

Der Müller Peter and (s) *Fischers Emma*: Grammar and pragmatics of unofficial personal names in German dialects

Theresa Schweden

Abstract: In German dialects and in rural communities, special personal names are used, in which the surname precedes the given name: *der Müller Peter*, *Fischers Emma*. This article presents the results of a research project addressing the grammatical and pragmatic variation of these unofficial names. A mixed methods approach shows that the order of “surname + given name” is triggered by dialect area, the size of a village or town, the age of the speakers, as well as the integration of a referent into the local community. Some unofficial names show remnants of genitive inflection, which has otherwise disappeared in German dialects: *Fischer-s Emma*. In some cases, we also find cliticized genitive articles: *des > s Fischer-s Emma*. A diachronic analysis shows that these structures can be traced back to possessive constructions, in which children or wives were assigned to a head of household. Even today, it is still highly relevant in rural communities to identify a person as a member of a local family.

Keywords: unofficial names, personal names, German dialects, genitive, diatopic variation, personal reference, sociopragmatics, morphology

Theresa Schweden (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität, Mainz). *Der Müller Peter* and (s) *Fischers Emma*: Grammar and pragmatics of unofficial personal names in German dialects.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons 4.0 International licence (CC BY 4.0) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

1. Introduction and state of research

This paper presents results from a research project at the University of Münster, Germany¹, which investigated dialectal personal reference forms occurring in rural communication communities. In these forms, the surname (or an unofficial name) precedes the given name (*der Müller Peter*, *(s) Fischers Emma*). On the one hand, these names show diatopic variation between different German dialect areas. On the other hand, within a single village or dialect, reference forms can also vary, the competing variants encoding different degrees of (un-)officiality, which correlate with the referents' level of integration into the village.

Some of these reference forms show remains of genitive inflection and sometimes even phonologically reduced genitive articles: *Müller-s Peter*; *s* (< *des*) *Fischer-s Emma* (Article_{genitive} Fischer_{genitive}; 'Emma of the family Fischer'). These markers represent one of the last domains of the synthetic prenominal genitive in German dialects and in Luxembourgish. Previously, they have been documented in some research on individual dialects (Berchtold & Dammel 2014; Cornelissen 2014, 2016; Flores Flores 2014; Heinrichs 2012; Krier 2014; Roelfs 2016; Weiß 2014). However, except for the considerations published in Berchtold & Dammel (2014), they have not yet been analysed in terms of diachrony or pragmatics.

In addition, currently there is only one diatopic overview published by Bach (1952), who derived six different structural types from the (published or anecdotal) data he collected. He inferred them both from the type of article and the (missing) genitive inflection respectively from their combination (see more in Section 4). These results have been taken up by Kunze (2005:180–181). In addition, the *Atlas*

¹ The project 'Grammatik und Soziopragmatik inoffizieller Personennamen in Dialekten des Deutschen' (Grammar and Sociopragmatics of Unofficial Personal Names in German Dialects; project no. 405468658; 2018–2021) was funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). To ensure accurate translation and enhance the style of this paper, I used DeepL Translate (<https://www.deepl.com>) and ChatGPT (<https://openai.com/index/chatgpt/>).

zur deutschen Alltagssprache ([Atlas for German Colloquial Language], Elspaß & Möller 2003ff.) has collected geographical data on the sequence of surname and given name in colloquial language (Figure 1). It shows that the “surname + given name” sequence can only be found in the southern parts of central Germany (marked with light and dark pink dots). However, the maps do not show regiolectal or even dialectal variants. So far, no large-scale geographical overview or exhaustive comparison between dialects or dialect regions exists.

The goals of the project were thus as follows:

- to identify influencing factors for the two sequence orders “given name + surname” vs. “surname + given name”. To achieve this, I tested grammatical variation, pragmatic factors regarding their use and the influence of sociolinguistic variables, such as age, gender, or the number of inhabitants of a village,
- to document and map the distribution of different grammatical types of unofficial names in dialect-related registers,
- to trace the diachronic development of these types as far back as possible (for some initial considerations see Berchtold & Dammel 2014),
- to identify and analyse constructional variation within the reference systems of specific villages.

The different research questions could not easily be answered using only one method. To meet these objectives, a combination of direct and indirect, as well as qualitative and quantitative research methods was employed, from an indirect questionnaire over audio recordings of everyday language, focus group interviews to the analysis of historical sources and dialect grammar books.

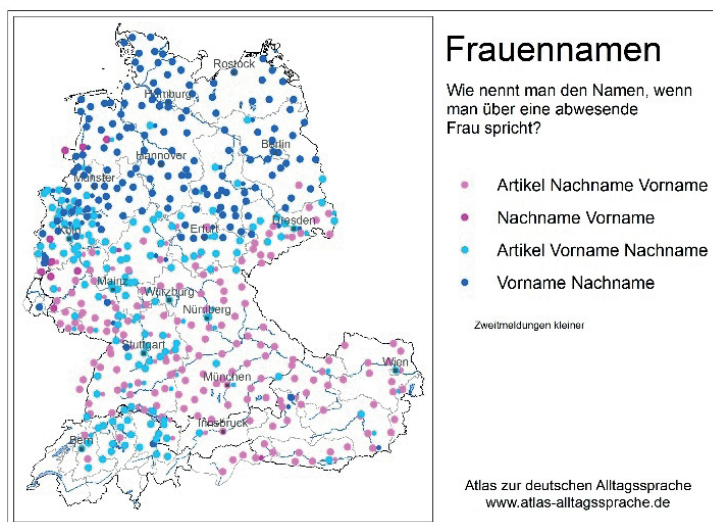


Figure 1: Map showing order of given name and surname for female names in German colloquial language (originally published in Elspaß & Möller 2003ff., copyright granted by authors). Pink dots indicate variants with surname positioned first, blue dots indicate variants with given name positioned first.

The project resulted in my dissertation, published under the title *Personenreferenz im Dialekt: Grammatik und Pragmatik inoffizieller Personennamen in Dialekten des Deutschen* (Schweden 2023). The following is a synopsis of the most relevant results published within the book. In Section 2, I will elaborate on the research design. Section 3 follows with a discussion of the sociolinguistic variation between “given name + surname” and “surname + given name”. In Section 4, I will go into detail about different structural types of “surname + given name” and their genesis. In an outlook (Section 5), I will go into open or new questions and starting points for further research.

