PLURICENTRIC LANGUAGES WORLDWIDE
SERIES 1: PLURICENTRIC THEORY

Rudolf Muhr, Reglindis De Ridder
Gerhard Edelmann, Aditi Ghosh (eds.)

Pluricentric languages in different theoretical and educational contexts

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SERIES 1: PLURICENTRIC THEORY

Edited by

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

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Preface

This is the second of two volumes that presents part of the outcome 9th World Conference on Pluricentric Languages that took place from August 26-28 2021. The volume contains eight contributions. Seven of them were presented at the conference. A further paper was included for topicality reasons. The conference was organised by the "Working Group on Non-Dominant Varieties of Pluricentric Languages (WGNDV), this time hosted by the Austrian German Research Centre in Graz. Due to the pandemic and the complications for travelling and health connected with it, the conference was held online via ZOOM much to the satisfaction of all participants.

The conference had three focal points: (1) Pluricentric languages in the Americas; (2) The localisation of global audiovisual and print media in pluricentric language areas. (3) General section - Pluricentric languages worldwide. The papers of this volume refer to the topics (2) and (3) while the papers of theme (1) are published in volume (1).

In detail, the articles of this volume deal with theoretical and educational matters. Section (1) of the book contains four (five) papers that deal with different aspects of the theory of pluricentricity. In the first two papers, Rudolf Muhr reports his experiences with reviewers/editors that strongly adhered to the "pluriareality concept". The result was an enormous number of comments and radical requests for changes in the text that would have turned its overall (pluricentric) message into the opposite. This was perceived by the author as destructive reviewing, which is shown in detail in the paper. It raises many linguistic and ethical questions. The original paper where the comments had been inserted is included as an appendix to allow the checking of the text. Gerhard Edelmann deals with the language situation in the Republic of Moldova and tries to answer the question whether the language of the country is a language of its own or a national variety of Romanian. The question is of high relevance. It has been and still is discussed ever since the independence of the country in 1991. Olga Goritskaya and Alexandra Chudar report of language changes that arrived in the course of the popular uprising in Belarus as a reaction to the presidential elections in 2020 that was generally considered to be rigged.

Aditi Ghosh and Rajeshwari Datta report about an even much more complex language situation – the one of India with 121 recognised and an overall 780 languages being used. To complicate matters the authors show that according to the Indian constitution there are 22 "scheduled languages" with many so called

“mother tongues” that are also languages in their own right but for language political reasons subsumed under a roof language like Hindi or Odia. The authors call these “subsumed” languages as non-dominant as their status is often unclear and hampered by monolingual ideologies that prevail in the Indian states (one state-one language) which often forces speakers of non-dominant languages to adopt the dominant language.
The second section of the volume deals with pluricentric languages in educational contexts. Máté Huber reports on a large scale research about whether and how the pluricentricity of English and German is taken into account by both the text books and the teaching practice of the teachers. He finds that teachers of English were found to be significantly more open than German teachers, but still lagging behind their students in this regard. Fabienne Korb presented the current state of research of pluricentricity in language education in Germany, followed by an analysis of exemplary textbooks for teaching and learning English, French and Spanish as foreign languages. The analysis reveals what language varieties students include in their digital language portraits, how they illustrate them and the importance they have for them and allows for recommendations in the creation of teaching materials.
Kelen Fonyuy shows the interference from various spoken and written varieties of Cameroon English in the texts university students produce in academic writing. The author concludes that such a pluricentric situation requires an inclusive language-aware approach for teaching-learning; a stretchy model that incorporates discernment into diversity.
The last section of the volume provides further information on the pluricentricity of Hungarian. István Csernicskó, Anita Márku, and Réka Máté report on the „Termini Network“ which collects and analyses the specific vocabulary elements of spoken and written varieties of Hungarian outside the borders of Hungary. The results are presented in the „Online Dictionary of Pluricentric Hungarian“.

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. Our sincere thanks also go to Dawn Marley and the student proof readers at the University of Surrey who corrected the texts. The Government of the federal state of Styria is thanked for its financial support of the publication.

Rudolf Muhr, Gerhard Edelmann, Aditi Ghosh, Reglindis De Ridder
Graz, Vienna, Calcutta, and Stockholm in June 2022

I. Pluricentric Theory

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How to kill a mocking bird[1]: On destructive reviewing in German sociolinguistics and the ethics of scientific reviewing

Abstract

This paper is a report on personal experiences when I submitted a paper that was meant to be published in the volume "Pluricentricity and Pluriareality: Dialects, Variation, and Standards", that was to comprise the presentations of a conference at the University of Münster in 2019. The paper was not accepted for publication, with many comments inserted into the text that demanded many alterations of my text. What makes the process particular is not only the large number of reviewer comments, but also their quality. A large number of the comments give the impression that they were not intended to improve the text, but are rather destructive in the sense that central parts of my text are demanded either to be deleted, rewritten or backed up with additional references even though there is no need for that and no space either. Five destructive strategies have been outlined and are presented with the original text of my paper and the respective comments. The paper finishes with a chapter on the ethics of reviewing that does not seem to be discussed in German sociolinguistics.

1. Introduction – What the paper is about and what led to it

This paper is about my personal experiences in connection with the invited publication of a paper that was presented in 2019 at the "International Conference on Pluricentricity vs. Pluriareality- Models, Varieties, Approaches" at the University of Münster, Germany. Each author was invited to write a con-

[1] The allusion to Harper Lee's famous novel is intentional but is used here as a metaphor for "getting rid of a critic". The term "mocking bird" is therefore spelled with a small initial letter. It is meant to be taken literally and not as a proper name for a bird of the same name and to avoid a direct connection to the content of Harper Lee's novel.

tribution of 20 pages. The paper was submitted in early January 2020.[2] On 30 July 2021 I got an email saying the following:

> Dear Rudolf, we are writing to inform you that your submission to "Pluricentricity and Pluriareality: Dialects, Variation, and Standards" has now gone through internal peer review. Unfortunately, our reviewers do not think that it fits very well with our conception of the volume, and believe that it might be better placed elsewhere. We therefore must inform you that it has been rejected for inclusion in the volume. Attached, you can find a copy of your prospective chapter with comments from the reviewers that we hope might be useful to you in understanding the overall decision."

It is not unusual to get a paper rejected by editors. So, why should it be of interest to write a paper about paper that has been rejected? The answer is that the two reviewers (most likely identical with the editors of the volume, Phillip Meer and Ryan Durgasin)[3] who placed 205 comments into my manuscript of 20 pages (roughly 10 per page), which is a rather unusual high number. Some might say that they were very thorough. But looking at the objections that have been put into the manuscript, it becomes clear that the reviewing had not been done in order to improve the text. Instead, as I will try to show, a large number of objections are, in my opinion, destructive and arguing against the pluricentric model that I presented. The rejection of the paper was obviously motivated by the pluriareal stance of the editors. Unlike the title of the volume suggests, it does not appear to welcome contributions in favour of the pluricentric model. This was indirectly acknowledged by the editors by telling me that "our reviewers do not think that it fits very well with our conception of the volume". The title of their book (according to the invitation to contribute) "Pluricentricity and Pluriareality: Dialects, Variation, and Standards" is therefore misleading as there is only one author supporting the pluricentric concept left that will be included in their book.[4] My paper

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[2] See the appendix. The article is included as an appendix so that the quoted passages can be reviewed and the text read entirely.

[3] The reviewers are most likely identical with the editors of the volume. This can be discerned from a number of indications. Among them is the strong preference for World Englishes (both editors are PhD students of English) as in comment 63, 79, 87, 101, 107, reference to the content of the paper of Elspaß in the volume and the claim that most papers of the volume support the pluriareal concept. Who else than the editors would know this? And there are also references on English in the Carribeans, the topic of one of the two editors PhD dissertation. In comment 2.4.1 (3) they maintain "*Elspaß* (this volume) also presents data which *cast doubt on the assumption of a Germany-wide standard of German*." Could anyone than the editors know of such a fact?

[4] There were only three presenters at the conference that supported the pluricentric model, two of them (Dollinger and Muhr) are not included, remains one that will be published.

(printed in the appendix) was a critical study arguing against the favoured pluriareal model of the editors and provided empirical evidence that it has no scientific basis and was in fact misleading. I provided a critical check of all pluriareal arguments and their data from a pluricentric point of view and presented several empirical data sets that showed the opposite of what was maintained by the pluriareal group. In my view it is necessary to counter the arguments in favour of the pluriareal concept and those that are levelled against pluricentricity.

To sum it up: After working in the academic field for more than 40 years, it is neither wounded vanity, nor a fit of old age stubbornness or revenge for not getting a paper published that prompts me to write this article. Being in retirement I am not dependent on publishing papers to further my academic career. This kind of reviewing does not affect me personally or professionally. In fact, what really touches me is

(a) the professional inadequacy of a large number of the editors' comments and change requests;
(b) appalling demands, like not mentioning the names of scientists, etc.;
(c) petty comments on style and choice of words;
(d) the unfounded rejection of empirical data that were presented in my paper by not accepting them or simply dismissing them as inadequate
(e) and grave ethical aspects of these reviews.

As there are so many dubious claims by the reviewers, authors that are at the beginning of their career are left with the choice of accepting the false/inadequate demands of the reviewers/editors or having to withdraw their paper.

This creates a gap in the publication list and is a traumatic experience that casts doubt on one's own competence – especially if a scholar is young and not too familiar with the practices in scientific publishing. The following section will give an overview of five strategies of what I perceive as destructive commenting of the editors/reviewers that also raise ethical questions of scientific publishing.

2. Reviewing the reviewers – A critical overview of editor comments and remarks - The destructive reviewing strategies used by the reviewers/editors

This section provides an overview of the key strategies used by the reviewers/editors that I consider destructive yielded by the reviewer/editor comments:

1. Do not allow the names and background of main representatives of the pluriareal model to be mentioned

2. Defend the pluriareal model with dubious arguments suggesting a lack of editorial impartiality
3. Delete or rewrite essential passages
4. Avoid clear scientific language that uncovers false claims and do not uncover refuted arguments
5. Pretend not to understand arguments put forward by authors, mark them as vague, demand it to be backed up with (unnecessary) references or simply refuse to accept the results without clarifying why.

Explanation of abbreviations and structure of analysis of the comments

- OT: Original text of my paper as submitted, page number is provided
- RC: Reviewer comment(s); number of comment is given
- CRC: Comment on reviewer comment
- If several reviewer comments occur in a text, the passages to which they refer are marked with numbers [1], [2].
- If there is just a small part of the text that is commented by the reviewers, the passage is marked by *** at the beginning and at the end ***.
- Abbreviations: PAG = Pluriareal group; PLAC = Pluriareal model; NPAG = new pluriareal group; PLCM = Pluricentric model.

The original text to which a comment refers is listed first (OT), followed by the reviewer's comment (RC). At the end of each section a summary analysis of the comments of the editors/reviewers is presented.

2.1 Strategy (1): Do not mention the names of main representatives of the pluriareal model as this might be "confrontative"!

The single text passages referring to section (1) and the comments connected with them

1.1 OT, p 1: A second pluriareal group established itself after 2010, which consists of scholars of German origin working in Austria: Stephan Elspaß, Alexandra Lenz, Arne Ziegler and Konstantin Niehaus. There are also other members like Peter Auer, Christa Dürscheid, Manfred Glauninger, who work in Germany, Switzerland or Austria. Their approach will be discussed in section 4.

> 1.1.1 RC 24: I don't think there is any inherent benefit of mentioning individual researchers here that may be associated with the pluriareal model. This might be *read negatively as a personal confrontation*. Maybe simply cite representative publications here. I don't think the nationalities of the researchers are relevant here. Discussions should remain at a content level. (Italics R.M.)

1.2 OT, p1: Elspaß, who is the leading member of the PAG, confirmed the view that AG does not exist, when he was asked at the conference in Münster (2019) whether he believed that there was "no Austrian German at all". In reply, he said: "I would not know where that would be!" The message for the Austrians is then that linguistically they do not have anything of their own except that there are some regionalisms.

1.2.1 RC 98: I suggest that this sub-section be *deleted*. It is somewhat problematic to cite this (especially while overtly criticizing someone). This is further taken out of context and, most importantly, the quote does not itself suggest that Elspaß rejects the existence of Austrian German, considering that his answer was "would not know". An answer to such a question also depends on the exact perspective taken.
1.2.2 RC 99: This is an *extremely odd thing to cite in an academic paper*. There is also a further reading of things that Elspaß did not say.

1.3. OT p 5: However, ***Elspaß is obviously insinuating*** that the PLCM [pluricentric model] is inciting nationalism as it is using the term "national variety".

1.3.1 RC 99: Please avoid these types of *accusations*.

Summary comments on the comments of the reviewers/editors for section (1)

The comments of section/strategy (1) have in common that the reviewer/editors do not want to name the members of the PLAG in a scientific paper. This is clearly shown in 1.1.1 RC 24. The naming of the members of the PLAG is part of the introduction in which I briefly summarised the genesis of both concepts. I cannot fathom why this should be "read negatively as a personal confrontation". What is "confrontative" about listing the members of a group of scholars that follow a certain concept? I think science has to be transparent and this also applies to those that promote certain ideas.

And why is it [1.2.1 RC 92:] "an extremely odd thing to cite in an academic paper" - that Elspaß said this at the conference in Münster? In fact, it was Phillip Meer – one of the two editors of the volume - who asked Elspaß: "Would you then say that there is no Austrian German?" The answer was: "I wouldn't know where that would be!" From the previous presentation and the answer by Elspaß, it was generally understood that the answer was a "yes" – there is no Austrian German. It is not an extremely odd thing to quote this in an academic paper as it was uttered in the context of a scientific presentation and by a scholar in front of a large number of other scholars. It is rather odd that the editors refuse to acknowledge that the question was posed and claiming that Elspaß did *not* say this. What is "extremely odd" is that the reviewers suggested removing this passage.

And finally, 1.3 OT p 5: Why is it an accusation to say that Elspaß is "insinuating" something? I could have used "imply" which has the same meaning. By all means it is not an accusation even if someone could get irritated by the reinforcing element "obviously". I would suggest being more accurate in English verb pragmatics.

2.2 Strategy (2): The pluriareal model is defended with arguments showing a lack of editorial impartiality and expert knowledge

The single text passages referring to section (2) and the comments connected with them

2.1 OT, p 15: The VARGR,[5] which is used by the PAG as an empirical proof of their claims turned out to be marked by a massive imbalance and general lack of representativeness in the underlying corpus. ***It is reasonable to conclude that all VAGR results are incorrect. *** This was confirmed by checking numerous VAGR results against the very large APA newspaper corpus.

2.1.1 RC 204: Definitely not! This is by no means a "reasonable" conclusion and does not meet the standards of a discussion in a scientific contribution.

2.2 OT, p 1: (1)***Several checks were conducted*** and (2) ***confirmed*** that the pluriareal model is *not a viable alternative* to the pluricentric language model. [Text was part of the abstract].

2.2.1 RC 16: Most contributions and the volume in its entirety argue that both concepts may, in certain circumstances, be seen as complementary, with each model having its own merits (and perhaps problems). I'm not sure whether such a strong claim, i.e. that the model outright is not useful, can necessarily be upheld. I *would suggest being more specific here*, *as to what notions are problematic or to rephrase this*.
2.1.2 RC 13 (1): As is, this sounds somewhat vague.
2.1.3 RC 14 (2): "Confirm" is not ideal here because it implies that this was hypothesized initially. "Suggest" or "show" seem to be better here.

[5] Explanation of abbreviations: VARGR = Variantengrammatik des Deutschen; PAG = Pluriareal Group; AG = Austrian German; NV = national variety;

2.3 OT: (1) While the concept of the pluricentricity of languages as introduced by Riesel (1953), Stewart (1962, 1968), Kloss (1978) and in particular by Clyne (1984, 1992, 1995) gradually developed over a period of 40 years, the concept "pluriareality" was (2) "born" with an article of Wolf (1994) who also introduced the terminology.

2.3.1 RC (1): I agree that pluricentricity has more tradition and is more common outside German linguistics. At the same time, the contrastive way in which this is phrased may be read negatively here ("pluricentricity: long tradition, well-established" vs. "pluriareality: "born" over night). I don't think this is beneficial for a discussion of both concepts at a descriptive, neutral, and content level - esp. in this relatively hot debate and the constructive-integrative nature of the volume. 2.3.1 RC 16: (1): See also other occasions below.
2.3.2 RC 16: (2): Rephrase

2.4 OT: (1) A second important fact is that all arguments are always directed against Austrian German and not against any other NV of German, which gives the impression that it is primarily concerned about abolishing AG, which was indirectly confirmed by Elspaß at the conference in Münster in 2019.

2.4.1 RC (1): This needs to be backed up with references/publications. "All arguments are always directed again Austrian German" *is vague.*
(1) Suggest clarification or *rather simple deletion* here because this is a argument which will need to be backed up with quite a bit of elaboration in the text. Also, I'm not sure if this *argument can be upheld in these absolute terms in the first place*.
(2) It rather seems to be the case *that pluriareality does not take national standard varieties overall as a necessary given* (which is to some extent in line with recent tendencies in World Englishes research for instance).
(3) *Elspaß* (this volume) also presents data which *cast doubt on the assumption of a Germany-wide standard of German*, i.e. the existence of Standard German German; the results rather seem to suggest the existence of a Standard Northern German German and Standard Southern German German. At the same time, while overlap of southern standard varieties exists,
(4) the evidence presented may also be interpreted in favour of the existence of Austrian and Swiss standard varieties (each with some overlap to neighbouring varieties of course).
(5) I don't share the view that it is the underlying intention of pluriareality to reject the existence of an Austrian standard in these absolute terms.

2.5 OT, p 11: Based on these criteria, the VARGR-corpus is not balanced as it contains only texts of regionally distributed newspapers. This means in fact that the results of VARGR are not an overall description of the German "Gebrauchsstandard" in different domains, but is a reduced selection of grammatical phenomena of written newspaper language of local newspapers. The sample/corpus does not "show the full range of variability in a population".

> 2.5.1 RC 167: RC Well, yes. This is a newspaper corpus. Newspaper corpora are common, and they are not invalid simply because they are a specialized corpus. Specialised corpora are very common in corpus linguistics. Of course, newspaper corpora only show newspaper language. The general claim that the Variantengrammatik solely shows newspaper language *is thus valid but should be rephrased; the corpus itself is not problematic*. That is, it is indeed a shortcoming that other written and also spoken corpora were not considered with regard to grammatical variation. Nevertheless, they of course show an important data source.

Summary comments on the comments of the reviewers/editors for section (2)

The comments and text passages in this section show that the editors/reviewers defend throughout the pluriareal model. Editors must take care for the scientific quality of their publication. But it seems highly unusual that the editors of a volume that is supposed to contain two models of language description show preference for one with unfounded arguments.

This is clearly the case with example 2.1.1 RC 204, where the editors indignantly state that my conclusions are inadmissible. They add that my statement "does not meet the standards of a discussion in a scientific contribution." What kind of standards do I not meet? To have clearly stated that the VAGR *is* "marked by a massive imbalance and general lack of representativeness in the underlying corpus", after having presented empirical data that prove this. Of course it is not pleasant to read "that it is reasonable to conclude that all VAGR results are incorrect." Maybe I should have written "almost all VARGR results are incorrect" as, by chance, a few of them are correct. The results we checked were *all false* when reviewed by means of a very large corpus that comprises about 100 billion texts.

In comment 2.2 RC16, the editors/reviewers argue that the majority of the contributors to their volume favour the pluriareal model because most contributions would "argue that both concepts may, in certain circumstances, be seen as complementary". However, in Muhr, 2020, and in the rejected paper, I showed that the pluriareal model is based *exclusively* on the criterion of the *occurrence* of certain linguistic features within (arbitrarily defined[6]) "areas". The model is completely ignoring the social- and identity function of language. When a certain linguistic feature appears on both sides of a national or regional border, it is not proof that the linguistic border does not exist, as the speakers on one side of the border might be completely unaware of the feature as there is no specific social value associated with it, whereas on the other side of the border this might be the case. The pluriareal model cannot by any means "be seen as complementary, with each model having its own merits (and perhaps problems)" as it is based on one-sided criteria that does not hold up in linguistic reality. It is simply not enough to look at whether linguistic features are in use on both sides of a border or in different areas. In this comment the editors/reviewers also show an unusual semantic interpretation of the word "confirm" that is not backed by any dictionary of English I consulted.

Comment 2.3.1 RC (1) again defends the pluriareal against the pluricentric model and pretends that "the contrastive way in which this is phrased may be read negatively here ("pluricentricity: long tradition, well-established" vs. "pluriareality: "born" overnight)". In fact, this passage is part of the introduction of my paper where I briefly outlined the history of both concepts. There was no intention to trump the pluricentric model against the pluriareal model. It was a simple description. Why is it not "beneficial for a discussion of both concepts at a descriptive, neutral, and content level"? It seems that the somewhat defensive attitude of the editors causes problems here.

Comment 2.4.1 RC (1): When I claim that "all arguments are always directed against Austrian German and not against any other NV of German" – after 40 years of work in the field - I can say with great certainty that there is not a single scholarly publication that questions the existence of Swiss German, but there are a great many regarding Austrian German as non-existent. If the editors had read Elspaß/Niehaus 2013, Elspaß, et. al. (2017), Scheuringer (1996a) etc., they would refrain from making such a comment. This comment also shows the demand either to delete or to rephrase larger passages of the paper and that the editors/reviewers are not sufficiently informed and not up to the task.

Comment 2.4.1 RC (2) maintains that "it rather seems to be the case *that pluriareality does not take national standard varieties overall as a necessary given.*" I

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[6] The VARGR uses the areas defined by Ammon et.al. 2004 – the Variantenwörterbuch – but at least for Austria the zoning of the areas is highly questionable as most of the Eastern part of the country is marked by a highly uniform coiné variety that includes most of area east of the state of Salzburg.

wonder what all the reference books and grammars of German and the other European languages are then good for. The fact that there is variation within the standard variety is a truism. However, to set up a whole new linguistic concept on that phenomenon and thereby negating the concept of pluricentricity and replacing it by linguistic "areas" gives the impression that there is a hidden agenda, which aims to strengthen the language policy preferences of the dominant nation.

Comment 2.5.1 RC 167 exemplifies the partisanship of the editors in a subtle way as they are downplaying the shortcomings of the VARGR corpus by claiming, contrary to the data I presented, that the "the corpus itself is not problematic" and claiming that it is a "specialised corpus. There is nothing specialised about the VARGR-corpus; it is a common reference (or tries to be one). I presented a large amount of data that show that the VARGR-corpus is skewed and the results that are presented on the website of the project are therefore not valid.

2.3 Strategy (3): The editors/reviewers demanded that essential passages of my article should either be deleted or rewritten, which would have resulted in a severe distortion of the content

The single text passages referring to strategy (3) and the comments connected with them

3.1. OT p 5: This is not only wrong; it seems to be a deliberate misinterpretation of the term. Anyone working in the field knows (or should know) that the term is based on the concept of nation-state and a loan expression from English sociolinguistics. How can researching and describing the language of a state-nation be nationalism, unless one assumes implicitly that Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Liechtenstein, etc. are not independent nations but part of the German nation and have no right to codify their own language?

> 3.1.1 RC 101: I *would suggest removing this* because the discussion here is largely on a *speculative level* (i.e. what may be insinuated, what may be indirectly implied etc.). This is not helpful for a *neutral-descriptive, content-oriented discussion*. …

3.2. OT p 1: These facts lead to the conclusion that the VARGR-corpus *does not meet the criteria of representativeness in any way*. It is neither balanced nor representative and does not correctly represent the linguistic situation and the variety of AG. The general conclusion is that the results based on VARGR-corpus cannot be generalised and are therefore invalid.

3.2.1 RC 174: *Please delete*. This is something that *cannot be claimed in these terms* (see comments above).

3.3 OT, p 2: The PLCM is therefore based on nation-states where every state is a nation of its own, irrespective of a shared language, and thereby forming a specific national variety (NV) of the (seemingly) common language.

3.3.1. This sentence is somewhat redundant, *suggest rephrasing*.

3.4. OT, p4: The three authors also have in common that they changed their opposition toward the existence of AG. Wiesinger (2006/2014) regretted the loss of traditional Austrian vocabulary, but, without correcting earlier unfounded allegations, Scheuringer (2007) published a dictionary Austrian German-Romanian and Pohl (2018:142) acknowledging the existence of AG.

3.4.1. RC 80: Are these details necessary? In general, I would suggest *leaving out this level of detail* because it will be relatively uninteresting for readers outside German linguistics and also with a view to the word count. *More general issues should be described and discussed*.
3.4.2 RC 82: Much of this section can be streamlined or even omitted.

3.5 OT, p 3: The term "pluriareal" was invented and first used in 1994 by Norbert Richard Wolf, (1) ***an Austrian born Professor of German medieval language and literature and dialectologist who worked most of his professional life in Germany.*** [Deleted by the editors/reviewers.]

3.5.1. RC (1): This information is not really relevant.

3.6. OT, p 1: 2. The monocentric background of the pluriareal concept (PLAC) and the differences to the pluricentric model (PLCM) (Headline). The [1] ***PLAC is a modern variant of the monocentric model most strongly associated with Hugo Moser, [2] ***who was a highly renowned linguist and highly influential.***

3.6.1 RC 34: [1] I don't think this is the case. At the same time, historical background is presented on how monocentriscm came about but there is no description/explanation/ discussion about how pluriareality may be based on monocentricism (as the section heading suggests); this is simply claimed in the first sentence. [...] Differences to pluricentricity are also not really discussed here, it is simply mentioned toward the end of this section that the concept is incompatible with pluricentricity. Maybe differences can be highlighted in the pluricentric section (section 3) instead. *With a view to length, this section can probably be shortened/condensed or be removed, given that pluricentricity and*

pluriareality both agree that a monocentric view is too limited and does not represent standard language production and perception.
3.6.2: [2] Deleted by the editors/reviewers.

Summary comments on the comments of the reviewers/editors for section (3)

Strategy three is the most far-reaching one of the five strategies. The editors/reviewers demanded[7] that large parts of my text should be either deleted or rewritten. If I had published the paper and followed *these* instructions, my paper would have been mutilated beyond recognition.

A typical example is comment RC 3.1.1 p 1. It demands the deletion of the whole paragraph outlining why the use of the term "national variety" is not nationalism. It is a very important statement that opposes a statement of Niehaus/Elspaß (2014). The editors/reviewers find that this is on a "speculative level" and "not helpful for a neutral-descriptive, content-oriented discussion." I cannot help but notice that whenever Elspaß is criticised, there is a good chance that the reviewers/editors want the paragraph deleted.

Quite in the same line is paragraph OT 3.2, which should be "deleted", because this "cannot be claimed in these terms". All I did was to state – well-supported with numerous empirical data – "the VARGR-corpus does not meet the criteria of representativeness in any way". As the VARGR is the key element of the pluriareal concept (PLAC), it is clear that such fundamental criticisms do not go down well.

An important statement is also OT 3.3, that clarifies the central role of the nation-state in the concept of pluricentricity. The sentence is judged to be "redundant" and should be rewritten. I wonder why and how it should be rewritten as the information is a corner stone of the pluricentric model. It is recurring pattern that central parts of my paper, where important statements are made, are asked to be either deleted or "rephrased".

This is also the case with statements that do not fit into of the conceptual view of the editors/reviewers and activate fervent support for the PALC. Such a case is OT 3.4, where Austrian supporters of the PLAC later turned into veiled supporters of the pluricentric model. This is marked as "relatively uninteresting

[7] It doesn't make any difference if the reviewers/editors "suggest" deleting or rewriting large passages. It is a hedged way of demanding a massive change of the text that would not be published without alteration.

for readers outside German linguistics". However, the whole concept is a German-only concept. It is not used in any other pluricentric language.

Very similar are the comments on 3.4. OT p4, that depict the starting point of the PLAC and the professional situation of its founder Norbert Richard Wolff, who had a professional German background (despite being of Austrian origin), and consequently adopting the dominant views of the dominant nation. This information is also judged as "not really relevant" even though it explains to a certain amount his skewed view on Austrian German. It also shows that Wolff is supporting the pan-Germanic idea of a single German standard.

3.6. OT, p 1 finally shows that the editors/reviewers are using arguments at random and claim "there is no description/explanation/discussion about how pluriareality may be based on monocentricsm". This is common knowledge in the field[8] as this is not the task of the paper. Even more so as the next chapter is a thorough description of the PLAC and which ideas have been taken over from earlier models.

2.4 Strategy (4): Clear scientific language used to refer to false claims and refuted results is to be avoided – Science as linguistic kindergarten

The single text passages referring to strategy (4) and the comments connected with them

4.1 OT, p 1 (in the abstract): (1) A critical discussion of these claims shows that they are not [1] ***tenable***.

4.1.1. RC 7: [1] Consider rephrasing this in less general-absolute terms.

4.2 OT, p 9: This is remarkably low and puts Eichhoff's data very much into perspective. It does not contradict them but expands them and strongly ***refutes*** the overlap theory put forward by the pluriareality camp.

4.2.1. RC 148: Again, proper discussion required.

4.3 OT, p 9: In summary, these data say that there are considerable differences in lexicon use between Austria and Bavaria and that this, ***above all, again clearly refutes*** the PAG's claim of overlap and inexistence of AG.

4.3.1. RC 148: Again, proper discussion required.

4.4 OT, p 9: Summary: The data from the four sources - Eichhoff's maps and Glauninger's and Kurnik's research, as well as the additional comparison of

[8] See Hellmann (1989): „Binnendeutsch" und „Hauptvariante Bundesrepublik".

average language use in Austria and Bavaria can be summed up that they showed a high degree of consistency and in all cases resulted in a *refutation of the five central claims of the pluriareal group*. [1]*** The following three sections will demonstrate further data and evidence that there is [2] *** no substance in the claims of the PAG and in the model itself.*** It will check the "Variantengrammatik" (VARGR), which plays a central role in the argumentation of the PAG for its validity and representativeness.

4.4.1 RC 158: [1] Please return into a proper discussion section
4.4.2 RC 159: [2] See above: nuanced/descriptive discussion.

4.5 OT, p1 (in the abstract): Several data were presented. They *refuted* all but one of the claims of the PAGs. We showed that the data of the Variantengrammatik (VARGR) that is used to back the claims of the PAG is (1) ***seriously flawed***, as the underlying corpus is neither balanced nor representative.

4.5.1 RC 12: (1) Consider *rephrasing*: "problematic" to *avoid strong term* with additional intensifier.

4.6. OT, p 6: In Elspaß/Niehaus (2014) an additional four arguments of the new pluriareal model are outlined (***mostly taken over from the first pluriareal groups without reference to their origin***).

