Quantifying auxiliary *tun* to study seventeenth-century German metalinguistic reflection

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Abstract. This paper discusses whether the quantitative analysis of auxiliary *tun* in the *Erzehlungen aus den mittlern Zeiten* (1624), the first German translation of the Italian short story collection *Novellino*, can help uncover new aspects of the metalinguistic reflection of the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*. The *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* was the first German society that focussed on the improvement of the German language, and the *Erzehlungen* are a product of the "language work" of this society. In the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* East Central / Low German were seen as the model for a new standard literary German. The metalinguistic writings of the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* voice this opinion explicitly when describing the rules for orthography, phonotactics and morphology but, as it was typical in the seventeenth-century, they don't give any rule for syntactic correct structures. Therefore, the question whether the syntax of this newly founded literary German had to be regionally marked as well, can only be inferred by observing the syntactic properties of the texts that resulted from the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*'s "language work". The quantitative analysis of auxiliary *tun* in the *Erzehlungen* will show that the use of this construction in the studied translation bears a Low German regional markedness. This quantitative linguistic analysis could thus shed some light on the question of which regional variety the first German "linguistic" society considered to be the model for syntactic correctness.

Nell'articolo si discuterà del fatto se l'analisi quantitativa di *tun* ausiliare nelle *Erzehlungen aus den mittlern Zeiten* (1624), la prima traduzione tedesca del *Novellino*, possa mettere in luce nuovi aspetti della riflessione metalinguistica della *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*. Questa fu la prima società in Germania a porre il rinnovamento della lingua tedesca tra i propri obiettivi principali. Le *Erzehlungen* sono proprio un prodotto del lavoro sulla lingua portato avanti da questa società. Nella *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* si propugnava l'esemplarità del tedesco centrale orientale / basso tedesco come base per la fondazione di una nuova lingua letteraria tedesca. Negli scritti metalinguistici della *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*, questa opinione viene esplicitata nel trattare le regole ortografiche, fonotattiche e morfologiche della nuova lingua standard. Tuttavia, come era tipico nel Seicento, questi scritti tralasciano di trattare le regole per la corretta sintassi del tedesco. Per comprendere se l'esemplarità delle varianti regionali sopra menzionate fosse valida anche per la sintassi, non si può dunque ricorrere agli scritti teorici della società,

bensì occorre dedurlo direttamente dalle proprietà sintattiche dei testi frutto del lavoro sulla lingua della *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*. L'analisi quantitativa della perifrasi con *tun* ha mostrato che l'uso di tale struttura nelle *Erzehlungen* è marcato come basso tedesco, contribuendo così a determinare quale variante regionale fosse ritenuta il modello di correttezza sintattica dalla *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*.

Introduction

This paper was first presented at the conference *Bridging Gaps, Creating Links: The Qualitative-Quantitative Interface in the Study of Literature* held in Padua (Italy) in June 2018. This conference provided an enriching discussion on the contribution of quantitative study of linguistic data to a better understanding of literary features, such as an author's writing style or process. Understanding these literary features allows for clear identification of recurring or shifting topics in a literary text, comparison of different versions of the same work and discovery of the true authorship of a literary text published anonymously or under a pseudonym. Many of the presentations at the conference focused on the relationship between language and literature and on the power of quantitative linguistics tools to provide information about the nature of literature.

This paper aims to show that quantitative study of linguistic data not only uncovers the literary properties of a text but also some cultural and historical aspects of the text that would otherwise go unnoticed. The case study analyses the use, distribution and frequency of the *tun* periphrasis in the *Erzehlungen aus den mittlern Zeiten* (1624) [5]; [7], the first German translation of the Italian collection of short stories, *Libro di Novelle, et di bel Parlar Gentile* (1572) [2], known today as *Novellino*. Quantifying and observing the distribution of this particular phenomenon reveals some aspects of the seventeenth-century German metalinguistic reflection, particularly in connection with the learned society and linguistic academy *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*, or, the "fruit-bearing society" (FG).

Furthermore, this paper discusses the many difficulties faced when dealing with linguistic data from historical texts; the data are often less than ideal both for the low token frequency of the analysed phenomenon and for the unsatisfactory state of the study of many linguistic structures typical of earlier language stages. However, dealing with nonideal linguistic data sets is still worthwhile. A quantitative-based approach mixed with a qualitative evaluation of the data obtained through linguistic analysis still advances knowledge of the chosen linguistic phenomenon and of the language stage and text under observation.