2. Research design

First, I designed an online questionnaire, which was spread both via private channels and via clubs devoted to regional traditions and dialects. I specifically wanted to yield answers by speakers of a dialect,

therefore, the participants were informed that I was researching names in German dialects. The questionnaire included discourse completion tasks (DCTs), meaning artificial communication situations that the participants should complete in the most natural way possible (Ackermann 2023; Agnieszka 2013; Ogiermann 2019; Schweden 2023: 20–23). In our case, these situations consisted of reporting various events involving familiar people to the participants' family members. For example, an assignment was: "Sie haben Ihrer Bekannten Emma Fischer Ihr altes Fahrrad verkauft. Heute werden Sie von Ihrer Mutter gefragt, wem Sie das Fahrrad verkauft haben. Was antworten Sie?"

Das Fahrrad _____. [You sold your old bicycle to your friend Emma Fischer. Today, your mother asks you who you sold the bike to. What do you say? The bike _____.]" The survey also included tasks in which fictitious names were to be translated into the dialect, or different dialectal variants (translation tasks). An open question asked the participants to reflect on the use of the two sequence orders of given name and surname to document diaphasic variation. The results of this question were later used to create a guideline for focus group interviews. The questionnaire yielded 810 responses, 424 by female, 386 by male participants.

Once the survey had provided an overview about diatopic variants, I began recruiting participants for field work via colleagues, dialect clubs or from the rows of survey participants who had left their email address for further contact. I was able to conduct field work in 13 villages, which was to cover as many of Germany's major dialect regions as possible. Except for East Low German and some gaps in East Central German, this goal was achieved. The greatest density of places is documented in West Central German, as the online survey revealed the greatest degree of constructional variation in this area (see Section 4). In 12 of the 13 locations, the "surname + given name" structure was used. The number of inhabitants of the locations varies between 622 and 23 925. A total of 90 local residents aged 45 years or above participated in the survey, 49 participants were male, 41 were female. To be eligible to participate, they had to have knowledge of the local families and be informed about local events. Additionally,

the members of the assembled group had to be familiar with each other. In every village, I conducted direct surveys with five to eleven local participants in each village (Schweden 2023:29–30). Each session lasted for two to three hours and always included (in the same order):

1. Table talks with groups of two to five participants, recorded in absence of the researcher.
2. Translation tasks, in which standard German sentences and names without syntactic context had to be translated into the local dialect.²
3. Focus group interviews with all participants from the respective village.

3. Sociolinguistic variation for the order of given name and surname

The questionnaire was able to show sociolinguistic variation. Most importantly, it helped identifying the areas of Germany and neighbouring countries where the “surname + given name” sequence is used, and which grammatical variants can be found.

In the collected data, for each individual answer set I noted whether the “surname + given name” sequence was at all used within the DCTs or the translation tasks. From this analysis, the map in Figure 2 was created. Split circles mark places where either the sequence in the overall name varies within different tasks of a single answer set or where interpersonal variations between different answer sets occurred.

² An example of such a task, is the following: “Tanja Neumann hat kürzlich das Haus von Familie Schmidt gekauft und zieht nächsten Monat schon mit ihrer Familie ein.” [Tanja Neumann recently bought the house of the Schmidt family and will be moving in with her family next month.]”

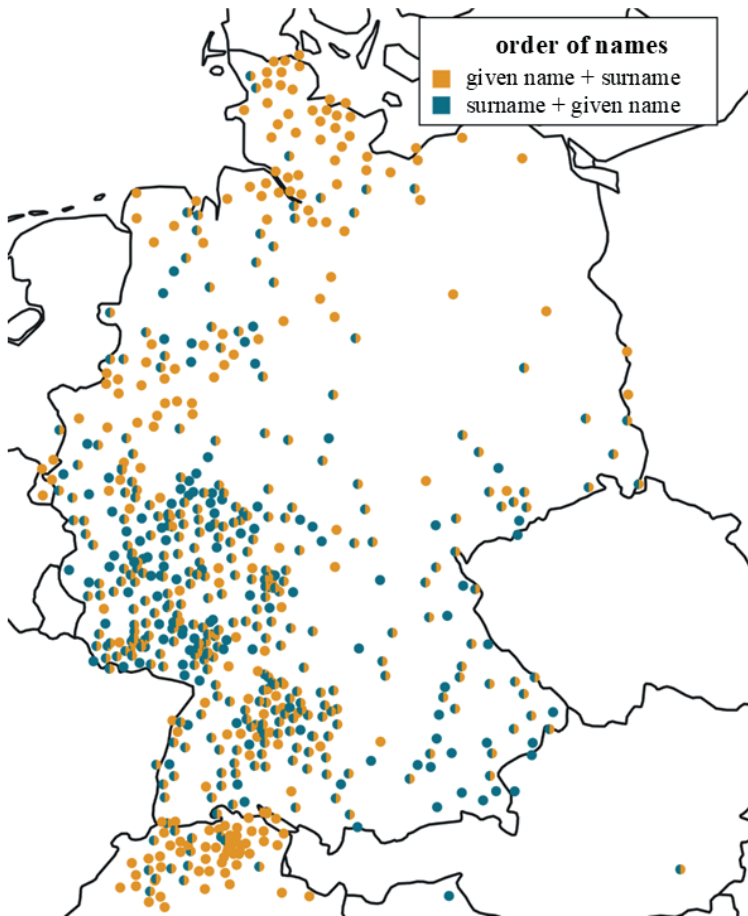


Figure 2: Map showing order of surname and given name (data: online questionnaire, DTCs and translations, originally published in Schweden 2023:50).

In order to correlate sociodemographic data with the two sequences in addition to the spatial dimension, a classification tree (chi-squared automatic interaction detection = CHAID) was created with the software SPSS ($n = 793$ survey answers³; Schweden 2023:51–56). This testing method identifies stronger and less strong correlations between a dependent variable and other metric, ordinal and nominal predictors

³ Differences in the number of participants in the individual analyses were due to very few participants having not provided certain socio-demographic data.

using Pearson’s chi-squared tests. The predictors are grouped into homogenous categories in several stages, with the categories differing significantly from each other with regard to the dependent variable. The tree was created testing correlations with the binary-coded dependent variable “surname precedes given name yes/no”. This variable coded whether the “surname + given name” sequence occurred in one individual data set at all. As predictors, the following social data was tested: year of birth of the participants, gender of the participants, number of inhabitants of the survey location, dialect frequency in everyday life according to the participants’ own assessment, and amount of contact of the participants to other people in their place of residence.

