

Dialect imperialism in West Sweden

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Previous research has observed an imperialistic tendency in the dialect of Gothenburg, the second biggest city in Sweden, spreading among young people in the surrounding region of West Sweden. A wide-ranging study of societal and linguistic change in West Sweden 1950–2000 is under preparation, with focus on urbanization, regionalization and dialect expansion.

One problem, however, is what is meant by "Gothenburg dialect", especially in a discussion of its present status. Earlier studies mainly describe the working class dialect of the 1910–20's or the 1950–60's, which differs a great deal from the present language of young people in Gothenburg, regardless of social class.

This paper presents a study of phonological variation among two generations of upper secondary school students from Gothenburg. The data consists of group conversations recorded 1978 and 1998. Dialect change between the two generations of teenagers is compared, as well as correlation with gender, study programmes (vocational and preparatory for university) and city neighbourhoods. To what extent are traditional variants still in use and what kind of neologisms are increasing? The study aims to build a basis for further research on the expansion of the Gothenburg dialect.