To scholars who do not specialize in the history of German language and linguistics, the link between the chosen text, the chosen linguistic phenomenon and the question of metalinguistic reflection in seventeenth-century Germany is far from obvious. Therefore, this paper provides necessary background information on the German language and the foundation of the first language academies in the seventeenth century, as well as the characteristics of the *tun* periphrasis.

Language reflection in seventeenth-century Germany

Like many other European countries in the early modern age, the vast German-speaking area of the seventeenth-century Holy Roman Empire had yet to define a unitary literary language with a shared set of grammatical rules. This originated mainly from the lack of true political unity in the Empire, which was composed of many sovereign states with different cultural centres. These included Saxony's chancellery, the Habsburg court in Vienna and the most important seventeenth-century German printing centres (Leipzig, Jena, Wittenberg, Frankfurt am Main and Nuremberg)[1]. The lack of political and confessional unity was one of the most important causes of the enduring linguistic fragmentation, since each area of the Empire clung to its traditional written dialect as a means of reasserting political and confessional independence (see [4]; [18], 129).

The prestige of German as a literary language was undermined in the seventeenth century by intellectuals' and learned noblemen's preferences for ancient or foreign languages in many fields of knowledge and culture. German competed with Latin in the fields of science, literature, philosophy and theology, as well as in the Empire's central administration. It also competed with French, the most fashionable language of the cultivated elite (see [12], 422). Many German intellectuals neglected their native language, adding to the linguistic fragmentation of the Empire and resulting in sparse literary production in German. Indeed, the German literary production of the seventeenth had little impact on the European panorama and could not compete with the leading European vernaculars (and literatures).

As a reaction against this situation, many seventeenth-century German societies and academies were founded in which the cultivation of the native language assumed an important, if not central, role. The first attempts at defining a common German language began with the aim of establishing a language capable of supporting the production of scientific and literary texts in German that could rival the quality of those in French, Spanish and Italian [6].

The first society that focused on the cultivation of German was the FG, one of the most important centres of linguistic reflection in the first half of the seventeenth century. The FG was founded in Weimar in 1617 by a group of learned intellectuals and noblemen from modern-day Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia.[2] Even though the FG presented itself as an open platform for intellectuals from all Christian confessions and admitted Catholics as

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1 The full list of all German printing centres of the seventeenth century by number of published books can be found on the website of The Union Catalogue of Books Printed in German Speaking Countries in the 17th Century (VD 17): http://www.vd17.de/files/pdf/VD17_Druckorte_2012-12-31.pdf.

2 Other societies with a focus on language were the *Aufrichtige Tannengesellschaft*, founded in 1633 in Strasbourg; the *Teutschgesinnte Genossenschaft*, founded in 1643 (probably in Hamburg); the *Pegnesische Blumenorden*, founded in 1644 in Nuremberg; the *Elbschwanenorden*, founded in 1658 in Wedel an der Elbe; and the *Deutsche Gesellschaft*, founded in 1697 in Leipzig (see [18]; [19], 150f.).

members, 96.2% of the members were Protestants (see [5], vol. 2, 30). Until 1650, the FG operated in Köthen, and its activities revolved around the work and personality of the reformed Prince Ludwig von Anhalt-Köthen, the first president of the society, who actively encouraged the members of the FG to cultivate German through writing, translating and creating metalinguistic works (see [13], 116). Although many opinions were voiced regarding the ideal German standard, the official stance of the society was dictated by its president, who also reviewed all works by members of the FG before publication to make sure that they followed the German standard as established by the FG.

The multifaceted metalinguistic reflection in seventeenth-century Germany was a complex matter marked by various currents of thought about the ideal standard for German.[3] One of the most debated questions at the time was whether a regional variety of German should be the model for the new literary German standard and, if so, which one. Because of the political and confessional fragmentation of the Empire, affirming the language of one cultural elite from one area of the empire and loyal to one confession meant affirming the cultural supremacy of that elite, that area and that confession (see [4], 184). This cultural elite would have enough prestige to guide the country not only to linguistic unity but also to national unity.