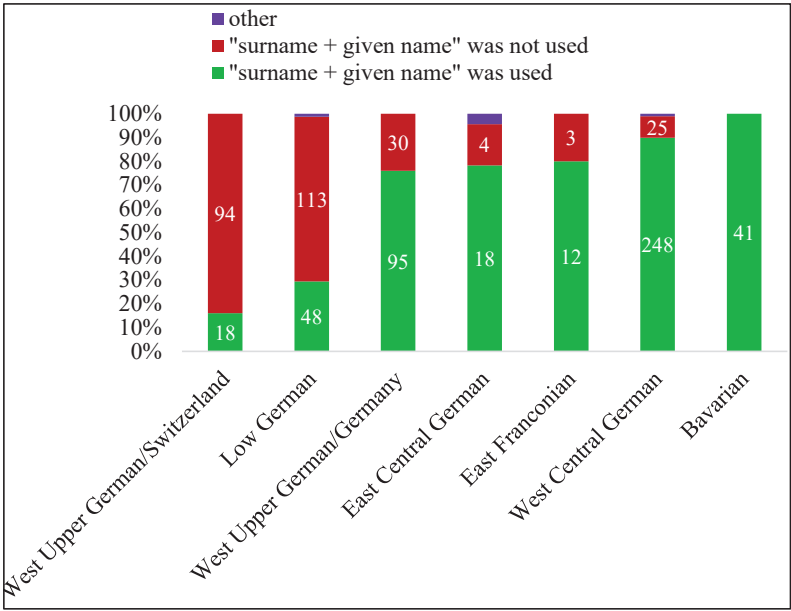


Figure 3: Order of surname and given name grouped by dialect region (data: online survey; $n = 755$, originally published in Schweden 2023:51).

The model was able to show that the sequence order of surname and given name is primarily dependent on the dialect area ($p < 0.001$). Particularly high percentages are found in West Central German and

Bavarian, while in Low German and Switzerland the “surname + given name” sequence is rarely used, or at least possible uses could not be documented (see Figure 3). In Northern Germany, this result reflects the significant decline in dialect use. A correlation between name order and dialect frequency, as assessed by the participants, can also be observed: in the entire Low German dialect region, active dialect usage is the lowest, with only 59 out of 163 participants (36 per cent) reporting that they always or frequently use dialect (see Table 1).

Table 1. Frequency of dialect usage according to the participants’ assessment, grouped by dialect region.

Dialect region	Frequency of dialect usage					Total
	Always	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	
Low German	6	53	38	35	31	163
East Central German	2	8	5	7	1	23
East Franconian	0	10	3	2	0	15
West Central German	47	153	50	23	3	276
West Upper German/ Germany	40	62	16	6	1	125
Bavarian	23	14	2	1	1	41
West Upper German/ Switzerland	74	34	3	1	0	112

In addition, it is not the surname which precedes the given name in Low German regions, but house names [Hausnamen] or farm names [Hofnamen] – unofficial family names referring to both the estate of a family and the owners or residents. It was therefore not possible to form the “surname + given name” sequence for the fictitious personal name stimuli in the questionnaire, as was discussed in the open question on use of “surname + given name”. In Switzerland, the lack of this sequence can be traced back to the high proportion of participants aged between 20 and 30 as well as a stigmatization of the phenomenon under the influence of the national sport of “Schwingen”, a type of folk freestyle wrestling with military connotations.

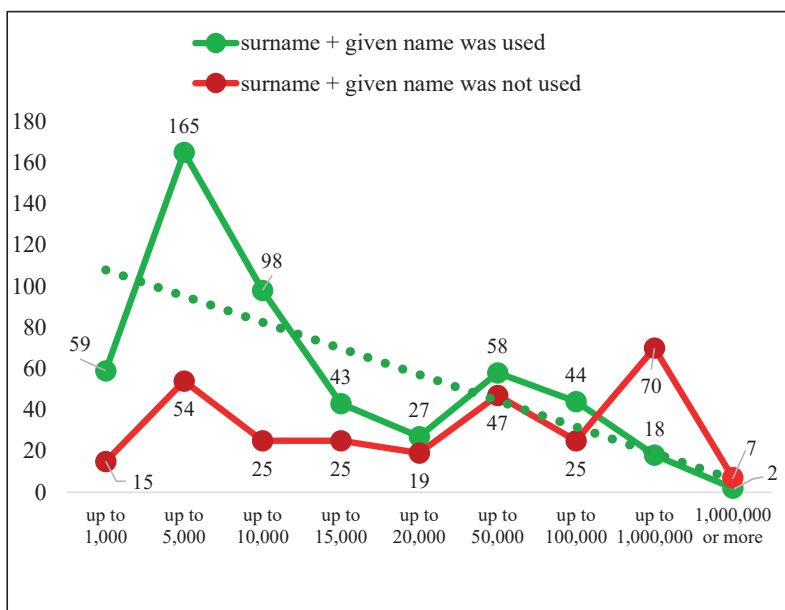


Figure 4: Order of surname and given name grouped by number of inhabitants of the survey location (data: online survey, $n = 801$, originally published in Schweden 2023:89).

The second most influential factor in the CHAID-model was the population size of the participants' places of residence ($p < 0.001$; see Figure 4). The smaller the population, the more frequently the "surname + given name" pattern was used in the questionnaire. In places with 100 000 inhabitants or more, the proportion exceeded 20 per cent only in Switzerland and the Low German region. In the remaining dialect areas, the proportion was less than 10 per cent. The third most influential factor was the participants' birth year ($p < 0.05$; Figure 5). Participants who were born between 1941 and 1970 tended to use "surname + given name" more often than younger ones. These results can be interpreted in terms of dialect decline and higher mobility among younger people. The latter also contributes to the fact that younger people prefer cities over villages. Therefore, they are less well connected and know fewer people.

