

# Henrik Discher *Curriculum vitae*

📍 Freie Universität Berlin  
Institute of German and Dutch Languages and Literatures  
Historical Linguistics  
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## Research interests

Variational pragmatics, variational linguistics and dialectology (synchronic and diachronic), semantics and pragmatics, (historical) sociolinguistics, experimental pragmatics and psycholinguistics, experimental methods and (geo-)statistical modelling

## Current positions

since 02 2025	Research fellow (Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter) at Freie Universität Berlin, Institute of German and Dutch Languages and Literatures, Historical Linguistics (parental leave replacement)
since 01 2023	Research fellow (Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter) at Freie Universität Berlin, DFG project <i>Variational Pragmatics of German: Comparing Communicative Patterns (VariPrag)</i> , Pls: Tanja Ackermann, Christa Dürscheid, Stephan Elspaß and Horst Simon

## Previous positions

01 2021 – 09 2022	Research assistant (Wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft) at the University of Potsdam, Emmy Noether research group <i>Scales in Language Processing and Acquisition: Semantic and Pragmatic Contributions to Implicature Computation (SPA)</i> , PI: Nicole Gotzner
06 2020 – 02 2021	Student assistant (Studentische Hilfskraft) at Leibniz-Centre General Linguistics (ZAS), Berlin, DFG project <i>Experimental Game Theory and Scalar Implicatures: Investigating Variation in Context and Scale Type (SIGames 2)</i> , PI: Anton Benz

## Scholarly visits

06 2024	Research stay at the University of Marburg, Research Center Deutscher Sprachatlas (DSA), hosted by Matthias Hahn and Alfred Lameli, 06-28 June 2024
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## Education

since 04 2023	Dr. phil. in Linguistics, Freie Universität Berlin
04 2020 – 09 2022	M.A. in Linguistics, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, final grade: 1.1
10 2016 – 02 2020	B.A. in German Studies and Mathematics, Freie Universität Berlin, final grade: 1.2

## Summer schools

09 2024	8 <sup>th</sup> Statistical Methods for Linguistics and Psychology (SMLP), University of Potsdam, 09-13 September 2024
07 2022 – 08 2022	Eastern Generative Grammar (EGG), Masaryk University Brno, 25 July-05 August 2022

## Theses

- *Pragmatic variation of requests, complaints and assertions in German: Modeling (im)politeness-sensitive speech acts*, PhD thesis (in preparation), Freie Universität Berlin, supervised by Tanja Ackermann and Horst Simon
- *Pragmatic inferences of gradable adjectives in German: The effect of scale structure, polarity and negation on the interpretation of absolute and relative adjectives*, M.A. thesis, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, supervised by Berit Gehrke and Nicole Gotzner
- *Das Berlinische und seine Verbreitung: Eine Merkmalanalyse des Berliner Sprachgebrauchs um 1880 am Beispiel historischer Wenkerbogen*, B.A. thesis, Freie Universität Berlin, supervised by Klaas-Hinrich Ehlers and Horst Simon

## Peer-reviewed papers, conference proceedings and other work

- Zoske, Janel, Henrik Discher, Laura Fischlhammer & Sabrina Guhe. In preparation. Standard language in Austria: Pragmatic variation in formal contexts and situations. In Alexandra N. Lenz, Stephan Elspaß, Stefan M. Newerkla & Gerhard Budin (eds.), *German in Austria: Variation – contact – perception*.
- Discher, Henrik & Janel Zoske. 2023. Variationspragmatik: Bericht zur Tagung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Linguistische Pragmatik (ALP e.V.) an der Universität zu Köln am 07. März 2023. *Zeitschrift für Germanistische Linguistik* 51(3), 551-560. <https://doi.org/10.1515/zgl-2023-2026>
- Alexandropoulou, Stavroula, Henrik Discher, Marisha Herb & Nicole Gotzner. 2022. Incremental pragmatic interpretation of gradable adjectives: The role of standards of comparison. *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT)* 32, 481-497. <https://doi.org/10.3765/salt.v1i0.5399>

