

SUMMARIES

SILESIAN AND SUDETEN GERMAN DIALECT SPEAKERS

A Case Study on the Linguistic Integration of Expellees
in the State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

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After the Second World War, more than 12 millions of refugees and expellees of German descent, coming from regions where Eastern varieties of German were spoken, arrived in regions situated a good deal further to the west. That the local population received such a great infusion of people coming from somewhere else is usually interpreted as an important reason for the fact that local dialects were considerably weakened on the territory of both the GDR and the FRG during the post-war years. However, recent field research in Mecklenburg shows that many expellees learned the Lower German local dialects of their new environment rather quickly. Thus, after 1945, Lower German dialects at first gained new speakers. Using the example of one expellee family of Silesian-Sudeten German origin, the present study examines in what circumstances the learning of Lower German took place. The case study ends with a few working hypotheses of a general nature pertaining to the circumstances of linguistic contact in places of resettlement in Mecklenburg, which will form the starting point of a planned research project on the linguistic acculturation of expellees in this particular German region.