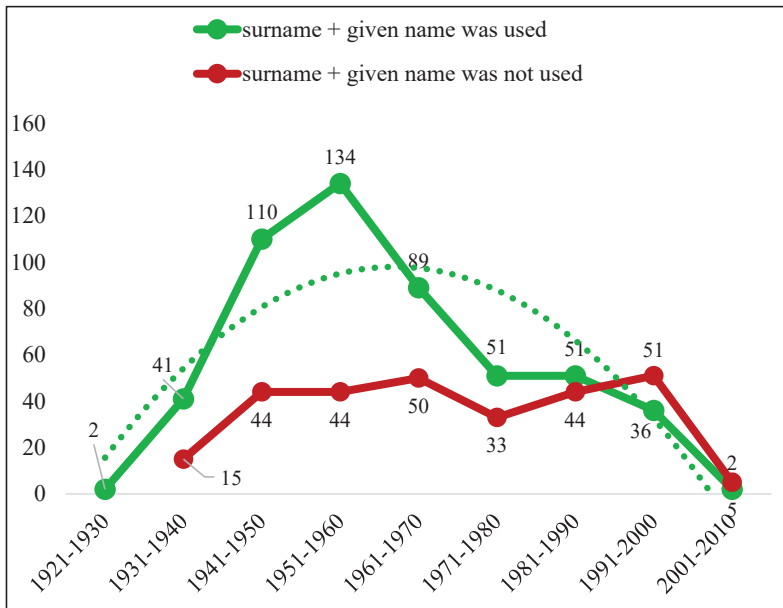


Figure 5: Order of surname and given name grouped by participants' year of birth (data: online survey, $n = 802$, originally published in Schweden 2023:95).

However, there were influencing factors that could not be identified through quantitative methods. Therefore, in addition to the questionnaire study, a comprehensive direct survey was conducted in 13 villages. This fieldwork included focus group discussions, where all participants from a village (on average seven) were asked to reflect on possible contexts of use for “surname + given name” (Schweden 2023:36–38, 40–43). Since we are working with language-reflective data rather than language production data, we opted for group interviews instead of individual interviews. The former are considered particularly valid because individual reflections on the (non-)use of “surname + given name” are subject to peer control. Flick (2009:195) refers to this as “quality controls on data collection” (for further information on the method see Benighaus & Benighaus 2012; Liamputtong 2011; Stewart & Shamdasani 2015). On another level, the data gained from the focus groups can be seen as speech production data on the cumulative interactional construction of group identity within the village. The group discussions of the twelve locations in which the pat-

tern occurred were transcribed as basic transcripts (Basistranskripte) according to GAT2 (Selting et al. 2009) using the software EXMAR-aLDA. They were later anonymized and published as ‘Fokusgruppen-korpus “Personenreferenz im Dialekt”’ (Dammel & Schweden 2022) on the University of Münster publication server (miami) and can be used for further linguistic research.

The open-ended free text question in the questionnaire and the focus group transcripts were analysed exploratively using the software MAXQDA. The analysis incorporated elements from qualitative content analysis (Kuckartz & Rädiker 2022; Marx & Wollny 2009) and the Grounded Theory methodology (see Corbin & Strauss 1990, 2008; Glaser & Strauss 1967; Glaser 1992). Statements by the speakers about their language use were coded bottom-up, so that three further central influencing factors for the “surname + given name” sequence could be identified:

- a. The referents’ and/or interlocutors’ connection with their village of residence.
- b. The referents’ and/or interlocutors’ participation in local events.
- c. A dialectal communication setting.

Social relationships with both the interlocutor and the referent play a central role in choosing a variant (a.): “surname + given name” is primarily used when referring to local referents and/or addressing local recipients. Interestingly (b.), outsiders can become part of the ingroup through marriage or personal initiative – such as joining local clubs – thereby becoming eligible for ingroup-specific reference forms. Conversely, this status is typically not withdrawn from long-time residents who have moved away or become socially isolated.

As part of the direct surveys, participants were asked to translate fictitious names into their local dialect (translation tasks; Schweden 2023:34–35). These translations also served to test additional influencing factors. One hypothesis was that the familiarity of the given or surnames influences the name order, such that less common names – like the given name *Cindy* or the surname *Nowak* – are used less

frequently in the order of “surname + given name” than more familiar ones. For this purpose, I tested names without any contextual information on the fictitious referents that might have triggered pragmatic variation. To avoid interference from phonological or prosodic factors, all given names used were disyllabic and stressed on the first syllable. The results show hardly any variation. Although *Cindy Wolf/Wulf* was only used in 68.3 per cent of the answers by “surname + given name”, the difference compared to *Thomas Schmidt* (83.6 per cent) should not be overstated.⁴

Lastly, the table talks yielded insights that went beyond the order of surname and given name. They were centred on photographs of persons from the village brought by the participants and recorded without the presence of the researcher (see Baumgartner et al. 2020; Busley 2021:132–134; Schweden 2023:34). Apart from the pragmatic factors influencing the sequence order of given name and surname, other forms of reference also contribute to this sociopragmatic construct – such as the use of the given name alone, without a surname. In the table talks, this reference type was mainly used for persons who were very close to the interlocutors, making further specification unnecessary.

4. Different structural types of *surname + given name* and their diachronic development

The data from the online questionnaire was also used to create a map showing (partly overlapping) diatopic areas in which different formal types by “surname + given name” occur (Figure 6). The map does not refer to a specific task in the questionnaire, instead, it encompasses all distinct types used in each data set. The data can be considered highly reliable, as identical formal types were realized at the same locations

⁴ The tasks generally showed a high proportion of the order of “surname + given name”. This can likely be attributed to the fact that participants were explicitly asked to translate into their dialect, prompting them to choose the most dialectal variant.

by different participants, even when a significant time gap between responses made mutual consultation unlikely.

On a large scale, four structural types can be distinguished, based on two formal variables:

1. different articles:
 - A phonologically reduced and cliticized genitive article *(d)s* < *des* [of] (*(d)s Müllers Peter*; red dots).
 - A *d*-article [the], which may be phonologically reduced depending on the dialect: *der/de, die/d* (*der Müllers(ch) Peter*; yellow and blue dots).
 - Article-less variants (*Müller-s(ch) Peter*; green dots).

Articles appear to have been produced correctly for the most part (see, for example, the noticeable nest without articles in the Swabian area). Due to the risk of article omission in the translations of names that were not syntactically embedded, forms without an article were only included if they appeared within the DCTs, thus ensuring they were embedded in a sentence.

2. (former) genitive inflection
 - Types without remnants of genitive inflection on the surname (yellow dots in Figure 6).
 - Types with remnants of genitive inflection on the surname (red, blue and green dots in Figure 6).

