

### **Lifestyle and linguistics**

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This paper presents some central theoretical and methodological issues from a study of sociolinguistic variation among 97 students from five municipalities, all attending an upper secondary school in Alingsås, a town of 25,000, northeast of Göteborg, Sweden.

The informants were 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 lifestyle (concerning taste, leisure, mobility, plans for the future, etc.). Phonological and lexical variants were found to be associated with traditional local dialect; regional and supraregional standard; Göteborg vernacular; and general youth language.

The notion of lifestyle was used in an experimental way, where non-hierarchical, two-dimensional mapping was the basis for the distribution of informants in seven categories. Correlations with lifestyle categories were less distinct than correlations with demogeography or gender, which proved to be the most important social factors in relation to linguistic variation. But the lifestyle analysis shows a potential for further development, as it both proves to be a complement to and includes traditional sociolinguistic variables (such as education and gender). Using results from the Alingsås study, I will discuss how lifestyle analysis can be used in sociolinguistic research.