4.6.1 RC 105: Unless this is explicitly shown and discussed with exact references, this type of statement should be avoided. Again, the *focus should be descriptive-neutral and target content-related aspects.*

4.7. OT, p 1: (1) ***It must be pointed out that*** the PLCM is a purely German German concept that has not been used in any other PCLs (2) *** (exemplary references)***.

4.7.1 RC 25: (1) Expressions like these are used frequently. I would *suggest deleting these* because they do not contribute to the line of argumentation per se. Stylistically, *a descriptive-neutral style and tone* will be helpful to concentrate on specific arguments at a content level.
"It must be pointed out". "It can be said"
4.7.2 RC exemplary references [are demanded by the reviewer/editors]

Summary comments on the comments of the reviewers/editors for section (4)

This section shows the strange attitude, due to which things must not be called by their names – contrary to the fact that this is a scientific paper that is supposed to present reliable results that withstand close scrutiny and are verifiable. This includes the fact that some data/statements/results can be "right" or simply "wrong" and must be labelled as such if the data back it up. However, this does not take place in the world of the two editors/reviewers.

In 4.1.1. RC 7: [1] (referring to OT 4.1 p.1) the term “not tenable” is considered inappropriate as too “general-absolute”. To say that a cornerstone of the PLAC has been “refuted” by empirical data, as in OT 4.2, is, according to comment 4.2.1. RC 148, not acceptable either. “A proper discussion” is then demanded. However, what is this supposed to mean when the data were presented that lead to this result? The same comment is the case in OT 4.3 p.9, where also “a proper discussion is demanded” even though the data were presented. Repetitively more “proper discussion” is required in comment 4.4.1 RC 158: [1] and a “more nuanced discussion” in 4.4.2 RC 159: [2] against OT 4.4 where the refutation of all five central claims is stated, and in 4.5 where I note that the PLAC has been “refuted”. The comments on OT 4.6 are even more perplexing as “exact references” for my claims are demanded, although this is exactly described in the respective section that is criticised.

It appears that these comments were made out of fear of negative career repercussions. In any case, they are unsuitable for scientific publications where findings have to be expressed clearly and unambiguously.

2.5 Strategy (5) The reviewers/editors seem not to understand the content of my scientific linguistic text, mark it as vague, demand it to be backed it up with references, or simply refuse to accept the results without a decent clarification

The single text passages referring to strategy (5) and the comments connected with them

5.1. OT, p 7: The first master's thesis (Glauninger 1997/2000) examined the use of vocabulary in 20 lexical fields within Austria. For this purpose, 181 expressions were selected and asked of 8-20 informants (105 persons in total) in all 9 state capitals of Austria by means of picture cards.

> 5.1.1 RC 134, p 8: *This is not clear*. Please *rephrase and provide additional information*. Is this a speech production or perception (quasi-)experiment?

5.2. OT, p 8: Table (1) shows (1) the amount of ***lexical conformity between the 9 Austrian state capitals*** and (2) answers the question about the alleged divide between the geographical west and east and (3) the conformity towards the GG-lexicon. The data demonstrate that (1) there is no support for the inconsistency claim. Only five - out of 72 - comparisons between state capitals have a compliance rate lower than 80% but are nowhere lower than 75%. AG shows a high degree of conformity.

5.2.1 RC 137: *It is not clear what exactly is shown*. This is related to my above comment that the description of the two studies is not clear. *More details and explanation necessary.*

5.3. OT, p 9: The results of Kurnik‘s study - The conformity in lexicon use between Austria and Bavaria (1998: 127). [1]***Kurnik's data*** describe the congruence between Austria and Bavaria in four categories: (1) Full congruence in spoken language; (2) full congruence in written language; (3) partial congruence in spoken language; (4) partial congruence in written language . [2] ***Table (2) also shows in columns (2) and (3) the congruence in usage of the GG-lexicon in Austria and Bavaria (as codified in the "Duden" dictionary.

5.3.1: RC 145: [1] More details necessary
5.3.2: RC 146: *It is not clear what exactly was done and how exactly this was compared*. Kurnik (1997) seems to be elicitation data - how can this be compared to a dictionary and to what ends? To me, the entire methodology and analysis remains very unclear.

5.4 OT, p 9: Category (1): Different ***expressions*** in both varieties are used for the same object, resulting in Austriacisms and Bavarisms/Deutschlandisms.

5.8.1 RC 152: Does this mean you are here looking at lexical items or something like fixed expressions?

5.5. OT, p 9: Kurnik also researched the conformity in lexical usage the GG-lexicon, as enshrined in the Duden lexicon that contains a vocabulary that is more northern in character.

5.5.1 RC 149: *Unclear*
5.5.2 RC 150: I find this all very *muddled and confusing*. How would any reader know the findings of two MA projects in enough detail to be able to understand these sections?

5.6. OT, p: In 6 out of 8 cells of table (6) the VARGR data for "Ziffer(n)blatt" (dial) are either marked with u. S." (= under the threshold [of 10 hits]), k.B. (= no hits) or do show 0% in cells. The markings indicate that there are only few hits (u.S.), which do not suffice for a statistical analysis, or none at all (k.B./0%). Nevertheless, the VARGR website presents a graph with data, even though data is incomplete or even missing. ***This is incomprehensible and misleading.*** It occurs in no less than 16 out of 100 tables and casts additional doubts on the validity of the VARGR data.

5.6.1 RC 197: What was checked exactly and how was this figure reached? Elaboration required.

5.7. OT, p 9: A first look at the data of VARGR, which are displayed on the website in the form of percentages and maps, revealed ambiguities both about how the results were calculated and about the validity of the data. Absolute token counts figures are missing, i.e., the results are not directly verifiable. It is also not clear how the statistical significance tests exactly were carried out.

5.7.1 RC 163: Verifiable only based on the corpus itself.
5.7.1 RC 164: What significance tests? Inferential-statistical tests are not mentioned in the footnote. The footnote simply mentions minimum token counts used to calculate percentages if I understand correctly.

5.8. OT, p 8: (2) The alleged east-west divide in lexical usage*** is also disconfirmed. ***

5.8.1 RC 139: Different results across different studies *do not simply verfiy/falsify research presented by others*, esp. if methodologies differ (as seems to be the case here, but the methodological description is not quite clear). *Differences between studies should be described and discussed and potential reasons should be mentioned in a nuanced manner, so that the reader may reach an informed decision as to whether something may be considered falsified*.

Summary comments on the comments of the reviewers/editors for section (5)

The objections in this section show a fifth strategy of destructive reviewing. In this case, the editors/reviewers took refuge to claim that my text was "vague" or the presented data and research was incomprehensible. There are eight instances in this review where parts of my paper are marked as "vague". The strategy to not understand the text of my paper is particularly frequent where empirical research is presented.

Examples for this are the OT 5.1.-5.5. OT 5.1 describes the method that was used to find out whether there is conformity in lexical usage between the nine Austrians state capitals: Picture cards were shown to respondents by asking them what expression they would normally use for the (everyday) objects used in an average household. I wonder why this is not clear and why should additional information be presented?

OT 5.2 presented the data for the lexical correspondence between the Austrian state capitals. One of the central claims of the PLAG is that there is no Austrian German because there is too much variation within Austria. The data presented show that this is not the case as only five out of 72 comparisons show conformity of 75%, all others are highly conformant above the 80% or 90% level. So, why is this not clear again?

The same problem existed for the editors/reviewers with OT 5.3, where the data of lexical conformity/correspondence between Austria and Bavaria are shown. They fall into four categories, which are briefly explained, with all information presented in a table and described in the text below. Instead: “More details necessary” and “more details and explanation necessary”.

A highlight of misunderstanding are the comments on OT 5.4 p.9 and OT 5.5 p.9, where the Austrian and Bavarian data are compared with the data of the GG Duden standard dictionary and clearly show that the Bavarian data are much more conformant to the Duden lexicon than the Austria data. The comment to this is “all very muddled and confusing”.

In a final section of my paper, I presented the results of a check of the VARGR-data, which were done by using the huge newspaper repository of the Austrian Press Agency that contains about a billion words. In OT 5.6 I pointed to the fact that, despite the lack of reliable data, the VARGR nevertheless presents charts on the website. The editors/reviewers show total misunderstanding and comment: “What was checked exactly and how was this figure reached? Elaboration required.” This is quite exasperating and gives the impression that the reviewing was done at random.

The comments on OT 5.5 – 5.8 show the second strategy of destructive defensive behaviour, which is also linked to alleged non-understanding, where the results presented are simply dismissed with silly arguments, like in 5.8.1: “Different results across different studies do not simply verify/falsify research presented by others...” In view of these comments, one often cannot help but feel that the reviewers / editors have too little expertise to understand the descriptions of the studies or did this on purpose in order to fend off the critique that undermines the PLAC.

2.6 A brief summary of the most important points

The analysis of the comments of the reviewers/editors revealed five main strategies that, in my view, are not contributing to the improvement of the paper, which is why I consider them destructive. The strategies are:

1. Do not want to mention the names of main representatives of the pluriareal model as this might be "confrontative"!
2. The pluriareal model is defended with dubious arguments showing a lack of editorial impartiality.
3. The editors/reviewers demanded that essential passages of my article should either be deleted or rewritten, which would have resulted in a severe change or even distortion of the content.
4. Clear scientific language that calls false claims and refuted results by their names is to be avoided and hedged expressions should be used instead.
5. The reviewers/editors do not understand / pretend not to understand the content of my scientific linguistic text, mark it as vague, demand it to be backed it up with (unnecessary) references or simply refuse to accept the results.

This is shown in 29 excerpts from my original text and 45 accompanying comments of the reviewers/editors. The vast majority of the 208 comments pursue, in my view, a destructive strategy as outlined in the 5 strategies. This is appalling and unacceptable as it raises concerns about the ethics of reviewing scientific texts. It is my firm belief that many of the comments convey the impression that they are biased against the pluricentric model.

3. The ethics of reviewing scientific texts

When processing the comments, I became aware that such reviewer behaviour, strictly speaking, remains without consequences. The reviewing of scientific texts is a kind of black box in which there are no fixed rules, and each reviewer can more or less do as they please.

Before being confronted with this kind of reviewing, I have never come across a rulebook or introduction to scientific peer review that lays down the basics of this task. However, when I searched the internet for material that describes some rules for scientific editing/reviewing, it turned out that there is "Science Editing" - a journal that provides "Golden Rules and the Peer-Review Good Practice Checklist[9] by Hames (2016).

It is an excerpt from the book of the same author (2007) "Peer Review and Manuscript Management in Scientific Journals: guidelines for good practice", published in 2007. And there is the „Committee on Publication Ethics"[10] - an

[9] https://www.escienceediting.org/journal/view.php?number=69 [Accessed March, 25 2022]

[10] https://publicationethics.org/ [Accessed March, 25 2022]. It is linked to the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ),

NGO that has existed since 1997, registered in England and Wales. This organisation also provides guidelines and an "Ethics toolkit for a successful editorial office"[11], so there are rulebooks for scientific reviewing that can be consulted to assess the behaviour of the two editors/reviewers who edited my article. This can and will only be done in a basic way because a comprehensive discussion would go beyond the scope of this article.

There is also another slight limitation in that the rulebooks mentioned are primarily intended for scientific journals and not for the publication of anthologies. Central statements about reviewer/editor behaviour can nevertheless be considered and will be listed below. The "Ethical guidelines for peer reviewers" are helpful. The most important rules are: [12]

1. Bias and competing interests
   It is important to remain unbiased by considerations related to the nationality, religious or political beliefs, gender or other characteristics of the authors, origins of a manuscript or by commercial considerations.
2. Appropriate feedback
   Bear in mind that the editor requires a fair, honest, and unbiased assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the manuscript.
3. Language and style
   Remember it is the author's paper, so do not attempt to rewrite it to your own preferred style if it is basically sound and clear; suggestions for changes that improve clarity are, however, important. [...]
4. Suggestions for further work
   It is the job of the peer reviewer to comment on the quality and rigour of the work they receive. If the work is not clear because of missing analyses, the reviewer should comment and explain what additional analyses would clarify the work submitted. It is not the job of the reviewer to extend the work beyond its current scope. [...]
5. Preparing a report
   [...] Be objective and constructive in your review, providing feedback that will help the authors to improve their manuscript.

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the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), and the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME).

[11] https://publicationethics.org/files/cope-ethical-guidelines-peer-reviewers-v2_0.pdf [Accessed March, 25 2022]

[12] Cited from https://publicationethics.org/files/cope-ethical-guidelines-peer-reviewers-v2_0.pdf [March, 25 022] - the COPE website

For example, be specific in your critique, and provide supporting evidence with appropriate references to substantiate general statements, to help editors in their evaluation.
Be professional and refrain from being hostile or inflammatory and from making libellous or derogatory personal comments or unfounded accusations (eg, see COPE Case 08-13).

Conclusion

I will leave it to the readers of this paper to decide whether the reviewers / editors met these criteria when they reviewed my paper.

In my view, it is clear that the reviewers/editors did not act in accordance with any of the five rules cited here. I think that there should be an extended discussion on the rules of scientific reviewing in the humanities in the near future.

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Appendix to Rudolf Muhr (2022): "How to kill a mocking bird: On destructive reviewing in German sociolinguistics and the ethics of scientific reviewing."

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Checking arguments and data of the pluriareality concept from a pluricentric perspective

Abstract

This paper examines the "pluriareal model" in German linguistics and reviews the claims of the literature review that yielded eight claims by the first group that was active until the mid 2000s. A second group of supporters started after 2010, by drawing on many claims made by the first group and by adding new claims. A critical discussion of these claims, however, shows that they are not tenable. A multitude of data was presented and refuted all but one of the claims of the PLAGs. Moreover, we show that the data of the Variantengrammatik (VARGR) is seriously flawed as the underlying corpus is neither balanced nor representative. This was proved by checking the data of the VARGR against the Corpus of the Austrian Press Agency, and an online survey with almost 1000 responders. The results confirm that the pluriareal model is invalid and not a viable alternative to the pluricentric language model.

1. Introduction

While the concept of the pluricentricity of languages, as introduced by Riesel (1953), Stewart (1962, 1968), Kloss (1978) and in particular by Clyne (1984, 1992, 1995), gradually developed over a period of 40 years, the concept of "pluriareality" was "born" in an article by Wolf (1994), who also introduced the terminology. Scheuringer (1985, 1990) had used parts of the concept before. Other Austrian linguists like Wiesinger, Pohl, Scheuringer and others, quickly adopted the concept. They all had a background as dialectologists and historical linguists and formed the "first pluriareal group" that was active from 1985-2007. The establishment of this group can be seen as a reaction against the concept of the "pluricentricity of languages" that had been adopted in German philology after Michael Clyne's seminal book from 1984: "Language and society in the German speaking countries". It caused a change in the monocentric language model of

German that had prevailed since the foundation of both German states in 1948. It also caused a stir in German studies circles of the FGR, as it seemed to side with the position of the GDR that supported the existence of four national varieties (or even more). This was of course a coincidence because Clyne had adapted the pluricentric model that had already been used for English since the 1970s. It has to be mentioned that a second pluriareal group established itself after 2010, which consists of scholars of German origin working in Austria: Stephan Elspaß, Alexandra Lenz, Arne Ziegler and Konstantin Niehaus. There are also other members including Peter Auer, Christa Dürscheid, Manfred Glauninger who work in Germany, Switzerland or Austria. Their approach will be discussed in section 4.

It must be pointed out that the PLAM is a purely German German concept that has not been used in any other pluricentric language (PCL). A second important fact is that all arguments are always directed against Austrian German and not against any other national varieties (NVs) of German, which gives the impression that it is primarily concerned about abolishing AG, which was indirectly confirmed by Elspaß at the conference in Münster in 2019.

2. The monocentric background of the pluriareal concept (PLAM) and the differences with the pluricentric model (PLCM)

It can be said from the outset that the PLAC is a modern variant of the monocentric model most strongly associated with the name Hugo Moser (1964:10), who was a highly renowned and influential linguist. He was the most important advocate of the monocentric language model established in German studies in the FRG after 1950, which he defended as late as 1985, triggering extensive debate.[1] His model imagined the German of West-Germany as the "*principal variety*" (*Hauptvariante*), while the varieties of the other three German speaking nations (German Democratic Republikc (GDR), Austria and Switzerland) were just considered as "*subsidiary varieties*" (*Nebenvariante),* attributing a reduced status as regionalisms to them. The terms "*Binnendeutsch*"[2] (internal/central German) for the German of the Federal Republic of Germany (FDR) and "*Außendeutsch*" (external/peripheral German), for all other varieties. The model clearly favoured the dominance of the German of the FDR towards the other national varieties.

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1 Polenz (1988)

2 The terms were not coined by Moser because they can be found as early as 1934 in a book by Josef Nadler: Das stammhafte Gefüge des deutschen Volkes. (p. 13). It was Moser's "Geschichte der deutschen Sprache" (1st ed. of 1955) that was instrumental for the attribution of the term "Binnendeutsch" to the language of the FRG after its establishment in 1948.

There were strong political reasons for the establishment of the monocentric approach after 1945 as there was the existence of the GDR as a second German nation, the publication of the Austrian national dictionary (ÖWB) in 1951, and the restoration of Austrian sovereignty in 1955. This led to anxieties on the side of the FDR of a so-called "language split"[3] and the development of separate German languages. Moser (1964:10) referred to this in an article about the recent linguistic developments in GDR-German by saying: "but one has to speak of the danger of a new segregation."[4] Any step into linguistic autonomy on the side of the other three national varieties met with strong opposition on the side of the FRG. Another reaction from the FRG in order to combat the alleged language divide was the establishment of a research unit in Bonn that conducted research on the development of the language of the GDR, Austria and Switzerland.

The GDR officially adopted the idea that there were four national varieties of German as early as 1976 (Lerchner 1976) to show its linguistic distinctiveness, while Moser (1985) and the majority of the German linguists in the FRG still favoured the monocentric model. It aspired to linguistic unity in order to keep its predominance.[5] It is important to know that large parts of the elite of the FDR at that time, advocated the idea of the German cultural and linguistic nation, according to which the other predominantly German-speaking nations are part of the one German nation and are merely regarded as states and not as independent nations. This position is not compatible with the nation-state based concept of pluricentricity but is supported by Ammon (1995).

3. The pluricentric language model (PLCM) – a short outline

Clyne's model was gradually adopted for German in German study circles after 1986[6]. The recognition of the many "Englishes" around the world was a side effect of the decolonisation after 1945 that lead to the establishment of about 70 independent nations but this had already begun in 1776 with the independence of the USA.

The PLCM is therefore based on nation-states where every state is a nation of its own irrespective of a shared language and forms a specific national variety (NV) of the (seemingly) common language. This is a cornerstone of the concept

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[3] Moser (1964:10).

[4] „Wohl aber muss man von der Gefahr einer neuen Sonderung sprechen."

[5] See Hellmann (1989b) who describes in detail this eventful struggle.

[6] IDV (1986:55-75). The breakthrough came after the panel discussion at the 8th International Conference of Teachers of German in Bern, Switzerland with high-ranking representatives from all four German-speaking countries agreeing that German is a pluricentric language.

which has been extended to include political units that have some political self-governance that allows them to set their own norms.[7] Examples for this are semi-autonomous regions like South-Tyrol in Italy and the regions of Spain like Catalonia (and others) that give these units the right to institutionalise their own norms or even their own languages.

A second important belief of the PCLM, is the idea that every nation-state sharing the same "language" will gradually develop linguistic and pragmatic features of its own, turning it into a norm-setting centre. This comes into effect as soon as the native features of each national variety are codified and enshrined in dictionaries, grammars and textbooks for the education of children in school. It enables the transfer of native norms to the generations to come, the orientation of the population of what is linguistically native to them, and what is part of the language usage of another country or region.

A third cornerstone of the PCLM is its sociolinguistic nature. The specific linguistic and pragmatic features of national varieties create a different social reality and the awareness of being different from the speakers of other NVs resulting in a different social and political identity. Clyne (1992:1) pointed out that "[PCLs] ... unify people through the use of language and separate them through the development of national norms ... with which the speakers identify. They mark group boundaries ... indicating who belongs and who does not."

The social significance and relevance of the individual expressions for the identity of the speakers must therefore also be taken into account, and not merely the occurrence on both sides of a state border as the proponents of the PLAM do.

A fourth feature of the PCLM is the separation into dominant and non-dominant NVs that do not have the same language-political interests as briefly shown further up. Their speakers differ largely in their language-attitudes as shown by Clyne (1992: 455ff, Muhr 2012).

4. Central features and claims of the pluriareality concept of the "first pluriareal group" (Wolf, Wiesinger, Pohl, Scheuringer)

The term "*pluriareal*" was invented and first used in 1994 by Norbert Richard Wolf - an Austrian born Professor of German medieval language and literature and dialectologist who worked most of his professional life in Germany. He proposed the PAC in a paper written in 1994 that assembles the core ideas and claims. It is the founding document of the movement, whose ideas have been repeated

[7] Muhr (2016) and the publications of the "International Working Group on Non-dominant Varieties of pluricentric Languages" (WGNDV).

(with variations) by many other publications since then, and mainly by the second pluriareal group. A total of eight claims can be found in the first publication, another four were added in a later publication in 2012:

1. Claim (1) maintains that German is a pluriareal and not a pluricentric language.
2. Claim (2): The so called “overlap claim”. The author refers to Eichhoff's “Word Atlas of Colloquial German” and claims (1994:72) that “we find only a few words or phrases whose usage is limited to the present-day territory of Austria ... and apply to the whole of Austria”. Only four words are used to back his claim. Section 4-7 will present data that puts this claim into perspective.
3. Claim (3): The “inconsistency claim” alleges (1994:75) that Austrian German (AG) does not exist as a uniform variety. Within Austria, “as in the entire German-speaking area - several linguistic landscapes are to be differentiated.” Several datasets will refute this claim.
4. Claim (4) is inherent in claim (3) “that 'Austrian German' does not exist as a uniform variety” which means that AG does not exist as such. It will also be refuted.
5. Claim (5): Wolf doubts “whether the German spoken (and written) in Austria is really a "state-national variety”, and German in general is characterised by “pluricentricity”. This “conclusion” is debunked in the context of claim (3).
6. Claim (6) (1994:74) tries to undo the idea that entire nations can function as “centres” of a language and whether there is only one centre in a single nation or several. He justifies this with the disappearance of the NV of GDR. It seems impossible to him that the language of a whole country disappears “overnight”. This is of course only the case after some time, when the system of the old country has been replaced by the system of the new one that incorporated it.
7. Claim (7) points to the establishment of the Österreichische Wörterbuch (Austrian National Dictionary) (ÖWB) after WWI (issued in 1951), considered by Wolf (1994: 67) an act of “a strange restorative cultural policy after WWII” and (implicitly) accuses it of a separatist ideology. In light of getting rid of Nazi jargon after WWII and re-establishing Austria as an independent nation, it is a strange argument.
8. Claim (8) maintains (1994:69) that “dialectal and colloquial elements in this primarily areallinguistic sense have no place in a language dictionary, they are also not elements of a standard “national variety”.” This kind of standard language would be extremely centralistic, exclude many features of actual com-

munication and would therefore be highly unrealistic. However, the assertion underlines the monocentric character of the PLAM.

There were other members of the first pluriareal school too: Heinz Dieter Pohl, Peter Wiesinger and Hermann Scheuringer. They all published a large number of papers about AG that followed the ideas of Wolf. Pohl's (1997) views supported claims 1-4, 6 and 8 by Wolf, but not the one stating that there is no AG. Wiesinger also shared most claims made by Wolf (1994) and Pohl (1997), as well as those made by Scheuringer (1996). Wiesinger (1997) supported the PAC, which he justified with the allegedly low number of Austriacisms and the lack of linguistic uniformity. In (1995:65), he claimed that the PCG was practising linguistic separatism and secretly trying to create an Austrian national language. There is no evidence for that in any of the publications of this group. Wiesinger repeatedly downplayed the number of Austrian expressions, claiming on several occasions (1995:62) that AG contains no more than 4,000 words, which would be only 2% of the entire lexicon of German. The number was based on Ebner's dictionary[8] and is wrong, as the Variantenwörterbuch (Ammon et.al. 2004) comprises 12,500 entries for each of the three major varieties of German. Contrary to that, Wiesinger organised a first major publication about AG in 1988, however without mentioning the term "pluricentric" at all. The second pluriareal group repeats most of Wolf's claims and those of Wiesinger too.

Scheuringer claimed (1996a: 152) that "the term pluricentric cannot do justice to the areal patterns of the German language area..." as "it suggests nationally or state-wide uniform varieties of German in relatively strict demarcation from one another which do not exist in this form.". To him, pluricentricity is a "view on linguistic space that is restricted by the horizon of states." This is a total misconception of the term "linguistic centre" and without evidence in any publication of the PCG. However, both claims have also been taken up by the second pluriareal group.

The three authors also have the fact that they changed their opposition toward the existence of AG in common by regretting the loss of traditional Austrian vocabulary (Wiesinger, 2006/2014) but without correcting earlier unfounded allegations[9], by publishing an Austrian German-Romanian dictionary (Scheuringer, 2007)[10] and by acknowledging the existence of AG (Pohl 2018:142).

[8] Ebner Jakob (2009: 84) Wie sagt man in Österreich? [What's the word in Austria?]

[9] Wiesinger (2006/2014) „Das österreichische Deutsch in Gegenwart und Geschichte." which is a collection of papers of the author on AG.

[10] Lăzărescu Ioan/Scheuringer Hermann (2007): Limba germană din Austria. Un dictionar German Român. Österreichisches Deutsch. Ein deutsch-rumänisches Wörterbuch. Passau:Strutz

5. The concepts of the second pluriareal group: Stefan Elspaß, Arne Ziegler, Konstantin Niehaus, Alexandra Lenz, Christa Dürscheid, and Peter Auer

The 2000s saw the publication of the "Variantenwörterbuch" and many other publications that were based on the PLCM of German. It seemed that there was no alternative to it as it was generally acknowledged. However, this changed fundamentally when three professors of German origin took up their posts as professors of German linguistics at three Austrian universities in the period of 2005-2012. Since then, AG and the PLCM are under siege as the term "*Austrian German*" has been changed into "*German in Austria*" which implies a basic change in the underlying concept from a pluricentric one to a monocentric one. The group also revived the PLAM with a multitude of different arguments that had already been rejected in the 1990s (Muhr 1997) and recently by Dollinger (2019). Two large-scale research projects based on Austrian financial funds were initiated by them, whose objective is to prove empirically that there are no NVs and in particular no AG but just areal variants: "Deutsch in Österreich" (German in Austria) and "Variantengrammatik des Deutschen" (Grammar of variants of German) (VARGR).

Elspaß, who is the leading member of the pluriareal group (PLAG) confirmed that in his opinion, AG does not exist. When asked at the conference in Münster (2019) whether he believed that there was "no Austrian German at all?", in response, he said: "I would not know where that would be!" The message for the Austrians is therefore that they do not have an NV of their own, although there are some regionalisms. The concepts of the new pluriareal group (NPLAG) therefore needs to be scrutinised, as their position is a revision of 30 years of linguistic research that is contrary to the interests of the Austrian population that shows a high amount of loyalty to its variety of German.[11]

5.1 Key arguments of the new pluriareal group

In the abstract of the proceedings from the conference in Müster in 2019, Elspaß writes that the concept of pluricentricity (1) "focuses solely on national centres" and doubts (2) "whether it is conceptually, linguistically and politically still appropriate"? (3) He also asks "whether an adherence to the idea of "national varieties" is still timely or, on the contrary, rather damaging in an era of emerging nationalisms." Referring to Auer (2013) he says that the PLCM (4) "was criticised

[11] See Fink (2016: 270f): "The vast majority of Austrian teachers (89.6%) and pupils (79.2%) consider German to be a language with differences in its standard form among the German-speaking countries. " And a clear majority of teachers (80.5%) and two thirds of the pupils (59.4%) are convinced that Austrian Standard German as such exists."

because the limitation by state borders contradicts the centre-periphery notion of “pluricentricity”, and adds that (5) the idea of national varieties can often not be supported by the actual (aggregated) distribution of standard-language variants.” Some comments are not necessary to these claims, as they are not correct.
Argument (1): This allegation is not correct as the PLCM does not only focus on “national centres” but also differentiates first level and second level pluricentricity (Muhr, 1997, Rodrigues/Paiva da Conceição (2016), Miller/Saeli (2016), Méndez-Gª de Paredes / Amorós Negre (2016).
Argument (2) and (3): It is standard procedure in the sciences to review existing research results and data. However, Elspaß is obviously insinuating that the PLCM is inciting nationalism as it is using the term “national variety”. This is not only wrong, it seems to be a deliberate misinterpretation of the term. Anyone working in the field knows (or should know) that the term is based on the concept of state-nation and a loan expression from English sociolinguistics. How can researching and describing the language of a state-nation be nationalism, unless one assumes implicitly that Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Liechtenstein, etc. are not independent nations, but part of the German nation and have no right to codify their own language?
Argument (4): Like claims (2) and (3), this one was also taken from the first PLAG, in this case from Scheuringer (1996) and not from Auer (2013). Apart from that, Auer's assertion that a centre must also have a periphery is without theoretical basis, because in the PLCM whole countries serve as a descriptive framework for the description of variation.
Argument (5): In that respect, we will show in the next chapters that the concept of “NVs” are clearly supported by actual data and the data presented by the PLAG are false and even misleading.

In Elspaß/Niehaus (2014) an additional four arguments of the new pluriareal model are outlined (mostly taken over from the first pluriareal groups without reference to their origin).

Argument (1) postulates that the PLCM is an “entirely political concept based on the notion of *Überdachung* [lit. roofing] of the language area by a political state” and the impossibility that an NV like the one of the former GDR can disappear over night. The latter has been adopted from Wolf (1994) and (2012) and is wrong, as discussed in chapter (2). The argument that it is an “entirely political concept” does not make sense as any named “language” only comes into existence through a wilful act by social and/or political forces that have the power to do that (Muhr, 2019).

Argument (2) reiterates the diminishing argument of Wiesinger (1995) that AG only has a native lexicon of no more than 4000 words or 2% of the German lexicon. It has been reiterated against better knowledge in 2013 as the "Variantenwörterbuch" (Ammon et. al. (2004/2018) which comprises more than 12,000 entries for each of the three major varieties of German.

Argument (3) repeats the "overlap argument" and the "inconsistency argument" of Wolf (1994) and Scheuringer (1996), postulating (2014: 48) that "absolute variants may even be the exception" as "standard variants do cross borders, i.e. their distribution is not restricted to one country alone." Both claims cannot be upheld as a multitude of data does not support this claim (see the empirical data in the next chapters).