While the strong genitive inflection *-s(ch)*⁵ has been preserved in appellatives of non-dialectal varieties (*das Fell des Hundes* [the dog's fur]), weak and combined genitive inflections have largely disappeared. However, these remnants have been retained in the respective name constructions. As a result, three types of former genitive allomorphs are still observable: *-s*, *-e(n)* and *-en-s*.

⁵ In Moselle-Franconian and Ripuarian, the strong genitive inflection *-s* occurs in the phonetic variant *-sch* after the word final sound /ʁ/: *Müller-sch Peter*.

Some areas of the map note a lack of structural variation, with only one structural type appearing across wide areas. In the north of Germany, for instance, constructions with genitive inflection have reduced their allomorphy in favour of the strong genitive marker (-s).

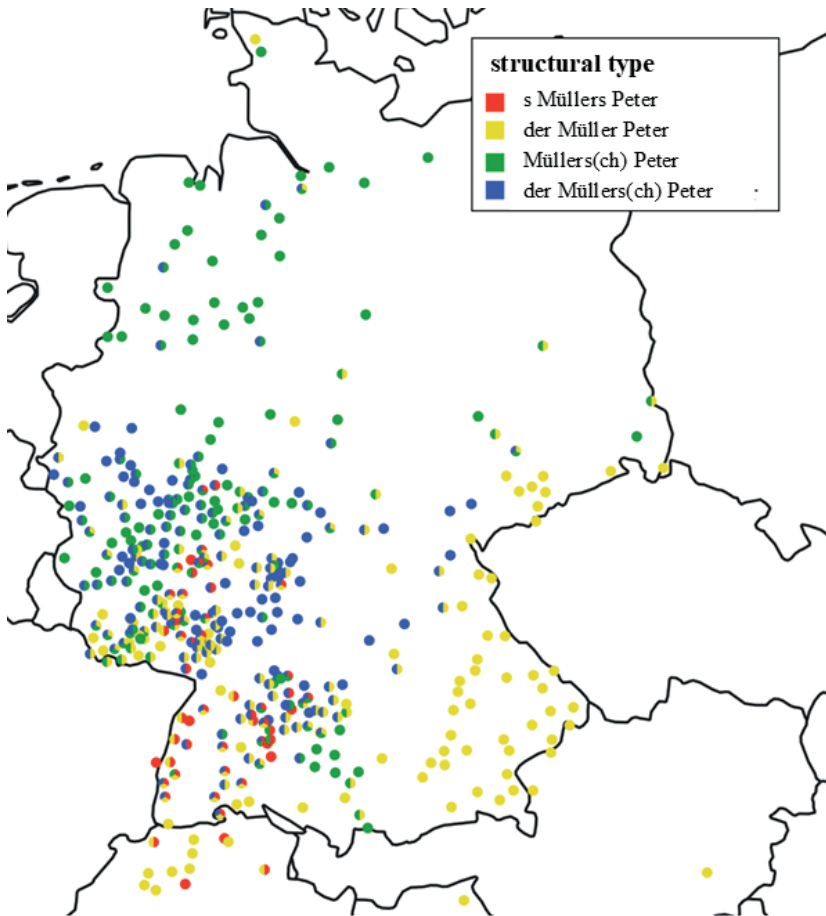


Figure 6: Map of structural types by “surname + given name” (data: online survey, DCTs and translations, originally published in Schweden 2023:99).

Other parts of Germany are characterized by a mixed spatial pattern. Of particular interest are the Middle German structures found in Rhine and Moselle Franconian. They feature a *d*-article combined with remnants of genitive inflection (blue dots), as in *der Müllers(ch) Peter*. In some cases, the article may serve a pragmatic function, such

as marking a newly introduced referent in conversation (Schmuck & Szczepaniak 2014; Werth 2014). In other cases, the article is not pragmatic but grammaticalized⁶. This occurs particularly in regions where non-inflected forms with a *d*-article (*der Müller Peter*) overlap and thus compete with inflected forms with *s*-articles (*s Müller-s Peter*) or with article-less structures (*Müller-s Peter*). Thus, it can be inferred that in this contact zone between the eastern non-inflected and the western genitive type, the combination of *d*-article and genitive inflection (*der Müller-s(ch) Peter*) has emerged as a case of constructional contamination (Schweden & Dammel 2023:213).

In most dialects that still show variation in genitive inflection, the former distribution based on inflectional classes has shifted to a conditioning by formal or phonological-prosodic factors. This shift could be investigated using a CHAID decision tree model, which was applied to all authentic name data ($n = 1\,241$ tokens) collected and transcribed from table talks and focus groups (Schweden 2023:182–190). To identify overarching conditioning factors, differences between the individual villages were excluded as predictor variables. The analysis showed that the number of syllables in the surname is the most influential predictor in determining the suffix variant ($p < 0.001$). The data reveals that suffix choice is primarily governed by the number of syllables in the surname. Specifically, the formerly strong, asyllabic genitive suffix *-s(ch)* tends to occur with disyllabic surnames (e.g. *Müller-s Peter*), while a weak, syllabic suffix *-e(n)* is more likely used with monosyllabic surnames (e.g. *Schmidt-e(n) Emma*). These findings were confirmed by the written translation task involving fictitious name stimuli ($n = 952$ tokens). Here, *-e(n)* was used with monosyllabic surnames in 30.88 per cent of the cases but only in 8.19 per cent of the disyllabic ones. Conversely, *-s(ch)* was used in 51.89 per cent of disyllabic surnames, but only in 32.35 per cent of monosyllabic surnames.

This means that the current conditioning of former genitive inflections is governed by an output-oriented principle (see Dammel &

⁶ In Upper German and some Central German varieties, given names are accompanied by a grammaticalized definite article (e.g. *die Emma*).

Kürschner 2008; Dammel, Kürschner & Nübling 2010:590–591; Neef 2000), which follows the trochee as the ideal word structure (Nowak & Nübling 2017:115). This output ideal has developed historically with a shift in focus from the syllable to the phonological word as the most important linguistic unit (Eisenberg 1991:47; Szczepaniak 2007). In this specific case, monosyllabic surnames are modified by a syllabic element to create a trochaic structure, resulting in a process of resyllabification (e.g. *Schmidt* > *Schmi.dte(n)*). For surnames that are already trochaic, the additional syllable is avoided by using the asyllabic suffix *-s(ch)*. A secondary factor influencing the choice of suffix variant is the final sound of the surname. Names ending in a sibilant (e.g. *Schulz*, *Fuchs*) tend to avoid the inflection with *-s(ch)* (5.59 per cent), in contrast to *-e(n)* (44.13 per cent; data from the written translation tasks). This formal restriction helps distinguish a name's base form from the suffix (e.g. *Schulz* – *Schulz-e(n)*; *Fuchs* – *Fuchs-e(n)*).

