

As predicted, the speakers from Tübingen and particularly Stuttgart showed high rates of /e:/-lowering in the 1960s. Forty years later, the feature has almost disappeared in educated Tübingen speakers and has been reduced to around one third of its original value in Stuttgart. This is a dramatic change within one generation.

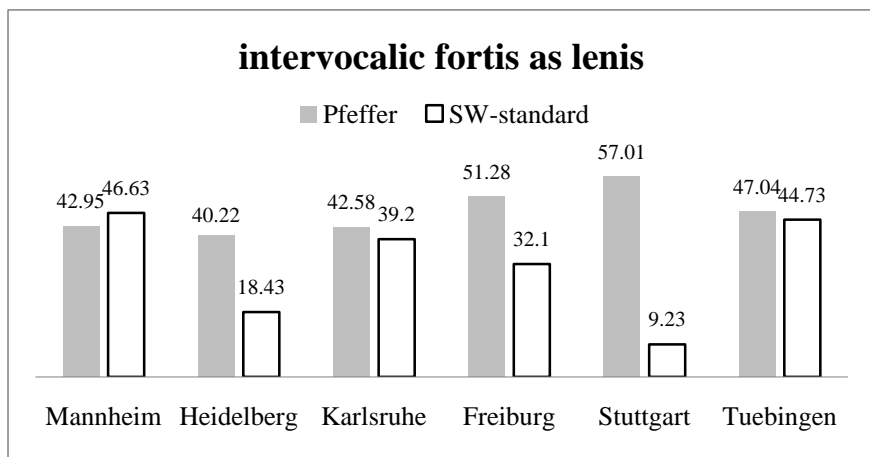


**Figure 3:** Palatalisation of /s/ before coda obstruents in speakers from six urban centres in Baden-Württemberg in 1961 (Pfeffer = grey) and in 2002–3 (SW-standard = white)

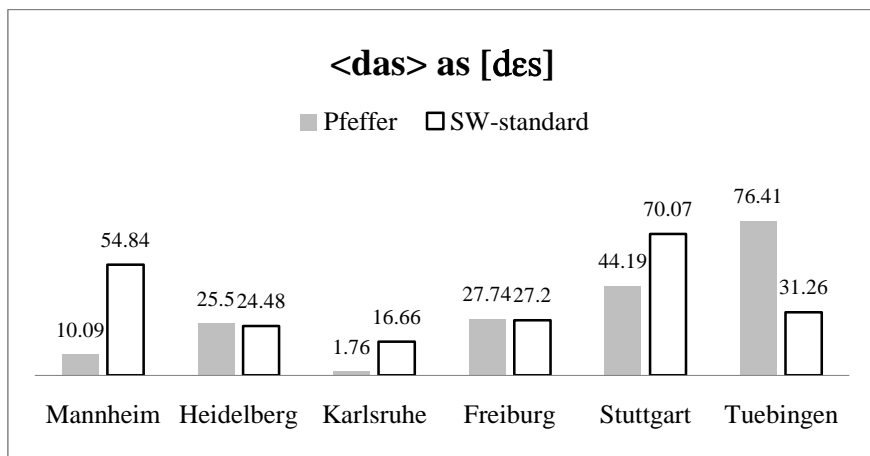
The palatalisation of /s/ is a typical feature of the Alemannic area as a whole, and is often associated with the state of Baden-Württemberg by outsiders. The feature is hard to suppress and one of the best candidates for a southwest German standard marker. However, comparison of the two data sets makes clear that the feature has become much less popular over the last decades. The Pfeffer data prove that palatalisation was indeed highly frequent in the three Alemannic cities of the corpus, where educated standard speakers in the early 60s used it, on average, in every second or even in two out of three possible environments. /s/-palatalisation is also found in the Franconian dialects of the Palatinate (Beckers 1980), which may explain its occurrence in Karlsruhe.<sup>5</sup> Compared to these data, the relative frequency of /s/-palatalisation has declined by at least half in all Alemannic cities, even though there remains a residue of some 20–30%.

<sup>5</sup> However, s-palatalisation is much less frequent here and it is almost absent in Mannheim and Heidelberg. An alternative explanation is that, as in the case of /e/-lowering, the feature was about to develop into a general feature of Baden-Württemberg Standard German, independent of its dialectal substrate.