Argument (4) says that a "standardisation from below" and "real" language usage should be the basis of language description and codification and the concept of "standard language" should be extended by the concept of "*standard of usage*" [Gebrauchsstandard]. This had been proposed by Elspaß in several publications (2005a, 2005b etc.) before, and purports a "democratisation" of standard language which is a positive approach. However, in practice the concept also entails the concept of a reality that replaces pluricentricity as Elspaß/Dürscheid (2017: 9) explains:

> We, too, understand ... usage standards [Gebrauchsstandards] as "geographically defined varieties", but refer here to the written language. We thus assume - in the sense of the pluriareal approach - the coexistence of different (large) area-wide standard varieties of German, not the existence of national standard varieties and certainly not the existence of a uniform standard German."[12]

Ideologically, the concept of pluriareality and the "Gebrauchsstand" abandons the concept of NVs and the concept of pluricentricity of German. It is a concept that deconstructs the non-dominant varieties and replaces them with the indiscriminate term "areal", that – in the words of the makers of the "Variantengrammatik" - "would not specify how large the areas are."[13]

In the following four sections, empirical data is presented that test the claims of the PLAG for their validity - and do not confirm them.

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[12] Auch wir fassen, … Gebrauchsstandards als „geographisch definierte Varietäten" auf, beziehen das Konzept hier aber auf die geschriebene Sprache. Wir gehen also - im Sinne des pluriarealen Ansatzes - von der Koexistenz verschiedener (groß-)areal verbreiteter Standardvarietäten des Deutschen aus, nicht von der Existenz nationaler Standardvarietäten und schon gar nicht von der Existenz eines einheitlichen Standarddeutsch.

[13] http://mediawiki.ids-mannheim.de/VarGra/index.php/Theoretische_Grundlagen - Internet site of "VARGR [accessed January 7, 2021).

6. The data from Jürgen Eichhoff's (1977/1978) "Atlas der deutschen Umgangssprachen"

In the 1970s, Jürgen Eichhoff started a large scale project with interviews in about 400 places in Austria, the GRR, the FRG and in South Tyrol. Two volumes with maps were published in 1977 and 1978, and two others in 1994 and 1997 (not included in this survey). The data from 121 maps was checked in respect (a) to their occurrence in Austria and (b) in the neighbouring areas of Germany and (c) whether there are other expressions used (which was often the case). Despite their relative age, the data can still be used to check five central claims of the PLAG (the key members of the PLAG used them too but in a very selective way) : (1) there are only a few Austrian expressions, (2) there is no AG, (3) AG is marked by linguistic inconsistency, (4) there is overlap with areas across the border and (5) German is a pluriareal language. Eichhoff's data falls into 8 categories when reviewed in terms of the claims of the PLAG:

6.1. Category (1): 28 (23.14%) out of 121 expressions are used throughout Austria and are specific to Austria.

6.2 Category (2): Another 16 (13.22%) expressions are used in the seven of nine federal states of Austria with the exception of the two western states.

6.3 Category (3): Eichhoff's maps also contain 6 (4.96%) expressions that are specific to Austria in the western parts that do not overlap with neighbouring areas of Germany or Switzerland.

Categories 1-3 added together results in 50 (41.32%) of the 121 researched items that are specific to Austria and do not overlap with other German speaking areas outside Austria. This is a remarkably high number.

6.5 46 (38%) expressions and linguistic features occur in AG and in the whole area of southern Germany up to the Rhine-Main-line. Many of these expressions are part of the formal standard of German German (GG) and are therefore not different from GG or southern German.

6.6 21 (17.36%) AG expressions and linguistic features are overlapping only with some parts of Bavaria.

6.7 10 (8.26%) AG expressions and linguistic features occur in a small part in the south and east of Bavaria (mostly along the Austrian border).

6.8 Another 10 (8.26%) expressions and linguistic features overlap with some other parts of the German speaking area and 7 (5.79%) expressions overlap with Switzerland, which is rather small number.[14]

Summary of results in respect to the claims of the pluriareal group

(1) Claims (4) and (5) of the PLAG are clearly refuted as 50 (41.32%) out of 121 items are specific to Austria. It is therefore wrong to say that there are only very few Austrian expressions and that this proves there is no AG.

(2) AG shows a high degree of consistency, which refutes the inconsistency claim. 99 (81.82%) out of 121 expressions do not show variation throughout Austria except for 22 expressions (18.18%) in the western parts of Austria. There is a high degree of homogeneity of AG.

(3) 71 (58.68%) of the researched items overlap with the neighbouring areas of Germany and Switzerland. It would be strange if there were no overlap as the border is open and there are many contacts on both sides. Despite the overlap, the central premise of the PLAG that German is a pluriareal language is not confirmed as this dataset reveals there is a high amount of Austriacisms (41.32%) and a high consistency of AG. Both datasets confirm the existence of the NV of AG. Including information about the social and identity values of variants in the query would probably have yielded an additional differentiation of AG.

7. The data of the Austrian German-Project (Glauninger (1997/2000)[15] and Kurnik (1998)

Two master theses were initiated and conducted at the Austrian German Research Centre in Graz in the period of 1997-2000. They were intended to check the claims of Wolf (1994) and Scheuringer (1996). The first master's thesis (Glauninger 1997/2000) examined the use of vocabulary in 20 lexical fields within Austria. For this purpose, 181 expressions were selected and illustrated on picture cards that were shown to 8-20 informants (n=105 persons in total) in all 9 state capitals of Austria who then had to name the objects pictured on the cards.

The second master thesis (Kurnik, 1997) was intended to determine the amount of convergence of the Austrian and Bavarian lexical usage and by that to verify or refute the overlap claim. It researched the designations of 139 objects (identical to the ones of Glauninger's study) again presented on picture cards in

[14] Note: 16 (13.22%) of the expressions that are different in the western and eastern parts of Austria appear twice in the lists. This percentage had to be deducted in order to get a consolidated number that sums up the total percentage of 100%.

[15] The study has been published at Peter Lang Verlag in 2000.

four Bavarian towns (Passau, Rosenheim, Augsburg and Munich). 55 informants answered the questions in respect to their oral and written usage.

7.1 Results: The lexical correspondence between the Austrian state capitals (Glauninger, 1997:258f)

Table (1) shows (1) the amount of lexical conformity between the 9 Austrian state capitals and (2) answers the question about the alleged divide between the geographical west and east and (3) the conformity towards the GG-lexicon.

The data clearly demonstrates that (1) there is no support for the inconsistency claim. Only five - out of 72 - comparisons between state capitals have a lower compliance rate less than 80% but are nowhere lower than 75%. AG shows a high degree of conformity throughout the country as already shown with the data of Eichhoff. (2) The alleged east-west divide in lexical usage is also disconfirmed. Glauninger (1997: 260) concludes that "in none of the four comparison modes applied does an alleged lexical West-East contrast within Austria have a significant effect."

Table (1)

% max	***DE***[16]	***BR***	***IN***	***SZ***	***LI***	***KL***	***GR***	***SP***	***WI***	***EI***
DE		36	31	29	23	27	35	26	23	22
BR	36		87	81	***77***	**76**	86	**79**	**79**	**76**
IN	31	87		91	85	93	86	87	85	82
SZ	29	81	91		**100**	98	95	93	92	87
LI	23	77	85	**100**		92	90	97	92	90
KL	27	76	93	98	92		92	88	87	84
GR	35	86	86	95	90	92		84	92	83
SP	26	79	87	93	97	88	84		93	98
WI	23	79	85	92	92	87	92	93		92
EI	22	76	82	87	90	84	83	98	92	

(3) The claim that there are only few native Austrian expressions is again unconfirmed. Data row (1) and data column (1) marked "DE" in table (1) shows the conformity in the 9 Austrian cities to the GG lexicon. The highest values of 35% are found in Bregenz in the far west and the lowest with 22% in Eisenstadt in the far

[16] Explanation of the abbreviations of the names of the capital cities of the Austrian states (Bundesländer): BR = Bregenz (Vorarlberg, West); IN = Innsbruck (Tyrol, West); SZ = Salzburg (Salzburg, West); LI = Linz (Upper Austria, Centre); KL = Klagenfurt (Kärnten, South), GR = Graz (Styria, Centre); SP = St. Pölten (Lower Austria, East); Wi = Wien (Vienna, East); EI = Eisenstadt (Burgenland, East); DE= the column with the data for the German German expressions.
The table compares the lexical conformity between the 9 state capitals. Example: The conformity between "Eisenstadt" (capital of Burgenland in the very East of Austria) and Innsbruck in the West of the country is 82%, however between Germany and Bavaria it is only 22%, respectively 76%.

East which is far from 50% that could be considered a threshold value that there is no AG.

(4) The claim that Austria-specific expressions are only found in institutional and administrative lexical areas (Elspaß/Niehaus 2014) is also disproved as Glauninger's study covered 20 different lexical fields that included a large array of objects that are used in the household or are part of houses and flats. This is also consistent with the data from Eichhoff's research.

7.2 The results of Kurnik‘s study - The conformity in lexicon use between Austria and Bavaria (1998: 127).

Kurnik's data describes the congruence between Austria and Bavaria in four categories: (1) Full congruence in spoken language; (2) full congruence in written language;[17] (3) partial congruence in spoken language; (4) partial congruence in written language[18]. Table (2) also shows in columns (2) and (3) the congruence in usage of the GG-lexicon in Austria and Bavaria (as codified in the "Duden" dictionary).

Table (2)	(1) Congruence Austria-Bavaria	(2) Congruence Austria-GG	(3) Congruence Bavaria-GG	(4) Difference (2)-(3) Austria - Bavaria
Full congruence spoken language	12%	5.1%	7.8%	2.7%
Full congruence written language	13.40 %	6.6%	10.3%	4.7%
Partial congruence spoken language	17.9%	10.2%	14.8%	4.6%
Partial congruence written language	20.5%	13.4%	20%	6.6%
Average	15.95%	11,75%	13,1%	

(1) Column (1) of table (2) demonstrates that across the four categories, on average, only 15.95% of the lexical usage in Austria and in Bavaria coincides. Only every sixth expression is being used in the same way. This is remarkably low and puts Eichhoff's data very much into perspective. It does not contradict them but expands them and strongly refutes the overlap theory put forward by the pluriareality group.

[17] Explanation of the terms "spoken language" and "written language" in this research: The respondents of both studies were asked which expressions they use for objects shown on picture cards in daily spoken language and which expression they would consider appropriate when writing a text.

[18] "Partial congruence "means, that responses that are not showing exactly the same form (= full congruence) are mostly composites of different lexical-morphological formation which were exclusively classified according to the stem lexeme.

(2) Kurnik also researched the conformity in lexical usage the GG-lexicon as enshrined in the Duden lexicon that contains a vocabulary that is more northern in character.

Columns (2), (3) and (4) show the respective data, demonstrating that the GG-lexicon is used much more in Bavaria – especially in the way of a partial congruence in written language. In summary, this data says that there are considerable differences in lexicon use between Austria and Bavaria and that this, above all, again clearly refutes the PLAG's claim of the overlap and inexistence of AG.

7.3 Average use in percent of the same or different lexical expressions by Austrian and Bavarian informants

Using the data of Glauninger and Kurnik, the following data was calculated by the author of this article. Based on their results an average percentual usage of each primary and secondary element was calculated across all cities and all informants in Austria and Bavaria. The result indicates the relative number of informants using a certain expression (ranging from 0% - 100%) in AG and Bavarian German (BG). There are three categories of usage:

1. Category (1): Different expressions in both varieties for the same object - Austriacisms and Bavarisms/Deutschlandisms.

   In 68 (48.2%) of the 139 items researched, the Austrian informants use different expressions for the same object. Almost 50% of the elements are Austriacisms, which again refutes the claim that there is no AG. It is in line with Eichhoff's data, where 41% were found.
   There are also many secondary expressions that are often unknown in Austria and convey the impression that there are few concordances between the two language areas (Wiesinger, 1990). Austrian primary expressions are in some cases used in Bavaria as secondary variants and vice versa. The linguistic reality is not simple as the supporters of the PLAG suggest, who usually only present word duplicates (AG: Faschiertes | DE Hackfleisch | minced meat).
2. Category (2) contains lexical forms used in both varieties but with a substantial difference in percentage of more than 20%.
   26 (18.7%) expressions belong to this category. In addition, there is a high amount of variation and strong quantitative differences in the use of the primary expressions even though the same expressions are used in both varieties.
3. Category (3) includes identical lexical items that are used in both varieties but with a difference of less than 20%.

There are 34 (24.46%) expressions in this category plus ten variants whose use in both language areas is 100%, 44 in all.

The data from the four sources - Eichhoff's maps and Glauninger's and Kurnik's research, as well as the additional comparison of average language use in Austria and Bavaria can be summed up that they showed a high degree of consistency and in all cases resulted in a refutation of the five central claims of the pluriareal group.

The following three sections will demonstrate further data and evidence that there is no substance in the claims of the PLAG and in the model itself. It will check the “Variantengrammatik” (VARGR) which plays a central role in the argumentation of the PLAG for its validity and representativeness.

8. The “Variantengrammatik” (VARGR) – Checking its data and validity

The VARGR plays a key role in the argumentation of the “new” PLAG as its data is used to prove the claims of the PAC. Both Elspaß and Auer made extensive reference to VARGR when drawing the conclusion that there are no national varieties and that there is no AG at the conferences in Münster and Stockholm. It was created during an international project (Austria, Germany and Switzerland) in the period of 2013-2020. The concept of the VARGR is outlined at the website of the project[19].

> The VARGR lists “structures [from] the German-speaking area according to the concept of "areality" and “only give[s] advice on the written standard language”.... we restrict ourselves to the standard linguistic usage. That is why we prefer the term areal - and thus a term, which leaves open how large the areas are which form the basis for the variation (this is also the reason why in the publications on variant grammar we find terms such as pluriareal or pluriareality, but not plurinational or pluriregional). ... As a rule, we are only dealing with relative, not absolute (i.e. exclusively occurring in one linguistic area) variants.”

(2) The underlying corpus was built on the online editions of 68 regionally distributed newspapers from the entire German-speaking area and contains some 600 million running words and a total of 1.699.115 articles. The 68 newspapers have been assigned to 15 major regions (= areas) just like the Variantenwörterbuch (Ammon et. al. 2004, 2016) did.

[19] http://mediawiki.ids-mannheim.de/VarGra/index.php/Start [accessed 20.12.2020]

8.1 Checking the balance and representativeness of the VARGR corpus

A first look at the data of VARGR, which is displayed on the website in the form of percentages and maps, revealed ambiguities both about how the results were calculated, and about the validity of the data. Absolute figures are missing, i.e. the results are not directly verifiable. It is also not clear how the statistically significant tests were carried out exactly, if one were to read the explanations on the website of the project[20]. The following review will assess the VARG-Project on the data as presented on the web site and on its own objectives and stipulations.

Language corpora must meet the criteria of representativeness and balance in order for the data obtained from them to be considered valid. According to Leech (1991: 27) this is achieved "if the findings based on its contents can be generalised to the said language variety" and if (Biber 1992:243) a sample includes the full range of variability in a population. "For this, it is necessary (MacEnery et.al. 2010: 13-15) to "consider balance and sampling to ensure representativeness". Corpora should cover "proportionally, as many text types as possible ...". Its representativeness "depends heavily on sampling from a broad range of genres..." Based on these criteria, the VARGR-corpus is not balanced as it contains only texts of regionally distributed newspapers. This means in fact that the results of VARGR are not an overall description of the German grammatical "Gebrauchsstandard" in different domains but is a reduced selection of grammatical phenomena of written newspaper language of local newspapers. Hence, the sample/corpus does not "show the full range of variability in a population".

Does the VARGR meet the criteria of representativeness? Is it designed in a way that "if the findings based on its contents can be generalised to the said language variety?" A number of shortcomings can be found. The following comments refer exclusively to the Austrian part of the VARGR corpus. However, it can be assumed that they also apply to the other parts of the corpus.

(1) 48.23% of the texts of the VARGR-corpus only come from *two* newspapers – the "Kleine Zeitung Steiermark/Kärnten" and the "Kronen Zeitung Steiermark/ Kärnten", both are located in the south-east of Austria. Their share in the overall circulation of print products in Austria is just 15.73%. A further 18.64% of the texts come from "Vorarlberg Online" which by its daily circulation is an overrepresen-

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[20] "The absolute frequency of occurrence in an area must also be at least ten occurrences in order for the area to be mentioned in the form commentary. For variants with counter-variants, the individual frequencies are summed up, but in addition, an individual variant must have at least 5 occurrences in an area in order to be considered in the form comment. .... On the other hand, the relative frequency must be at least 5%. The reference value is either the sum of all occurrences of all variants, if compared with counter variants."

tation by *eight times*. The share of three newspapers in the corpus amounts to 66.87% of all texts of the Austrian VARGR-corpus, which is a gross imbalance. The other 12 newspapers of the Austrian corpus account for only 33.13%.

(2) There are further imbalances with 71.58% of the texts coming from newspapers that are situated in the west and in the south of Austria, while the majority of the newspaper-production is situated in the east of the country and strongly underrepresented in the corpus with a share of only 28.42%.

(3) The ratio of regional newspapers in the corpus accounts for 85.56% of the texts, the one of *national* newspapers only 14.51%. This is also one-sided and unrepresentative. A large number of major newspapers and magazines (61.76% of the overall circulation) that are all exclusively situated in the east of Austria - are not represented in the VARGR-corpus. There is no justification for this.

All of the above leads to the conclusion that the corpus of the VARGR does not meet the criteria of representativeness at all. It is neither balanced or representative and does not correctly represent the linguistic situation and the variety of AG (and probably also of the other NVs of German). The general conclusion is that the results based on VARGR-corpus cannot be generalised and are therefore invalid.

8.2 Counterchecking the results of the VARGR corpus using a very large corpus

Despite the evidence showing the inadequacy of the VARGR corpus and the results presented, an analysis was carried out *as if the corpus were representative and balanced* in order to verify or falsify the results of the VARGR. This was done using the newspaper archive of the Austrian Press Agency (APA), which is the central information institution in Austria. The results of several expressions presented on the VARGR website were verified against the APA newspaper corpus. It contained (in July 2019) 87,481,668 million articles of 75 Austrian newspapers/magazines (45,697,361 articles), 46 German newspapers/magazines (35,567,161 articles) and 34 Swiss newspapers/magazines (6,217,146 articles). The results had to be normalised to make the data comparable because of the different sizes of the three corpora. The number of hits for Germany was multiplied by the factor of 1.28 and the ones for Switzerland with the factor 7.35. Two example cases will be shown here, which stand for many wrong results of VARGR.

8.2.1 Example (1): The expressions “Bußgeld”, and “Geldbuße” [fine / penalty fee]

Table (3)	(1) Σ articles AG		(2) Σ articles GG		(3) Σ articles CHG	
(1) Bußgeld	10.354		11.0453 | norm. 14.1380		2.302 | norm. 16.943	
(2) Geldbuße	11.809		37.971 | norm. 48.603		3.340 | norm. 24.582	
Results	**(1)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(2)**
(3) APA	**46.7 %**	**53.3%**	**70.4%**	**29.6%**	**59.2%**	**40.8%**
(4) VARGR	**14.25%**	**85.75%**	**43.6%**	**56.3%**	**11%**	**89%**
(5) Difference	**-/+ 32.4%**		**-/+ 26.8%**		**-48.2%/+48.2%**	

Line (5) compares the percentages of hits in the APA-corpus and in the VARGR-corpus and finds for AG a discrepancy for “Bußgeld” of -32.4%, and for “Geldbuße” of -/+ 32.45%, for GG -/+ 26.8% and for CHG even -/+ 48.2%. In all three cases, the results as indicated by VARGR are reversed with substantially higher percentages for “Bußgeld”, instead of “Geldbuße”. Given the size of the APA corpus, there can be no doubt that the VARGR data is seriously flawed.

8.2.2 Example (2): The past participles “*bewegt*” and “*bewogen*” of the verb “bewegen” (to move)

The verb “*bewegen*” shows variation with its past participle as there is a (newer) regular form “*bewegt*” and an (older) irregular form “*bewogen*”. Table (4) shows the number of hits in the APA-corpus and a comparison of the average ratios of both corpora.

Table (4)	(1) Σ articles AG | %		(2) Σ articles GG | %		(3) Σ articles CHG | %	
(1) bewegt	29.793 | 77.25%		55.029 | 70.437 | 83.2%		11.615 | 85.370 | 72.7%	
(2) bewogen	8.773 | 22.75%		11.112| 14.223 | 16.8%		4.362 | 3.260 | 27.3%	
Results	**(1)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(2)**
(3) APA-Corpus	**77.25 %**	22.75 %	**83.2%**	16.8%	**72.7%**	27.3%
(4) VARGR	23.75 %	**76.25 %**	24.17	**75.83**	8%	**92.00 %**
(5) Difference	**-/+ 53.5%**		**-/+ 59.0%**		**-/+64.7%**	

(1) The results of the query in the APA-corpus again refute the VARGR, which states that the form “*bewogen*” is the primary variant in all three countries. However, our data based on 83 million articles shows the opposite: the regular form “*bewegt*” is the primary variant: AG: 77.25%, GG: 83.2% and Swiss German (CHD): 72.3% with all results reversed. The difference between the results of the VARGR and APA-corpus are: AG: 53.5%, GG: 59.0% and CHD: 64.1% which is a particularly extreme case of erroneous data - and it is not an isolated case. Most data at the VARGR website which we checked against the APA-corpus show large differences towards the APA corpus of 20-35% or higher.

9. The verification of VARGR data against the current language use of Austrian speakers via an online survey

During the period of 10-12/2020, we checked the data of 100 VARGR items via an online survey that was conducted during the annual election of the Austrian word of the year[21]. 951 Austrian speakers took part in the survey, who came from all parts of the country and were grouped into four regions analogous to the VARGR: AT-East: 543 informants (57.1%), AT-centre: 168 (17.67%), AT-south: 164 (17.25%), AT-west: 73 (7.68%). The percentages correspond to the relative population share of the four regions. The VARGR-expressions were placed into the context of declarative sentences that were taken from the VARGR-website. The informants were given three options: (a) This is how I say, (b) Is also possible (second choice) or (c) Is impossible. The resulting numbers were transformed into percentages and compared to the data from VARGR. Due to limited page space, only a few examples and the most important results are presented here. Example (1): The usage of "*Abendkassa*" versus "*Abendkasse*" (evening box office)

Table (5)	VARGR		Our Survey	
Areal	**Abendkassa**	**Abendkasse**	**Abendkassa**	**Abendkasse**
A-EAST	65%	35%	85.4%	18.7%
A-CENTRE	33%	67%	82.6%	19.5%
A-SOUTH	15%	85%	78.5%	26.3%
A-WEST	49%	51%	82.2%	16.9%
AVERAGE	40.5%	59.5%	**82.1%**	**20.3%**

The results in table (5) confirm the pattern of the previous section where massive deviations have been found between our data and the data yielded by the VARGR. In this case, the results are again reversed: Contrary to the VARGR, 82.1% of the Austrian informants say that *Abendkassa* is the expression they use and not *Abendkasse,* while the VARGR indicates 51% versus 16.9%. The percentual ratio is 41.7/34.1%. This table stands for 24% of results that show the same deviating data.

Example (2): In a second category, 31% of the 100 items of our query display differences up to 40% but without reversed results like in example (1). This is typically the case with the two expressions "am häufigsten/am öftesten" (most frequently/most often) that demonstrate a difference of 24/29.5% between VARGR data and our query.

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[21] https://oewort.at

Example (3): Data whose validity is unclear due to fragmented information in the VARGR tables.

Table (6)	VARGR		Our SURVEY	
Area	Zifferblatt	Ziffernblatt	Zifferblatt	Ziffernblatt
A-East	92%	0% (k.B.)	11.2%	90%
A-CentRE	0% (k.B.)	50% (u.S.)	15%	89%
A-South	50% (u.S.)	100% (u.S.)	11%	91%
A-West	0%	2%	9%	91%
	0	0	13.2%	89.5%

In 6 out of 8 cells of table (6) the VAGR data for "Ziffer(n)blatt" (dial) is either marked with u.S." (= under the threshold [of 10 hits]), k.B. (= no hits) or shows 0% in cells. The markings indicate that there are only a few hits (u.S.) which does not suffice for a statistical analysis or none at all (k.B./0%). Nevertheless, the VARGR website presents a graph with data, even though the data is incomplete or even missing. This is incomprehensible and misleading. It occurs in no less than 16 out of 100 tables and casts additional doubts on the validity of the VARGR data. Table (7) finally shows that 70% of the VARGR data was not confirmed by the online survey with Austrian speakers and is not interpretable.

	Table (7)	
1.	VAGR results with a massive difference and reversed (20-40%)	24%
2.	VAGR results with a massive difference but not reversed (20-40%)	18%
3.	VAGR results with a substantial difference (< 20%)	12%
4.	VAGR results are fragmented and not interpretable	16%
6.	VAGR data are confirmed by the online survey (< 5% of difference)	30%

Additionally, in the AG-data of our query, less than 5% of the queried expressions showed areal differences between 5-10%. This is a further indication of the homogeneity of AG.

10. Summary

The claims of the PLAG have been refuted by an array of empirical data that consistently showed the same result: (1) A high percentage of Austrian-specific expressions, (41.3% in Eichhoff, 78% in Glauninger and 48% in Kurnik/Glauninger) which convincingly refute the pluriareal claims: (a) that there is no Austrian German and (b) that there are only few Austriacisms and (c) that there are non national varieties. (2) The so-called inconsistency of AG was also debunked. 82% of Eichhoff's data showed no variation within Austria, while in Glauninger's data the lexical conformity between the 9 Austrian state capitals is nowhere lower than

75% and between 75-80% in only three towns, but elsewhere much higher. (3) The convergence of AG towards GG is low, averaging only 28% in the data of Glauninger and ranging from 22-35%. This again shows a high autonomy of AG. (4) The overlap claim has some justification but has also been massively put into proper perspective. Of the expressions examined, 58% in Eichhoff's case and only 16% in Kurnik's case, are in use in Austria and in the neighbouring areas of Germany. Additionally, many secondary expressions are used with a high percentage in Bavaria but are unknown in Austria.

The VAGR, which is used by the PLAG as an empirical proof of their claims, turned out to be marked by a massive imbalance and general lack of representativeness in the underlying corpus, so it is reasonable to conclude that all VAGR results are incorrect. This was confirmed by checking numerous VAGR results against the very large APA newspaper corpus. Massive differences of up to 40% were found. The same was found when comparing the VAGR results with the results of a recent online survey of Austrian speakers, which examined 100 items. 70% of the VAGR results turned out to be massively wrong, which casts enormous doubts on the whole project. In any case, the VAGR data is unsuitable to support the PLAG's arguments because it has no empirical content.

In conclusion the data presented here shows that the PLAM has no justification and that it does not and cannot represent an alternative to the pluricentric model of languages.

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The Status of the Moldovan Language

Abstract

This article discusses the status of the language spoken in the Republic of Moldova, which presents some particular features compared with the standard Romanian language. For almost two centuries, Moldova was part of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union and subject to their language policies, which was responsible for an independent development of the language in certain aspects. However, with the independence of Moldova in 1991, this development came to an end. The speakers of Moldovan show a strong awareness of their language. This fact and the attitude of today's official institutions vis-à-vis their language leads to the conclusion that Moldovan is not a language of its own. The sociolinguistic situation suggests speaking of a variety of the pluricentric Romanian language. The advocates of an independent Moldovan language use arguments which are based on the notion that an own language is necessary to define statehood. Such arguments are not valid.

1. Introduction

The topic of this article is the status of the language of the Republic of Moldova. I will discuss the sociolinguistic status of Moldovan and, in particular, the disputed question whether it is a language of its own or a variety of Romanian. After presenting the country and its history and language, I shall discuss which criteria should be applied in order to determine the status of a language and confront them with the linguistic reality of the language spoken in Moldova.

Then I shall go on to examine whether Romanian can be considered as a pluricentric language based on the criteria developed by Clyne/Muhr (2012). For reasons of space, I shall not discuss pluricentricity in detail.

2. The Republic of Moldova

Since August 1991, the Republic of Moldova has been an independent and sovereign State. The capital of Moldova is Chișinău. On the North, East and South Moldova has borders with Ukraine, and on the West, it is separated from Romania by the Prut River. The country has a population of 2,954,000 (2021 est.) and a total area of 33,843 sq. km. About three-quarters of Moldova's population consist of ethnic Moldovans. There are smaller populations of Ukrainians, Russians, Gagauz, Roma, and Bulgarians. There are two regions with a special status:

- *Unitatea Teritorială Autonomă Găgăuzia* (Autonomous Territorial Unit Gagauzia) and
- *Unitățile administrativ-teritoriale din stînga Nistrului* (Territorial administrative units from the left part of Nistru river, generically known as Transnistria).

Map of the Republic of Moldova[1]

3. History

In order to illustrate the complex history of Moldova, I shall describe the development of the historical regions from which the present-day states of Romania and Moldova emerged in the 19th and 20th centuries.

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[1] Source: Encyclopædia Britannica: https://www.britannica.com/place/Moldova#/media/1/388005/206590

At the beginning of modern times, the Romanian territories were divided into a large number of political organisational units, some of which were administrated by different Empires, especially by the Habsburg Monarchy. The most important autonomous Principalities were Wallachia, Moldova and Transylvania, which, in the wake of the collapse of the Hungarian Kingdom, became vassals of the Ottoman Empire (Murgescu, 2006:223).

The principality of Moldova was founded in the first half of the 14th century and became independent about 1349 (Encyclopaedia Britannica). Under the reign of the Moldovan prince Alexander the Good (Alexandru cel Bun, 1400-1432), the border of the principality was moved to the Black Sea. Thus, the Moldovan state reached its largest extent with an area of 94,000 km^2. However, over the course of the next centuries, essential areas were lost again (Lindenbauer, 2017:171). Like the other Principalities, Moldova became a vassal of the Ottoman Empire. After the Peace Treaty of Bucharest, which ended the Russo-Turkish War of 1806–1812, the eastern half of the principality was annexed by the Russian Empire, which called this region Bessarabia (Giurescu, 2000: 248) and remained part of the Russian Empire until 1918.