Variation in both the article and the (former) genitive inflection marker can also be observed within individual survey locations (split dots on the map in Figure 6). In some dialects, the genitive inflection depends on the article type and the accent structure of the name as a whole: an *-s* is only added to the surname if the main accent is placed on the given name, as in *(s) Müller-s 'Peter*. This accent structure corresponds to the phrasal structure of the adnominal possessive genitive in appellatives, to which these names can be traced: *(des) Müllers 'Peter* [Peter as a member of the Müller family]. However, if the accent is placed on the surname, the genitive inflection may be missing in Upper German and West Central German dialects, as in *der 'Müller Peter*. This suggests an apposition or compositional structure. Structures with the former weak genitive allomorph *-e*⁷ (*die/s Schmidt-e Emma*) occur with either the main accent on the surname or the given name. Therefore, *-e* not only continues to exist in its original function as a genitive inflection but has also become functionalized as a linking element, so that monosyllabic surnames are expanded into trochaic structures (Berchtold & Dammel 2014).

⁷ The *-n* of the weak genitive inflection *-en* has been apocopated in the respective dialects.

In locations exhibiting constructional variation, the choice between the *d*-article and *s*-article (as in the Rhine-Franconian village of Höringen) or between the *d*-article and no article (as in the Moselle-Franconian Idar-Oberstein) is conditioned by pragmatic factors. The *s*-article or article-less variants, when combined with phrasal accent (the former genitive phrase structure), are used whenever the descent of a referent from a specific local family is emphasized. With this genitive phrase name type, referents are assigned to their family of origin or the head of the household. In the direct surveys, information about one's family of origin was found to be the most important reference point for identifying a person. While the prenominal genitive has disappeared in other contexts in German dialects, it has been preserved in dialectal onymic structures. Although we are dealing with names, this structure resembles definite appellative descriptions.

This preservation of adnominal genitives can be explained by an interplay of cultural-history and language change. The cultural-historical importance of the family of origin, a concept that has persisted since pre-industrial times, is iconically reflected in the order of surname and given name, as well as in the formal proximity of the attribute and head in the possessive construction (Aikhenwald & Dixon 2012; Haiman 1983, 1985; Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2002). Simultaneously, this information is used to adapt reference forms for the communication practices within the village speech community, thus optimizing them through recipient design (Sacks & Schegloff 1979; Schweden 2023:193–219; Werth 2020).

An analysis of 27 witch trial court records from 1570 to 1953 (Baumgarten 1987; Macha et al. 2005; Topalovic et al. 2007) revealed that, although the North German type with genitive inflection, but without an article (e.g. *Müller-s Peter*), was frequently used with names (e.g. *Schmuckers Johan*, *Schmidts Hanßen*), this was not the case for the Southwest German type with the genitive article. However, in Alemannic dialects, genitive articles often occur when the prenominal genitive attribute is an office title, such as in the examples *Greta deß Meßmerß Tochter* (Greta [article_{genitive} sexton_{genitive} daughter]) = 'Greta, the daughter of the sexton', *Balthes Tierheimer des Küe-*

hürten mädle ([[Balthes Tierheimer article_{genitive} cowherd_{genitive}] girl] = ‘the girl (daughter) of Balthes Tierheimer, who is the cowherd’).

Since office titles count among the precursors to family names, and in the head position of these phrases, relational nouns like *Frau/Hausfrau/Weib* [wife] or *Kind/Tochter/Sohn* [child/daughter/son] appear almost exclusively, these constructions in Southwestern Germany can be seen as precursors to today’s purely onymic genitives (the red dots in Figure 6). The witch trial interrogation records show that in these appellative prenominal genitive phrases, it is primarily wives and (female) descendants who function as the possessum. Interestingly, in some recent dialects, the use of onymic genitive phrases appears to be restricted to female referents, while the non-genitive variant can be used for both men and women.

The South German type (represented by yellow dots in Figure 6) also appears in the historical data (e.g. *Müller Jergen*) but does not yet exhibit the grammaticalized article found in more recent forms. The choice of genitive inflection on specific surnames seems to have already become largely fixed, with minimal variation.

As prenominal genitive constructions, which used to describe the relationship between the head of the family and his wife or children, have been restricted to names (with adnominal genitives in appellatives disappearing in German dialects), the “surname + given name” structure has solidified into a fixed linguistic pattern. This is evidenced by participants spontaneously creating constructions with gap fillers when they cannot recall the specific name: *Kurz-e Sowieso* [*Kurz*_{genitive} whatshisname] (Idar-Oberstein, Moselle-Franconian) or *de Auerbach-e wie horrer_n gehääß* [*Auerbach*_{genitive} (surname) what was he called again] (Höringen, Rhine-Franconian).

4. Conclusion and outlook

This paper has demonstrated that unofficial names in German dialects are highly relevant to understanding German morphology, as they preserve former morphological structures such as the prenominal

genitive attribute and the weak genitive inflection. This does not happen by chance, but for a reason. Onymic genitives serve the important function of placing people in their family of origin, a concept that has always been and continues to be highly significant in village communities. Consequently, these genitives are a linguistically fixed element of social history. The variation between “surname + given name” and “given name + surname” also serves the function of distinguishing local residents from newcomers or outsiders.

As previously noted, German rural dialects are in sharp decline. Fortunately, the project managed to document the corresponding naming systems just in time before they have also disappeared. Generations under the age of 30 no longer use these forms and are unable to reproduce them.

Although the project has achieved various results, it has also raised further questions: Village varieties offer promising starting points for research, particularly concerning the sociolinguistic functions of names. For instance: In what ways are names or name variants used as ingroup and outgroup markers distinguishing locals from newcomers? What linguistic traces of patriarchal social structures can be identified?

In the table talks, a striking disparity was observed in the frequency of references to male versus female individuals: male referents accounted for 1 288 types (71.08 per cent), while female referents were mentioned in only 524 types (28.92 per cent). This imbalance is partly due to the gender distribution in the photographs used. In addition, a more detailed analysis revealed significant differences in the forms of reference: participants used given names far more frequently for women (51.15 per cent) than for men (34.24 per cent).