According to the FG, as dictated by Prince Ludwig, the model for correct language usage was East Central German. This choice was obvious; the founders of this society came from East Central Germany. However, Prince Ludwig and his followers had no intention of imposing the dialect commonly spoken in this region, which was too uncultivated to become the new standard (see [16], 74). Additionally, using words from a small region's dialect would have limited understanding outside of that region. Instead, the FG affirmed the dialect of German spoken and written by the cultivated elite of the region that, like other traditional written dialects, was vastly superregional in word choice. However, the East Central German written dialect and all other traditional superregional dialects differed from one another in their orthography as well as morphological and phonotactical aspects.

The linguistic reflection of this period thoroughly discussed orthographic, phonotactic and morphological rules that clearly differed from one written dialect to another. The grammar and metalinguistics works that were published in these years, however, did not provide clear instructions about syntax [3]. The FG never explicitly defined what was syntactically correct or whether the correct syntactic use was regionally marked. Therefore, these concepts can only be understood indirectly by studying the syntactic properties of the literary texts that were the product of the FG's language work. This is exactly what this paper proposes to do: analysing the *tun* periphrasis in the *Erzehlungen* to determine the syntactic regional markedness of the text. Through this method, a better understanding of a non-literary features is gained, in this case, by shedding light on the FG's position on syntax and regional features in the first half of the seventeenth century.

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3   For a comprehensive discussion, see [12]; [15].

The *Erzehlungen* and the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*

As mentioned above, this study was conducted on the Erzehlungen [7], the first German translation of the Italian collection of short stories known today as Novellino. This translation was completed in March 1624 by eight translators– seven women and one man. Each of them translated a different amount of the 100 short stories of Novellino into German. One member of this group, Prince Ludwig the Young, was also a member of the FG (the society did not admit women). All of the translators were part of the Anhalt family and completed the Erzehlungen at the court in Köthen, likely under the guidance of Prince Ludwig.

Other elements of the *Erzehlungen* place this translation as part of the language work of the FG, as demonstrated through analysis of the translating technique and the writing style of the translators and matching this technique and style to the norms for linguistic work and improvement discussed in the FG at the time. Translating played a large role in the linguistic reflection of this society since it was seen as the perfect stylistic exercise, an ideal way to improve one's writing style and thus to enhance the expressivity and literary fineness of the German language while importing new topics and genres that could renovate German literature.

The text of the *Erzehlungen* is particularly suited for evaluation of what the FG considered to be syntactically correct, because its manuscript was reviewed by a ninth person who amended grammatical, lexical and syntactic errors. Since this ninth person was most likely Prince Ludwig, the corrections made to the syntax of the *Erzehlungen* show what syntactic structures he (and therefore, by extension, the official stance of the FG) considered to be correct. This is, in fact, the only way to know more about the syntactic correctness proposed by the FG, since, as mentioned above, syntax is not discussed in their theoretical works.

Auxiliary *tun* in New High German and Early New High German

The *tun* periphrasis is the use of the verb *tun* as a dummy auxiliary followed by an infinitive (*er tat lesen*) instead of a synthetic verb form (*er las*) (see [8], 181). *Tun* is the German cognate of the English 'to do'. Thus, the *tun* periphrasis is the German cousin of the English construction, 'do' plus an infinitive (*sie tat das Buch schreiben*/she did write the book), at least formally. Unlike 'do', auxiliary *tun* cannot be phonologically stressed in this construction and is not used to emphasize the action described by the verb, as is the case in English (see [17], 86). Therefore, the meaning of *sie tat das Buch schreiben* is not equivalent to that of the English sentence *she did write the book*; the German sentence does not mean that "she actually, really wrote the book". Instead, it simply states, in a neutral way, that "she wrote the book".[4] *Sie tat das Buch schreiben* is identical in meaning to the sentence *Sie schrieb das Buch* with the synthetic

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4   For further and more precise discussion on the differences between *tun* and *do*, see [21].

preterite verb form *schrieb*.[5]

Since the meaning of *tun* and an infinitive coincides with corresponding sentences using a synthetic verb form, the use of auxiliary *tun* stands under great normative pressure in today's New High German. Using *tun* and an infinitive instead of a synthetic verb form (as in 1, below) is seen as a semantically redundant, low-prestige construction; it is considered to be low-register language, typical to the spoken language of lower social classes. This construction is a dialectal phenomenon (see [8], 182) and should be avoided in the written language as well as in the middle- or high-register spoken language. The *tun* construction is only allowed when it has a clear purpose and leads to topicalization of the infinite lexical verb in a declarative main clause as in 1, below (see [1], 41):

1. [?/*]Sie tut ein Buch lesen.

