

Semi-Public Texts and their contribution for historical sociolinguistics

"Semi-public texts", writings that have been created with the awareness that they could be read by individuals other than the intended addressee include memory albums, guestbooks, or meeting minutes, among others (Litty & Penning Forthcoming). This project examines two such sources, connected by signatories from the Tonder Teaching Seminary. The first, Otto Trede's memory album (with initial entries written between 1879-1882) and the second, a guestbook from the Ranzelberg guesthouse (1838-1888). Otto Trede, a teacher in training at the seminary, adorned the entries of his fellow students with metalinguistic comments, providing additional and otherwise lost data, such as when the signatory received his diploma from the seminary, where some signatories later worked – and sometimes lived and died. Most entries include several of these additional notes. The Ranzelberg Guestbook, with around 1,600 entries, offers a wealth of sociolinguistic data from the Duchy of Schleswig in the 19th century, including origin of the authors and purpose of their journey. Many seminarians from Tonder stopped at the Ranzelberg guesthouse on their way to or from holidays and wrote in the guestbook. Among these were some of Otto Trede's fellow classmates.

This presentation outlines possible avenues of analysis that can be obtained through metalinguistic comments and research. The goal is to provide an overview of the linguistic characteristics employed to effect in-group cohesion of the seminarian community. These characteristics include seminarian specific vocabulary such as so-called "Biernamen", nicknames given in student organizations, and the use of idioms and poems, often adapted to group-specific themes. Furthermore, cartographic visualizations show the mobility associated with this group, in order to highlight the geographic extent of oral multilingualism.

References

Samantha M. Litty & Jan Momme Penning. Forthcoming. Semi-public writings in the Duchy of Schleswig in the 19th century. In Samantha M. Litty & Nils Langer (eds.), *Language Ideology, Policy, and Practice: Focus on minoritized languages past and present*. Historical Sociolinguistics. Studies on Language and Society in the Past, Peter Lang.