The lenition of intervocalic fortis consonants is shown in Figure 4. This feature is typical of many Upper German (and even some Low German) dialects. It is therefore not particularly associated with Baden-Württemberg or any of its dialect areas. As we can see, this has a preserving effect. Although the ratio of lenited to non-lenited intervocalic stops decreases in most cities (particularly in Heidelberg, Freiburg and Stuttgart), no significant changes are found in Mannheim, Karlsruhe and Tübingen. The dialectal substrate cannot explain these differences. Rather, it seems that the feature is only selectively perceived as a regional feature and only some urban communities include this feature among the dialectal features that are to be avoided in Standard German.



**Figure 4:** Lenition of intervocalic stops in speakers from six urban centres in Baden-Württemberg in 1961 (Pfeffer = grey) and in 2002–3 (SW-standard = white)



**Figure 5:** Realisation of std. *das* (neuter definite article, demonstrative, pronoun) as *des* in speakers from six urban centres in Baden-Württemberg in 1961 (Pfeffer = grey) and in 2002–3 (SW-standard = white)

Finally, let us have a look at the form *des* instead of std. *das*. Here, the picture is different (see Figure 5). All in all, [des] is more frequent in the 2002–3 data (40.36 vs. 30.95%, a highly significant difference), and the breakdown into urban centres shows a chaotic distribution, with no changes in Heidelberg and Freiburg, an increase of the regional form in Mannheim, Karlsruhe and Stuttgart, and a decrease in Tübingen.

One possible explanation might be that *des* is widely spread in the German language area, particularly in the southern part, and is considered to be a typical feature of the colloquial German there (Mihm 2000) (cf. <http://www.philhist.uni-augsburg.de/lehrstuehle/germanistik/>

sprachwissenschaft/ada/runde\_2/f25a/). In any case, the form is not associated with any particular dialect area, and therefore cannot be considered a stereotype. A possible conclusion might therefore be that this form is no longer understood as a regional (let alone dialectal) form by many speakers, but rather as spoken standard.

As an intermediate summary, we can conclude that the more salient dialect features are, particularly when they are stereotypically associated with a dialect area, the more they recede in Standard German. The more enduring regional features in the standard varieties are low-saliency, high-reach ones.

We now turn to the second group of variables investigated, i.e. non-standard features that can be called *allegro* forms (or ‘secondary substandard forms’, Albrecht 2005). The features investigated under this heading are reductions or cliticised variants of standard forms (cf. Meinhold 1973; Dressler 1975). The following discussion concentrates on the phonological reductions of morphological markers or lexical items.<sup>6</sup> The following variables will be discussed:

1. deletion of the first pers. sg. suffix, e.g. *ich hol+e* [ho:lə] = *ich hol* ‘I fetch’;
2. final /t/-deletion in the copular form *ist* (‘is’) which is realised as [ɪs];
3. final /t/-deletion in the negative adverbial *nicht* ‘not’, which is realised as [nɪç];
4. cliticisation of the indefinite article *eine(n)*, which is realised as *ne(n)*.

All these *allegro* features can be found in standard speech in all parts of Germany.

This group of features behaves in exactly the opposite way as the regional substrate features discussed before: in all cases, we find a considerable *increase* in frequency when comparing the relative occurrences in the two corpora.

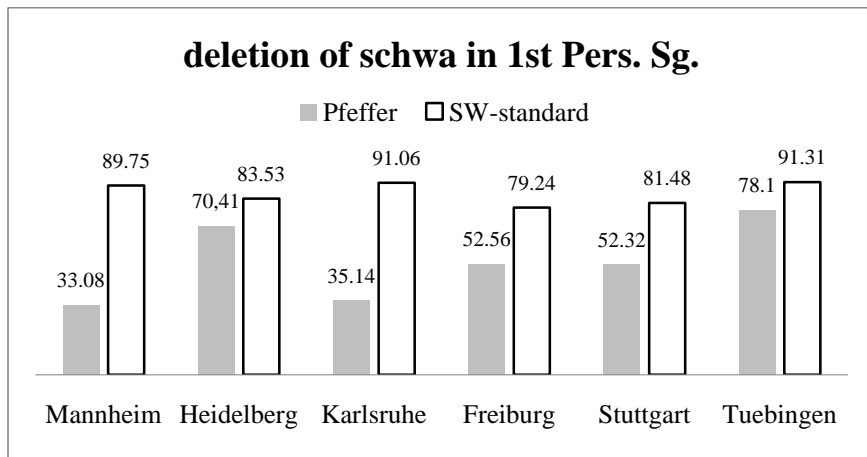
The frequency of the deletion of schwa in the first pers. sg. (Figure 6) oscillates between 79% and 91% in the SW-standard-corpus, while it was in the range of 33% to 78% in the Pfeffer corpus. It is fair to say that it must be regarded as the normal standard realisation today.