This pattern suggests that women were and still are less visible in the public and social life of village communities. Their movement radius appears to be restricted largely to the domestic sphere, a fact reflected linguistically by the preference for more familiar forms of address (given name) rather than official surnames or full names. Nevertheless, the social structures of villages have not been researched enough to draw more precise conclusions. This highlights the impor-

tance of examining complete reference systems – such as those found in village speech communities – in order to fully understand these dynamics.

References

- Ackermann, Tanja. 2023. Soziopragmatik und areale Verteilung von Vokativen im deutschsprachigen Raum. *Beiträge zur Namenforschung* 58(1–2). 169–204.
- Agnieszka, Cyluk. 2013. Discourse Completion Task, Its Validity and Reliability in Research Projects on Speech Acts. *Anglica. An International Journal of English Studies* 22(2). 100–111.
- Aikhenvald, Alexandra & Dixon, Robert M. W. 2012. *Possession and ownership* (Explorations in linguistic typology, Volume 6). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bach, Adolf. 1952. Die Verbindung von Ruf- und Familiennamen in den deutschen, insbesondere den rheinischen Mundarten. *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 17. 66–88.
- Baumgarten, Achim R. 1987. *Hexenwahn und Hexenverfolgung im Nahraum, Ein Beitrag zur Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte* (Geschichte und ihre Hilfswissenschaften 325). Frankfurt am Main i.a.: Peter Lang.
- Baumgartner, Gerda, Busley, Simone, Fritzinger, Julia & Martin, Sara. 2020. Dat Anna, et Charlotte und s Heidi. Neutrale Genuszuweisung bei Referenz auf Frauen als überregionales Phänomen. In Ganswindt, Brigitte, Christen, Helen, Herrgen, Joachim & Schmidt, Jürgen Erich (eds), *Regiolekt – Der neue Dialekt? Akten des 6. Kongresses der Internationalen Gesellschaft für Dialektologie des Deutschen (IGDD)* (Zeitschrift für Dialektologie und Linguistik, Beihefte 182), 175–192. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner.
- Benighaus, Christina & Benighaus, Ludger. 2012. Moderation, Gesprächsaufbau und Dynamik in Fokusgruppen. In Schulz, Marlen, Mack, Birgit & Renn, Ortwin (eds), *Fokusgruppen in der empirischen Sozialwissenschaft, Von der Konzeption bis zur Auswertung*, 111–132. Wiesbaden: Springer.
- Berchtold, Simone & Dammel, Antje 2014. Kombinatorik von Artikel, Ruf- und Familiennamen in Varietäten des Deutschen. In Debus, Friedhelm, Heuser, Rita & Nübling, Damaris (eds), *Linguistik der Familiennamen* (Germanistische Linguistik 225–227), 249–280. Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Olms.

- Busley, Simone. 2021. *Frauen im Neutrum. Empirische Studien zu mittel- und niederdeutschen Dialekten* (Germanistische Linguistik – Monografien 33). Hildesheim: Olms.
- Corbin, Juliet M. & Strauss, Anselm L. 1990. *Grounded Theory Research, Procedures, Canons, and Evaluative Criteria. Qualitative Sociology* 13(1), 3–21.
- Corbin, Juliet M. & Strauss, Anselm L. 2008. *Basics of Qualitative Research, Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. 3. Edition. Los Angeles i.a.: SAGE.
- Cornelissen, Georg. 2014. Genitivierungen bei vorangestellten Familiennamen im Kleverländischen, Rezente und diachrone Befunde. In Debus, Friedhelm, Heuser, Rita & Nübling, Damaris (eds), *Linguistik der Familiennamen* (Germanistische Linguistik 225–227), 281–296. Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Olms.
- Cornelissen, Georg. 2016. „mit doep– unnd toname“? Personennamen als Teil einer Sprachgeschichte des Dorfes – mit Beispielen vom Niederrhein. In Roolfs, Friedel Helga (ed), *Bäuerliche Familiennamen in Westfalen*, 71–81. Münster: Aschendorff.
- Dammel, Antje & Kürschner, Sebastian. 2008. Complexity in nominal plural allomorphy – a contrastive survey of ten Germanic languages. In Miestamo, Matti, Sinnemäki, Kaius & Karlsson, Fred (eds), *Language Complexity, Typology, contact, change* Studies in Language Companion Series 94), 243–262. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Dammel, Antje, Kürschner, Sebastian & Nübling, Damaris. 2010. Pluralallomorphie in zehn germanischen Sprachen: Konvergenzen und Divergenzen in Ausdrucksverfahren und Konditionierung. In Dammel, Antje, Kürschner, Sebastian & Nübling, Damaris (eds), *Kontrastive Germanistische Linguistik* (Germanistische Linguistik 206–209), 587–642. Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Olms.
- Dammel, Antje & Schweden, Theresa. 2022. Fokusgruppenkorpus „Personenreferenz im Dialekt.“ <https://nbn-resolving.de&urn:nbn:de:hbz:6-14019710094> (accessed 2022-12-06.)
- Eisenberg, Peter. 1991. Syllabische Struktur und Wortakzent. Prinzipien der Prosodik deutscher Wörter. *Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft* 10(1). 37–64.
- Elspass, Stephan & Möller, Robert. 2003ff. *Atlas zur deutschen Alltagssprache (AdA)*. www.atlas-alltagssprache.de&r10-f16ab (accessed 2021-04-30.)
- Flick, Uwe. 2009. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. 4th edition. Los Angeles i.a. SAGE.

