

# High or low? Rise or fall?

## An exploration of variation in the stress group pattern in Næstved”

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The primary feature that distinguishes Danish regiolects from each other is intonation, more precisely the stress group pattern. Næstved intonation is particularly interesting, as the stress group pattern is acoustically very similar to that in Copenhagen, in that both start with a short fall followed by a rise, and both end with a fall. However, the two sound quite different, probably because the initial fall is deeper in Copenhagen, while the final fall is steeper in Næstved. In recent recordings from Næstved, some of the speakers auditorily resemble Copenhageners in their intonation. Such a discrepancy could indicate an ongoing language change. To investigate this, we carried out acoustic analyses of recordings from Næstved in the 1980s and 2000s. The purpose was to investigate whether language change can be observed in Næstved during the three generations represented in the corpus. We compared three generations in the latest recordings, and in addition we did a real-time study of the oldest speakers, comparing their old recording with the new one. Our results indicate that the stress group pattern has moved more towards the Copenhagen pattern, but we cannot show that the two coincide. Furthermore, far from all speakers in the sample show a change in real time, and some of them even appear to revert to a more Næstved-like pattern. This interindividual variation together with the fact that the difference is still subtle may explain why some speakers from Næstved sound Copenhagen-like, while others do not.

**KEYWORDS:** intonation; language change; dialects; sociophonetics; Generalised Additive Mixed Models