2. Bücher lesen tut sie gern.[6]

The stigmatisation of auxiliary *tun* in German prose began with the first prescriptive grammars of the eighteenth century.[7] However, in the language stage discussed in this paper, Early New High German (ca. 1350-1650), the *tun* periphrasis was used in written texts of all genres and registers throughout the whole German-speaking area. Auxiliary *tun* is still present in all German dialects, with a different clause type and tense/mood dependent distribution that has remained constant throughout the centuries.[8] Therefore, by considering these clause type, tense/mood variables in the distribution of auxiliary *tun* in the different German dialects and comparing them to the use of auxiliary *tun* in a text, we can determine the regional markedness of the *tun* periphrasis in the analysed text.

What is proposed in this paper is a pilot study. As is often the case when working on diachronic linguistics, the data obtained by analysing texts from earlier language stages are seldom ideal. The low number of occurrences of auxiliary *tun* in the *Erzehlungen* present challenges to this analysis. Additionally, the study of this phenomenon, its characteristics in today's language and its historical evolution is far from exhaustive. Auxiliary *tun* has gained the attention of just a few scholars ([9], [10], [11], [17]), perhaps as a result of the stigmatization of this phenomenon

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5   The discussion on the semantic value of *tun* in this construction is still open in the scientific literature. The interpretations of *tun* as an aspectual marker of habituality, imperfectivity or progressivity proposed by some scholars (see [1], [9], [11]) still lack sufficient demonstration and are often proved wrong by the empiric analysis of texts containing auxiliary *tun*. The author agrees with Erb ([8], 196) and Langer ([17], 55) who affirm that auxiliary *tun* carries no aspectual value and is not a specific mood or tense marker, but that it is rather a kind of semantic empty, 'dummy auxiliary' (see [17], 97).

6   Both examples are taken from [8], 185.

7   The banishing of auxiliary *tun* from poetry began earlier, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and extended to prose at the end of the seventeenth century, but it's not until the eighteenth century that a sociolinguistic stigmatisation existed for the *tun* periphrasis (see [17], 65ff.).

8   This argument will be discussed more extensively while analysing the frequency of auxiliary *tun* in the *Erzehlungen*.

in today's New High German.

Auxiliary *tun* in the *Erzehlungen*

Auxiliary tun was studied throughout the text of the Erzehlungen, which is comprised of 100 short stories (ca. 40,000 words). The text was transcribed from the manuscript [7], compared with its critical edition [20] and annotated manually. At first, only 115 clauses containing a tun periphrasis were found in the Erzehlungen, a low number for a text of this length. However, considering only the clauses in which auxiliary tun appeared and comparing them with the total number of clauses in the text would not accurately determine the frequency of this construction. Although the literature stated that the tun periphrasis could potentially substitute for every verb in any tense or mood (see [11], 140), a closer look at the occurrences of auxiliary tun in the Erzehlungen revealed an interesting fact. The tun periphrasis occurred exclusively in the indicative present (1), preterite (2) and future (3) tenses in main clauses (MC) and in the indicative present (4), preterite (5) and subjunctive preterite (6) tenses in subordinate clauses (SC).

3. die vbrigen 4 groschen **thue** ich zu meinem eigenen außgaben **anwenden**. [7], 5r

4. Hierauf **thet** Herr Jacob den engster **ergreiffen**. [7], 62v

5. Wan du nun das alter erreichet, **wirstu** nicht der natur sondern der vernunft nach […] **leben thun**. [7], 103r

6. Es wird ew rem nachfolger wolgedeÿen wan er sich selbsten recht **lösen thut**. [7], 104r

7. eines tages begab sichs, das er vber einen schönen brunnen **ruhen thete**. [7], 63v

8. wan dieses ein ritter were, oder ich ihn nicht **kennen thete**, were ich… [7], 56r

All clauses containing a synthetic verb form in these moods and tenses were isolated to assess the actual frequency of auxiliary *tun*, which was still low. The *tun* periphrasis was present in only 4.03% of all clauses containing a verb that could potentially be substituted by auxiliary *tun* and an infinitive (see Table 1).

