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Languages in contact: the case of Alsatian and French

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A particular situation:

- French and Alsatian in contact
- Two language families : romance and germanic

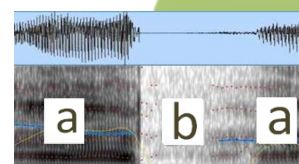
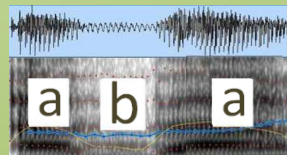
The Plosives problem:

- No voicing in Alsatian contrary to French
- What about French spoken by Alsatians ?

/p/ /t/ /k/ versus /b/ /d/ /g/

In French and Alsatian : two ways to distinguish plosives

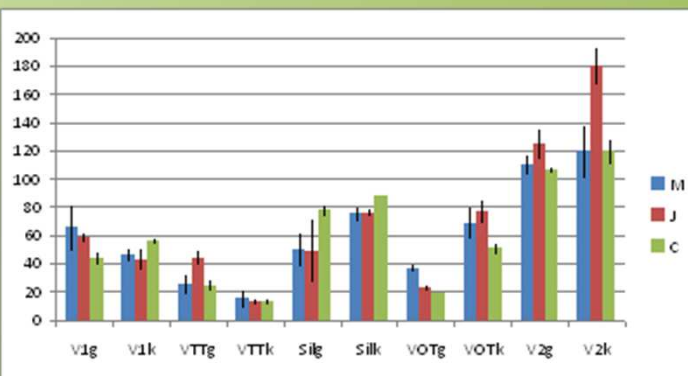
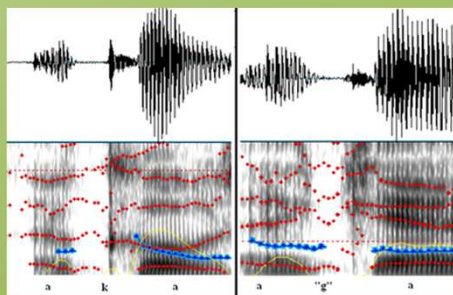
Written /b/ in French and Alsatian



Datas Alsatian

Corpus:

Kass / Gass	Box/ Road
Dritt / Tritt	Blow / 3rd
Pump / Bumb	Pump / Bomb



Comparison of durations (in ms) for initial G and K in Alsatian for 3 female speakers (M, J and C)

Results:

- All plosives are voiceless
- They are opposed by :
 Silence // fortis - lenis
 VOT / VTT

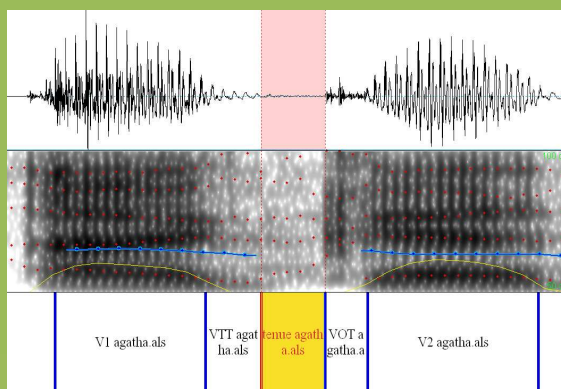
Corpus :

- 18 sentences
- 6 stops
- 3 positions (initial, intervocalic, final)
- Translated from Alsatian to French

Measurments:

- Vowels before and after stop
- V.TT, silence and V.O.T

Datas Alsatian → French



p/b		%VOT/stop alsatian	%VOT/stop french	%occ/stop alsatian	%occ/stop french	%stop/loqa alsatian	%stop/loqa french
m	sonnet	19,6	18,9	80,4	81,1	43,6	32,0
	j	12,2	11,5	87,4	88,5	41,1	36,3
	c	14,7	9,5	85,5	90,5	45,8	43,2
m	sonnet	24,4	18,3	78,3	81,7	48,5	56,6
	j	36,8	17,9	69,2	82,1	50,9	45,3
	c	16,9	15,4	80,5	84,6	52,1	49,1
t/d		%VOT/stop alsatian	%VOT/stop french	%occ/stop alsatian	%occ/stop french	%stop/loqa alsatian	%stop/loqa french
m	sonnet	23,5	29,7	61,1	70,3	50,7	35,3
	j	25,6	18,8	44,2	81,2	36,0	37,0
	c	28,9	14,8	56,7	85,2	47,6	35,7
m	sonnet	21,4	28,6	68,5	71,4	43,7	49,3
	j	23,6	17,9	47,3	82,1	49,9	45,6
	c	22,9	18,4	64,5	81,6	39,3	44,9
k/g		%VOT/stop alsatian	%VOT/stop french	%occ/stop alsatian	%occ/stop french	%stop/loqa alsatian	%stop/loqa french
m	sonnet	32,7	29,7	44,6	70,3	38,8	39,6
	j	19,8	17,1	42,8	82,9	38,5	36,7
	c	16,2	15,3	64,0	84,7	44,8	37,4
m	sonnet	43,3	35,2	47,2	75,4	49,1	46,7
	j	46,3	27,3	45,6	95,5	43,2	40,6
	c	33,2	29,1	57,9	84,4	46,6	44,5

Quantitative approach:

- Devoicing depending on age : from none for young speakers, to all stops for older speakers.
- Lenition affect more female speakers

Results:

- Voiced stops lenition
- Voiced as voiceless
- Longer VOT in alsatian
- Longer stops in alsatian

- Features and cues are not as rigid as we might think. Some articulatory targets are clearly sufficient to ensure mutual understanding.

- The question raised by these changes is that of the nature of phonological systems and their phonetic basis.

- It seems feasible to suggest a more flexible reading of the phonetic system, based on variability and adaptation that arise within a group of different phonemes as part of language contact.