

Small languages in the digital age – the example of Low German

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Nowadays, digital media determine essential parts of everyday communication. They are characterised by networking, participation and sharing. Since the early 2000s, there has been discussion about the role that the internet can play in the preservation of small languages, which are facing the loss of communication domains to dominant standard languages. The effects of digital mediatisation are manifold (Reershemius 2017) and the question is repeatedly raised whether Web 2.0 can lead to new "communities of practice" (Arendt 2021) and thus new forms of using smaller languages (Kelly-Holmes/Atkinson 2017, Cunliffe & Herring 2005; Crystal 2000).

Linguists have started to evaluate the impact of this digital paradigm shift on small languages. From early on, researchers have stressed both the opportunities and the pitfalls of digital technologies for small languages.

Using Low German as an example, the talk will highlight how digital development can create spaces for sharing language ideologies as well as for language learning and use. Data from YouTube and web seminars will be presented as examples.

Arendt, B. (2021): A Long-Lasting CofP of New and Native Speakers—Practices, Identities of Belonging and Motives for Participation. In: *Languages* 6, 1:30.

Crystal, D. (2000): *Language Death*. Cambridge.

Cunliffe, D. /Herring, S.C. (2005): Introduction to Minority Languages, Multimedia and the Web. In: *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia*, 11:2, 131-137.

Kelly-Holmes, H./Atkinson, D. (2017): Perspectives on Language Sustainability in a Performance Era: Discourses, Policies, and Practices in a Digital and Social Media Campaign to Revitalise Irish. In: *Open Linguistics* 3, 236-250.

Reershemius, G. (2017): Autochthonous heritage languages and social media: writing and bilingual practices in Low German on Facebook. In: *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 38:1, 35-49.