When the frequency analysis was split by tense and clause type, however, the precise quantitative analysis of the phenomenon revealed some features that would have otherwise remained unnoticed due to the low frequency of auxiliary *tun* in the text. As seen in Table 1, the use of this construction in the *Erzehlungen* was very limited in main clauses, remaining at an overall frequency of <0.5% of all clauses containing a verb capable of being rendered through a *tun* periphrasis. The 4% frequency that resulted from the analysis of main clauses in the future tense was insignificant due to the low token number of clauses in that tense.

However, the frequency of auxiliary *tun* increased substantially in subordinate clauses (SC); nearly 10% of all verbal complexes could have potentially been rendered through a *tun* periphrasis in the indicative mood, and 25% could have been rendered in the subjunctive preterite. What seemed at first to be a rare phenomenon was revealed as a construction whose frequency reached significant quantities, depending on the clause type and on the mood of the verbal complex.

	MC Ind. Pres.	MC Ind. Pret.	MC Ind. Fut.	SC Ind. Pres.	SC Ind. Pret.	SC Subj. Pret.	
Synth.	2099	1788	24	174	491	51	2737
Tun + Inf.	1	9	1	18	69	17	115
	0.48%	0.50%	4%	9.38%	12.32%	25%	4.03%

Table 1: Distribution of auxiliary tun in the Erzehlungen

A qualitative analysis explained why this was relevant to the study of the regional markedness of the text's syntax. Currently, no study exists concerning the distribution of auxiliary *tun* in different regions in Early New High German, so the few clues existing in the literature were used to examine the regional use of auxiliary *tun*. Dialects tend to be conservative, as seen in the distribution of auxiliary tun in German dialects today. According to the literature, the prevalent use of auxiliary *tun* in subordinate clauses was typical for Lower German dialects, whereas Middle and Upper German dialects tended to use the *tun* periphrasis more often, especially in main clauses (see [8], 193). Data from today's dialects can be compared with other information clues found in the sparse studies of auxiliary *tun* in Early New High German texts. For example, the study conducted by Fischer [11] stated that seventeenth-century authors like the pedagogue Wolfgang Ratke, who was born in the northern part of Germany, used auxiliary tun almost exclusively in subordinate clauses (see [10], 136). This confirmed the conservativeness of Lower German dialects in the use and distribution of tun and also confirmed that the nearly exclusive use of auxiliary *tun* in the Erzehlungen marked its syntax as having a Lower German tendency. This was consistent with what is known about the origin of the translators from Anhalt. Although it is now in a region that speaks East Central German, in the seventeenth century, Anhalt was at the southern border of the region that spoke Lower German. This border moved constantly north in the following centuries (see [22], 9).

Observing the corrections and changes made to the text's manuscript by the translators and the reviewer of the *Erzehlungen* also provided hints of their acceptability judgements. These changes made a considerable effort to correct spelling errors, improve text coherence and word choice and avoid unnecessary repetitions. Syntactic aspects were seldom corrected. Analysis of the handwritten version of the *Erzehlungen* revealed that no instance of auxiliary *tun* was ever modified, except in the following example (1), where the *tun* periphrasis (*lieben thue*) was struck through, leaving only the corresponding synthetic verb form (*liebe*). However, this

correction was made only to avoid a repetition of *tun*, since the verb appeared as a full verb meaning 'to do, to make' in the following infinitive clause:

9. Liebe Königin vnd ehegemahl, ihr möget wol wißen, das ich euch vber alle menschen auf der welt hertzlich **lieben thue**, auch bereit bin, was euch gefellet gerne **zu thun**. [7], 154v

In summary, the use of the *tun* periphrasis in the *Erzehlungen* was restricted almost exclusively to subordinate clauses, a Lower German syntactic tendency. Additionally, the occurrences of auxiliary *tun* were never corrected in the manuscript (except to avoid repetition). These observations revealed that the use of auxiliary *tun* in the analysed text was seen as correct both by the translators and the reviewer.