In 1859, Alexandru Cuza was elected as prince in both Moldavia (the part to the West of the river Prut, which did not belong to the Russian Empire) and Walachia. He was followed by Prince Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, who achieved formal independence after the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78 and obtained formal recognition of Romania as a kingdom in 1881 (Encyclopaedia Britannica). When Austria-Hungary was defeated in World War I, the Romanians of Transylvania in late 1918 proclaimed the land united with Romania. In 1920, the Allies confirmed the union in the Treaty of Trianon (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

In the wake of the chaos brought about by the Russian Revolution, in December 1917, the Moldovan Democratic Republic (*Republica Democratică Moldovenească*) was proclaimed, which, however, initially remained in association with the Russian Federation for the time being (Lindenbauer, 2017:174). But in January 1918, the *Sfatul Ţării* (Council of the State) proclaimed the independent Republic of Moldavia and, subsequently, voted in favour of a unification with Romania, which was recognised in the Treaty of Paris of 1920 by France, Great Britain, Italy and Japan, but not by the United States and the Soviet Union (Lindenbauer, 2017:174). So, Greater Romania, the expanded nation-state uniting the majority of Romanians, came into being. Through the acquisition of Transylvania and the Banat from Hungary, Bukovina from Austria, and

Bessarabia from Russia, the country's territory was doubled (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

In 1924, the Soviet Union had created a Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (MASSR) on the territory east of the Dniester River, within the Ukrainian S.S.R. After the collapse of the western European front in the Second World War, in 1940 Romania was compelled to cede its territories between the Prut and Dniester rivers back to the Soviet Union. Under Stalin the landlocked Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR) was created out of the central rump of eastern Moldova and a narrow part of the MASSR (Transnistria) (Encyclopaedia Britannica). In the climate of Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost, the weakening and eventual collapse of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union led to the declaration of independence in 1990. The Gagauz in the south and the Russians east of the Dniester responded by declaring independent republics of their own (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

4. The Romanian language

Romanian is a part of the Eastern Romance sub-branch of Romance languages and, like the other Romance languages, developed between the fifth and seventh/eighth centuries, but took a specific development that gave this language a special position among the neo-Latin languages (Arvinte, 2010:288). Romanian formed a language continuum, i.e. a large interconnected linguistic area to the north and south of the Danube, which fell apart due to the infiltration of Slavic settlers between the late seventh and the twelfth centuries. A differentiation of the original Romanian language occurred into today's Dako-Romanian, which is limited to the Romanian territory, as well as the three varieties spoken outside today's Romanian territory: Istro-Romanian, Aromunian and Megleno-Romanian (Lindenbauer, 2006:339-340).

The historical events and the cultural and religious circumstances had the effect that the Romanians were the only Romanesque people for centuries to use not Latin, but Church Slavonic as a cult and cultural language (Arvinte, 2010:289). This Slavic influence is very clearly evident in the vocabulary, which shows a significant proportion of words of Slavic origin. The borrowings come from almost all semantic areas, whether concrete or abstract, and refer to very frequently used terms (Schroeder, 2010:348).

In addition, Romanian shows morphological and grammatical peculiarities that distinguish it from other Romance languages, but which it shares with other Balkan languages. In this field it should be mentioned: The special genitivedative case form, the enclitic specific article, the so-called short infinitive, the formation of the futurum and the conditional with *vream* and the use of the subjunctive in cases where other Romance languages use the infinitive (Ivănescu, 2000:744).

The influence of Slavic is also evidenced by the fact that Romanian was written with Cyrillic letters. It was not until the 19th century that the transition to the Latin alphabet took place, which also had the purpose of making the Latin origin of the Romanian language clear. At the beginning, an etymological spelling was used, but this gave way to the now common phonematic spelling with diacritic characters (Ivănescu, 2000:686-691).

5. Differences between Moldovan and the Romanian spoken in Romania

Generally speaking, the differences between Moldovan and the Romanian spoken in Romania are not very great. Heitmann (2011:508) points out that the spoken (colloquial) Moldovan is a regional variety of Romanian, which is as common in a large part of Romania (the territory of the former Principality of Moldova) as in the territories of the Republic of Moldova.

According to Gabinskij (2002:134), whilst there are differences between Moldovan and Romanian spoken in Romania regarding the pronunciation of some phonemes and some grammatical features, the most striking differences exist in the lexicon.

6. Codification of the Moldovan language

6.1. Academy of Sciences of Moldova

The *Institutul de Filologie Română "Bogdan Petriceicu-Hasdeu"*, which is incorporated into the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, is a public institute entrusted with the tasks of fundamental and applied research in the fields of linguistics, literature, folklore and terminology.

Point 2.4 of the Statutes reads: *Obiectivele principale ale Institutului sunt: 1) studierea şi descrierea limbii române în Republica Moldova* (The main objectives of the Institute are: 1) Study and description of the Romanian language in the Republic of Moldova) (Statute of the Institute of Romanian Philology, 2018:4).

The Statutes do not use the expression “Moldovan language”, they exclusively speak of “the Romanian language in the Republic of Moldova”, so for example, describing in more detail the tasks of the Institute: *studierea procesului funcţionării limbii române ca mijloc de comunicare în Republica Moldova* (study of the functioning process of the Romanian language as a means of communication in the Republic of Moldova).

6.2. Stati, Dicționar moldovenesc-românesc

The dictionary contains 19,000 entries of expressions of the language spoken in Moldova with an explanation in Romanian (Stati, 2003:12). The dictionary assumes the existence of two different languages; in the introduction it speaks of *două limbi naţionale: moldovenească şi românească* (two national languages: Moldovan and Romanian). It is clearly stated that the purpose of this dictionary is political; it is intended to underline Moldova's statehood. I quote a characteristic sentence from the introduction to the dictionary as an example of the ideological orientation of the work (Stati, 2003:6):

> Prin promovarea noţiunii de "limba moldovenească" se urmăreşte: renunţarea categorică la statalitatea românească a Republicii Moldova. Deci dezicerea, renunţarea de lingvonimul limba moldovenească înseamnă dezicere, renunţarea de Statul Moldovenesc, acceptarea statalităţii româneşti.
> [By promoting the notion of "Moldovan language" it is intended to categorically renounce the Romanian statehood of the Republic of Moldova. So, to disclaim and to renounce the Moldovan language means disclaiming and renouncing the Moldovan State and accepting the Romanian statehood.]

The dictionary was criticised and even ridiculed in the harshest terms. Bojoga (2013:40-41) quotes Ion Barbuta, director at the Institute of Linguistics of the Academy of Sciences in Moldova, who called it *o absurditate servind scopuri politice* (an absurdity serving political purposes), others called it *vocabular al limbii de bricolaj* (dictionary of do-it-yourself language) and so on.

7. Language vs. variety

Language and dialect are ambiguous terms. In literature, there are numerous opinions and approaches to answer this question.

Some scholars believe that philological criteria should be used to clarify this question. Bojoga (2013:65), for example, discussing the status of the language spoken in the Republic of Moldova, points out that linguists are able to establish objective scientific criteria which clearly define the status of a language. Heitmann (2011:513) takes a similar stance. In his opinion, the doctrine of the two languages, Moldovan and Romanian, is purely politically motivated and objectively unjustifiable. I admit that criteria such as mutual intelligibility, *Ausbausprache* and autonomy in many cases allow a clear definition of the status of a given language. But in some situations this is not possible, mainly because of political, ideological or religious reasons, as, for example, in the case of Urdu and Hindi or Serbian and Croatian.

I agree with Wardhaugh/Fuller (2015:32), who point out that the defining factor in determining whether two varieties are considered distinct languages or dialects of the same language is their socio-political identity, rather than their linguistic similarity or difference.

Kremnitz's approach is interesting (Kremnitz, 2008). According to this author, neither formal linguistics nor sociolinguistics can offer a solution to the problem. The only sub-discipline of language sciences that tries to take into account the complexity of data and contradictions is language policy. He proposes to intensify the reflections around polycentric conceptions. In Kremnitz’s words these could contribute to de-dramatising the debates and trying to maintain the communicative potential of the languages thus defined without oppressing subgroups.

In my opinion, the Moldovan case cannot be resolved by means of philological criteria. That is why I shall use for my analysis the criteria of socio-political identity and politics, in particular, language politics.

8. Bilingualism

An important factor in assessing the language spoken in Moldova is bilingualism. Officially, the expression *bilingvismil armonios* (harmonic bilingualism) was often mentioned, but according to Bojoga (2013:77), in practice, Moldovan had the role of a *cenuşăreasă* (Cinderella) and was pushed out of the public space by Russian.

Moranta (2015: 137) adds that it was an unbalanced social bilingualism, which was a general diglossia as a result of decades of russification policy, as was the case in the other non-Russian republics of the Soviet Union – each with a local national language alongside Russian. He compares the situation with the situation in the Catalan-speaking areas of Spain, where social bilingualism was glorified, but in practice had the purpose of establishing a hierarchical conception and affirming the political status quo of the language of the state. Catalan sociolinguists speak of the *bilingüisme com a mite* (bilingualism as myth) or *bilingüisme mític* (mythical bilingualism). Gabinskij (2002:138) states that in the cities (except Transnistria) Moldovan and Russian are heard approximately in a

50:50 ratio, although Moldovan is gaining in importance as an official and everyday language.

9. The official name of the language

The Declaration of Independence of 1991, speaks of “Romanian” as the state language: ... *decretarea limbii române ca limbă de stat și reintroducerea alfabetului latin* ... (declaring Romanian as the state language and reintroducing the Latin alphabet ...).

However, the Constitution of Moldova, which was adopted in 1994, states in article 13: *Limba de stat a Republicii Moldova este limba moldovenească, funcţionînd pe baza grafiei latine* (The national language of the Republic of Moldova is Moldovan, and its writing is based on the Latin alphabet).

The Official Website of the Republic of Moldova (2021), referring to the decision of the Constitutional Court of December 5th 2013, which states that the Declaration of Independence has priority over the Constitution in case of divergence, mentions that the Government supports the legislative initiative to substitute the expression “Moldovan language” by “Romanian language”: *substituirea sintagmei „limba moldovenească, funcționând pe baza grafiei latine” cu „limba română”.*

It is noteworthy to mention that this website calls the languages in which it can be accessed, RO (Romanian), EN (English) und RU (Russian). There is no mention of Moldovan. Bojoga points out that in official use it is often avoided to mention the name of the language, and other names are used. In this context, the author quotes the expressions *limba de stat* (language of the State), *limba noastră* (our language), *limba oficială* (the official language), *limba de instruire* (language of instruction), *limba neamului* (language of the people), limba strămoşească (the ancestral language) and others (Bojoga, 2013:63).

Avoiding the name of the language is a strategy that can also be found in other languages. Moranta (2015:134) points out that similar names in Spanish and Catalan were used for Catalan to disguise the name of the language, such as *llengua nostra* (our language), *lengua cooficial distinta del castellano* (co-official language other than Spanish) and *lengua autonómica* (language of the Autonomous Community).

Another example is the term *Unterrichtssprache* (language of instruction) for German introduced in 1946 in the school reports in Austria, with which the Ministers of Education Fischer and later Hurdes wanted to avoid any reference to German, perhaps also in order not to stand in the way of a possible special peace treaty with Austria after the Second World War. However, this designation was soon withdrawn (Dollinger, 2021:124).

10. Language policy

State language policy plays a special role in assessing the character of the language spoken in the Republic of Moldova. However, the objectives and concrete measures of this language policy changed over the course of history.

10.1 The tsarist period (1812–1918)

In the first stage of the tsarist period, in which 95% of the population only understood their mother tongue, which was on the level of a colloquial language of peasant illiterates (Heitmann, 2011:513), there was a neutral or functional bilingualism. The second stage was characterised by a partial diglossian bilingualism, when the Romanian language was banned in the administration. In the third stage, beginning in the second half of the 19th century, the Romanian language was finally banned in schools. In the fourth stage, by the end of the 19th century, there was already an official monolingualism: the only officially permitted language was Russian. At the beginning of the 20th century, the awakening national consciousness fought for political liberation and the defence of its own language.

10.2. Union with Romania (1918–1940)

In 1918, the area between Prut and Dniester was annexed by Romania. In the Moldovan-speaking areas of the USSR, a norm for a minority language that was different from Romanian was sought. Heitmann (2011:513-515) distinguishes different phases. In the first phase (1924–1928), linguistic separatism was still low. Since Moldovan was mainly lexically limited, it was decided to use the Romanian language as a basis for cultural work.

Soon this Romanophile tendency was exposed to attacks. From 1928 to 1932, the country distanced itself from Romania in terms of language policy. The linguist L.A. Madan tried to reconstruct the written language on the basis of the autochthonous dialect. In addition, the Cyrillic script was to be reintroduced. This effort, known as Madanism, was officially disapproved of, and there was a countermovement in the sense of Latinisation with the reintroduction of the Latin script.

But this development was thwarted by the Great Purge carried out by Stalin in 1936–1938. Both the Madanist and the Latinising-Romanian language policies were judged as bourgeois-local or Romanian-infected nationalism (Heitmann, 2011:514).

10.3. Language Policy in the Soviet Period (1940–1991)

After the creation of the MSSR, the language policy from the late-1930s MASSR was extended to the entire MSSR. Education and literacy for the peasants were delivered in Moldovan language. In addition, the language of higher education, the urban elite, and social mobility in general was Russian. Thus, a situation of strict diglossia was created with Russian serving high functions and local languages, such as Moldovan, functionally limited to the home and other informal settings (Ciscel 2006:578-579).

Throughout the 1940s, Moldovan came under the influence of Russian. Its standardisation and codification in 1939 and 1945 were the works of the philologist I. D. Cobanu (Ceban), whose presentations of grammar and the orthography of Moldovan for school lessons remained trendsetting until the end of the Stalin era. Dialect, on the basis of the Chişinău variety, entered the written language, creating a considerable distance to Romanian. This applies in particular to phonetics and vocabulary (Heitmann, 2011:514).

In the years 1950 to 1951, there was a course correction. In 1950, Stalin had denounced Marr's linguistic approach, according to which languages themselves were the products of the underlying socioeconomic structure and were therefore class-related and not national phenomena (British Encyclopaedia). At the conference organised in December 1951 by the Linguistic Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Soviet linguists stated that the Moldovan language was a Romance language whose characteristics were not the Slavic elements, but the Romance grammatical structure and lexicological fund from Latin (Bojoga (2013:36).

10.4. Assessment of Soviet language planning

Haarmann (2013:235-236) states in his article with the descriptive title "Moldovan-Rise and Fall of a Standard Language" that the standard Moldovan language is a child of the 20th century. The main focus of Soviet language planning was to create a clear linguistic distance between the Moldovan population in the Soviet state and the population in the neighbouring state of Romania. One might consider this as an interesting experiment. However, it turned out to be an artificial product, which was abandoned by parliamentary resolution in Chişinău in the autumn of 1989.

11. Identity and language awareness

Many authors refer to the results of the Study Etnobarometru published in 2004/2005 by the Institutul de Politici Publice al Fundaţiei Soros and IMAS Chişinău, according to which 86% of the interviewees stated that they were speakers of the Moldovan language (Bojoga, 2013:14).

Should we take this as evidence for the existence of an autonomous Moldovan language?

One must clarify what is meant by the term Moldovan. Gabinskij (2002:140) points out that this also means a careless, non-standard-language speech. Bojoga, who rejects the existence of an independent Moldovan language, interprets the result of the study arguing that respondents refer to the name of their local dialect (*graiul local*) and thus make a distinction between this dialect and the standard Romanian language (Bojoga, 2013:16).

Bojoga (2013:71-72) quotes Vladimir Voronin, the former communist president of Moldova, who used a very dialectally coloured language in voter speeches while in an interview with Euronews he spoke a cultivated standard Romanian.

Gabinsky (2002:135) points out that in the Republic of Moldova many speakers speak dialect or dialectally coloured language, both in terms of pronunciation and vocabulary. The author distinguishes two groups with different intentions: one group wants to avoid an overly refined language that is detached from the people, the other group does not want to use a "bourgeois" language.

12. Moldovan: Language or variety?

On the basis of the above explanations, I would now like to answer the question on the status of the language spoken in the Republic of Moldova. The main conclusion that can be drawn is that language has been used as a tool for achieving different political or ideological goals.

The MASSR tried to design a new language according to class principles. In this sense, Moldovan should be the language of the Moldovan working class, while Romanian would be the language of the class enemy spoken in the salons of the Bucharest bourgeoisie (Bojoga, 2013:17).

Bojoga (2013:35) quotes Ivan D. Ceban, who in an article published in 1945 called for more Russian words to be used because "Marxist-Leninist science regards the influence of Russian culture on Moldovan culture as a progressive phenomenon." The doctrine of the Moldovan language was also used to emphasise the statehood of the Republic of Moldova. Communist President Voronin declared in 2007 that the Moldovan language, the history of Moldova, the anthem and the coat of arms were necessary as state attributes to ensure the country's independence. Therefore, these attributes would also have to be different (Bojoga, 2013:67).

The term Greater Romania (Romanian: România Mare) refers to the borders of the Kingdom of Romania achieved after the First World War. It is also an ideological concept, which pursues the creation of a nation-state which would incorporate all Romanian speakers. The rejection of an independent Moldovan language is an instrument for justifying this idea of *România Mare*, just as the assertion of its own language is used by the advocates of Moldova's independence. Moranta (2025:135) points to the parallels between the terms *România Mare* and *Països Catalans* as a potential political and administrative entity or as a cultural community. In both cases, linguistic unitarianism is used as an instrument for achieving a political or ideological goal. Later, when the Declaration of Independence was drawn up in 1991, some saw the Romanian language as a symbol of independence (Bojoga, 2013:56).

The internal factors are easy to interpret. I here agree with the opinion of Heitmann and others that the differences between Romanian and Moldovan are very small, but I would not consider this as proof, as Heitmann and linguists do, that Moldovan is a language of its own.

The question of the name of the language is a bit more complicated, but it seems that the legal situation, in the light of the most recent decisions of the Government, is in favour of the name Romanian. This is in line with the attitude of the official institution responsible for the language, which calls the language of the Republic of Moldova Romanian. Stati’s *Dicționar moldovenesc-românesc* speaks of two different languages and clearly states that the purpose of the distinction is to preserve the Moldovan statehood. On the other hand, one should take into account the criticism regarding the scientific quality to which this dictionary is exposed.

The majority of Moldovan speakers seem to be aware of their language. Many of them use their variety in order to be distinguished from the speakers of standard Romanian for social or ideological reasons. I would not take this as evidence for the existence of an autonomous Moldovan language because it is normal code-switching which can be observed in the varieties of many other languages. The most striking feature of Moldovan is the existence of a very strict, albeit at times different language planning in the Russian and Soviet period. One could make theoretical considerations as to whether this language policy would have led to the emergence of an independent language at some point, but for the purposes of this investigation it is important that these periods belong to the past.

The advocates of a separate Moldovan language argue that in order to have an independent state one must also have or create a language oft its own, mixing the concepts of statehood with language. The linguistic and political situation in the world, for example, in the case of English, German or Dutch, shows us that this argument is not valid.

The situation of Moldovan can be summarised in the light of the above remarks as follows: The period of Soviet language planning is over, the official authorities of the Republic of Moldova assume that the national language is Romanian, with the proviso that among the speakers there is a strong awareness of their language. So, the answer to the question regarding the status of Moldovan is that it is not a language of its own.

13. Pluricentricity

For reasons of space, I cannot discuss in detail all the aspects of pluricentricity. There is no doubt that Romanian is a pluricentric language, because according to the definition, at least one of seven criteria must be met to constitute a pluricentric language. I shall confine myself to the first two criteria established by Clyne and Muhr (Muhr 2012: 30):

Criterium 1. Occurrence: A certain language occurs in at least 2 nations that function as 'interacting centres': Romanian occurs in Romania and in the Republic of Moldova. In the context of this article, I cannot discuss whether Istro-Romanian, Aromunian and Megleno-Romanian should also be considered varieties of Romanian.

Criterium 2. Linguistic distance (Abstand): The variety must have enough linguistic (and/or pragmatic) characteristics that distinguish it from others and by that can serve as a symbol for expressing identity and social uniqueness. According to what I said in chapter 11, this is clearly the case. Due to limited space I will stop here and will not discuss other aspects, such as stages of pluricentricity, dominance or non-dominance etc.

14. Conclusion

The language spoken in the Republic of Moldova presents some specific features compared with the standard Romanian language. These specific features are due to the historical development of the country and, in particular, to the long years Moldova was part of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, which implemented their language policy trying to strengthen the role of Russian and the "non-bourgeois character" of the language. Also, the existing bilingualism plays a role. With the independence of the Republic of Moldova in 1991, however, this language policy came to an end.

The name of the language used by the Moldovan Government and the attitude of the official institution responsible for the language in the country, which also calls the language of the state Romanian, are strong arguments for not considering Moldovan as a language of its own.

The speakers of Moldovan show a strong awareness of their language. Therefore, the sociolinguistic situation suggests speaking of Moldovan as a variety of the pluricentric Romanian language.

The advocates of an independent Moldovan language use arguments which are based on the notion that an own language is necessary to define statehood. Such arguments are not valid.

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Pluricentric languages in times of political turbulence: the case of Belarusian Russian

Abstract

This paper focuses on the functioning of Belarusian Russian in the second half of 2020-21 against the background of the presidential elections in Belarus. As a prominent historical event, the elections of 2020-21 had a major impact on the sociolinguistic situation in Belarus. They caused the intensification of the creative capacity of Belarusian Russian, which led to the creation of new lexical items and the revival of some old ones to name the current concepts. A lack of dialogue between the opposing sides has caused the usage of the same words with different meanings and facilitated the formation of their pragmatic ambivalence. The innovations arise not only in Russian, but also in the Belarusian-Russian language continuum, which manifests itself in the new contact-induced formations in Belarusian Russian. And though the language of the protests which followed the elections was primarily Belarusian Russian, the symbolic role of the Belarusian language in the protest movement increases.

1. Introduction – Current political situation in Belarus

On August 9, 2020, the presidential elections took place in Belarus. Alexander Lukashenko has been the president of Belarus since July 20, 1994. The most powerful opposition candidates (including Viktor Babariko[1] and Sergei Tikhanovsky who were detained, and Valery Tsepkalo), were not allowed to participate in the elections. As a result, the three strongest

[1] Belarus has two official languages; therefore, the names of Belarusians can be transcribed both from Belarusian and from Russian. As this paper deals with the Russian language, names are transcribed from Russian.

campaign headquarters joined with Svetlana Tikhanovskaya as the main opposition candidate.

According to the official data, Alexander Lukashenko won the elections with 80.10 % of the votes, Svetlana Tikhanovskaya got 10.12 %, and the three remaining candidates got 1.14-1.67 %. The presidential elections were followed by massive, unprecedented protests contesting the election outcomes, as well as a brutal crackdown on protesters.

Over time, the protest suppression became more intense, and many activists were jailed or had to leave the country, while the protest movement in Belarus shifted mostly to partisan strategies. At the beginning of December 2021, more than 900 people were recognised as political prisoners[2], and this number is constantly growing.

At the same time, the protests are not limited by Belarusian borders. Svetlana Tikhanovskaya has regular meetings with the heads of different European states. The political activity also involves diasporas, including people who had to leave Belarus in 2020-21 for political reasons.

The aim of this work is to reveal sociolinguistic and structural (lexical) characteristics of Belarusian Russian in the context of the political crisis of 2020-21. This period is particularly interesting for sociolinguistic studies because, as we assume, it has intensified the tendencies in different spheres of social life. The future of Belarus, including its languages, vastly depends on the outcome of the current events.

The political crisis in Belarus that started in the second half of 2020 is widely discussed in world media, but has rarely become the subject of scientific research. Apart from security matters, we should take into account the fact that sociopolitical processes are actively developing, which hampers proper interpretation and drawing conclusions from the data.

In the linguistic literature, protest discourse has been described much more comprehensively than a pro-governmental one. The collection of papers "Kommunikacija v èpoxu protestov" (2021) 'Communication in times of protests' was released, and there are also several articles on protests, e.g. Kiklevič/Potexina (2021) and Lukašanec (in press). Pro-governmental discourse is covered less extensively. A few exceptions include a short article by Inga Voyush (2020) on the topic of Belarusian propaganda, as well as discussions of

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[2] https://prisoners.spring96.org/en#list [acc. 12.12.2021]

the ideological conflict in songs in the work of Marina Scharlaj (2021). Our work focuses on the interaction of the pro-governmental and protest discourses.

The data for the study included texts and videos from electronic media sources. We analysed texts written by the political leaders (first of all, Alexander Lukashenko and Svetlana Tikhanovskaya), journalists, and ordinary Belarusians. The material was also collected from the corpus of picket signs (both protest and pro-governmental ones), which is now under development.

2. Sociolinguistic characteristics of Belarusian Russian during the 2020-21 protests

Historically, Belarus was a multilingual country where the functioning of languages and their varieties changed according to sociopolitical circumstances. Today, Belarus has two official languages, with Russian (its Belarusian variety) being the main means of communication. According to the 2019 Census, 71 % of native Belarusians use Russian in their everyday communication[3]. The complexity of the language situation in Belarus lies in the close kinship of the contact languages – Russian and Belarusian. This results in the Belarusian-Russian language continuum that includes several contact-induced varieties: the Russian language with some traces of relatively strong Belarusian influence, Belarusian-Russian mixed speech, and the Belarusian language influenced by Russian in varying degrees (Goritskaya 2019). The particularities of Belarusian Russian are not only induced by language contacts, but are also formed by the internal resources of the Russian language.

Political crisis events are important for the theory of pluricentric languages, because language is defined as pluricentric mainly on the basis of the sociolinguistic (political) criterion, i.e. the usage of language (firstly, as an official one) in more than one country (Muhr 2012, etc.). At the same time, it is obvious that the functioning of a language within the borders of sovereign countries will inevitably lead to the development of language particularities, which demonstrates the link between structural and sociolinguistic criteria of pluricentric language definition.

For example, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of sovereign states, including Belarus, have changed the status of the Russian

[3] https://www.belstat.gov.by/upload/iblock/471/471b4693ab545e3c40d206338ff4ec9e.pdf [acc. 12.12.2021]

language. Michael Clyne (1992: 3) defined it as monocentric, while nowadays the idea of Russian being a pluricentric language is articulated more and more often (see the collective monographs "The Soft Power" (2019) and "The Russian language outside Russia" (2020), which include articles on the Russian language in Belarus).

Let us consider the influence of the political factor on the functioning of the Belarusian Russian. The structural (phonetical, lexical and grammatical) specificity of the Russian language in Belarus dates back to the Soviet times, or even earlier, see the collective monograph "The Russian language in Belarus" (1985). After retaining sovereignty, Belarus has also developed new features of Belarusian Russian. The conditions of life in a sovereign state inevitably led to the formation of respective cultural phenomena that needed to be named, such as *belka* 'Belarusian ruble' or *palatka* from *Palata predstavitelej* 'the lower chamber of the Belarusian Parliament'. There is an ongoing development of a unique Belarusian cultural and communicative space. Though the Belarusian people watch Russian TV, read Russian newspapers and magazines, etc., the role of local media is crucial, and with the spread of the internet, there are more and more possibilities to choose the local content. However, recently, a lot of Belarusian media has been blocked, and according to the number of jailed journalists, Belarus ranks 5th in the world[4].

We assume that the political factor (the formation of a sovereign state) primarily has an influence not on the structural, but on the sociolinguistic aspect of the functioning of the pluricentric languages; in particular, on the social meaning of the language variants. In Soviet times, Russian was considered the main language that united all Soviet people, and in the academic mainstream the dominating idea was that the language policy in relation to the Belarusian national variety (*naciolekt* 'natiolect', in the terminology of Anatolij Giruckij and Arnol'd Mixnevič), "is about making every organised scientific, methodological, and other effort to bring the Belarusian national variety closer to the Russian standard language which, in fact, is the task of achieving the full, harmonic, equal, pure (autonomous, coordinative) Belarusian-Russian bilingualism" (Mixnevič/Giruckij 1982:79).

Today, both the academic community and the society in general, treat Belarusian Russian more diversely – there are both monocentric and pluricentric approaches to Russian (Goritskaya 2018). The spread of the

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4 https://cpj.org/reports/2021/12/number-of-journalists-behind-bars-reaches-global-high [acc. 12.12.2021]

pluricentric view on the Russian language is politically determined: the national variety of the language is one of the symbols of Belarus as a sovereign country. Yet, the particularities of the Belarusian language situation are that the symbolic function here (as a marker of national identity) is assigned to the Belarusian language (Mečkovskaja 2003: 124), which is one of the factors that slows down the divergence of the Belarusian and Russian varieties of the Russian language.

The sovereignty of Belarus seems to be the value that today unites both the supporters and the opponents of the current authorities[5]. At the same time, the accusations of the prospective "surrender of sovereignty" by the opponents come from both sides.

> Alexander Lukashenko: *Čto kasaetsja togo, čto Belarus' vojdet v sostav SŠA, Velikobritanii ili Rossii, – èto absoljutnaja glupost'. Nedavno ja na ètot vopros tože otvečal. My s Putinym, i rukovodstvo Rossii i Belarusi v celom, dostatočno umny, čtoby v ramkax dvux nezavisimyx, suverennyx gosudarstv sozdat' takoj sojuz, kotoryj budet ešče sil'nee unitarnogo obrazovanija, Takoj vopros [o potere nezavisimosti i vxoždenii v sostav Rossii] v povestke dnja ne stoit voobšče. Èto vydumka kollektivnogo Zapada, kak u nas govorjat. I nikakix cen zdes' net i byt' ne možet. Suverenitet i nezavisimost' ljuboj strany ne pokupaetsja i ne prodaetsja*[6]. –
> [To say that Belarus would become part of the United States, Britain or Russia is an absolute fallacy. I answered this question recently. Putin and I, and the entire leadership of Russia and Belarus, are intelligent enough to create a union of two independent states that would be even stronger than either of these separate entities. This issue isn't on the agenda at all. This is a product of collective Western imagination, as we say here, and I say this to you sincerely. There are no prices. The sovereignty and independence of any country is not for sale.]
> Svetlana Tikhanovskaya: *U nas i tak dve suverennye strany. I Sojuznoe gosudarstvo ne predpolagaet sdaču suvereniteta. I suverenitet, i nezavisimost' – dlja Belarusi èto vysšaja cennost'. I nikto ne sobiraetsja eju torgovat'sja. Integracija uže nastol'ko gluboka meždu našimi dvumja stranami, i*

5 The sociological study led by political scientist Andrey Kazakevich and sociologist Andrey Vardomatsky before the 2020 elections has shown that only 24.9 % of the respondents consider sovereignty a value worth sacrificing citizens' standard of living for. 51.6 % of the respondents spoke in favor of preserving the standard of living even at the expense of a partial relinquishment of the sovereignty. The rest of the respondents have not given a definitive answer to this question. We have not found the scientific paper presenting the results of this survey; therefore, we rely on the commentary given by the project leaders to the media: https://nashaniva.com/?c=ar&i=255834&lang=ru/.

6 https://president.gov.by/ru/events/intervyu-telekompanii-cnn [acc. 12.12.2021]

> *èkonomičeskaja v častnosti, čto nam s ètim žit'*[7].
> [We already have two sovereign countries and the Common State is not about surrendering sovereignty. Sovereignty and independence are important values for Belarus and no one is going to bargain this. Integration is so deep between our two countries, and, we will first of all have to live with it in the economic sphere.]

As for the role of Russian in the life of the Belarusian society and the direction of the language policy, even the opposing leaders have rather similar opinions on this.