## Conference presentations and colloquium talks

2025

- *Diachronic and diatopic variation in German requests: High imposition contexts since the 19<sup>th</sup> century* [with Laura Fischlhammer]. Workshop “Geographical contrast in variational pragmatics”, Bielefeld University, 30 July – 01 August 2025.
- *(Im)politeness in Germany: Regional variation of request and complaint strategies*. 19<sup>th</sup> International Pragmatics Conference (IPrA), University of Queensland, Brisbane, 22-27 June 2025
- *You’re a true Vulgarian, aren’t you? Inter-speaker variation in the use of expressivity in German complaints* [with Tanja Ackermann]. 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the German Linguistics Society (DGfS), Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, 04-07 March 2025

2024

- *Explicitness of requests and complaints in German: Theoretical considerations and (geo)statistical modeling*. Research colloquium on German linguistics, Bielefeld University, 27 November 2024
- „Ähm, Diggi, der Vier-Euro-Schein wurde noch nicht erfunden“: *Pragmatische Variation von Beschwerden im Deutschen*. Colloquium of the linguistics research groups at TU Dortmund University (Christian Zimmer), University of Bielefeld (Tanja Ackermann) and University of Duisburg-Essen (Melitta Gillmann), Datteln, 13-15 August 2024
- *Variational pragmatics of German: The effect of ‘region’ and other micro- and macro-social factors* [with Janel Zoske, Tanja Ackermann & Horst Simon]. 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Language Variation in Europe (ICLaVE|12), Austrian Academy of Sciences and University of Vienna, 08-11 July 2024
- *Pragmatische Variation im deutschsprachigen Raum: Regionale Unterschiede in der Realisierung von höflichkeitssensitiven Sprechakten*. Colloquium of the Research Center Deutscher Sprachatlas and Institut für Germanistische Sprachwissenschaft, University of Marburg, 26 June 2024

- *Pragmatische Variation von höflichkeitssensitiven Sprechakten: Die Faktoren 'Region' und 'Nation' in der geostatistischen Analyse*. Research colloquium on German linguistics (FoGeL), Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, 11 June 2024

## 2023

- *Wen befragen wir? Auswirkungen von (sprachlicher) Mobilität für die Untersuchung von regionaler Sprachvariation* [with Janel Zoske]. Colloquium by Ferdinand von Mengden, Freie Universität Berlin, 29 November 2023
- *Wie können wir linguistische Mobilität messen? Herangehensweisen und Herausforderungen* [with Janel Zoske]. Colloquium of the linguistics research groups at TU Dortmund University (Ulrike Freywald), University of Münster (Antje Dammel), University of Osnabrück (Sophie Ellsäßer) and Freie Universität Berlin (Horst Simon), Oerlinghausen, 10-12 November 2023
- *The impact of the factors 'nation' and 'region' on pragmatic variation in pluricentric German: First results* [with Tanja Ackermann]. 18<sup>th</sup> International Pragmatics Conference (IPrA), Université Libre de Bruxelles, 09-14 July 2023
- *Zwischen Sprachproduktion und -reflexion. Discourse Completion Tasks, Adequacy Ratings und linguistische Feldforschung als variantenpragmatische Untersuchungsmethoden* [with Janel Zoske]. Workshop "Methoden der variationellen Pragmatik und historischen Soziolinguistik", Freie Universität Berlin, 26-27 June 2023