The same interpretation applies to final t-deletion in *ist* (Figure 7) and *nicht* (Figure 8). In the first case, the codified standard variant [ɪst] was the predominant form in the 1960s.<sup>7</sup> At that time, the deletion of final /t/ exceeded its preservation only in Heidelberg. In the forty years after, deletion tripled in Mannheim, Stuttgart, Tübingen and Freiburg. In Mannheim, it almost reaches 100% today and can be regarded as the only oral standard realisation.

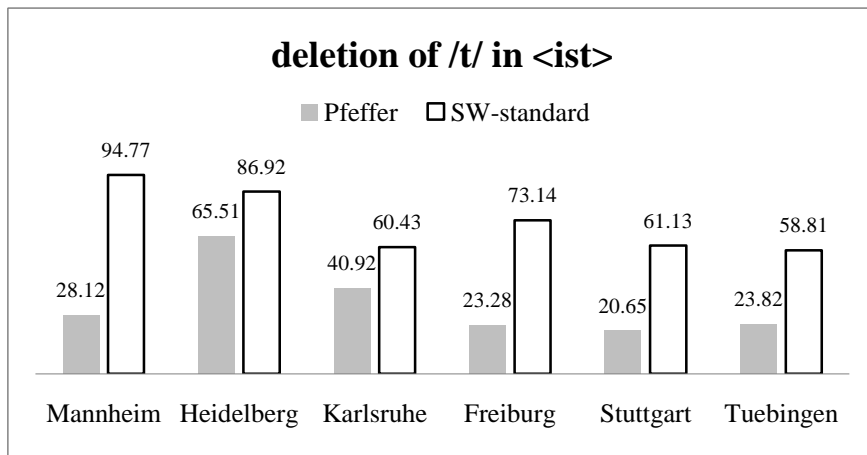
The changes in final /t/-deletion in the word *nicht* are even more remarkable (Figure 8). However, they need to be seen in the context of the fact that the old spoken standard had a regional alternate for *nicht*, i.e. *ned*. In the Pfeffer corpus this regional alternate was still moderately frequent (total of 15.78%), and it only became slightly less frequent in the new data set (13.2%). The *ned*-alternate was particularly frequent in Freiburg, Mannheim and Tübingen, and it was in Tübingen and Freiburg that its use decreased (cf. Table 2). However, the loss of the regional variant, where it occurred, did not result in an increase of traditional standard forms (*nicht*), since at the same time, the *allegro* standard form *nich* became much more popular. While in the Pfeffer corpus, the traditional form (with final /t/) was by far most frequent, in the 2002–3 data it is no longer dominant. The form which has replaced it is the *allegro* form.

<sup>6</sup> Other variables investigated in Spiekermann (2008) are the cliticisation of the pronoun *es* ‘it’, the prefix *ge-*, and the definite articles *der*, *die*, *das*. The number of realisations for these variables is extremely small in both corpora so that they are neglected here (cf. Spiekermann 2008: 229). All differences between the two corpora were significant at 0.001 level.