Traditionally, while using Russian, Alexander Lukashenko, speaks in favour of bilingualism (though the equality of Belarusian and Russian declared in Belarus leads to the displacement of Belarusian by Russian) and the position has not changed in times of crisis. Here is a fragment of his speech at the All-Belarusian National Assembly, February 11, 2021:

> *U nas dva rodnyx jazyka. Belorusskij i russkij. I tot, kto segodnja otkazyvaetsja ot ètogo velikogo nasledstva, kak govoril velikij Lenin: «Očen' ser'ezno riskuet». Poterjat' jazyk možno. Velikij russkij jazyk, gde mnogo našej belorusskoj duši. Jazyk — èto postojanno razvivajuščajasja materija. Esli my èto poterjaem, my nikogda bol'še èto ne vernem. Poètomu belorusskij i naš russkij jazyk — oni budut vsegda dostojaniem našej nacii, i my ne budem travit' ljudej... I davit', čtoby oni ne razgovarivali na russkom jazyke*[8].
> [We have two native languages. Belarusian and Russian. And those who deny this great inheritance, as the great Lenin said, "risk a lot". You can lose a language. The great Russian language with a large part of our Belarusian soul. Language is constantly changing. If we lose it, we will never get it back again. That is why the Belarusian and our Russian language – they will always be national treasures, and we will not poison people... or insist that people do not speak Russian.]

Generally, Lukashenko's role in the development of the Belarusian variety of Russian is contradictory. On the one hand, Lukashenko created conditions for the development of the Belarusian variety of Russian. In fact, it was done at the expense of scaling down the Belarusisation policy in the first half of the 1990s. This language policy was largely caused due to the fact that in the 1990s, especially in the early years of Lukashenko's governance, the political forces in Belarus were opposed to one another's languages, and

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[7] https://echo.msk.ru/programs/tuz/2925800-echo [acc. 12.12.2021]

[8] https://president.gov.by/ru/events/shestoe-vsebelorusskoe-narodnoe-sobranie [acc. 12.12.2021]

Belarusian was perceived as the language of opposition. Moreover, support of Russian is in line with the policy aimed at the preservation of the Soviet heritage (it was not a coincidence that the official status of Russian was announced at the same Referendum of 1995 where the Soviet symbols were reinstated).

On the other hand, Lukashenko himself speaks Russian which is extensively influenced by Belarusian. As it is difficult to draw the clear boundaries within the Belarusian-Russian language continuum, Lukashenko's speech is sometimes perceived as not the Belarusian variety of Russian, but as Belarusian-Russian mixed speech that is stigmatised (Hentschel 2017). Therefore, Russian speech largely influenced by Belarusian, as well as Belarusian-Russian mixed speech, is associated with Lukashenko and his circles, which is not always positively coloured.

Svetlana Tikhanovskaya shares a similar approach to the language policy. Here is a fragment from her interview with Russian radio station "Echo of Moscow" on October 26, 2021:

> *Na samom dele, mnogo sporov v Belarusi, potomu čto za stol'ko let u nas sejčas dva jazyka gosudarstvennyx: rossijkij [russkij] i belorusskij. I, k sožaleniju, belorusskie jazyk i kul'tura kak-to otodvigalis' na zadnij plan. Konečno, my kak gosudarstvo, kak strana so svoim jazykom, so svoej kul'turoj vynuždeny budem vozroždat' belorusskij jazyk. No èto ne značit, čto my budem protiv russkogo jazyka. U nas bol'šaja čast' naselenija govorit na russkom jazyke. I èto pravo ljudej. Budet odin gosudarstvennyj jazyk libo ne budet – èto uže budet rešat'sja posle vyborov novym prezidentom s učastiem belorusskix ljudej. Budut oprosy kakie-to. Ja ne znaju, kak èto budet organizovano. No ničego protiv russkogo jazyka, Rossii belorusy ne imejut*[9]*.–*
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> [In reality, the reason for many arguments in Belarus is that for so many years we have had two official languages: Russian and Belarusian. And unfortunately, the Belarusian language and culture have been set aside to some extent. Of course, we as a nation, as a country with its own language and its own culture will have to revive the Belarusian language. But it doesn't mean that we will be against Russian. The majority of our people speak Russian, and they have the right to do so. Either we will or will not have one official language – the new president will make this decision after the elections, together with the Belarusian people. Maybe there will be some surveys. I don't know about the form. But Belarusians have nothing against the Russian language or Russia itself.]

[9] https://echo.msk.ru/programs/tuz/2925800-echo [acc. 12.12.2021].

It is worth mentioning that among the opponents, Svetlana Tikhanovskaya is attributed with another view of the language policy, if one compares it with this fragment from the speech by Lukashenko:

> *...perevod vospitatel'noj raboty v armii isključitel'no na belorusskij jazyk. Belorusskij jazyk dolžen byt' odnoznačno vveden i poval'no, načinaja s detskogo sada i zakančivaja nami. Bez kommentariev*[10]*. –*
> [... education in armed forces should only be carried out in Belarusian. The Belarusian language should be introduced everywhere, from kindergarten to us [governmental authorities]. No comments.]

The usage of Russian as the main language of the election campaign by the opposition and protest movement is the result of a gradual change in language attitudes in Belarusian society. Over time, the Belarusian language became more politically neutral. It happened naturally as a result of socio-political transformations. As a political force, nationally oriented opposition became much weaker in comparison to the 1990s, especially in the first half of the decade, which has been matched by the changes of language attitudes in Belarusian society. The young respondents showed that "proficiency in Belarusian is not clearly correlated with the educational level of the respondents, and most importantly, with the pro-western (EU) or pro-eastern (Russia) political orientation" (Hentschel et al. 2016: 74). Nevertheless, a part of the pro-opposition Belarusian society criticised Tikhanovskaya and her team for insufficient attention to the national question and the Belarusian language in general, which demonstrates the ideological heterogeneity of the protest movement.

Pro-governmental discourse is mainly Russian-speaking (newspapers, magazines, Telegram-channels and other media use the same language as Alexander Lukashenko); Belarusian protests are otherwise, multilingual. The multilingualism of the protests is connected not only with the specificity of the sociolinguistic situation in Belarus, but also with its foreign policy orientation and active participation of diasporas in protest activities (see Warditz/Goritskaya 2021 for details). Therefore, the Belarusian variety of the Russian language cannot be considered separately, other components of the sociolinguistic situation (firstly, the Belarusian language and Belarusian-Russian mixed speech) should also be taken into account.

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10 https://president.gov.by/ru/events/shestoe-vsebelorusskoe-narodnoe-sobranie/. This statement does not have any proof and is based on the texts that Tikhanovskaya and the members of her team had no relation to, see more in the article of Warditz/Goritskaya (2021, p. 38–39).

Our research shows that current mass protests in Belarus are primarily Russian-speaking, which in particular is reflected in the language of picket signs in times of the largest protest events (994 signs in Russian, 197 in Belarusian, 83 in English, 17 in Belarusian-Russian mixed speech; other languages are represented by fewer picket signs). The same results, though with less data, were acquired by Andrej Zinkevič and Marija Katažina Prenner (2021: 85). According to our observations, over time the percentage of picket signs in foreign languages increases. As with the termination of protest marches in Belarus, there are also fewer picket signs created within the country, however the number of picket signs outside the country increases.

At the same time, Belarusian takes on a symbolic function, as it – along with the white-red-white flag – not only becomes the marker of the Belarusian nation, but also one of the protest symbols.

3. Lexical features of Belarusian Russian in the context of political crisis

Lexical innovations (including nonce words and multi-word expressions) reflect the time of political turbulence. According to the data of Elena Lukašanec (in print), the number of neologisms that appeared in the Belarusian variety of Russian in connection with the political events of 2020, is estimated at around 130 words and word combinations. The elections of 2020 became a prominent event in Belarusian history, which intensified the creative capacity of the language (see also Dubasova 2021, Kiklevič/Potexina 2021, Zinkevič/Prenner 2021) and enriched the Belarusian Russian language leading to the creation of new words and the revival of some old ones to name the current concepts.

The main semantic groups of such words and expressions include names for: protesters (*protestun, bastun, borcun, zmagar*), Alexander Lukashenko (*tarakan, peresident*) or his supporters (*jabat'ka/jabac'ka, trexprocentnik*), security forces trying to suppress the protests (*slaboviki, nasiloviki, krasaucy/krysavcy, olivki, masliny, tixari, kosmonavty*), elements of the protest movement (*zmagaryč* 'a white-red-white dragon', *lenty* 'white-red-white ribbons', *bčb* 'white-red-white flag'), etc.

Not only is Russian the source of innovations in times of political crisis, but Belarusian Russian is also enhanced due to some new contact-induced phenomena that originate from the Belarusian-Russian language continuum. An example of a hybrid unit can be *žyvemobil'*, the name of a white-red car, derived from the Belarusian motto *Žyve Belarus'* 'Long live Belarus, – one of the protest symbols.

Elena Lukašanec (in print) notes that among neologisms emerging in Russian in 2020-21, there are few borrowings from Belarusian. However, according to our observations, political texts of this period written in Russian contain lots of Belarusian words and word combinations (not considered neologisms) that mark important phenomena. Some examples from the speeches of protest movement representatives:

> Natalya Dulina: *Letom 2020 goda slučilos' neverojatnoe. Belorus, vskočiv s taburetki, zajavil: "**tak ne trèba!**" i stal dejstvovat'. Prisuščee nam "**spačuvanne**" – skromnoe, nepokaznoe – neožidanno dlja nas samix vytesnjaet mnogoletnjuju "**abyjakavasc'**", i my vdrug načinaem gordit'sja drug drugom i ispytyvat' to, čto v našem jazyke oboznačaetsja drugim slovom: "**hodnasc'**". Takim že ëmkim i mnogogrannym. I takim že trudnoobjasnimym*[11] –
> [In the summer of 2020 the unbelievable happened. A Belarusian jumped from the stool and stated: "*tak ne trèba!*" 'we don't need this'. And it all started. Our deep-seated *spačuvanne* 'compassion', so modest and humble, unexpectedly for all of us pushes the long-standing *abyjakavasc'* 'indifference' and we suddenly start to be proud of each other and to feel something that is called *hodnasc'*, 'dignity' in Belarusian. This word is also concise and multidimensional and is also difficult to explain.]
> Vadim Prokopiev: *Est' krasivoe belarusskoe slovo "**pagarda**", kotoromu očen' složno najti četkoe opredelenie v russkom jazyke. Èto takaja smes' krajnego prezrenija, čuvstva brezglivosti i ottorženija... Čto my delaem – ne žmem ruku pri vstreče. Èto psixologičeski ne tak prosto, kak kažetsja na pervyj vzgljad... Spokojno. **Z pagardaj.** Čtoby ix pronjalo. Oni nerukopožatnye. Oni sami sebja opustili. Teper' rukopožatie nužno zaslužit', dlja načala xotja by otmyt' ruki ot krovi*[12] –
> [There is a beautiful Belarusian word, *pagarda* which is difficult to define precisely in Russian. It is a mixture of the extreme contempt, disgust, and rejection... What we do - we do not shake hands when we meet. It is not as easy as it may seem... Calmly. *With pagarda*. For them to feel it. They are not to shake hands. They have brought themselves down. Now they should earn a handshake, at least to wash blood off their hands first.].

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[11] https://www.dw.com/ru/o-neveragodnyh-belorusah-i-chelovecheskom-vybore/a-57879530 [acc. 12.12.2021]

[12] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNyhUp15EfM [acc. 12.12.2021].

We suppose that the innovations that reflect the political crisis are formed in the bilingual Belarusian communicative space, not in the isolated systems of the Belarusian or Russian languages.

Some new words are rarely used and will hardly stay in Belarusian Russian. For example, the names of unique objects, such as the above mentioned *žyvemobil'* or *evaljucija* as a synonym of *revolution* – from the name of "Eve", the painting of Chaïm Soutine, which became the symbol of peaceful protest. The word was used in the summer of 2020 but is almost forgotten now.

Other words and multi-word expressions start to be used more widely. For example, this includes the word *jabat'ka/jabac'ka* – the name of Lukashenko's supporters. This word came from the motto and hashtag *Ja/My bat'ka* 'I/we are father', which sounds similar to a Russian swear word. This word is gaining new derivational links: *jabat'kovskij* 'adjective from *jabat'ka*', *jabating* 'meeting of Lukashenko's supporters', etc.

The times of political turbulence led to changes in the semantics and pragmatics of language units. For example, in the above-mentioned article by Lukašanec (in print), among the neologisms there is an expression *belorus belorusu belorus.* According to our observations, this phrase existed earlier (1), however, recently it has been revived and redefined (2), changing its negative connotations to positive ones. This indicates changes in public conscience.

> *(1) Ne zrja pojavilos' «v ètix vašix Internetax» rasxožee grustnoe slovosočetanie: belorus belorusu belorus. Vidimo, rešiv, čto nadejat'sja stoit tol'ko na sebja, mnogie ljudi perestali obraščat' vnimanie na drugix, sčitat'sja xotja by minimal'no s ix interesami, uvažat' bližnego <...> No vopros ostaetsja: daleko li my ujdem v ètoj vseobščej atmosfere total'nogo ègoizma i ègocentrizma, neverija v drugix i nedoverija, zloby na ves' mir i zavisti?..*[13] –
> [The common sad expression *belorus belorusu belorus* has appeared "in these your internets" for good reason. A lot of people have probably decided that they can only count on themselves, and as a result, stopped paying attention to others, they do not reckon with their interests, do not respect the close ones <...> But the question remains: how far will we go in this general atmosphere of total egoism and egocentrism, lack of confidence in others and mistrust, anger at the whole world, and envy?].

> *(2) Vyraženie "belorus belorusu belorus" za poslednij god priobrelo soveršenno*

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[13] https://volkovysknews.by/sotsium/18894-ubej-v-sebe-babu-yagu-ili-pochemu-belorus-belorusu-belorus/volkovysknews.by/sotsium/18894-ubej-v-sebe-babu-yagu-ili-pochemu-belorus-belorusu-belorus [acc. 12.12.2021]

novoe značenie. Spasibo vsem, kto pomog i prodolžaet pomogat' v ètoj situacii, kto podderživaet i ne daet svalit'sja v otčajanie i sožalenija[14]. –
[The expression "belorus belorusu belorus" has gained a completely new meaning over the last year, thanks to everyone who has helped and is still helping in this situation, to those who provide support and do not fall into despair and regret].

The mass character of the protests influenced the sphere of word usage. Due to the politicisation of the society, words and word meanings that were previously used by a narrower circle, for example, *bčb* 'white-red-white flag' or *xapun* 'mass detention', are now used more broadly, therefore the same word may be perceived as a neologism or as a word that existed in the language earlier (this issue is discussed in Lukašanec (in print)). The words that date back to much earlier events are also actualised. In particular, the word *karateli* which was associated with World War II and denoted the participants of Hitler's Death Squads[15] is now used to name the members of security forces.

4. Reflection of political confrontation in the pragmatics of words

Reflection (sometimes ironic) of actual events makes up an important part of the protest discourse. An example of this is a Krasnaja zelen' project[16] – a satirical duo of a Belarusian opera singer Margarita Levčuk and blogger Andrej Pauk, who actively use Russian (its Belarusian variety) and Belarusian, as well as Belarusian-Russian mixed speech which becomes a marker of the current government, not only Lukashenko. It is interesting, as stigmatisation of Belarusian-Russian speech was linked to its association with people of lower social strata (primarily, village residents). However, over time, the new ruling elites formed, which also led to changes in the associative background of the mixed speech.

As our work focuses on establishing links between the pro-governmental and protest discourses, we will now consider the role of intertextual connections in the formation of words and multi-word expressions that are important for the current political situation. Intertextual connections play a

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[14] https://euroradio.fm/ru/zhurnalistka-tatyana-korovenkova-pokinula-belarus [acc. 12.12.2021]

[15] In general, the topic of World War II drew much attention in Belarus during 2020-21. It is interesting that some words are used by the opposing sides with different meanings. F.ex., Lukašanec (in print) shows that in the pro-governmental discourse the word *fašizm* usually defines the Wehrmacht soldiers, and the word *nacizm* is used for a negative evaluation of the ideology of the protest movement. In the protest discourse, the word *fašizm* (and the contaminant *lukašizm*) is used to name the Lukashenko's socio-political system, and the word *fašist* denotes the security forces that suppress the protests.

[16] https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtgLk7ekvfcVU0zDotag06PLaIX3UUqpq/ [acc. 12.12.2021]

significant role in the protest communication, see Dubasova (2021: 136-139), Kiklevič/Potexina (2021: 291-294) and Zinkevič/Prenner (2021: 91-98). With the lack of communication between different political forces, representatives of the protest movement address their opponents in the texts of picket signs, songs, etc. In these circumstances, the intertextual connections are essential. According to Zinkevič and Prenner (2021: 99), about 42.64 % of slogans were based on the citations of Alexander Lukashenko and other pro-government politicians.

A specific speech genre of an intertextual nature - ironic autonecrologue - was formed. It arose in the spring of 2020, as a reaction to Lukashenko's comments about those who passed away because of Corona, where the deceased were blamed for their own deaths (Norman 2021). From a sociolinguistic point of view, these texts also deserve attention because they contain contact-induced phenomena, in particular, mixed speech also used as an allusion to Lukashenko's speech.

Intertextual connections are also important to interpret the pragmatics of some words. Consider, for example, the usage of diminutives with derogatory semantics (*narodec* 'little nation', *buržujčiki* 'little bourgeois', *kučka protestujuščix* 'a little bunch of protesters', etc.). Such items appear in the speeches of Alexander Lukashenko to express negative attitudes towards the opposition and protests, and to downplay their importance, after which they are used (also ironically) in the protest discourse. Other negatively-coloured words function in the same way (*protestun* 'protester', *ovca* 'sheep', *bydlo* 'cattle' (about people), etc.). The word *jabat'ka/jabac'ka*, one of the most famous neologisms of the historical period under discussion, is used both by those who oppose and by those who support Lukashenko. It is apparent therefore that there is a difference in pragmatics of the word *jabat'ka/jabac'ka* in the speech of people with different political orientations (see Vasilenko 2021: 20, Kiklevič/Potexina 2021: 290-291). Such pragmatic ambivalence is quite natural in the context of society polarisation. In the Belarusian pro-governmental propaganda, the marker *tak nazyvaemyj* 'the so-called' is often used to show the change in pragmatics from a positive to a negative one.

The word *neverojatnye* 'the unbelievable' also demonstrates the ambivalent pragmatics, but in this case the nominative unit initially appeared in the speech of representatives of the democratic forces. First, it was used by Maria Kolesnikova and the participants of the protest movement in relation to Belarusians and was positively coloured. Later, the word also got some negative colouring – not only in the speech of Lukashenko's supporters, but also in the usage of those who got disappointed with the peaceful protest because of its inefficiency.

As a result, we can see a close link between the pro-governmental and protest discourse, where the pragmatically marked allusions become a marker of ideological confrontation. Quite revealing is that the speech of Alexander Lukashenko is still largely a source for allusions, including the ones in the protest discourse. In this regard, it is logical that some representatives of the protest movement have spoken against citations of Lukashenko's speeches and the discussion of the pro-governmental news agenda in general.

5. Conclusion

Prominent historical events led to the intensification of ongoing linguistic processes and shaped some new trends. The presidential elections of 2020 have become an important point in the formation of the sociolinguistic situation in Belarus. It is interesting that in their declarations, Alexander Lukashenko and Svetlana Tikhanovskaya generally have the same views on the sovereignty of the country and the language policy, which, however, does not prevent the opposing sides from accusing each other of pursuing the goals confronting the declared ones. The pro-governmental discourse is based mostly on the usage of Russian (its Belarusian variety); and although the language of the protests which followed the elections is primarily Belarusian Russian, the symbolic role of the Belarusian language in the protest movement increases.

Belarusian Russian has its specific features at all linguistic levels, moreover, there is an ongoing separation of the variety from a dominant (Russian) one, and a continuous growth of metalinguistic awareness of its speakers. However, the importance of the Belarusian variety of Russian for identity is constrained by the symbolic function of the Belarusian language.

The events of the second half of 2020-21 caused the intensification of the creative capacity of Belarusian Russian, which is reflected in the new lexical items and the actualisation of some old ones used to name the current concepts. However, not all new items arising at the time of the protests may be actively used in the future. It is interesting that the innovations arise in the Belarusian-Russian language continuum, not only in the Russian language which manifests itself in the new contact-induced formations in Belarusian Russian.

In Belarusian society today, there is no real dialogue aimed to solve the crisis between the political opponents. The analysed data shows that the opposing sides use the same words, but often with a different meaning. Different forms of protest movement led to an increased importance of intertextual connections and facilitated the formation of pragmatic ambivalence of the words that reflect the political confrontation.

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Problematic approaches towards the Non-dominant Languages and Language Varieties in India

Abstract

India has a long history of co-existence of multiple languages, ethnicities, cultures and religions, all growing alongside one another. The diversities help to strengthen the multilingual and multicultural character of India as a nation. However, due to some problematic approaches prevalent in various parts of the society, the survival and sustenance of the non-dominant languages and language varieties becomes a challenge. Even for the speakers of Bengali – one of the scheduled languages of India having a speaker strength of more than 95 million speakers – this pressure is seen to be exerted through various activities. This paper attempts to study some of the challenges faced by the non-dominant languages and language varieties in India. It will particularly focus on the complex nature of language grouping in India, the monolingual approach of language policies in the state and in educational institutions, and problems of parochialism in some cases of language activism.

1. Grouping and labelling of language varieties

The notions of ‘language’ and ‘language variety’, convenient as they may sound, are rather difficult to define in purely linguistic or even sociolinguistic terms (cf., Haugen, 1966; Hudson, 1996; Chambers and Trudgill, 2004). Commonly recognised factors such as prestige, mutual intelligibility, political boundaries, etc., are often inadequate for distinguishing between a language and a language variety. The problems of classifying languages and grouping language varieties under them are particularly relevant in the multilingual context of India, with 121 recognised and many more unrecognized languages (Census 2011). India’s cultural and linguistic diversity is well captured in the common saying -- *kos-kos par badle paani, chaar kos par baani* (literally: ‘the water changes every two miles, the language changes every eight miles'). If one travels by road from one point of the country to the other, there are no noticeable linguistic differences that distinguish one area from the adjacent ones. While there appears to be a seamless transition between the different language varieties spoken in adjacent geographical areas, the difficulties in comprehension become greater with the increase in geographical distance. With heightened differences, the language varieties lying on the extreme points of a scale end up being mutually unintelligible. A clear boundary between languages in objective terms, already a difficult task, is more complex in the context of India with its vibrant diversity.

The Linguistic Survey of India conducted between 1894-1903, led by Sir George Abraham Grierson, reported 179 languages and 544 dialects spoken in India. The People's Linguistic Survey of India (2010-2012) reported the existence of 780 languages (without making a distinction between language and dialect). The Ethnologue classified 447 languages in India (Jolad and Agarwal, 2021). The categorisation of different language varieties has been a matter of controversy for a long time (cf., Beams, 1872: 96; Grierson, 1883-87, 1903; Chatterji, 1970; Cardona, 1974; Dass, 1976; Jeffers, 1976; Tiwari, 2001).

The Eighth Schedule of the Indian constitution lists twenty-two languages, without mentioning anything about their exact status. However, these languages enjoy some official status and prestige as the 'scheduled languages' of India. The 'non-scheduled languages' in the Indian census consist of ninety-nine languages. Other than these, the category – "Total of other languages" – includes all other languages and mother tongues that have less than 10,000 speakers. Each of the twenty-two scheduled languages have 'mother tongues' grouped under them in the Indian census. These 'mother tongues' are not considered separate languages but varieties of the language under which they are grouped. The largest of such groups with fifty-six mother tongues are classified under Hindi, followed by Odia which consists of more than eight mother tongues (for further discussion on this issue see Ghosh, 2012, p. 439). Similarly, the non-scheduled languages also have some 'mother tongues' grouped under them. The speakers' strengths of the languages that are grouped under the scheduled and non-scheduled languages category are varied. For instance, Maithili, a language listed under eighth schedule since 2003 (previously it was a mother tongue under Hindi), has a speakers' strength of 13.5 million, whereas Bhojpuri and Rajasthani, having a speakers' strength of 50 million and 20 million respectively, are grouped as mother tongues under Hindi. In addition, Sanskrit, which is also a scheduled language has a speakers' strength of 24,821. These categorisation and labelling practices demonstrate how the decision to group a dialect under a particular language is more social and political rather than linguistic (Spolsky, 1998).

The Indian constitution has another label of – 'official languages' – which allots a special status to Hindi and English. Additionally, there are various other official and additional official languages identified for the different Indian states, which include languages from both scheduled and non-scheduled categories. While on one hand, the speakers of such languages are given recognition, their functionality is often undefined and restricted. The number and selection of such languages are also often variable and politically determined. In West Bengal, for example, the West Bengal Official Language Act, 1961 laid out the languages to be used for official purposes of the state. Bengali and English were the two official languages of the state at that time. Later at different points in time, other official languages were added with various amendments to this Act. At present the number of additional official languages in Bengal stands at eleven, namely, *Nepali, Urdu, Hindi, Odia, Santali, Punjabi, Kamtapuri, Rajbanshi, Kurmali, Kurukh* and *Telugu*.

Nepali, in addition to Bengali, was stated as the official language in three hill subdivisions of the Darjeeling district, namely Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong in the Official Language Act 1961. In 2011, six languages were granted official status in the state, namely, *Nepali, Urdu, Hindi, Odia, Santali* and *Punjabi* (Roy, 2011). *Nepali* – which was earlier given an official status only in the district of Darjeeling – later became an additional official language of the state (Biswas, 2017). Kurukh was given an official status in 2017 (Srivastava, 2017). *Kamtapuri, Rajbanshi* and *Kurmali* were added as additional official languages under the Official Language Act 2018. *Telugu* has been the eleventh language to be declared as an additional official language in the year 2020 (ETV Bharat, 2020). Compared to the national classification, these 'official languages' have various status. According to the Census, Santali is a scheduled language, whereas Rajbangshi is classified as a 'mother tongue' under Bengali, and Kurukh is listed under the non-scheduled languages. Santali has a developed script of its own known as '*Ol Chiki*' which is now widely used to write Santali in India. '*Tolong Siki*' besides Devanagari is used to write Kurukh, Bengali-Assamese script is used to write Rajbangshi. Related to the complex practice of grouping of languages in India, there is the issue of language-based state boundaries. State boundaries in India are created primarily based on language

(Report of the States Reorganisation Commission, 1955). This naturally presents its own difficulties as it is quite impossible to assign separate states for each of those numerous languages (cf., Kulkarni-Joshi, 2019). Moreover, many language communities (e.g., Urdu) are not restricted to a single geographical area. Besides the linguistic considerations, there are other political or administrative factors that call for separate states in the country. Demands for separate states for separate languages (or language varieties) leading to instances of violence and disruption of daily lives are often witnessed in the country. The earliest instance of such cases is the creation of the state of Andhra Pradesh for the Telegu-speaking people, which resulted in a movement where the leader of the agitation, Potti Sriramulu, did an indefinite fast unto death in 1952 (Singh, 2021).

The reorganisation of states based on language has a subsequent effect on the numerous mother tongues that are homogenised under the dominant languages. A much greater instance of homogenisation is seen in the case of the language Hindi which incorporates 56 mother tongues under it. The recommendation of the Report of the Official Language Commission (1955) stated a progressive use of Hindi in place of English in various functions of the central government (indiansaga.info, 2000). Suniti Kumar Chatterji however opposed this recommendation as such a move was likely to create confusion and disrupt the process of national integration. (Gahatraj, no date)

2. Monolingual ideology

An important factor affecting the status of non-dominant languages and language varieties is the ideological orientation of language policies as well as language movements in India which have been largely monolingual. Though there are some provisions in the language policies about conserving diversity, the attitude of the policymakers towards diversity since independence has been less than favourable (Ghosh, 2018). There are several instances from our history where the enforcement of monolingual policies has resulted in violent agitations (Pisharoty, 2017; Venkatesh, 2018; Ravikumar, 2018). More recently, the nationalist policy of promoting Hindi as one language above others which can unite the citizens of the country and can stand as the cultural symbol of India has been manifested in the drafting of a bill that makes Hindi a mandatory third language in schools across the country (Draft National Education Policy, 2019). Championed in the name of harmony and integration, more often than not these attempts of homogenisation and language dominance end up in discordance and disputes (BBC, 2019; Rastogi / Anwer, 2019; IANS, 2019). Consecutive backlashes from the people later made the ministry make quick changes in its draft policy stating – “there will be no attempt to make the language mandatory” rather “the students will be given flexibility over choice of language under the three-language model in schools.” (Gohain, 2019; Times of India, 2019).

Just like the policymakers, a coercive approach can be noted among some of the language activists who participate in the various language movements that take place in the country. The attitude of a section of language activists of locally dominant language borders on parochialism. Here the enthusiastic activism towards the maintenance of the local language is directed towards those who do not speak that language, but rather live in an area where their mother tongue is not the majority language. In other words, such activism demands that speakers of all other languages (other than the one that is spoken by the majority in the locality in which they reside), either adopt the majority languages or at least accept their dominance. In this context, it is important to note that the state division in India, though based primarily on language, is not based solely on languages. There were geographical, historic and other considerations. It has never been stated that the only legitimate residents of a state are the dominant language speakers.

In an attempt to promote the local languages against the imposition of more dominant languages such as Hindi, they often end up demanding that all inhabitants of a state adopt the majority language at the cost of their native languages (PTI, 2018; Special Correspondent, 2020; Bongal Kheda, 2021). The problems with these ill-informed and at times not very well-intentioned movements are that they do more harm than good to the language they claim to promote, and enormous harm to the people of those language communities they choose to dominate. As a result, this vitiates the atmosphere of the state for all who live in it, irrespective of their language background.

Language activism takes a form of aggressive linguistic nationalism, at times resorting to physical violence. Instances of such violent agitation is witnessed in Mumbai (Deshpande, 2017), parts of Assam (Ghosh, 2003) as well as various other parts of India. In many such agitative actions, no effort is made to ensure that language is maintained within the language community, but all efforts are made towards ascertaining the fact that the members of other linguistic communities accept the language that is spoken by the majority as one that is of higher importance.

For the endangered and non-dominant languages, consequence of such monolingual ideology is seen in reduced functionality and lessened intergenerational transmission of the language. In such cases, it is often seen that the language speakers claim a strong symbolic identification with their language and culture, but often their association seems to be weakened when it comes to passing on their native language to their next generation speakers or even using them in intimate conversation. One of the domains in which language is maintained among the endangered languages can be seen in the performances of various cultural and ritualistic practices of the community. These events are generally undertaken by elderly people who are hired to perform the particular ritualistic practice of the community, for example, housewarming ceremonies, birth and death rituals, marriage etc. Such domains are the places where the influence of the dominant language is seen to be restricted. A similar example is also seen in the case of the many language varieties that are covered under the umbrella of Hindi. Well thought out language activism should aim to encourage the spread of language use in different domains within the community, and not demand that they adopt the locally dominant language.