- Flores Flores, W. Amaru. 2014. Zur Grammatik der Familiennamen im Luxemburgischen. Kombinationen mit Rufnamen, Bildung des Plurals und Movierung der Familiennamen. In Debus, Friedhelm, Heuser, Rita & Nübling, Damaris (eds), *Linguistik der Familiennamen* (Germanistische Linguistik 225–227), 297–319. Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Olms.
- Glaser, Barney G. & Strauss, Anselm L. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory, Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New York: Aldine.
- Glaser, Barney G. 1992. *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis, Emergence Vs. Forcing*. Mill Valley (California): Sociology Press.
- Haiman, John. 1983. Iconic and Economic Motivation. *Language* 59(1). 781–819.
- Haiman, John. 1985. Natural syntax. Iconicity and erosion (Cambridge studies in linguistics 44). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heinrichs, Heinrich Matthias. 2012. Namengebung in einem niederrheinischen Dorf vor 40 Jahren. Amern um 1925. In *Alltag im Rheinland*, 68–73.
- Koptjevskaja-Tamm, Maria. 2002. Adnominal possession in the European languages: form and function. *STUF – Language Typology and Universals* 55(2). 141–172.
- Krier, Fernande. 2014. Flektierte Familiennamen im Luxemburgischen. *Dialectologia et Geolinguistica* 22(1). 5–15.
- Kuckartz, Udo & Rädiker, Stefan. 2022. *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse, Methoden, Praxis, Computerunterstützung*. 5th edition. Weinheim, Basel: Beltz Juventa.
- Kunze, Konrad. 2005. dtv–Atlas Namenkunde. *Deutsche Vor- und Familiennamen*. Augsburg: Weltbild.
- Liamputtong, Pranee. 2011. *Focus Group Methodology, Principles and Practice*. Los Angeles i.a.: SAGE.
- Macha, Jürgen, Topalovic, Elvira, Hille, Iris, Nolting, Uta & Wilke, Anja (eds). 2005. *Deutsche Kanzleisprache in Hexenverhörprotokollen der Frühen Neuzeit*. Volume 1: Auswahl edition. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter.
- Marx, Gabriella & Wollny, Anja. 2009. Qualitative Sozialforschung. Ausgangspunkte und Ansätze für eine forschende Allgemeinmedizin. Teil 2: Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse vs. Grounded Theory. *Zeitschrift für Allgemeinmedizin*. ZFA. Organ der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Allgemeinmedizin und Familienmedizin (DEGAM): Vereinigung der Hochschullehrer und Lehrbeauftragten für Allgemeinmedizin 84(11). 467–475.

- Neef, Martin. 2000. Phonologische Konditionierung. In Booij, Geert E, Lehmann, Christian, Mugdan, Joachim, Kesselheim, Wolfgang & Skopeteas, Stavros (eds), *Morphologie/Morphology. Ein internationales Handbuch zur Flexion und Wortbildung/An International Handbook on Inflection and Word-Formation*, volume 1, 463–473. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Nowak, Jessica & Nübling, Damaris. 2017. Schwierige Lexeme und ihre Flexive im Konflikt, Hör- und sichtbare Wortschonungsstrategien. In Fuhrhop, Nanna, Szczepaniak, Renata & Schmidt, Karsten (eds), *Sichtbare und hörbare Morphologie* (Linguistische Arbeiten 565), 113–144. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter.
- Ogiermann, Eva. 2019. Discourse Completion Tasks. In Jucker, Andreas H. & Bublitz, Wolfram & Schneider, Klaus P. (eds), *Methods in Pragmatics* (Handbooks of Pragmatics 10), 229–255. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Roofls, Friedel Helga. 2016. Anna Bergmanns und Maria Witten. Parentale Femininmovierung von Familiennamen in westfälischen Varietäten. In Roofls, Friedel Helga (ed), *Bäuerliche Familiennamen in Westfalen*, 57–69. Münster: Aschendorff.
- Sacks, Harvey & Schegloff, Emanuel A. 1979. Two Preferences in the Organization of Reference to Persons in Conversation and Their Interaction. In Psathas, George (ed), *Everyday Language. Studies in Ethnomethodology*, 15–21. New York: Irvington Publishers.
- Schmuck, Mirjam & Szczepaniak, Renata. 2014. Der Gebrauch des Definitartikels vor Familien- und Rufnamen im Frühneuhochdeutschen aus grammatikalisierungstheoretischer Perspektive. In Friedhelm Debus, Heuser, Rita & Nübling, Damaris (eds), *Linguistik der Familiennamen*. (Germanistische Linguistik 225–227), 97–137. Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Olms.
- Schweden, Theresa. 2023. *Personenreferenz im Dialekt, Grammatik und Pragmatik inoffizieller Personennamen in Dialekten des Deutschen* (Empirische Linguistik & Empirical Linguistics 18). Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter.
- Schweden, Theresa & Dammel, Antje. 2023. Neues zur Grammatik und Soziopragmatik inoffizieller Personennamen in Dialekten des Deutschen. *Beiträge zur Namenforschung* 58(1–2). 205–227.

- Selting, Margret, Auer, Peter, Barth-Weingarten, Dagmar, Bergmann, Jörg, Bergmann, Pia, Birkner, Karin, Couper-Kuhlen, Elizabeth, Depermann, Arnulf, Gilles, Peter, Günthner, Susanne, Hartung, Martin, Kern, Friederike, Mertzluft, Christine, Meyer, Christian, Morek, Miriam, Oberzaucher, Frank, Peters, Jörg, Quasthoff, Uta, Schütte, Wilfried, Stukenbrock, Anja & Uhman, Susanne. 2009. Gesprächsanalytisches Transkriptionssystem. *Gesprächsforschung – Online-Zeitschrift zur verbalen Interaktion* 10. 353–402.
- Stewart, David W. & Shamdasani, Prem N. 2015. *Focus Groups, Theory and Practice*. 3rd edition (Applied social research methods series 20). Los Angeles i.a.: SAGE.
- Szczepaniak, Renata. 2007. *Der phonologisch–typologische Wandel des Deutschen von einer Silben- zu einer Wortsprache* (Studia linguistica Germanica 85). Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter.
- Topalovic, Elvira, Hille, Iris & Macha, Jürgen (eds). 2007. *Münstersches txt-Korpus. Hexenverhörprotokolle*.
- Weiß, Helmut. 2014. Really weird subjects. The syntax of family names in Bavarian. In Grewendorf, Günther & Weiß, Helmut (eds), *Bavarian syntax. Contributions to the theory of syntax* (Linguistik aktuell 220), 203–222. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Werth, Alexander. 2014. Die Funktionen des Artikels bei Personennamen im norddeutschen Sprachraum. In Debus, Friedhelm, Heuser, Rita & Nübling, Damaris (eds), *Linguistik der Familiennamen* (Germanistische Linguistik 225–227), 139–174. Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Olms.
- Werth, Alexander. 2020. Referenzkoordinatoren. Namengrammatik im Dienste des Rezipientendesigns. In Kempf, Luise, Nübling, Damaris & Schmuck, Mirjam (eds). *Linguistik der Eigennamen* (Linguistik – Impulse & Tendenzen 88). Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 259–284.