

## Generational and individual variation in heritage Albanian in Switzerland

The analysis of heritage languages across successive generations of speakers provides a suitable starting point for empirically observing the effects of language usage in multilingual contexts within clearly specifiable sociocultural settings on the shaping of the varieties in contact. Based on a fully annotated corpus (approx. 13'000 tokens) with data from 60 narratives retelling the *Pear story* across 3 generations of speakers of (heritage) Gheg Albanian in Zurich/Switzerland, the study reported in this paper investigates general patterns of language usage in narration. Specifically, it focuses the distribution of parts of speech across generations, as compared to a baseline of 9 *Pear story* narrations (3 per generation) from Gheg Albanian natives in Prishtina/Kosovo. We thus inquire the prediction that in an heritage context, the variation in PoS usage decreases and becomes more predictable over generations.

To assess the amount of uncertainty in the choice of PoS we measure the entropy by speaker and generation. From previous literature on 'language attrition' in populations of heritage language speakers we expect a decreasing entropy in apparent time in the Zurich as opposed to the Prishtina sample.

Preliminary results of 21 speakers (9 Prishtina, 12 Zurich; see Figure 1) suggest that the overall entropy in PoS usage does not decrease over generations in the Zurich sample. The overall variation across speakers in usage of PoS is smaller than in the Prishtina sample and remains more or less stable across generations. The specific trajectory might point towards a closer network of speakers in Zurich and the concomitant emergence of a rather homogeneous local heritage variety of Albanian, levelling out generational, individual and dialectal differences.

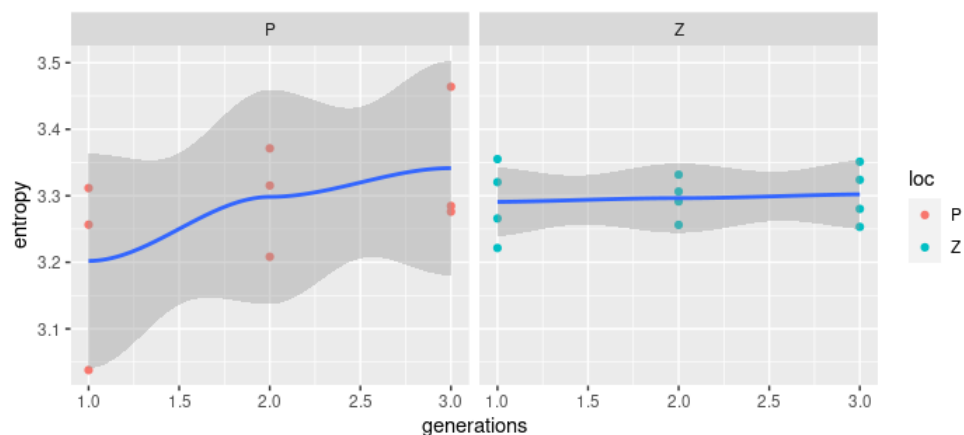


Figure 1: Entropy of PoS usage across 3 generations in the Prishtina (loc = P; 9 speakers) and the Zurich (loc = Z; 12 speakers) sample.