## 2022

- *Pragmatische Inferenzen in Deutsch und Englisch: Interpretation von absoluten und relativen Adjektiven im Sprachvergleich*. Colloquium by Ferdinand von Mengden, Freie Universität Berlin, 14 December 2022
- *Warum bedeutet nicht gut nicht schlecht? Pragmatische Inferenzen von graduierbaren Adjektiven im Deutschen*. Colloquium on German grammar by Christian Zimmer, Freie Universität Berlin, 30 November 2022
- *Incremental processing of scalar inferences of adjectives: The role of comparison standards* [with Stavroula Alexandropoulou, Marisha Herb & Nicole Gotzner]. 9<sup>th</sup> Experimental Pragmatics Conference (XPRAG), IUSS Pavia, 22-23 September 2022
- *Incremental pragmatic interpretation of gradable adjectives: The role of standards of comparison* [with Stavroula Alexandropoulou, Marisha Herb & Nicole Gotzner]. 32<sup>nd</sup> Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT), El Colegio de México, Mexico City, 08-10 June 2022
- *Incremental processing of scalar implicatures of adjectives: The role of lexical semantics* [with Stavroula Alexandropoulou, Marisha Herb & Nicole Gotzner]. 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Department of Linguistics (AMGL), Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 06-08 May 2022
- *Scale structure and negation: Inferences of gradable adjectives in German*. Syntax and semantics colloquium by Stefan Müller and Elisabeth Verhoeven, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 26 April 2022

## 2021

- *Measure phrases as modifiers of negative adjectives*. 70<sup>th</sup> Studentische Tagung Sprachwissenschaft (StuTS), University of Vienna, 17-21 November 2021

**Public outreach**

- *Essen und Höflichkeit: Regionale Variation von kommunikativen Routinen* [with Janel Zoske]. Lange Nacht der Wissenschaften, Freie Universität Berlin, 17 June 2023

**Teaching**

04 2025 – 07 2025	<i>Sprachwandel</i> , advanced course, B.A. German Studies, Freie Universität Berlin, summer term 2025
11 2024	Substitute teaching, <i>Kulturelles im Dialekt</i> (lecturer: Horst Simon), seminar, B.A. Language and Society, Freie Universität Berlin, 26 November 2024
10 2023 – 02 2024	<i>Sprachwissenschaftliche Fragestellungen und Methoden</i> , basic course, B.A. German Studies, Freie Universität Berlin, winter term 2023/24
07 2023	Substitute teaching, <i>Sprachwandel</i> (lecturer: Horst Simon), seminar, B.A. German studies, Freie Universität Berlin, 04 July 2023
05 2023	Guest lecture, <i>Psychosemantics</i> (lecturer: Nicole Gotzner), seminar, B.Sc. and M.Sc. Cognitive Science, University of Osnabrück, 16 May 2023

### Workshop organization

- *Geographical Contrast in Variational Pragmatics (GeoContrast)* [with Tanja Ackermann, Anne Schröder, Pawel Sickinger, Horst Simon & Janel Zoske], Bielefeld University, 30 July – 01 August 2025
- *Methoden der variationellen Pragmatik und historischen Soziolinguistik* [with Tanja Ackermann, Horst Simon & Janel Zoske], Freie Universität Berlin, 26-27 June 2023
- *9<sup>th</sup> Linguistik Meetup Berlin-Brandenburg (LMBB)* [with Patrick Auhagen, Helen Besel, Luisa Kalvelage, Radim Lacina & Johanna Pott], University of Potsdam, 29 September 2022

### Fellowships

06 2025	DAAD conference travel program, 19 <sup>th</sup> International Pragmatics Conference (IPrA), University of Queensland, Brisbane, 22-27 June 2025
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### Skills

<i>Languages</i>	German (native), English (C1), French (B2)
<i>Coding</i>	R, Python, HTML, JavaScript
<i>Experimental tools</i>	PClbex, ScoSci Survey
<i>Annotating tools</i>	Praat, EXMARaLDA, ANNIS

### Membership

- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Sprachwissenschaft (DGfS)
- International Pragmatics Association (IPrA)

### References

Horst Simon	Tanja Ackermann	Nicole Gotzner
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Berlin, 28 May 2025