India as a nation has consistently adopted a nationalist policy that promotes one single language, i.e., Hindi over others. The promotion of Hindi as a language and as a cultural symbol of India and its adverse effect on non-dominant indigenous languages deserves a more extensive discussion. Here we would like to give one quote from Ambedkar's writings on the Linguistic States to represent this attitude in early nationalist leaders.

> "One State, one language" is a universal feature of almost every State. Examine the constitution of Germany, examine the constitution of France, examine the constitution of Italy, examine the constitution of England, and examine the constitution of the U.S.A. "one State, one language " is the rule.
> One language can unite people. Two languages are sure to divide people. This is an inexorable law. Culture is conserved by language. Since Indians wish to unite and develop a common culture it is the bounden duty of all Indians to own up Hindi as their language."

He goes on to write that 'another reason why it is necessary to adopt the rule of "one State, one language" is that it is the only solvent to racial and cultural conflicts'. History of adoption of the One State one language rule in India as well as South Asia has shown that language is capable of adding to the existing conflicts or of bringing out conflicts of its own. The successive governments in India, however, have chosen to treat diversity as an inexorable problem and promotion of monolingual policies in the form of various kinds of promotions for Hindi as the solution. The recent recommendation regarding the National Education Policy reflects the above-mentioned ideology. Instances of promoting Hindi repeatedly in the non-Hindi speaking states have frequently occurred in our country, to the extent that the Gujarat high court – while passing an observation in the year 2012 in a case, said that "Hindi is a foreign language for Gujaratis" also highlighting that the state government run primary schools teaching in Gujarati (Times of India, 2012).

At the level of the state such policies and the subsequent protests have also been witnessed by the people of West Bengal. In the year 2017 the state administration decided to make the learning of Bengali compulsory in all schools of the state from class 1 to 10. However, the decision was vehemently opposed by the people of the northern part of West Bengal – the hill area – for whom the language Bengali seemed foreign and dominating. Keeping in mind the sensitivities of the issues involving the hill folks, this decision quite predictably provoked backlash and the Gorkha Janamukti Morcha (GJM) (a political party of the hills) described the decision of the government as one that of "language imperialism" (Mukherjee, 2017).

3. Approaches adopted in educational institutions

In the middle of the debate about the imposition of Hindi as a part of the continuation of the three-language formula, one of the important factors which has appeared to be side-lined is that the draft of the National Education Policy (NEP) also proposes to make English "available and taught in a high-quality manner at all government and non-government schools." Calling English the language of the elite, the NEP committee states that "there has been an unfortunate trend in schools and society towards English as a medium of instruction and as a medium of conversation and the reason being...since independence, the economic elite of India have adopted English as their language..." (Gohain, 2019). This admiration for the language has in a way limited the prospects of a large part of society who have been far away from the language of the "good life". It has reduced the chances of availing better opportunities for many who are not proficient in the language. Hence, the proposal of providing high-quality teaching facilities in English at all government and non-government schools is focused with renewed interest and vigour. Propagation and promotion of the English language are frequently seen in a section of educational institutes across the country. In some English medium schools in Kolkata, instances of physical coercion are often witnessed where children are either beaten, fined or punished in different ways if they are caught committing the crime of speaking in their own mother tongue, i.e., Bengali, within the school premises. The attitude of the school authorities in inflicting various forms of punishment upon the students stigmatises them for speaking their native tongue, which is usually Bengali – a language which is far from an endangered language.

Bengali has an officially recognised status as one of the 22 languages listed in the eighth schedule of the Indian constitution. It is the second most widely spoken language in India with a long and very rich history of literary and cultural tradition. The teachers in such schools perhaps try to follow the established method of teaching as best as they can. One of the methods followed popularly all over the world by English Language Teaching (ELT) practitioners is called the immersion programme – which is similar to the recommendation given in the old adage about “living, speaking and dreaming in English” in order to properly learn the language. The teachers here try to create an atmosphere in which they think that the student has the best chance of developing skills in an important language.

This paper in no way claims that English is not an important language and that it is to be learned casually. The language is immensely important not just because India is a post-colonial nation, or because its importance has increased manifold after globalisation, but English, for historical reasons, is often essential for social standing and for procuring a reasonably good life that the NEP talks about. This language also acts as a window to the world of knowledge. Having a proficiency in the language increases the academic and professional choices for a student. Learning this language is necessary. However, linking the learning of English with a disdain instilled in the students for all other languages, including one’s mother tongue, is unnecessary and creates problems on many levels. The approach adopted by these schools comes from the ignorance of the fact that it is seen in a lot of research that primary education in the medium of a mother tongue is essential for the cognitive development of children (cf., Buhmann / Trudell, 2008). Connected to the problematic approach of the educational institutions, is the general attitude of the non-dominant language community members towards English. Parents often seek out schools with English as medium of instruction for their children, irrespective of the quality of schools and in spite of the high expenses of most of such schools. Unreasonable admiration towards a dominant language especially in a post-colonial nation (Heugh, 2002) is common throughout the world. The extraordinary deference towards English as a language of colonial legacy and the language of a 'good life' in a globalised era, is a kind of deference that can influence the individual into making choices that are not to their own benefit.

This biased admiration for English can also be seen in the choice of language used by parents while communicating with their children in the home domain. In many households, we can see parents voluntarily talking to their children in English and not in their mother tongue, which according to them will enable their children to learn and perform better in school and also stay ahead of their peers. Whereas speaking in their native tongue may disrupt their children's ability to learn English in a better way. Needless to say, this approach is not conducive to the sustenance of non-dominant languages in India.

4. Conclusion

If we look at the scenario of non-dominant languages in India there are certain factors in the environment that guide, motivate or push members of the non-dominant language community for a shift to the more dominant variety. The official grouping of languages or language varieties, complex as it is by its very nature, is largely guided by a nationalist and monolingual ideology, which views diversity as a problem. The same approach is seen in various language related policies. The approach of some language movements is also motivated by domination over other locally non-dominant languages. Additionally, some educational institutions, work actively towards instilling a sense of fear and prejudice in the psyche of the students against non-dominant languages including the students mother tongues.

Such approaches create an unfavourable environment for all the existing non-dominant languages. With the given multilingual reality, where privileges are given to the dominant languages with official recognition, many minority and non-dominant language speakers are deprived of important linguistic rights, motivations and incentives required for their survival. In such an environment, an ideological shift in the approaches associated with the non-dominant languages and language varieties is of utmost importance for the sustenance and survival of non-dominant languages.

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II. Pluricentric Languages in differing educational contexts

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English and German as pluricentric languages in the Hungarian education system: Teachers' and learners' perceptions

Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate and compare teachers' and students' perceptions of the pluricentricity of English and German, and its role in language teaching in Hungary, and to explore the extent to which teachers and students are open to pluricentricity in language teaching. As part of a large-scale research project that consists of several components, the questionnaire survey that the present paper discusses is based on a national sample of 484 participants, including 134 teachers and 112 learners of English, as well as 104 teachers and 134 learners of German. Two hypotheses are used as a point of departure, namely (i) that learners are more open to different standards than their teachers, and (ii) that dominant varieties predominate over non-dominant ones. The statistical tests conducted confirm both hypotheses with a number of significant results. Furthermore, English teachers were found to be significantly more open than German teachers, but still lagging behind their students in this regard. As this discrepancy between teachers and students often causes conflicts that can undermine the success of the language learning process, this research provides a valuable message for many actors in the education system in Hungary and beyond.

1. Introduction

This study compares teachers' and students' perceptions of the pluricentricity of English and German in the Hungarian public education system, based on an empirical questionnaire. The focus is on teachers' and students' perceptions of, and openness towards, the pluricentricity of the language(s) they teach or learn. Since the author of this paper also teaches both languages in Hungarian public education, this study also represents an insider's perspective.

1.1. Research question and hypotheses

The basic research question of the study is how open Hungarian language teachers and language learners are to the pluricentricity of English and German, and what role they attribute to it in language teaching. This question is worth exploring in order to gain an insight into a segment of contemporary Hungarian language teaching, that can have a major impact on language learners' views related to the languages they are learning, and, through this, on the success of the language learning process itself.

Based on my own experience as a language teacher and language learner in Hungary (i.e. from the internal perspective mentioned above), the present study is based on the following two hypotheses:

1. Learners are more open to different standards than their teachers, and this creates a discrepancy between the perceptions of learners and teachers, which has a negative impact on the success of the language learning process.
2. For both students and teachers, the predominance of the dominant varieties over the non-dominant ones is typical.

1.2. Theoretical background

Many aspects of the language learning process are influenced when the foreign language being learned is pluricentric. If one accepts that the way a language is presented in the classroom should reflect the sociolinguistic reality, it would be a serious mistake to ignore the differences between national varieties that are present at all language levels (cf. e.g. Ammon and Hägi 2005 and Krumm, 2006 on German, and Marlina 2014 and Schneider 2011 on English).

Although English and German are both pluricentric languages, they differ in many respects in the nature of their pluricentricity (cf. Huber, 2021). The most important difference is that while English has two dominant varieties (American and British English), German has only one (Germany German). The other standard varieties (such as Austrian and Swiss German, as well as Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, Indian English, etc.) are considered by this theoretical framework as non-dominant varieties (cf. Ammon 1995; Schneider 2011). Muhr (2012) summarises this as monodominance for German and co-dominance for English – a distinction which, as we shall see, will have very important implications for the teaching of the two languages. As for the role of pluricentricity in language teaching, the primacy of receptive skills (i.e. listening and reading comprehension) in the representation of pluricentricity has to be emphasized (cf. Muhr 1996b, Glauninger 2001), since the primary goal of modern language teaching is to enable language learners to make themselves understood in a wide variety of communicative situations with a wide variety of communicative partners, rather than to produce some artificially constructed native speaker effect through productive language use. Muhr refers to this as "the meaningful coexistence of norms" (1996b: 42). The same is also the case for English, as Marlina (2014, 2018) argues that today's global media facilitates contact between varieties to such an extent that it is impossible to predict which varieties a language learner will encounter in their lifetime – even without necessarily having to visit the language area where the variety is spoken.

On this basis, in order to reflect the sociolinguistic reality as accurately as possible in the foreign language classroom, a British-American codominance is justified in the case of English. This can be progressively combined with other, non-dominant standards in increasing proportions as the proficiency level rises. In the case of German, on the other hand, a monodominance of the Germany German standard is realistic – within reasonable limits –, alongside which the Austrian and Swiss national varieties can be introduced gradually, also in line with the increase in the proficiency level (cf. Huber 2021).

It is also important to note that the differences between the different varieties are present at all levels of the language – from pronunciation to vocabulary and grammar, and pragmatics. Therefore, all of these should be reflected in language teaching, and the representation of pluricentricity should not be limited to vocabulary (cf. Muhr 1996a). This should be in focus primarily from the intermediate level onwards, while for beginners, it is preferable to provide a relatively neutral baseline, avoiding overload, and then gradually introducing more and more pluricentric content (cf. Muhr 1996a, Christen and Knipf-Komlósi 2002, Neuland 2011).

The present study provides an opportunity to compare actual teacher and learner perceptions with the theoretical background outlined above, and to draw conclusions from this comparison that may allow theory and practice to come closer together. In my experience, this is very much needed in many respects.

2. Methodology

This study is part of a complex research project which, in addition to the questionnaire component, also includes interviews with teachers and students, as well as curriculum and textbook analyses, as the aim of the project is to analyse the situation of pluricentricity in as many segments of English and German language teaching in Hungary as possible. The present research examines the results of a 19-item online questionnaire, investigating the perceptions of students and teachers of English and/or German, and through that, their openness to the pluricentricity of the language, based on a national sample of 484 students and teachers of English and/or German, with the participation of 134 teachers of English, 112 students of English, 104 teachers of German, and 134 students of German.

The data were collected using a combination of convenience sampling and the snowball technique, i.e. using online and offline language teacher groups, communities, mailing lists, and the author's own professional contacts in the author's environment. Basically, Borg and Al-Busaidi's (2012) measurement tool was used as a model, for the questionnaire used in this research. However, as Borg and Al-Busaidi's (2012) original questionnaire did not measure perceptions of pluricentricity, but of learner autonomy, the original had to be largely modified due to the different thematic focus. The structure and type of questions, however, were derived from it. Data collection took place in spring 2020, with the questionnaire modified from the pilot phase.

4. Learners should be able to comprehend {when listening to or reading) as many national varieties as possible.

- ☐ strongly disagree
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ strongly agree

Figure 1: Example of the first section of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire originally consisted of 48 items, divided into four sections. Before the actual questions, a brief description was provided, explaining the aim of the research and the meaning of key concepts like pluricentricity, national varieties, etc. Then, the first section contained 23 statements on different aspects of the role of pluricentricity in language teaching, on which respondents expressed their opinion on a four-point Likert scale, choosing from the following options: "strongly disagree" / "disagree" / "agree" / "strongly agree". Due to the four-tiered nature of the scale, respondents were not given the option of expressing a completely neutral position, which was advantageous in this case, because it allowed them to identify whether they were more positive or negative about the aspect of pluricentricity in question, while also allowing them to distinguish between a fully convinced and a more uncertain position (see Figure 1).

In the second phase, respondents were asked to rate the desirability and feasibility of a particular statement related to pluricentricity in language teaching, again using a four-point Likert scale, in relation to 13 statements. However, this section has been entirely excluded from the present analysis, due to the large number of incomplete responses.

Then, the third stage narrowed the scope of the survey down to the respondents' own experiences as language teachers/learners. The first of the six items in this stage was a multiple-choice item, in which respondents simply selected the standard varieties they had encountered in their own language teaching/learning experience, and they could also add any other variety to the list, as demonstrated by Figure 2.

Section 3: Your Learners and Your Teaching
This section contains three multiple choice and three open ended questions about your own teaching. These are an important part of the questionnaire and give you the opportunity to comment more specifically on your work.

1a. Which national varieties are present in your own teaching? (Feel free to tick multiple boxes.)

- □ US English
- □ Canadian English
- □ British English
- □ Indian English
- □ Australian English
- □ Aslan Englishes
- □ African English»
- □ Caribbean Englishes

Figure 2. The first multiple-choice item of the third section of the questionnaire.

This was followed by two Likert scale items, which were identical in function to the items in the first section, and were analysed together with them. Furthermore, each item in this section was accompanied by an open-ended question, allowing respondents to elaborate on their opinion of the question or to provide specific details to illustrate their previous response, as can be seen in Figure 3.

2a. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? (Choose ONE answer):
In general,the students I teach have some knowledge about the different national varieties of English.

- □ Strongly disagree
- □ Disagree
- □ Agree
- □ Strongly agree

2b. What makes you think so?

Figure 3. Example of the third section of the questionnaire.

Finally, the fourth section included demographic questions on background variables, such as the respondents' experience as language teachers/learners, the type and level of their school, the type of municipality they went to school in, their county, and any other foreign language(s) taught/learned.

In addition to the exclusion of the second stage from the analysis of the present study, a relatively more complex rearrangement was necessary in order to prepare the statistical calculations. As already mentioned, the 23 items of the first stage were analysed together with two items of the third stage, which operate on the same principle, but in the end, six of the statements of the resulting 25-item unit were excluded in order to increase the reliability value, leaving 19 final items in this unit and a Crombach's a of 0.735.

A factor analysis of the structure of the questionnaire led to the identification of five well-defined factors. Based on the KMO index of 0.782 (appropriate), the variables were suitable for factor analysis (cf. Gie Yong and Pearce 2013), the level of significance was considered good ($p < 0.001$), and Bartlett's test yielded χ^2=1950.607. The total explained variance for the five factors together is 53.396%, which is considered acceptable in the social sciences based on Izquierdo et al. (2014).

Each factor is associated with statements that refer to the same aspect of the role of pluricentricity in language teaching. Below is a breakdown of what each factor focused on, and which items it included (using the original numbering of the questionnaire). As the wording of the specific items is sometimes somewhat lengthy, and there are minor differences between the four versions of the questionnaire due to the different languages and target groups, each item is accompanied by a key phrase summarising the essence of the statement, rather than the full statements. In addition, the factor loading associated with each item is shown in a separate column.

Factor 1: Expectations (explained variance: 21.615%) – This factor focuses on what respondents think characterises language teaching that is open to pluricentricity. Specific details of the items are given in Table 1.

Item number	*Factor loading*	*Key phrase (the essence of the statement)*
3	0.800	pluricentricity in productive skills
4	0.698	pluricentricity in receptive skills
6	0.682	the pluricentricity of oral input
7	0.772	the pluricentricity of written input
10	0.473	free choice for students
14	0.510	the importance of the role of the teacher

Table 1. Items of factor 1.

Factor 2: Presence (explained variance: 10.518%) – Items in this factor relate to the extent to which pluricentricity is present in different segments of language teaching. Specific details of the items included are given in Table 2.

Item number	*Factor loading*	*Key phrase (the essence of the statement)*
1	0.520	pluricentricity at all ages
2	0.541	pluricentricity at all levels of language proficiency
2a	0.650	learners know about pluricentricity
3a	0.655	students are given the opportunity to find out

Table 2. Items of factor 2.

Factor 3: Interest and awareness (explained variance: 8.937%) – These statements focus on the relationship between learners' language awareness, interest in learning the language, and openness to its pluricentricity. Specific details of the related items are given in Table 3.

Item number	*Factor loading*	*Key phrase (the essence of the statement)*
5	0.418	pluricentricity at all levels of language
15	0.416	pluricentricity with adults only
21	0.713	the importance of raising awareness
22	0.521	the importance of being aware
23	0.592	the role of cultural interest

Table 3. Items of factor 3.

Factor 4: Mixing varieties (explained variance: 6.756%) – This factor relates to respondents' attitudes towards the mixing of varieties in language learning. Specific details of the items are given in Table 4.

Item number	*Factor loading*	*Key phrase (the essence of the statement)*
11	0.776	adhering to a variety
13	0.746	the teacher's choice

Table 4. Items of factor 4.

Factor 5: Language proficiency level (explained variance: 5.570%) – This factor examines the role of the language proficiency level of the learners in the incorporation of pluricentricity into language teaching. Specific details of the related items are given in Table 5.

Item number	*Factor weight*	*Key phrase (the essence of the statement)*
8	0.762	harder with beginners
9	0.768	proficiency level does not matter

Table 5. Items of factor 5.

3. Results

I conducted correlation analyses and t-tests, grouping the responses for the five factors presented above according to the different background variables, which yielded a number of results with varying degrees of significance. These are summarised in five points below.

4.1. The presence of different national varieties in the teaching-learning process

This section includes the answers to the first multiple-choice question in the third part of the questionnaire – see Figure 2 for a reminder. By looking at the mere percentages shown in Tables 6 and 7, one can draw important conclusions about the different levels of representation of the different varieties, which may prove useful for testing the second hypothesis formulated in the introduction (As respondents were allowed to indicate more than one variety, the percentages shown in the tables do not necessarily add up to 100. Varieties for which all values were less than 5% are not included in the tables.).

The tables below show that the dominant varieties (American English, British English, and Germany German) are hegemonic in the case of both languages, which supports the second hypothesis. Within the dominant category, we can also see that, in line with the principle of geographical vicinity (cf. Muhr 1996a), British English is more predominant than American, although this difference is significantly smaller than the difference between the dominant and non-dominant varieties.

	American	*British*	*Australian*	*Canadian*	*Irish*
Total (%)	78	95	16	10	2.7
Teachers (%)	85	98	21	11	5
Students (%)	71	92	11	9	0

Table 6. Presence of national varieties of English in the teaching-learning process.

	German German	*Austrian German*	*Swiss German*
Total (%)	92	53	16
Teachers (%)	90	64	24
Students (%)	93	45	11

Table 7. Presence of national varieties of German in the teaching-learning process.

At first glance, it would seem that teachers and learners of English are more open to pluricentricity than teachers and learners of German, as their answers are not "dominated" by one dominant variety but by two, and thus in their case a greater diversity of national varieties is present in the language learning process. In reality, however, the picture is much more complex, since this difference can be explained more by the different nature of the pluricentricity of the two languages (cf. the mono-dominance vs. co-dominance distinction discussed earlier) than by the greater openness of English teachers and learners. Moreover, as far as the presence of non-dominant varieties is concerned, the situation is considerably more evenly balanced in German than in English, since, while the most frequent non-dominant variety in English, Australian English, is present in 16% of the cases, Austrian German, which occupies the same position in the case of German, is present in 53%, which is a rather striking difference. This can be logically explained by the fact that, in many respects, the national variety of neighbouring Austria is more relevant for Hungary than that of distant Australia – if only because of geographical proximity, not to mention the shared historical past and cultural heritage (cf. Glauninger 2001).

Thus, it can be said that both languages have significant positive aspects compared to the other, but the differences are more due to the different status of the languages than to the different degree of openness of the respondents.

What is certain, however, is that the predominance of the dominant varieties over the non-dominant ones is absolutely clear, which means that the second hypothesis is certainly supported by these data.

4.2 Teachers and learners

The results of a two-tailed t-test comparing teachers' and students' responses are presented in Table 8. These data allow us to test the first hypothesis, i.e. that students are more open to pluricentricity than teachers.

	Teachers (average)	*Students (average)*	*t*	*p*
Factor 1	16.4370	20.5488	-18.276	$p<0.001$
Factor 2	10.8481	10.3943	2.372	$p<0.05$
Factor 3	15.9833	17.6210	-9.649	$p<0.001$
Factor 4	5.4664	5.2080	2.115	$p<0.05$
Factor 5	3.9170	3.6627	2.156	$p<0.05$
Total	52.5939	57.3824	-9.303	$p<0.001$

Table 8. Results of a two-sample t-test comparing teachers' and students' responses

An important basic assumption when interpreting the data in Table 8 (and all data from this point onwards) is that higher mean scores indicate a higher degree of openness, which is a result of quantifying the Likert scale responses. In very simple terms, the higher the number in the table, the greater the openness of the group's responses to pluricentricity for that factor.

Although all the results in Table 8 are significant, the rows highlighted in grey are the most noteworthy, as they have the highest level of statistical significance ($p<0.001$). To be more precise, these are the first and third factors, which clearly have the greatest influence on the overall value too. Several important conclusions can be drawn from this.

Firstly, although not for all factors, the first hypothesis that students are more open to pluricentricity than teachers, seems to be confirmed overall. Although the opposite is true for the second, fourth, and fifth factors, the results for these three factors are much less significant than the results for the first and third factors that confirm the hypothesis, and the overall results also indicate a higher degree of openness among students.

In terms of a thematic distribution, students' openness is much higher than teachers' in relation to expectations of pluricentricity (Factor 1) and the role of student interest and awareness (Factor 3), while the opposite is true for perceptions of pluricentric presence (Factor 2), attitudes to the mixing of varieties (Factor 4), and the role of language proficiency (Factor 5). It is important to note that the factors supporting the first hypothesis together account for 30.552% of the explained variance, while the factors showing the opposite result account for only 22.844%, which also tips the scales in favour of the former. When the English and German subsamples are examined separately, the results are almost identical, so it can be said that there is no difference between the two languages in this respect.

4.3 Teachers of English and German

There are, however, some cases where the results of the English and German subsamples differ to a very significant extent, but only for teachers, so only their data are included in Table 9, and within that, only those factors for which the two-tailed t-test yielded a significant result.

	English teachers (average)	*German teachers (average)*	*t*	*p*
Factor 1	16.8433	15.9135	2.771	p<0.05
Factor 2	11.4809	10.0660	4.906	p<0.001
Total	53.6744	51.2000	3.066	p<0.05

Table 9. Results of a two-tailed t-test comparing the responses of English and German teachers

All the significant data in the table above suggest that English teachers are more open to pluricentricity than German teachers. Although there are significant results for only two of the five factors, this is enough to make the overall result significant. As for the theme of these factors (expectations of pluricentricity and pluricentric presence), these are precisely the two most general factors, while the other three represent more specific issues, which further strengthens the validity of the above claim.

Again, the difference between the situations of the two languages seems to arise from the aforementioned monodominant vs. codominant distinction, since in English the inclusion of two dominant varieties already implies the incorporation of pluricentricity into the learning process, while in German this is only possible by including (at least) one non-dominant variety. In addition, global media exposure may also explain the greater openness of English teachers (especially to American English), while the effect of the proximity of Austria seems to be less important here.

4.4 Women and men

Although not the main focus of the present research, it is worth considering the gender distribution in a quantitative study of this kind. As there is a significant difference for only one of the five factors, it is not worth drawing any firm conclusions, but it may be relevant to mention that for the first factor, men (N=145) were significantly more open to pluricentricity than women (N=366; see Table 10).

	Men (average)	*Women (average)*	*t*	*p*
Factor 1	19.4077	18.2133	3.662	p<0.001

Table 10. Results of a two-tailed t-test comparing men's and women's responses

4.5 Educational levels and age groups taught

The results discussed in the next section compare teachers' responses according to the level(s) or age group(s) at which they teach: junior section (years 1-4), senior section (years 5-8), secondary (years 9-12), and higher or adult education. Since the correlation analysis did not yield significant results, I chose the procedure of selecting individual age groups from the others one by one, and comparing their data with the rest of the total teacher subsample, using a two-tailed t-test. Of these two-tailed t-tests, significant results were found for junior section (years 1-4), secondary (years 9-12), and higher or adult education. A summary of these is shown in Tables 11, 12, and 13, again limiting the data to the significant results.

	Teachers teaching at junior section (avg.)	*Teachers not teaching at junior section (avg.)*	*t*	*p*
Factor 2	10.3390	11.0169	2.017	p<0.05
Factor 4	5.1803	5.5650	2.173	p<0.05

Table 11. Comparison of the results of teachers at junior section (years 1-4) with the rest of the teacher subsample

	Teachers teaching at secondary level (avg.)	*Teachers not teaching at secondary level (avg.)*	*t*	*p*
Factor 3	16.1134	15.4222	-2.226	p<0.05

Table 12. Comparison of secondary school teachers' results with the rest of the teacher subsample

	Teachers teaching at higher or adult education (avg.)	*Teachers not teaching at higher or adult education (avg.)*	*t*	*p*
Factor 1	16.8309	15.9118	-2,732	p<0.05
Factor 2	11.1397	10.4554	-2,335	p<0.05
Factor 3	16.1985	15.6990	-2,034	p<0.05
Total	53.4000	51.5354	-2,371	p<0.05

Table 13. Comparison of the results for teachers in higher or adult education with the rest of the teacher subsample

The data from the three tables above show, in particular, that while there is significantly less openness to pluricentricity among teachers at junior section than among those who do not teach at this level, the opposite is true for secondary, higher and adult education: teachers at these levels are significantly more open to pluricentricity than their colleagues who do not teach at these levels.

And if we sketch all the levels, the following trend emerges:

(a) There is significantly less openness to pluricentricity among teachers at junior section (years 1-4) compared to others, for two factors: pluricentric presence and openness to mixing varieties (64 respondents have experience at this level, while 183 do not.).

(b) The senior section (years 5-8) shows no significant results at all (120 respondents have experience at this level, while 127 do not.).

(c) At the secondary level, the reverse is true, with teachers at this level being more open to pluricentricity than those who do not teach at this level, but this difference is significant for only one factor: interest and awareness (201 respondents belonged there, while 46 said they had no experience at this level).

(d) Higher or adult education shows the exact opposite of the distribution at junior section, with significant results for three factors (expectations, presence, and interest/awareness) and in aggregate (again, respondents with experience at this level were in the majority, with a 140:107 split).

This gradual trend is to be evaluated positively in the light of the literature, as it is in line with Muhr's (1996a) principle of beginner level neutrality, which was discussed earlier. Even the two factors involved fit in well with this principle, since, on the one hand, it is about a progressively greater and greater prominence of pluricentric content, as the level of proficiency increases, and, on the other hand, the fact that the mixing of different varieties would place an excessive burden on beginners (cf. Muhr 1996a; Christen and Knipf-Komlósi 2002; Neuland 2011).

Finally, it is also worth noting that, of all levels, higher or adult education shows the most significant results, indicating a significantly higher degree of openness to pluricentricity than in the case of the other levels. In addition to the above-mentioned gradual trend, this can also be explained by the gradual increase in students' language awareness in parallel with their age (cf. Factor 3) and, in the case of colleagues in higher education, by the fact that they are likely to have a closer relationship with teacher training institutions, which in many cases recognise and even disseminate the theory of pluricentricity.

4. Conclusion

In summary, the statistical analyses seem to confirm both hypotheses, as (i) the proportion of responses showing openness to pluricentricity tends to be significantly higher for students than for teachers, and (ii) the predominance of dominant varieties is clear for both subsamples.

It is important to note that students' greater openness is not confirmed for all factors, but overall, it significantly outweighs that of teachers. Furthermore, English teachers show a greater openness to pluricentricity than German teachers, but this may be explained, at least in part, by the different nature of pluricentricity that characterizes the two languages. Also worth mentioning is the role of the educational levels, throughout which, a gradually increasing openness to pluricentricity emerges, in line with the recommendations in the literature in this regard.

As for the consequences of the above, in my experience, the discrepancy between teachers and students very often causes conflicts that can greatly undermine the success of the language learning process. This is supported by the findings of the interview component directly related to the present research, as well as by a number of literature sources cited above. This seems to be particularly true in the case of German, where there is a very strong need to remedy the situation, i.e. to create opportunities for teachers in all segments of the education system to reflect the diversity of national varieties in language teaching. This is inconceivable without greater attention paid to this issue in curricula, textbooks, teaching materials, teacher training, and in-service training courses. And this is precisely what makes this study relevant, as it sends a particularly important message to the many actors in the education system, including practising teachers and teacher training institutions, as well as curriculum and textbook developers.

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Pluricentricity in Language Education: Representation of Language Varieties in German Students' Digital Language Portraits[1]

Abstract

This paper first discusses the current state of research of pluricentricity in language education in Germany, followed by an analysis of exemplary textbooks for teaching and learning English, French and Spanish as foreign languages. Within the scope of a micro-study, 69 digital language portraits of German students were analysed with regard to the representation of language varieties. The analysis focuses on German as the native language of most of the students as well as English, French and Spanish as the most commonly learnt foreign languages. The analysis reveals what language varieties students include in their digital language portraits, how they illustrate them and the importance they have for them. On that basis, conclusions, and desiderata about pluricentricity in language educations are discussed.