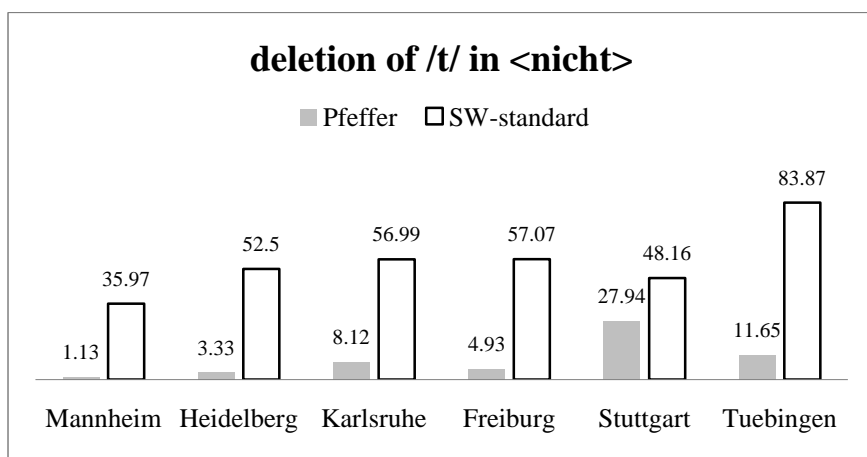
<sup>7</sup> The dialect variant [ɪʃ] (palatalisation of /s/ plus t-deletion) has been ignored in this count since s-palatalisation was discussed before. The form [ɪʃt] with t-preservation and s-palatalisation is well attested in the dialects but occurs only very rarely in the standard data.



**Figure 6:** Deletion of the first pers. sg. suffix /-e/ in speakers from six urban centres in Baden-Württemberg in 1961 (Pfeffer = grey) and in 2002–3 (SW-standard = white)



**Figure 7:** Final /t/-deletion in the copula form *ist* (third pers. sg. pres.) in speakers from six urban centres in Baden-Württemberg in 1961 (Pfeffer = grey) and in 2002–3 (SW-standard = white)

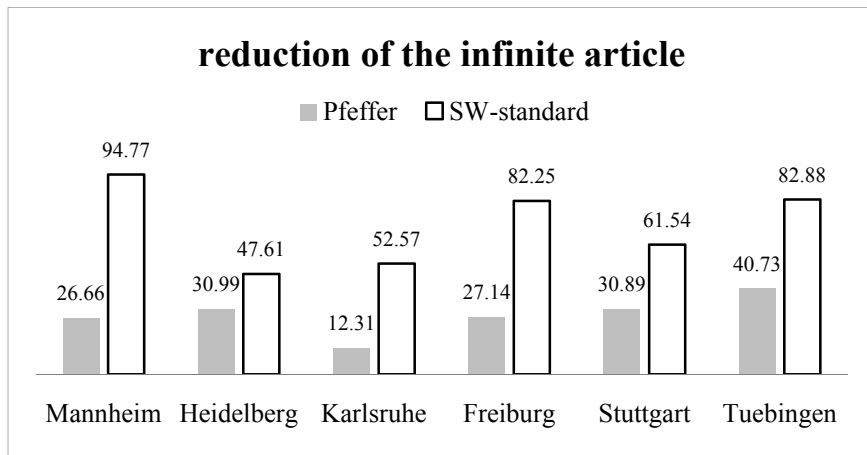


**Figure 8:** Final /t/-deletion in the negative adverb *nicht* in speakers from six urban centres in Baden-Württemberg in 1961 (Pfeffer = grey) and in 2002–3 (SW-standard = white).

**Table 2:** Development of regional and non-regional (allegro) elements in the southwest German standard between 1961 (Pfeffer corpus) and 2002–3 (Southwest-German Standard corpus). All shaded differences are significant at 0.001 level, while the remaining are not significant. Differences in the traditional standard realisation (*nicht*) were not tested for significance.

	% ned		% nich		% NICHT	
	1961	2002–3	1961	2002–3	1961	2002–3
Mannheim	18.18	23.33	1.13	35.97	80.6	40.7
Heidelberg	7.50	9.92	3.33	52.50	91.1	37.58
Karlsruhe	2.78	6.9	8.12	56.99	89.1	36.11
Freiburg	31.33	7.25	4.93	57.07	63.7	35.68
Stuttgart	10.00	14.53	27.94	48.16	62.0	37.31
Tübingen	18.86	0	11.65	83.87	69.4	16.13

Finally, Figure 9 shows the reduction of the indefinite article *eine(n)* to *ne(n)*. Its relative frequency in the SW-standard corpus varies between 47% and 94%. Compared to the Pfeffer corpus, this is an increase from approximately 20% to nearly 70%.



