



SFB Guest Lecture

Friday, January 19, 2024 at 5.00 pm
Campus Golm, Building 14, Room 0.29

Invited by the projects C02 and C10

Prof. Dr. [Göz Kaufmann](#) (University of Freiburg)
 will give a talk on

In the thick of it: scope rivalry in past counterfactuals of Pomerano

Abstract:

Pomerano is an unroofed ('dachlose') Low German variety spoken by roughly 250,000 speakers in several parts of Brazil. Its linguistic base are Eastern Pomeranian varieties, which, due to the expulsion of Germans from Eastern Pomerania in the aftermath of World War II, have been entirely lost in Europe. Likewise, there are hardly any speakers left in the United States though most Pomeranians who left Europe in the 19th century migrated there, and not to Brazil.

In order to elicit comparable data of this unique variety, 348 speakers from Brazil (128 from Rio Grande do Sul, 98 from Espírito Santo, 77 from Rondônia, and 45 from Santa Catarina) were asked to orally translate 61 Portuguese stimulus sentences (leading to roughly 21,000 translations). Although this data set allows the analysis of various phenomena (cf. Kaufmann 2017, Kaufmann 2023, and Kaufmann & Duran 2022), the focus of the present presentation is on past counterfactuals with modal verbs (cf. Kaufmann 2022). For this phenomenon, translations such as (1) and (2) are crucial as they either feature a finite temporal auxiliary or a finite modal verb:

stimulus <45> Portuguese: Ontem eu poderia ter vendido o anel.
 English: Yesterday I could have sold the ring

(1) gistern hät küüt ik dai fingerring forköft hat häwa (Pom-206)
 yesterday has_{3SG/Present} can_{Participle} I_{1SG/Subject} the ring sold had have

(2) gistern küün ik dai fingering [0.4] forköft häwa (Pom-153)
 yesterday could_{1SG/Past} I_{1SG/Subject} the ring [0.4] sold have

Although translation (2) resembles the Portuguese (and English) stimulus sentence – and the verbal constellation in German clauses with an epistemic modal verb –, there can be no doubt whatsoever that it is not related to either construction. It rather results from the eventual loss of the already defective temporal auxiliary *hät* in translation (1). After all, one would expect a 1SG-past tense form of the temporal auxiliary, i.e., *haar*, to code for the counterfactual layer of this clause (cf. Iatridou 2000: 240). In (1), however, both person and tense 'agreement' seem to have been blocked, most probably by the adjacent modal verb