1. Pluricentricity in language education in Germany

1.1 Current state of research

Research on including language varieties into foreign language teaching and learning dates back to the 1970s. During that time, the predominant teacher-centred instruction changed and concepts focusing on fostering communication between students were integrated into language teaching. In Germany, this development is known as *kommunikative Wende* (communicative turn). In this context, researchers demanded that more language varieties, dominant and non-dominant ones, should be included into teaching and learning (foreign) languages. During the 1980s and 1990s, more specific initiatives

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were introduced into the research areas of intercultural learning and language awareness. Notably, the development and promotion of language awareness increasingly gained importance throughout the following years. Following the turn of the millennium, the perception of e.g., Spanish or English as pluricentric languages and their role in language education has become more important and concepts that integrate more than one standard language variety are on the rise. Textbooks also play an important role in the context of integrating pluricentricity into language education. Considering the aims of language teaching and learning, which are, primarily, promoting comprehensive communicative and intercultural competences including language awareness and language learning competence, it should be concluded that these aims are not yet achieved in current language education (Leitzge-Ungerer/Polzin-Haumann 2017:9f).

Taking recent contributions about pluricentricity in language education in Europe into consideration (cf. Spanish: Martín Zorraquino et al. 2001; Moreno Fernández 2017; Leitzke-Ungerer/Polzin-Haumann 2017, Polzin-Haumann 2010; Pustka/Bäumler 2021; English: Bieswanger 2008; Lopriore/Vettorel 2015; Schubert 2014; French: Bertrand/Schaffner 2007; Fauß 2012; Frings/Schöpp 2011; Polzin-Haumann 2010; Pöll 2000; German: Benzer/Yildirim 2019; Davies et al. 2017; de Cillia/Fink/Ransmayr 2017; de Cillia/Ransmayr 2019; Huber 2021), it can be concluded that until now the focus is still on teaching and learning (European) standard varieties.

For the three popular foreign languages English, French and Spanish, this means that especially UK English, French French and Castilian Spanish are taught in Germany. Other larger language varieties, for example Australian English or Canadian French, are only of marginal interest, and smaller language varieties, such as Puerto Rican Spanish, are non-existent, despite researchers' demand to integrate more language varieties into German classrooms (cf. e.g. Leitzke-Ungerer/Polzin-Haumann 2017:11; Reimann 2011:161ff / 2017:74; Schubert 2014:235ff; Thiele 2011:65ff).

The number and selection of language varieties included in language teaching and learning form part of main research questions about pluricentricity in language education. Predominantly, it is discussed whether students may acquire specific competences in different language varieties and if so, which ones, or whether they focus on only one language variety for language acquisition. There is increasing consensus that receptive competences, e.g., listening competences, are more relevant than productive competences in different language varieties. Reimann (2011:123ff/2017:72ff) pleads for a receptive variational competence (rezeptive Varietätenkompetenz) focusing on listening competences in different language varieties and regional languages (cf. Leitzke-Ungerer 2017b:94ff; Meißner 1995:5). Muhr (1996:42) suggests establishing a useful coexistence of norms, meaning that learners would be able to handle different language varieties with the help of receptive competences, but focus on only one language variety for language learning. However, including more than one language variety in language learning may lead to uncertainties and mix-ups for both teachers and learners. This is why teaching may focus on one language variety especially in the first years of learning, whilst integrating more language varieties on a receptive level only (cf. e.g. Muhr 1996:42; Leitzge-Ungerer 2017a:65/2017b:93ff, 109; Reimann 2011:123ff/2017:72ff).

Teacher training constitutes another research field as language teachers have to be prepared for integrating different language varieties into their classrooms. A microstudy by Reissner (2017:249ff) with 52 future Spanish teachers reveals that Spanish lessons at the schools of almost all interviewees only included Castilian Spanish. One sixth of students stated that sometimes references to Latin America were made, but only within socio-cultural topics. Furthermore, 60% of students chose Spain for their stay abroad; only 3.9% had travelled to Latin America. Therefore, students associated their experiences with the Spanish language and culture mainly with Spain. Regarding pluricentricity, students attribute language varieties as important, however they claim that concepts for integrating language varieties into teaching are still lacking. For a more comprehensive study with similar key findings see Pustka/Bäumler 2021.

In connection with teaching concepts and materials, textbooks have significant relevance and influence. Nevertheless, pluricentricity is not yet integrated sufficiently in recent textbooks as will be illustrated in the next section (cf. e.g. Huber 2021:117ff.; Montemayor/Neusius 2017:185ff; Leitzke-Ungerer 2017b:100ff; Reimann 2011:138ff; Stadie 2011:103ff).

1.2 Textbook analysis

In the context of language education, textbooks possess significant importance and influence in language teaching and learning. Several studies already reveal that language varieties should be integrated more in recent textbooks (cf. German:Benzer/Yildirim 2019; de Cillia/Ransmayr 2019; Huber 2021; Spanish:Leitzke-Ungerer 2017a/b; Montemayor/Neusius 2017; French:Montemayor/Neusius 2017; Reimann 2011; Stadie 2011; Polzin-Haumann 2010; English:Bieswanger 2008).

In this section, the textbooks *Green Line* (English as a first foreign language), *Découvertes Série jaune* (French as a second foreign language) and *Encuentros hoy* (Spanish as a third foreign language) are briefly[2] analysed regarding language varieties. The textbooks are exemplarily chosen because they represent textbooks that are frequently used in Germany[3]. Hence, most of the students who participated in this study and created digital language portraits may be familiar with them.

The textbook series *Green Line* offers different units and volumes focusing on English-speaking countries and regions, such as the UK, the USA or Australia, which is beneficial in the context of English as pluricentric language. However, a closer look at the textbooks reveals that language varieties and their specific linguistic characteristics only play a marginal role. Generally, activities focus on differences in vocabulary, e.g. contrasting selected words from UK and Australian English (cf. in *Green Line* 5, Unit 3). Besides this, the main focus is put on intercultural characteristics and differences, for example discussing traditions such as Halloween or Thanksgiving, as well as differences in school systems or culinary stereotypes (e.g. in *Green Line* 4, Unit 1). The volume *Green Line 5* focuses on Australia and the USA and includes the unit *The world speaks English* (*Green Line* 5, unit 1). This unit informs about three English-speaking countries (India, South Africa, Australia), presented with the use of categories including population, area, independent from UK since, interesting facts and student statements. Information about the number of languages spoken is given, but without specification. A vocabulary activity contrasts words and chunks typical for Australian English with UK English in two boxes. No further linguistic considerations about language varieties were found. In summary, the focus is still primarily on UK and American English; hence, different English language varieties are not integrated sufficiently and often reduced to vocabulary activities. On the other hand, it should be mentioned that texts for listening comprehension in different, larger Standard English language varieties are used

2 The limited extent of this paper did not allow in-depth analyses of the textbooks; thus, compare the respective comments in footnotes for more extensive analyses of textbook series.

3 Due to the federalism in Germany, each *Bundesland* (federal state) and sometimes even schools independently decide which textbooks are used in their classes. Hence, there is a huge variety of textbooks from different publishers in use.

(e.g. UK or American English). Essentially, students get to know different English-speaking countries and their cultures.[4]

In the textbook series *Découvertes Série jaune*, France, and hence French French, are the main focus. In the third volume, the unit *Bienvenue en francophonie!* introduces students to different French-speaking countries and regions, such as Canada, Burkina Faso, and Morocco. Besides intercultural, socio-cultural, geographical, and historical knowledge, one activity also focuses on *Mots et expressions du Quebec* (words and expressions from Quebec). After translating a short story about weekend activities with typical expressions from Quebec French into French French, the question *Qu'est-ce qu'on peut dire sur le français du Québec?* (What can one say about the Quebec French?) may initiate a reflection process about Quebec French and perhaps more French language varieties. Apart from this activity, linguistic characteristics of other French language varieties were not discussed explicitly. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that references to Creole languages, e.g. from Martinique, in form of greetings were found (*Découvertes Série jaune 3*, unit 5). Throughout the textbooks, several activities refer to regional languages spoken in France (e.g. *Découvertes Série jaune 5*, unit 4), Creole languages (e.g. *Découvertes Série jaune 3*, unit 5) as well as youth language (e.g. *Découvertes Série jaune 3*, unit 4). Only a few listening comprehensions include different French language varieties; the principal focus is evidently on French French. In the most recent *Découvertes*-volumes published since 2020, France is still the focus, but in the third volume, which is not yet available, units about Quebec (unit 3) and the Antilles (unit 4) have been planned. In conclusion, similarly to the *Green Line 5* textbook, *Découvertes Série jaune* dedicates one unit to the variety of the French-speaking world and introduces students to different French speaking countries, cultures, and contexts. Furthermore, references to regional French language varieties, Creole languages and youth languages were found, but may be substantiated in the future. Overall, France and teaching French French are clearly the primary focus.[5]

The textbook series *Encuentros hoy* focuses on Spain, but also includes units about Mexico, El Cono Sur and Peru. In the first volume, various students

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[4] These results coincident with the study of Bieswanger (2008: 39ff), who analyzed previous *Green Line*-volumes.

[5] For more comprehensive analyses with similar results compare for *À plus!* Montemayor/Neusius (2017: 187ff), for *Découvertes*, *Á plus*, *Tous ensemble* and *Passages* Polzin-Haumann (2010: 666f.), for *À plus!* and *Découvertes* Stadie (2011: 103ff) and for *Tous ensemble*, *Tout va bien*, *À plus!* and *Découvertes* Reimann (2011: 138ff).

present themselves on a map, which provides initial information about Spanish speakers worldwide. In the Mexico-unit, students get a short introduction with different information about Mexico, such as official name, capital, population size, etc. – similar as to the unit *The world speaks English* in *Green Line 5*. In the rest of the unit, Mexico is approached from different perspectives, including texts and activities about famous people, food, traditions, and history, for example. In addition, linguistic characteristics are scarcely included (*Encuentros hoy 1*, unit 6). In the *Algo más*-section at the end of the textbook, a text about Spanish as a pluricentric language informs about different Spanish language varieties and their specific characteristics taking lexis and morphosyntax into account. Unfortunately, the text loses this focus and ends up with the discussion on whether Spanish is a difficult language to learn (*Encuentros hoy 1*, 146). The El Cono Sur-unit in *Encuentros hoy 2* also focuses on cultural, historical, and geographical aspects. A reference to Argentinian Spanish exists in the text *Intercambio en Buenos Aires* (exchange in Buenos Aires), in which a student talks about her experiences throughout her gap year. She explains that she had difficulties to understand Argentinian Spanish, e.g. because of the pronoun *voseo*, having learnt and used Castilian Spanish before. Additionally, a table contrasts Argentinian and Castilian Spanish words and verbs (A: *acá* – C: *aquí*; A: *vos* – C: *tú*; A: *necesitás* – C: *(tú) necesitas*; A: *Che* – C: *tío*) (*Encuentros hoy 2*, unit 3). In the *Algo más*-section, a matching activity further discusses lexical and morphosyntactic differences between Castilian and Argentinian Spanish (*Encuentros hoy 2*, 130). The Peru-unit in *Encuentros hoy 3* follows a similar concept to the other units about Latin American countries and regions, meaning that linguistic characteristics are only of marginal interest (*Encuentros hoy 3*, unit 4). To conclude, students get to know different Spanish-speaking countries and become familiar with their cultures and traditions. In selected texts and activities, references to Spanish language varieties are made, but linguistic characteristics are still only marginally included, especially when it comes to pronunciation.[6]

The exemplary textbook analysis reveals that linguistic and cultural differences within the language varieties are included, even though the topic needs further implementation. In general, differences within language varieties and speaking communities are reduced to typical examples referring to lexis, morphosyntax and cultural differences as illustrated in the examples. A

[6] These results coincident with the studies of Montemayor/Neusius (2017: 185f, 189) and Leitzke-Ungerer (2017a: 61ff), who analyzed previous *Encuentros*-volumes, and Polzin-Haumann (2010: 668f.) who analyzed several volumes of *Encuentros*, *Línea verde* and *Puente nuevo*.

desideratum can also be seen in offering more listening activities with speakers from different English-, French- and Spanish-speaking countries. The focus is mainly centred around larger language varieties, and smaller language varieties are non-existent in the textbooks, although several activities also include youth language or regional language varieties.

Consequently, for the digital language portrait analysis it can be assumed that learners are only familiar with the contents presented in the textbooks, unless the teacher adds information on language varieties that are not taken from the textbooks.

2. Pluricentricity in German Students' Digital Language Portraits

2.1 Research context: data collection for this microstudy

In the scope of my ongoing dissertation project, I undertook a feasibility study, in which one of the main objectives was finding ways on how to foster students' individual plurilingual competences (cf. Korb 2019). In this context, I taught a subject about plurilingualism at three German schools in senior classes with students aged 17-19 from 2017-2019. Drawing language portraits was one of the first activities and, thus, the students were not influenced by previous lessons when thinking about their linguistic repertoire.

2.2 Methodology: digital language portraits

Language portraits initially aiming at promoting language awareness in primary schools have evolved into an established method for language biographical research. Often enough, students are not aware of their own and their classmates' linguistic repertoire. Language portraits help to make all their languages visible and initiate reflections about their language learning processes. Hence, they are used to promote language awareness and to raise awareness for linguistic and cultural diversity.

In order to create a language portrait, the learners first reflect on their linguistic repertoire and their communication strategies. In the second step, they visualize the languages and their respective meanings in a body silhouette or on a blank sheet. Lastly, they add an explanation to it (e.g. Busch [3]2021: 40ff.; Caspari 2006; Krumm 2002).

The language portraits of the students involved in this microstudy were expanded by the digital dimension using *Microsoft PowerPoint*. Their task was to create their language portrait including the multiple possibilities of digital media for visualization, e.g. pictures, posts, hyperlinks, videos, etc. In this way, students included languages that play a role in their real and virtual life. Subsequently, the students wrote an explanation and reflection of their digital language portraits and presented them to the class.

2.3 Analysis: representation of language varieties

This analysis begins with a brief general explanation about the students' digital language portraits, followed by research questions and the representation of language varieties for German, English, French and Spanish.

69 digital language portraits are part of this analysis. Altogether, 24 different languages were illustrated including German as a native language for most of the students (except for five), English, Spanish and French as the most popular foreign languages, other foreign languages (e.g. Italian, Japanese, Portuguese) and family languages (e.g. Arabic, Italian, Bosnian, Kurdish). Some students also illustrated German regional varieties.

It should be mentioned that the students were not asked to think about language varieties as such, just about the languages that play a role in their lives. As a general result, it can be said that students tend to identify more with the countries, cities, cultural aspects, and stereotypes than with the languages and/or language varieties themselves. A parallel to the contents of the textbooks can clearly be detected.

The following research questions that will be addressed in this analysis are:

- How and to what degree do German high school students consider different language varieties when creating their personal digital language portraits?
- How do they explain their language choice and illustration?
- What importance do language varieties have for students?
- What does this indicate for pluricentric languages and (foreign) language learning and teaching?
- What are possible consequences for (foreign) language learning and teaching?

2.3.1 German as a native language

German as a native language or foreign language was illustrated in 67 out of 69 language portraits. 64 students associated German only with Germany, one student with Germany and Austria and two students with Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. The students used either a map of Germany or the German flag as one major way of illustration, followed by stereotypical associations (e.g. soccer, *Wiener Schnitzel*, beer, white socks in sandals, Berlin) as well as family and friends. Austria was associated with holidays and job perspectives.

The illustrations lead to the conclusion that students strongly connect German with Germany and perceive it as language of family and friends. Other German language varieties are of marginal interest, which may be explained by the fact that German is the mother tongue for the vast majority of students.

2.3.2 English as a foreign language

English as a foreign language was visualized in 65 out of 69 language portraits. 39 students associated English only with the UK, two only with the USA. 14 students included the UK and the USA, one student the UK, the USA and Canada. Five students illustrated English using a map of all English-speaking countries, which reflects their awareness for English as a global language. For four of the students an association was not discernible as they referred to social media or music. For illustration, students also used maps and flags, followed by stereotypical associations (e.g. London, Tower Bridge, the Queen, tea time, English breakfast, New York, hamburgers), holidays, school exchange, job perspectives and music.

To sum up, the students seem to have a strong focus on UK English, followed by both UK and American English. Other English language varieties are essentially scarcely included. English is also perceived as a global language. These findings coincide with the textbook analysis where the focus was also put on UK and American English. Still, it is interesting that students did not include Australian English, even though several units included Australia.

2.3.3 French as a foreign language

French as a foreign language was included in 44 out of 69 language portraits. All students associated French only with France.

For illustration, students once more mainly used flags and maps as well as stereotypical associations (e.g. wine, cheese, frogs, Paris, baguette, croissant). Seven students also associated French with school and learning; some others expressed their dislike for French for example by using the thumbs down. Furthermore, three students included the supermarket Cora, which is located close to the German border and a popular shopping destination for people living in Saarland. It is interesting to observe that none of the students included another French-speaking country.

Overall, French French is in the centre of the digital language portraits. Possible explanations for this may be found in the rather France-centred French teaching and learning tradition, which is also reflected in the textbooks. Therefore, the influence of textbooks is clear in this context. In addition, it is noticeable that students seem to have a negative association with learning French, which could partially be caused by the contents of the textbooks. On a more positive note, it should be mentioned that some students included the closeness to France, showed awareness for France as neighbouring country and saw relevance in speaking French as a neighbouring language.

2.3.4 Spanish as a foreign language

Spanish was illustrated in 32 out of 69 language portraits. 24 students associated Spanish only with Spain, followed by seven students who included Spain and Latin America. One student connected Spanish with Latin America in general. Again, ways of illustration included flags and maps, stereotypical associations (e.g. Flamenco, Paella, Torero, Mariachi, burrito) and holidays.

To sum up, three quarters of the students associated Spanish only with Castilian Spanish, which may be related to the fact that most of the students had been learning Spanish for one year at the time of data collection. Once again, the influence of textbooks is obvious as they mostly focus on Spain and Mexico in the first years of learning. The students who associated Spanish with Spain and Latin America did not distinguish further as to which Latin American country they referred to. Some focused on Mexico, but most of the students did not specify which language variety spoken in Latin America they referred to, or which country they considered. They seem to assume that there is only one Latin American Spanish language variety.

3. Conclusion

The synopsis of the current state of research, the exemplary textbook analysis and the digital language portrait analysis show that larger, especially European, standard language varieties are in the centre of language education in Germany. Other language varieties are increasingly included, but still with a focus on inter- and sociocultural factors and only little reference to linguistic characteristics. According to the state of research, fostering receptive competences (especially listening comprehension) in different language varieties should be developed further. Textbooks do not consider this desideratum sufficiently up to now and additional teaching and learning contents on language varieties are necessary. Nevertheless, the textbook volumes and units dedicated to different English-, French- and Spanish-speaking countries raise awareness for pluricentricity and introduce students to new speaking communities, even though further implementation is needed taking the findings of the digital language portrait analysis into consideration. Another remarkable finding of the analysis is that awareness and relevance of language varieties seem to differ from language to language. English was connected more often with its language varieties than Spanish, while French was only associated with French French. Taking this into consideration, it may be argued that the research findings indicate that the students' language awareness may also illustrate dynamics of language and power, e.g. when thinking of colonial times.

Throughout the paper, it became clear that current language education does not prepare for interacting in a pluricentric world and that research is not yet transferred sufficiently into school practice. The findings now raise questions about what this means for pluricentricity in language education and what possible consequences for (foreign) language learning and teaching there might be?

First, it is essential to highlight the importance of pluricentricity in language education in research, didactics, and school practice. Secondly, it is important to raise awareness for language varieties and their specific characteristics. This concerns future teachers as well as students. Thirdly and lastly, it is necessary to provide ideas and materials to enable (future) teachers and educators to integrate pluricentricity into their classrooms.[7]

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An appraisal of the impact of digital communication on Cameroonian university students' academic writing in pluricentric English

Abstract

From conventional to new forms, students are transferring innovative linguistic features in digital communication to academic writing. The aim of this chapter is therefore, to examine the impact of digital communication as conceptualised and applied by Cameroonian university students in academic writing in pluricentric English, proposing strategies for awareness and discernment. From an applied linguistics perspective, the processes that recur in students' academic writing are traceable to aspects of morpho-syntax, lexico-semantics, phonology, spelling, and translanguaging. The research questions are formulated based on the investigation of reasons for a shift from conventional writing, of the variables that influence the shift, and of inclusive pedagogic strategies in managing pluricentricity. Methodologically, a content analysis of students' e-texts and analogue essays is done, while the Communication Accommodation Theory supports adjustments in communication and adds to reasons for the inevitability of the pluricentricity of English. Such pluricentricity requires an inclusive language-aware approach for teaching-learning; a stretchy model that incorporates discernment into diversity.

1. Introduction

One feature of the pluricentricity of a language is versatility. The versatility of the English language is acknowledged in "[...] a unique cultural pluralism, and a linguistic heterogeneity and diversity" (Kachru, 1985: 14). Over five decades and still counting, the English language has been versatile in the sociolinguistic ecology of Cameroon, generating derivative, national and ethnic varieties of English (see 1.2). The versatility is not limited to spoken regional, national, and ethnic varieties, it includes versatility or pluralism in writing culture, influenced by digital communication. With the swell in use of digital communication in formal and informal spaces, the varieties of English have undergone innovative forms that recur in students' academic writing. From conventional to unconventional, but innovative forms, what Crystal (2006) describes as a contemporary bias towards informality, students are normalising the innovative writing system of digital communication in virtual spaces in formal contexts such as academic writing. This practice has split academic discourse into conventional and unconventional, especially in a post-colonial space such as Cameroon, where pluricentric English and French co-communicate with a myriad of indigenous languages.

Conventional in this context refers especially to the morphology and syntax of the English language that has been distorted by digital communication innovations due to the versatility of English. In the course of establishing its writing norm, digital communication innovations are unavoidably unconventional by altering some conventional English grammar norms. Intriguingly, both conventional and unconventional practices are features of pluricentric language studies. Unconventional practices challenge the conventional in justifying the pluricentricity of overriding languages.

2. The sociolinguistic setting of Cameroon

Cameroon is located in the west of Central Africa, the horn of Africa. It is known as Africa in miniature or little Africa, as it contains all geographical characteristics of all regions of Africa: coastline, mountains, planes, plateaux, grass-fields, forests, rainforests, deserts, marshlands, etc. Cameroon has a colonial legacy starting from the Portuguese (1472), the Germans (1884), the British (1914) and the French (1922). The post-World War I period (1918-) ushered in remarkable changes, which significantly changed the sociolinguistic landscape of Cameroon. The League of Nations mandate gave 4/5 of Cameroon to the French and 1/5 to the British. Based on geo-political motivation, present-day Cameroon comprises ten regions: 8 French speaking and 2 English speaking, resulting in a division between Francophone and Anglophone Cameroon (see Fig. 2).

In the 1961 plebiscite, English Cameroon and French Cameroon united and adopted French and English as co-official languages of Cameroon, coexisting with about 277 Cameroon indigenous languages in combination with about 200 ethnicities. There is a Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE), which for some has become a Creole. This is common knowledge, as this language situation can be spotted in some villages in Anglophone Cameroon, where the lingua franca, CPE, is a mother tongue to some citizens. There is the emerging variety, Camfranglais, a portmanteau of French, English, CPE, and indigenous languages, characteristic of the speech of the urban youth. Apart from CPE, there are regional lingua francas such as Fulfulde in the Northern and North-Western regions, Duala in the hinterlands, and Ewondo in the Central, Southern, and Eastern regions. Within such a plethora of languages, pluricentricity is inevitable in the language contact outcomes in both spoken and written discourses (also see Fonlon1969; *Ethnologue* 15thedn; Todd 1982; Alobwede 1998; Anchimbe 2012; Echu 2003; Fonyuy 2013; Mbangwana 1983; Kouega 2003; Wolf 2001; Simo Bobda 2006; etc).

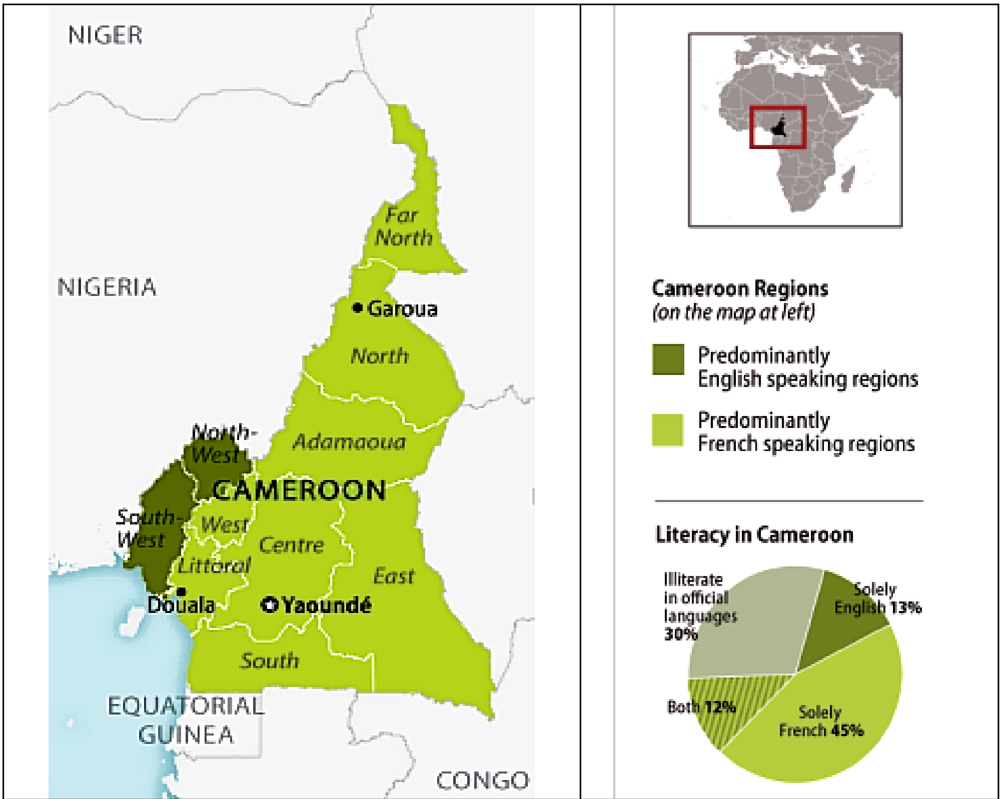

Fig. 1: Linguistic Map of Cameroon[1]

[1] Source: https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/IN10881.html [acc. 06.060.2022]

3. Background to the problem: conventionality and unconventionality

Conventional perspectives will interpret the unconventional culture of text messaging, for instance, as a linguistic distortion that is eroding languages, while unconventional perspectives will argue that this digital or computer mediated communication has inspired innovation and new stylistic varieties that promote informal or unconventional writing culture. Wray and Bloomer (2012:135) qualify such digital communication tools and spaces that give reason for unconventionality as an opportunity in "the explosion of new opportunities to gather and exchange information instantly using electronic devices", including texting and apps, internet searches, social networking sites, GPS navigation, Blogging, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp, Facebook, Google, Wikipedia, etc. They (ibid) also recognise the changes in writing culture, describing the variants that emerge by using these digital tools and spaces as "impoverished". From conventional to unconventional perspectives, "impoverished" could also be interpreted as an innovation. It can be improvised writing practices such as stenography in texting- predominantly due to the onset on restriction in overall message length in Twitter and SMS, chat channel constraints, the use of emoticons to communicate a whole idea or cultural concept, etc. Over the years, these digital communication practices are getting normalised even in formal contexts, such as academic writing. The problem statement is thus: Cameroonian university students are transforming conventional writing forms through practices of linguistic unconventionalities and innovation in digital communication, and normalising the practices in a formal context, such as academic writing.

4. Research questions and hypothesis

For an appraisal of this phenomenon observed in the problem statement, the research questions include: Why are Cameroonian university students normalising unconventional forms of writing in a formal context such as academic writing? What are some of the linguistic parameters (the socially or culturally conceptualised practices) that induce this phenomenon? What is the frequency of unconventional writing in students' academic writing? From what perspective can this phenomenon be examined? What are the needs for improvement of academic writing for the target population? From these research questions it could be hypothesised that an appraisal of digital communication impact on Cameroonian university students' academic writing induces a supple method of teaching-learning in pluricentric languages.

6. Conceptual and theoretical frameworks

The conceptual and theoretical frameworks adopted in this chapter are interconnected concepts of applied linguistics, pluricentricity, and the Communication Accommodation Theory.

6.1 The pluricentricity of English and other languages: extending the tenets

The acceptability of the pluricentricity of English and other dominant languages has been a hot potato in sociolinguistic spaces for decades. On this, Muhr reiterates recently in his keynote that "Anti-pluricentricity ignores the social-semiotic value of linguistic features of NVs and their function for the personal needs of single speakers and collective identity of nations". In his keynote, Dollinger (2021: 44) "seeks to go a step beyond current debates and refusals to engage in meaningful debate (e.g. Langer 2021 on Dollinger 2019), to look at the interplay of (positivist) method and (general) sociolinguistic theory, for which Chambers (2009) and Labov (1994, 2001, 2010) are the reference points". By extension, Dailey-O'Cain (2017) in Trans-National English in Social Media Communities has as goal:

> to compare the use of English by different social media communities (within otherwise local-language online conversations) in different countries where English is not a typical first language, and to use the analysis of these practices not only as a comparison of online language practices, but also as a close look at how 'transnational English' plays out in the practices of everyday communication.

Extending the tenets, the Cameroon case study uses e-texts and analogue essays to analyse the impact of digital communication on university students' academic writing, and based on findings, variation inclusion and discernment in academic writing are proposed. The variation inclusion could be applied to the teaching-learning of pluricentric languages and to daily communication.

6.2 Digital communication and academic writing in English

There has been an evolution in the history of writing and communication via telephone and fax, television and radio, and recently, the new information technology based on the computer with hypermedia, email, chat channels, and the global hypertext on the World Wide Web (Jucker 2010). Digital communication is continually evolving through wireless platforms such as smart phones, computers, digital TV and radio, email, and messaging on social media. This evolution in digital communication introduced new words, and innovative forms of writing and reading cultures, that have added new meaning to language and modified writing system. Digital communication is establishing a writing culture of its own, wherein aspects of social media communication are transferred to academic writing.

This practice of applying innovative but unconventional usage in formal contexts of academic writing, or in the teaching and learning of English is highlighted by other researchers with diverse outcomes. Freudenberg (2009) conducted a study at an English-Afrikaans dual-medium school in the Western Cape, South Africa. Findings prove that all participants use features of SMS speak but, in contrast, "samples of their written work did not contain a great number of instances of SMS speak features".

In another linguistically diverse space, Mahmoud (2013) examines the effect of English SMS language on the development of 40 Foundation Year students' speaking and writing skills at a university in Saudi Arabia. One of the findings of this study is that "students who used SMS had their writing and speaking performance noticeably improved". Similar in context, but with different results, Odey et al. (2014) explore the influence of SMS texting on the writing skills of students at a college of education in Nigeria. The five most dominant features of the SMS language identified in student essay responses, in an exponential order, are: vowel deletion, graphemes, alphanumeric homophones, punctuation errors, and initialisation.