**Figure 9:** Reduction of the forms of the indefinite article (*eine/n*) to *ne(n)* in speakers from six urban centres in Baden-Württemberg in 1961 (Pfeffer = grey) and in 2002–3 (SW-standard = white)

In sum, the allegro forms are advancing rapidly in all six of the investigated locations. They clearly diverge from the written standard and also from the old norm established in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The spread of allegro forms in the spoken standard is compatible with other studies as well, especially with Berend's (2005) study of interview data from the 1980s in about 45 cities in West Germany (a kind of intermediate stage between our 1961 and our 2002–3 data). The allegro forms were more or less spread over the whole country, except for some regional forms in the south. The traditional standard forms, on the other hand, should be regarded as minority realisations.

## CONCLUSIONS

We now return to our initial question: is there evidence for the demotisation and/or destandardisation of German today? We have already argued in the first section that of the three ingredients of standardisation (spread to the entire area, prestige, reduction of internal variability), the first and second do not hold for the destandardisation of spoken Standard Ger-

man. Although the three large nations<sup>8</sup> in which German is the national standard have established (slightly) different norms, the reach of the German German standard variety within Germany is complete today. In addition, the (covert and overt?) prestige of the German standard in Germany seems to be high, particularly when compared with that of more regional ways of speaking. However, it seems that the attitudes attached to this variety have changed: because it has become available to everybody, and can be used in all domains of life, it has also become independent of the values attached to the *written* standard (such as formality, monogicity, complexity, elaboration, lack of spontaneity, and aesthetic and national values). This spoken standard sounds more informal – mainly due to its increasing independence and divergence from the written norm. In part, this is also due to the fact that, in former times, the oral standard was learned at school together with the written standard. This kind of coupling has disappeared: for many Germans, the standard is the language they grew up with (not the dialect). What they learn in school is literacy, i.e. the written variant of the spoken standard they are already familiar with.

The question of internal variability can now be answered as well: regional forms are increasingly disappearing from the spoken standard, i.e. the standard is becoming more homogeneous across Germany. This process is gradual, however, and consciousness as well as salience seem to play a role here. If a feature is stereotypically linked to a certain area, it will disappear particularly fast. If it is regional but more unconscious, it will be less suppressed and will therefore recede at a slower pace. While diatopic variability is therefore disappearing, allegro forms of the spoken standard are rapidly becoming more frequent. All evidence suggests that we are not dealing with increasing variability in the sense of a relaxation of norms here, but rather that we are in the middle of a process of language change: it is likely that the new standard features will in the end take over entirely and that pronunciations such as *nicht*, *einen*, or *ist* will sound old-fashioned and bookish. Seen from a historical perspective, this is just a further step in the emancipation of the spoken standard and its differentiation from the written standard. As long as the spoken standard (orthoepy) was nothing but an oral version of the written standard and was designed for articulatory strength and even over-articulation in light of its media use (theater, film, radio broadcast, electrically amplified political speeches), it could not become demotic: the standard that was used by the educated middle classes therefore remained indebted to the old regional standards that were developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> and propagated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> It was only in the last 60 years that a spoken standard could emerge which avoided both the over-articulation and formality of the old orthoepic standard and the regional restrictions of the old regional standards. The new standard (doubtlessly supported again by the media, which now, however, combine informality with non-regionality) is finally a demotic standard. This process implies destandardisation only if the spoken standard is defined by the particular constellation of attitudinal elements which go back to (and are mostly identical with those of the) the written standard. However, if we allow for changes in both the standard's phonological structure and prestige, there is no reason to assume that the present-day, demoticised standard variety is undergoing a process of destandardisation.

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<sup>8</sup> We leave out the discussion of the minority areas in which German has official status, i.e. Belgium and Italy, and also disregard the special situation of German in Luxembourg where it is considered a second language.

<sup>9</sup> This seems to be the main difference between Germany on the one hand, and Denmark on the other: the German oral standard could not eliminate all regional traces before it became demotic. In Denmark (as well as in other European countries, such as in England) the Copenhagen-based traditional standard (*rigsmål*) was already established as the national spoken standard *before* a more informal new standard started to arise. In fact, due to the size of the country and the huge structural differences in the dialect substrate influences in the territory, the process of the elimination of regional features from the standard is far from being finished in Germany.

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