

PLURICENTRIC LANGUAGES WORLDWIDE  
SERIES 1: PLURICENTRIC THEORY

Rudolf Muhr / Juan Thomas (eds.)

**Pluricentric Theory**  
**beyond Dominance and Non-Dominance:**  
**A Critical View**

Graz / Berlin



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## SERIES 1: PLURICENTRIC THEORY

Edited by

Rudolf Muhr, Juan Thomas, Eugenia L. Duarte,  
Reglindis De Ridder, and Dawn Marley



## VOLUME 1

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## Preface

The present volume contains ten contributions. Seven of them were presented in Stockholm at the workshop “The Theory and Description of Pluricentric Languages- Beyond Concepts of Dominance and Non-Dominance, which was hosted at the conference “The Languages, Nations, Cultures: Pluricentric Languages in Context(s) Conference was held at Stockholm University in May 2019. Four other contributions have been accepted because some of the papers presented at the workshop could not be delivered because of difficulties beyond the control of the authors.

Although many of these papers still utilize the concepts of dominance and non-dominance, they are used to advance the theory of pluricentricity in general or are used as tools to explain other linguistic or social phenomena. Each contribution, in its own way, is a testimony to the usefulness of pluricentricity as a theoretical framework. And, they show that the alternative concept of “pluriareality” that is favoured by some linguists working on German has no theoretical basis and cannot describe pluricentric languages correctly.

Muhr explores the key ideas of the pluriareality concept and gives an overview of its development since the mid 1980s. He also deals with the linguistic data that the pluriareality group uses and finds that their corpora do not fulfil the criteria of reliability and representativity.

Edelmann, Ransmayr, Baranzini and Moskopf-Jenner deal with aspects of pluricentric theory in general. Edelmann's contribution, “Karelian: a pluricentric language?”, answers that question in the positive about the two varieties of Karelian which exist in Russia and in Finland, and how historical movements and changing boundaries can induce language change. Ransmayr, using data from German, Austrian and Swiss standard German, tested the axioms of relevance, correctness and standardness for their validity in pluricentric theory in “Central axioms of pluricentricity revisited. A validity-check beyond theory: the example of German”. Baranzini and Moskopf-Jenner in “Norm authorities for a weakly pluricentric language: the case of Italian in Switzerland” show what sources can serve as norm-setting authorities for Italian in Switzerland, which, in spite of not being explicitly codified, has implicit models of codification from the press, television and non-professional literary texts.

De Ridder and Leonardi and Hofer's papers corroborate the long-standing view that non-dominant varieties are censured, yet they show this in some new contexts. Staudinger, on the other hand, shows a context in which traits of a non-

dominant variety are not only accepted but indeed required in publications which normally use only the dominant variety. De Ridder in “Linguistic diversity in audiovisual media for children in Belgium and Austria” studied children's television programs and some YouTubers in the Dutch and German speaking areas and found that the linguistic varieties that children are exposed to can vary greatly, especially dubbed foreign media tended to be less in Belgian Dutch than was local programming. Leonardi and Hofer, in “Standard language variation in German at educational institutions in South Tyrol (Italy)”, questioned the linguistic attitudes of students at the University of Brixen-Bressanone in Bolzano, Italy. They found that the future teachers were less tolerant of South Tyrolisms used in a fictitious student's essay than they were of Germanisms from Germany, Austrianisms or secondary south Tyrolisms (that is, a Germanism present in the South Tyrol but also in other German-speaking centers). On the other hand, Staudinger in “Pluricentricity and language practices – the visibility of Argentine Spanish in a pluricentric communication context” shows how and why a characteristic prominent in Argentinean Spanish, *voseo*, appears in a Spanish newspaper as well as in a novel written by a peninsular author.

Three papers study the lexica of non-dominant varieties and show how external factors play a greater role in explaining divergence from dominant varieties. Goritsaya's paper, “Belarusian flavour in Russian: how to measure gradual differences between the varieties of pluricentric languages?” experimentalizes graduality in Belarussian and Russian Russians and shows that words are not necessarily different between two varieties, but rather their frequency. Thomas (“Contact-induced pluricentricity? The role of Anglicisms in forging a new variety of Spanish”) uses a sociometric method to show how Anglicisms influence the variety of Spanish spoken in a small American city to a greater degree than the home varieties of the majority of the city's Hispanic community (namely Dominicans and Puerto Ricans). Chudar also does a lexical study, specifically about diminutives in southern hemisphere Englishes (“Diminutives in Southern Hemisphere Englishes: factors of variation”) and finds that linguistic factors play a lesser role in the use of those diminutives than do social factors.

The editors would like to thank the authors for their contributions and we would also like thank those colleagues who – in addition to the editors – acted as reviewers.

Rudolf Muhr - Juan Thomas  
Graz, and Utica in August 2020