Since *Erzehlungen* was translated in the spirit of the FG's language work, and since their reviewer was the president of the society, Prince Ludwig, the syntactic tendencies of the text and changes made to the text followed the tendencies of the accepted exemplary dialect. This confirmed that the northern East Central/southern Lower German regional dialect was exemplary not only for orthography, morphology and phonotatics, as stated in the theoretical works nearest to the official stance of the FG,[9] but also for syntax.[10]

Another aspect of auxiliary *tun* was uncovered by a thorough quantitative analysis of this construction by taking the variable of the translators into account. Since syntax did not play a significant role in the grammars written in the seventeenth century, the translators of the *Erzehlungen* most likely had no particular or conscious knowledge of syntax, either. It is highly probable that they used syntactic structures instinctively. This supposition was corroborated by observing the use of auxiliary *tun* by each translator (Table 2).

		MC Ind. Pres.	MC Ind. Pret.	MC Ind. Fut.	SC Ind. Pres.	SC Ind. Pret.	SC Subj. Pret.	Tot.	
Ludwig the Young von	Synth	71	717	10	72	195	16	1081	

9   For example, Christian Gueintz's *Deutscher Sprachlehre Entwurf* (1634) [13] and *Deutsche Rechtschreibung* (1645) [14] were reviewed and substantially modified by the president of the FG, Ludwig von Anhalt-Köthen. They can rightly be considered an official product of the FG's metalinguistic reflection (see [18],26; [15],110).

10 This result is consistent with the comprehensive analysis of the morphology and syntax of the *Erzehlungen* conducted in the author's dissertation, which will hopefully be published soon. This dissertation uncovered this same southern Lower German/northern East Central German markedness in a series of other linguistic phenomena, such as the Ablautpattern of some irregular verbs, adjective declension and position of the finite verb in subordinate clauses containing an analytic predicate.

Anhalt-Köthen								
	tun + Inf.	0	5	0	6	25	3	39	3.48%
		0%	0.69%	0%	7.69%	11.36%	15.79%		
Amoena Amalia von Anhalt-Köthen	Synth	48	285	11	32	81	11	468	
	tun + Inf.	0	1	0	3	10	4	18	3.70%
		0%	0.35%	0%	8.57%	10.99%	26.67%		
Loysa Amoena von Anhalt-Köthen	Synth	30	259	2	24	64	6	385	
	tun + Inf.	0	0	1	7	14	2	24	5.87%
		0%	0%	33.33%	22.58%	17.95%	25.00%		
Eleonora Maria von Anhalt-Bernburg	Synth	21	181	0	17	44	9	272	
	tun + Inf.	1	3	0	1	7	4	16	5.56%
		4.55%	1.63%	-	5.56%	13.73%	30.77%		
Kunigunde Juliana von Anhalt-Dessau	Synth	18	164	1	17	50	4	254	
	tun + Inf.	0	0	0	1	10	4	15	5.58%
		0%	0%	0%	5.56%	16.67%	50.00%		
Anna Sophia von	Synth	9	106	0	7	33	2	157	

Anhalt-Bernburg									
	tun + Inf.	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.63%
		0%	0%	-	0%	2.94%	0%		
Sibylle Elisabeth von Anhalt-Bernburg	Synth	12	76	0	5	24	3	120	
	tun + Inf.	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1.64%
		0%	0%	-	0%	7.69%	0%		
Eleonora Dorothea von Anhalt-Dessau	Synth	0	13	0	0	2	0	15	
	tun + Inf.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
		-	0%	-	-	0%	-		
Tot.	Synth	209	1788	24	174	491	51	2737	
	tun + Inf.	1	9	1	18	69	17	115	4.03%
		0.48%	0.50%	4.00%	9.38%	12.32%	25.00%		

Table 2: The use of auxiliary tun in the Erzehlungen by each translator

Some substantial challenges were present when analysing this data due to the fact that the contribution of each translator was uneven: the son of the FG's president, Prince Ludwig the Young, authored 40% of the text alone, followed by his mother Amoena Amalia (ca. 18%) and his sister Loysa Amoena (ca. 14%). In the text translated by each of these three, enough examples of auxiliary tun were found to show that each one of them had a strong preference for the use of the tun periphrasis in subordinate clauses. In line with the general tendency of the Erzehlungen, they each used this construction more frequently as a periphrasis for verbs in the subjunctive mood.

