

**Abstract:**

Studies of regional variation in syntax are often, or even typically, limited to very few speakers in each location. In the SAND-project (Syntactic Atlas of the Dutch Dialects), for instance, only one or two speakers represented each “measuring point” in the oral interviews (there were 267 such measuring points, mostly in the Netherlands and Belgium), and in the Nordic Syntax Database that grew out of ScanDiaSyn there are at present (June 2012) data from 892 speakers from 192 locations, i.e. from roughly 4 speakers from each “measuring point”.

In IceDiaSyn and FarDiaSyn (the Icelandic and Faroese parts of ScanDiaSyn) we opted for a different strategy. Since pilot studies had revealed very limited regional variation in the syntax of these languages, and considerable age-related variation, we decided to test many more speakers from each location. We thus aimed for 8 speakers from each of 4 age groups and typically ended up with 25–30 speakers from each “measuring point”. In this paper I will discuss some of the results obtained by this method, attempting to answer questions like the following:

- What did we gain by testing so many speakers? What if we had only tested 2–4 speakers in each location?
- What do the results tell us about syntactic variation in Icelandic and Faroese?
- What do the results tell us about the individual grammars behind the data?