

***Wybrać* or *wybierać*, that is the question: The use of verbal aspect in Heritage Language Polish in Germany**

Based on data collected in the HOsPoD project¹, we investigate aspectual variation in Polish as a heritage language in Germany. The planned sample consists of 60 Polish heritage speakers (aged 14–39) from North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. We analyse responses from a reformulation task based on the Elicited Imitation approach, in which participants were asked to repeat orally-presented sentences and transform objects from singular to plural. While the transformation task forces the participants to focus the object of the sentence, we can covertly observe whether the verb aspect (perfective vs. imperfective; alpha/beta verbs) is preserved or altered.

The main research question is whether aspectual stability correlates with sociolinguistic variables such as the use of Polish (and other languages) within the family, years of heritage language instruction, size and composition of peer networks (in Poland and in Germany), and language attitudes (e.g. perceived prestige of Polish).

Drawing on methods introduced during the INTERMET workshop, we combine descriptive statistics with exploratory and inferential techniques implemented in R. In particular, we explore whether Correspondence Analysis can reveal associations between aspectual behaviour and speaker profiles, alongside regression-based approaches.

We hypothesise that aspectual variation is not random but patterned, with certain sociolinguistic factors correlating with higher rates of aspect preservation. Given the relatively small sample size, the analyses are interpreted as exploratory, demonstrating how quantitative methods can be adapted to small-scale, heterogeneous heritage language data.

¹ Heritage Language in comparison: Upper Sorbian and Polish in Germany (Anstatt & Scholze 2025)