The other translators, Prince Ludwig's nieces of Anhalt-Dessau and Anhalt-Bernburg,

translated a smaller amount of the text. Because their contribution was smaller, formulating any statistically founded statement on their language use was difficult, if not impossible. However, four out of eleven total occurrences of auxiliary *tun* used in main clauses appeared in the text translated by Eleonora Maria von Anhalt-Bernburg, the fourth translator, whose total contribution was around 10%. In other words, more than a third of all uses of the *tun* periphrasis in main clauses were written by a single translator who produced just one tenth of the total text length. Although the low token number by the less active translators made this observation statistically insignificant, a regional influence was seen in Eleonora Maria's tendency to use auxiliary *tun* more frequently in main clauses than was observable in the text of the other translators. Eleonora Maria didn't grow up in Anhalt, but in northern Bavaria, and moved back to her family residence in Bernburg when she was twenty-one years old.[11] The use of the *tun* periphrasis in main clauses was typical for Upper German dialects, and her more frequent use of this construction in declarative clauses could stem from the influence of the language spoken at the court of Amberg in Northern Bavaria, where she was born and raised. If that were the case (a more extensive study on the use of this construction by Eleonora Maria as well as by the other translators is needed), it would confirm the hypothesis that each member of the translating group used syntax subjectively and instinctively.

Conclusions

Only a comprehensive, corpus-based analysis of the use and distribution of auxiliary tun in the history of the German language could confirm or discard the suppositions formulated in this study, and many questions posed here will remain open to discussion for the time being. However, a tentative interpretation is better than no interpretation at all. If analysis of the language of historical texts is stopped for lack of data with which to compare results, many interesting diachronic linguistic phenomena would be unexplored. This would be counterproductive for the advancement of the knowledge of said phenomena. Quantitative methods help these difficult cases. Even if corpus-based analysis is lacking with which to compare the data on auxiliary *tun*, precisely quantifying the occurrences of this structure in a text still yields objective results that can be described and qualitatively interpreted while also making new, accurate information on the *tun* periphrasis available for future research.

The quantitative analysis of auxiliary *tun* in the *Erzehlungen* made it possible to demonstrate the Low German regional markedness of the *tun* periphrasis in the language use of the eight German translators. All translators used auxiliary *tun* almost exclusively in subordinate clauses, consistent with a Low German tendency. This regional markedness did not result from a conscious attempt to use a Low German syntax but was rather a natural reflex of the regional provenience of the eight translators, whose families came from and partly resided in Anhalt. Today, this region lies in the East Central German speaking area, but it was at the southernmost border of the Low German speaking zone in the seventeenth century.

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11 This was also the case with her two younger sisters, Sybille Elisabeth and Anna Sophia, who translated a text portion that was too small (less than 4% each) for any consideration.

The regional markedness of the text revealed the language reflection of the FG. As mentioned above, the *Erzehlungen* were produced in close connection with the activities of the FG, so that this first translation of the *Novellino* can be rightly considered a product of the FG's language work. Since none of the theoretical linguistic works of the FG mentioned rules for correct syntactic use, the only way to prove whether the exemplarity of northern East Central German proposed in the FG's grammars for orthography and morphology was also valid for syntax was to analyse the regional syntactic markedness of the texts written in connection with this society's language reflection. In this case, the use of auxiliary *tun* in the *Erzehlungen* was influenced by a Low German tendency. Additionally, auxiliary *tun* was never corrected in the manuscript of the *Erzehlungen*. This was particularly informative because the reviewer of the *Erzehlungen* manuscript was the FG's president, Prince Ludwig. The fact that the foremost authority of the FG did not correct the use of the *tun* periphrasis in the text proved that the use of auxiliary *tun* in the *Erzehlungen* satisfied the standards of linguistic correctness advocated by the FG.

Thus, by uncovering the Low German markedness of the distribution of auxiliary *tun* in the *Erzehlungen*, the quantitative analysis of this phenomenon confirmed that this German variety was seen by the FG as exemplary in regard to syntax as well as orthography and morphology, as stated in the society's metalinguistic reflection writings.

Further studies are necessary to prove this hypothesis. For instance, a corpus-based analysis of auxiliary *tun* in Early New High German prose is needed to corroborate the Low German markedness of the exclusive occurrence of the *tun* periphrasis in subordinate clauses, as well as more extensive studies of this phenomenon in the writings of the FG's members. Until this new research emerges, this study has shown the usefulness of a mixed quantitative-qualitative approach in the study of a text's linguistic properties and their interaction with the cultural context of the text, even in a complicated case like that of the *Erzehlungen*, with a non-ideal data set.

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