Diversity in context and usage keeps extending as Strain-Moritz (2016:5) observes that "teachers frequently complain about the decline in writing quality and effort of secondary students, but they have a difficult time figuring out what is causing this to happen'". E.g. "i wake up for the great weekend. i usually get up and talk to my dad and figure out what we are gonna do. i eat breakfast. then i get up and get dressed and feel great." – 11th grade. "After sitting at home for an hour i got the sudden urge to go for a little bike ride. i asked the wife if she wanted to join and as well the neighbors john and ashley." – 12th grade. This neglect on capitalisation, punctuation, and other conventional writing norms, are indicators that teachers have an even more challenging task figuring out how to maintain a conventional English writing culture amidst such diversity of writing systems in pluricentric English.

In the Book of Abstracts for the 9th World Conference on Pluricentric Languages and their Non-dominant Varieties, Korb (2021:55) acknowledges that "the awareness for pluricentricity in language education is rising: several publications already discuss the role of pluricentricity for (foreign) language teaching and learning and indicate possibilities of integrating language varieties into the classroom" (Lopriore/Vettorel 2015 etc.).

It could be deduced from all these reviews that the impact of digital technology on academic writing is two-folds: while it highlights users' sociolinguistic identity, modifies the writing system, and expands the vocabulary of English, restating its pluricentricity, learners indiscriminately apply unconventional usage to the formal context of academic writing. The daunting task is how to incorporate pluricentricity in education, without the dominant or non-dominant varieties losing their strengths. If discernment complements this observation, learners will be aware of the existing varieties, as well as be discerning in the use of which variety and in what context of written or spoken discourse.

6.3 Theoretical framework

Accommodation in the context of this chapter is an attempt to incorporate diversity. For this reason, Giles' (1971) Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) is used to analyse what, why, and how Cameroonian students adjust written communication strategies, and the interferences and outcomes of these adjustments. Dragojevic, Gasiorek & Giles (2015:37) report that:

> recently, researchers have increasingly begun to examine convergence in mediated and online environments as well (e.g., Riordan, Markman, & Stewart, 2013). For instance, Danescu, Niculescu-Mizil, Gamon, and Dumais (2011) investigated adjustment on Twitter and found that users regularly converged to one another in their tweets on a wide range of linguistic features, despite the limitations posed by this particular social medium.

Accommodation in league with (ibid) and this chapter is the adjustment to varieties of writing cultures, dominant and non-dominant, including computer mediated writing and conversation. Some variables that influence the what, why, and how of the accommodation process, include micro linguistics aspects of morpho-syntax, lexico-semantics, phonology, spelling, and translanguaging. The convergence to, or divergence from a variable, is determined by parameters such as time, speed, space, sociolinguistic environment, linguistic (un)awareness of usage, culture, identity, etc.

7. Methodology/ Research Scope and Focus

The target population is predominantly young adult undergrads of the University of Bamenda (UBa) for the case study. The instrument for gathering data is a collection of documents comprising excerpts from students' analogue essays, and students' e-texts in online teaching-learning platforms and to the lecturer. The method for data analysis is content analysis of documents with the focus on interpretation rather than quantification, of experiences, processes, and practices observed in the research.

4. Presentation & Analysis of data comprising e-texts and analogue essays

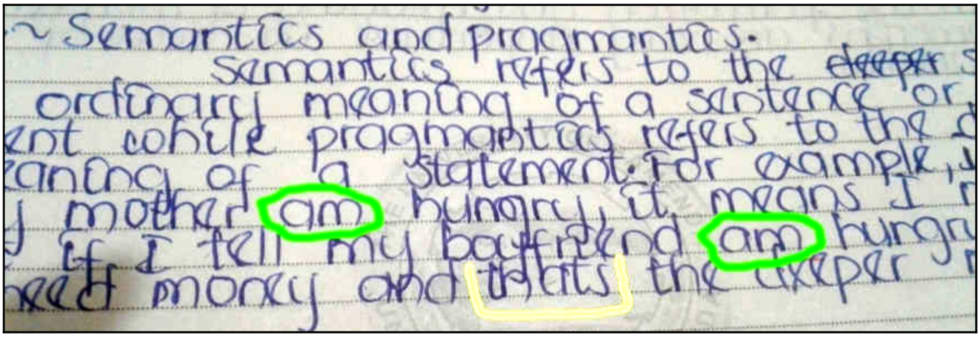
~ Semantics and pragmantics.
Semantics refers to the ~~deeper~~ s
ordinary meaning of a sentence or
ent while pragmantics refers to the d
eaning of a statement. For example, I
y mother am hungry, it means I
if I tell my boyfriend am hungr
eed money and thats the deeper

Figure 2: Excerpt 1 from students' analogue essays

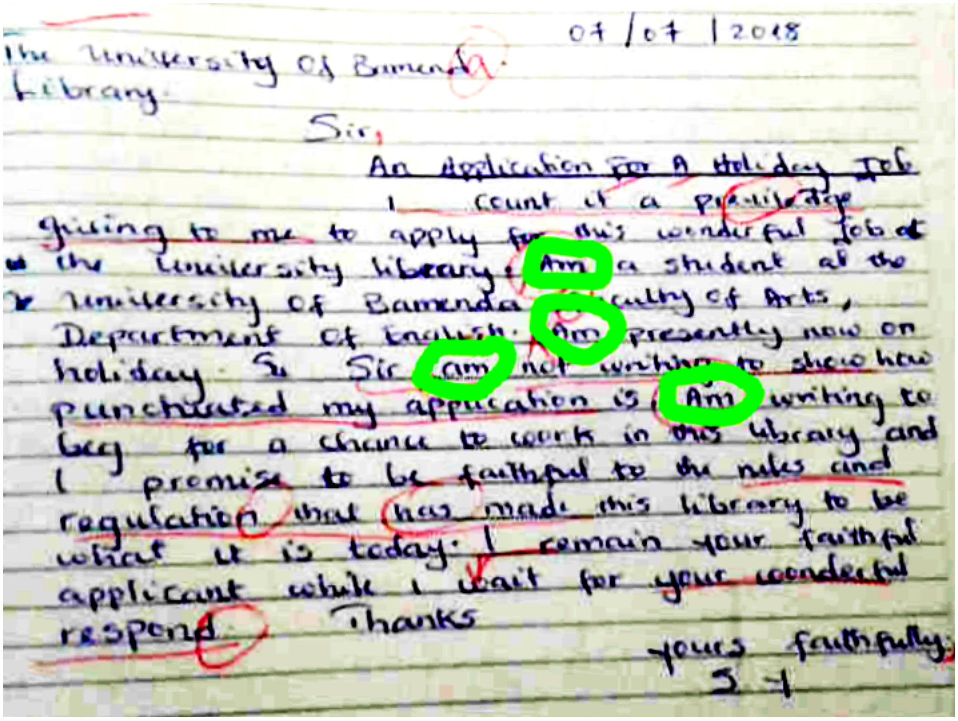
04/07/2018
The University of Bamenda.
Library.
Sir,
An Application for A Holiday Job
I count it a privilege
giving to me to apply for this wonderful Job at
the University library. Am a student at the
University of Bamenda faculty of Arts,
Department of English. Am presently now on
holiday. Sir am not writing to show how
punchuated my application is, Am writing to
beg for a chance to work in this library and
I promise to be faithful to the rules and
regulation that has made this library to be
what it is today. I remain your faithful
applicant while I wait for your wonderful
respond. Thanks
Yours faithfully,

Figure 4: Excerpt 2 from students' analogue essays

Unconventional writing culture	Conventional writing culture	Process
• Ate yu/ Ate u, leme go	• I tell you, let me go.	Pidginisation, simplification.
• mornx, comx, loadx	• morning, coming, loading • "loading" is the students' slang for "eating".	*ing*-clipping/ excluding or shortening the 'ing' to 'x'.
• Gud mornx Dr. am (X) the CC of (Y). on behave of my classmates i wish to ask u when we have a class.	• Good morning Dr. I am (X), the CC of (Y). On behalf of my classmates, I wish to ask you when we can have a class.	Syntactic distortion, use of stenography, text is written as it is spoken, spelling error, use of lower case for upper case, punctuation lapses.
• chaiiii! chaiiii! chaiiii! When will this nonsense killing stop?	• Unbelievable! When will this senseless killing stop?	An exclamation of disbelieve, cameroonisation.
• Am sori dis msg was not 4 u • Ive chosen group 4. members ivodia, daphney, rina, rita	• I am sorry this message was not for you. • I have chosen group 4. Members are Ivodia, Daphney, Rina, Rita.	Syntactic distortion, stenography, use of alphanumeric homophones, test is written as it is spoken, decapitalisation.
• didnt u write de ca • - am asking cuz I hv to meet her 4 de makeup ca	• Didn't you write the CA? • I am asking because I have to meet her for the catch up CA.	Same as the previous process, including deletions, ignored punctuation and omissions.
• Teacher de lewa? • - man mos ma'a calcu ma'a plan	• Is the teacher in class? • One must plan before executing.	Code mixing of indigenous language(Pidgin, French, English, Camfranglais) and translanguaging.
• Abeg you ppl should try ooh. criosli	• Please, you should make an effort. Seriously.	Code mixing, stenography, text is written as it is spoken, cameroonisation of English.

Table 1: Extracts from students' e-texts in online teaching-learning platforms

8. Findings

Although the non-dominant culture does not dominate the dominant writing culture, its presence is significant in students' academic writing, as default usage or practice is establishing a writing culture of its own. For instance, the SV discord and assimilation in "am" for "I am" is recurrent and conceived as a default syntactic aspect in Cameroonian university students' academic writing. An applied linguistic analysis show students' digital written communication is characterised by colloquialism, x-clippings, the use of alphanumeric homophones, lexical innovation, semantic extension, lexical and syntactic contraction, sentence structure distortion, phonemes or syllables for syntactic structures, assimilation, the cameroonisation of English, etc., with some of them transferred to formal contexts of academic writing.

On morpho-syntax, units of analysis affected are word structures, word order in subject-verb-object (SVO), sentence fragments, subject-verb agreement (SVA), extended use of punctuation marks, and neglect on capitalisation and conventional punctuation. In “Abeg you ppl should try ooh. criosli. Thanks for understanding”, apart from stenography, which is normalising in social media platforms, the “you ppl”, a double subject, is used to highlight subject/ object plurality and specificity. “Abeg” and “try ooh” underline the intensity of a plea or an appeal in CamE. The processes of vowel deletion, use of alphanumeric homophones, clipping, words written as they are spoken, etc., as in “am asking cuz I hv to meet her 4 de makeup ca” constitute the phonology of digital communication that is imposing itself in students’ writing in formal contexts. This process is normalised in the formal online learning platform, with lecturer and students present.

Translanguaging or multilingual discourse, metrolingual practices, code mixing, code switching, etc., (Wardhaugh& Fuller, 2015:86) is an outcome of languages in contact, in a multilingual setting such as Cameroon. For example, “Teacher de lewa?” and “man mos ma'a calcu ma'a plan”. These processes of mixing indigenous languages, Pidgin, French, English, and Camfranglais in written discourse, are an obvious reflection of specific social, cultural, and linguistic identities of learners and users of these languages in contact, the specificities generally disregarded in monocentric writing cultures.

Divergence in written communication is practiced through deviation from some conventional to unconventional forms as well, while convergence to the unconventional forms is practiced irrespective of the formality of the context of communication. These adjustments are indicators that the unconventional practice is systematically conceptualised as a normalcy, and subsequently applied to formal and academic writing. Therefore, to view the processes as eroding, is unrealistic and monolithic, but to raise awareness and to know in which context to use what writing culture, is inclusive and discerning.

9. Conclusion

9.1 Pluricentricity in education

In alignment with the CAT, the proposal in this chapter attempts to harness and develop shared strengths that recognise both dominant and non-dominant writing cultures in pluricentric English and other languages, summed up in an *inclusive but discerning model*. The pluricentricity of English has compelled researchers, such as Kachru (1992), to propose a polymodel approach, and Phillipson (1992a), to propagate teaching models in specific English varieties that maintain international intelligibility. Kramsch (1998) proposes an intercultural speaker model and Jenkins (2006) thinks a pluricentric approach should replace the monocentric one in English teaching, while Kirkpatrick (2008) advocates an endonormative model. Xie (2014:43) summarises these as a "pluricentric approach", promoting "pluralism in different cultures and English varieties to raise ESL/EFL learners' awareness of the various English varieties and to enhance ESL/EFL learners' confidence in their own English varieties". Jianli (2015:94) captures it as "pluricentricity in classifications of English language allows learners of English a 'speaker identity' while learning and using the language at the same time". (Also see Seidlhofer 2001, 2004, 2005).

Albeit the efforts, computer mediated communication in social media platforms is impacting writing in formal contexts, such as academic writing, and this compels an extended dimension of teaching-learning English. Due to the pluricentricity of English for that reason, an *inclusive contrastive linguistics model* for teaching pluricentric languages is proposed in order to awaken learners' awareness on the evolution of not just spoken, but written varieties as well, and of pluricentric English. Such pluricentricity requires an inclusive language-aware model for teaching-learning, a flexible model that incorporates discernment into diversity. The approach expects students to be assertive in writing and describing the language varieties, and simultaneously, show discernment in when to use what variety, in which context. This stretchy dimension retains conventional writing culture, while exploring the innovations that emerge with digital communication in writing cultures, in time and space. This is part of what applied linguistics does: It identifies, investigates, and offers solutions to many "language-related real-life problems... using the insights gained from the theory-practice interface for solving language-related problems in a principled way" (https://www.linguisticsociety.org/-

resource/applied-linguistics), a perspective from which this chapter is conceptualised.

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III. The Pluricentricity of Hungarian

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The (online) dictionary of pluricentric Hungarian

Abstract

The Termini Research Network was founded 20 years ago and unites the Hungarian language research institutes of the regions in the Carpathian Basin outside Hungary. Its most important research program is the 'de-bordering' of the pluricentric Hungarian language in the framework of an online, interactive dictionary program.
The main focus of the research is to collect and analyse the specific vocabulary elements of the spoken and written Hungarian language varieties outside the borders of Hungary. In this study, we briefly report on the peculiarities of the dictionary using illustrative examples.

1. Introduction – Hungarian as a pluricentric language

The political fragmentation of the Hungarian language area, established after the First World War and then confirmed by the peace treaties following the Second World War, has fundamentally changed the direction and nature of the linguistic contacts in regions being stranded outside of the newly established borders of Hungary (Lanstyák 2008). As the number of Hungarian communities living outside Hungary has been in a minority position since reaching agreements that brought the First World War to an end (except for a short period between 1938 and 1944), results of language contacts have taken place at all levels of the linguistic system, including in lexicon.

Thomason and Kaufman's 5-stage borrowing scale (1988: 74-100) is apt to characterise the degree of contacts between languages. At the first level in the scale, borrowing is limited to the casual lexical level and mainly to content words, while the fifth level is the borrowing due to very strong cultural pressure, which means the transformation of the typology of the language, and a significant change in the phonological and morphological rules. Hungarian language varieties spoken outside Hungary – depending on the language variant, style and register – are found between the first and second levels of Thomason and Kaufman's borrowing scale (Fenyvesi 2005: 5). The second level is characterised by the appearance of elements of grammatical borrowings in addition to lexical borrowings. The spoken language varieties share a close relationship with the second level of the borrowing scale, while the written language varieties are closely related to the first level (Table 1).

Stage	Features
1.Casual contact	Lexical borrowing only
2.Slightly more intense contact	Slight structural borrowing; conjuctions and adverbial particles
3.More intense contact	Slightly more structural borrowing: adpositions, derivations, affixes
4.Strong cultural pressure	Moderate structural borrowing (major structural features that cause relatively little typological change)
5.Very strong cultural pressure	Heavy structural borrowing (major structural features that cause significant typological disruption)

Table 1. Thomason and Kaufman's 5-stage borrowing scale (1988: 74-100)

Among the lexical borrowings of the Hungarian language – as a consequence of centuries-old contacts between the Hungarian and Slavic languages – loanwords of Slavic origin form the largest layer of vocabulary (Gerstner 2003: 124-126). A substantial number of the lexical elements of Slavic origin has spread throughout the Hungarian language area; many of them are part of the standard variety. Studies on these loanwords have had a long tradition in Hungarian linguistics (Melich 1910, Kniezsa 1955, Kiss 1976).

2. The Termini Hungarian-Hungarian online dictionary

In 2001, the Termini Research Network (Péntek 2009), a network of Hungarian linguistic research centres operating in neighbouring states[1], was founded (Figure 1). The main focus of the research is to collect and analyse the specific vocabulary elements of the spoken and written Hungarian language varieties outside the borders of Hungary. The vocabulary[2], also accessible online since 2007, has been comprised of loanwords of foreign origin which are different from those in Hungary and are used by autochtonous Hungarian minority communities living in the Carpathian Basin, outside Hungary (the Hun-

[1] The network comprises Hungarian communities living in the following countries: SK: Slovakia, UA: Ukraine, RO: Romania, SRB: Serbia, HR: Croatia, SLO: Slovenia, A: Austria, HU: Hungary.

[2] http://termini.nytud.hu/htonline/htlista.php?action=firstpage

garian variants of the given area usually originate from the state language). In addition to words and phrases used solely in a country neighbouring Hungary, words that are also used in Hungary but with a different meaning, have been also collected into the database (Benő, Juhász and Lanstyák 2020). By the end of January 2022 the dictionary database contained 5034 entries (Benő et al. 2021).

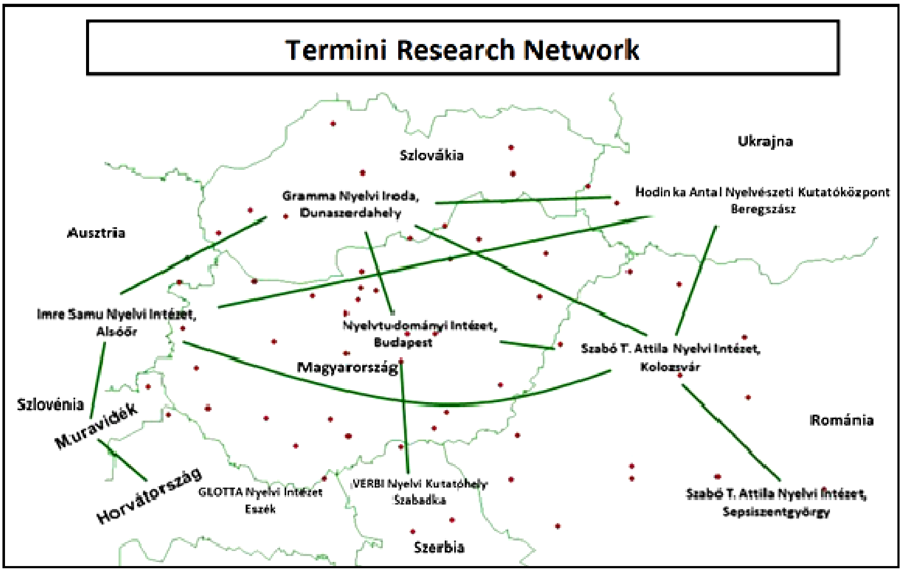

Figure 1. The Termini Research Network (Péntek 2009)

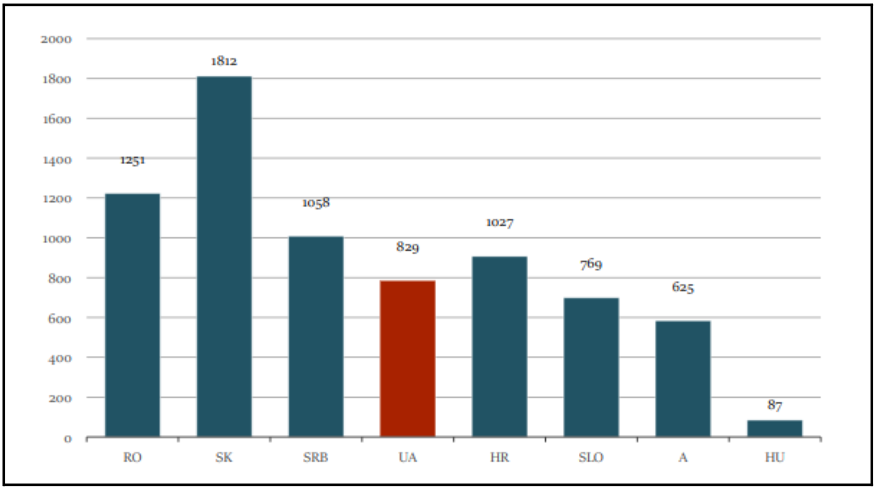

Figure 2. Entry distribution by region in Termini Hungarian-Hungarian Dictionary. How many entries contain a “nationality mark”? (January 20221, by regional distribution)

Since this online word list contains direct loanwords from numerous languages of the Carpathian Basin in contact with Hungarian (mainly from the official languages of countries neighbouring Hungary, including Slovak, Ukrainian, Russian, Romanian, Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian and German), the database is a rich source for providing research into contacts between the Hungarian and the Indo-European languages (Figure 2).

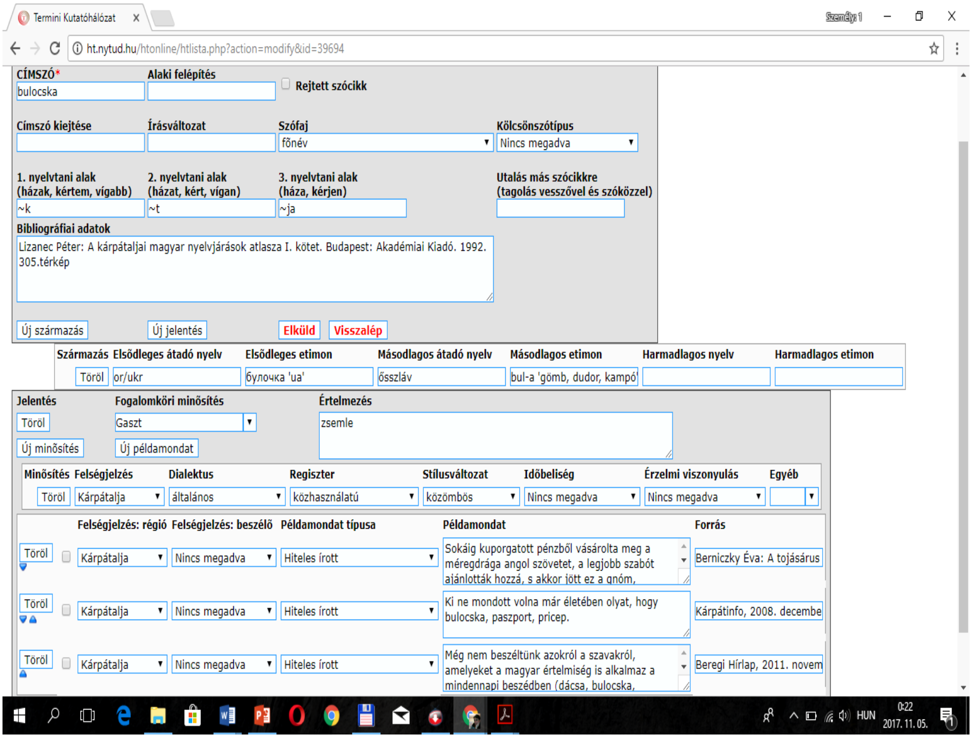

Figure 3. Insight into the editing interface

Finished entries are usually multimodal: in addition to the verbal data of the entry, there is an illustrative image, and from 2020 onwards, more and more articles will contain authentic audio data to help understand the meaning of the word (Figure 4). The online dictionary database can be a basis for expansions of Hungarian monolingual dictionaries. There is already research in the field of pluricentricity of the Hungarian language (see Muhr et. al. eds. 2020), although the lexicon has not been thoroughly studied so far. The result of our Termini-project is a dictionary database that offers an opportunity for comparative analysis of the vocabulary of non-dominant variants of the pluricentric Hungarian (Benő et al. 2021).

Figure 4. Multimodal dictionary entry

As this online dictionary contains direct loanwords from many languages in contact with Hungarian in the Carpathian Basin (mainly the official languages of the neighboring countries: Slovak, Ukrainian, Russian, Romanian, Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, German), the database is a rich source for examining contacts between Hungarian and Indo-European languages. This dictionary is not only different from printed dictionaries, but also from online ones. For external users, this database acts as a collection of words in alphabetical order, that is, more or less a standard dictionary: it contains all the data that average dictionary users need (e.g., spelling, pronunciation, type, origin, conceptual rating, meaning). However, it also contains several types of data that are not usually included in dictionaries (eg. the formal structure of a keyword, its belonging to a type of loanword, bibliographic data on its linguistic processing). This data is not displayed to external users. This is therefore the other face of this dictionary, and this is what makes it an online database.[3]

gripás (mn) ~abb, ~an
(Orv) **Er** *(ált) (közh) (biz)*, **Va** *(ált) (közh) (köz)*, **Hv** *(ált) (közh) (köz)*, **Mv** *(ált) (közh) (biz)* influenzás ♠ Er *Bihar megyében nincs járványveszély, ennek ellenére 5 gripás megbetegedést jegyeztek.* (www.tvs.ro) ♠ Er *Kicsit fáj a balkarom, tegnap édesanyám beadta az oltást, én minden évben megkapom a gripa* elleni oltást, amiután mindig 3 napig fáj a kezem, de nem leszek még véletlenül sem beteg, legalábbis nem gripás. *ez egy nagyon hülyén hangzó szó... valami nincs rendben vele* (kekivansagai.freeblog.hu)
[szrb / ~m gripa 'náthaláz, influenza' / ○ náthás, influenzás < fr grippe 'szeszély, ábrándozás'; 'náthaláz, hurut'],
[~m ← gripa],
[hrv gripa (fn-f) 'náthaláz, influenz < fr grippe (fn-f) 'ua']
(→chripka, chripkajárvány, chripkás, gripa, gripajárvány, gripp, grippe, grippjárvány, kripka, kripkajárvány, kripkás)
Megjegyzés hozzáadása.

gripp (fn) ~ek, ~et, ~je
(Orv) **Ka** *(ált) (szak) (köz)* influenza ♠ Ka *Hűléses megbetegedések, gripp [címben]* (Kárpáti Igaz Szó, 2003. november 29. (177--178. szám), 14. oldal.) ♥= Ka *Az idei gripp különösen súlyos szövődményekkel jár.*
[or грипп 'ua' < fr grippe 'ua']
(→chripka, chripkajárvány, chripkás, gripa, gripajárvány, gripás, grippe, grippes, grippjárvány, kripka, kripkajárvány, kripkás)

Bibliográfiai adatok:
Lizanec Péter: A kárpátaljai magyar nyelvjárások atlasza II. kötet. Ungvár: ?Patent? Kiadó. 1996. 813. térkép.
Megjegyzés hozzáadása.

grippe (grippé) (fn) ~, ~t, ~je
(Orv) **Er** *(ált) (közh) (vál)*, **Őv** *(ált) (közh) (köz)* meghűlés; influenza ♠ Er *Romániában egy új grippe vírus jelent meg.* (www.impulzus.ro) ♠ Er *Közeleg a grippe vírus - figyelmeztet dr. Sátha Ferenc.* (www.pluszportal.ro)

Figure 5. The Standard Hungarian influenza and its variants in Termini online dictionary

Over the course of the project, we explore the similarities and differences that appear in the specific vocabulary of each non-dominant variant. The analysis of the online dictionary database has revealed that a number of loan-words used in the Hungarian language variants in countries neighbouring Hungary are known not only in one, but also in several other regions. Thus, for example, the Standard Hungarian (SH) word "*influenza*" (in English: flu) is a direct borrowing in all regions, and these words are strongly similar-sounding in most regions: RO, SRB, HR, SLO *gripa*, UA *gripp*, A *grippe*, SK *chripka* (Figure 5)

Likewise, we have also found similar words for "*polo shirt*" or "*sleeveless sporting*", in several regions: RO *majó* 'sleeveless singlet/undershirt', UA *májka*

[3] http://termini.nytud.hu/htonline/present.php?action=jelleg

'vest', SRB, HR *majica* 'sleeveless singlet, vest' SLO *májca* 'polo shirt' (SH: *póló / pólóing*). The names for a variety of *soft drinks* are also similar in most regions: RO *szukk* 'soft drink', 'syrup', UA *sok* 'fruit juice' SLO *sok* 'fruit juice', 'soft drink', 'syrup', HR *szók* and SRB *szokk* 'fruit juice', 'soft drink', 'syrup' (SH: *gyümölcslé*).

In single cases, similarities in the entire phonetic form of the word and its meaning extending over several (five, six, seven) regions have occurred among direct borrowings. For instance, RO, SK, A, SRB, HR, SLO *cirkula* 'circular saw' (SH *körfűrész*), SK, SRB, HR, SLO, UA *szesztra* '(hospital) nurse, sick-nurse' (SH *nővér*), SK, SRB, HR, SLO, A, UA *tunel* 'tunnel' (SH *alagút*), SK, SRB, HR, SLO, UA *vetrovka* "windbreaker, trenchcoat" (SH *széldzseki*), etc.

The online version of the dictionary database also contains lexemes that sound alike but have different meanings related to them in each region. For example, the word *blokk* in the database has the following meanings:

1) RO, SK, UA, SRB, HR, SLO residential block, block of flats;
2) UA cardboard (cigarettes);
3) UA, SRB, HR a hollow building block made of clay.

The dictionary of foreign words published in Budapest in 2007 (Tolcsvai Nagy ed. 2007: 137), in addition to the above-mentioned meanings of the word *blokk*, provides 13 additional meanings. For the above 3 meanings, the dictionary specifies that they only occur in the official language use versions of the indicated countries. Numerous loanwords in variants of Hungarian outside Hungary occur not only in verbal communication, but they are also found in newspapers, magazines and fiction. The dictionaries of the Hungarian language, however, have ignored these words for decades since Hungarian normative linguistics did not consider them as part of the Hungarian language, which have entered the language use of minority Hungarian communities as a result of close contacts with the neighbouring states' languages (Csernicskó and Márku 2021).

After the collapse of communist regimes, sociolinguistics has gradually become part of Hungarian linguistics, and – as a result of long professional polemics (Kontra and Saly eds. 1998) – the development of a new language approach has begun, in particular, the revaluation of the language use of Hungarians living in neighbouring states. In 1994, Hungarian linguists in Slovakia raised the question with regard to the words used by Hungarians living outside Hungary: "If the Concise Dictionary of the Hungarian language does not provide space for them, then in what language dictionaries do they have to be dealt with?" (Lanstyák and Szabómihály 1994).

The second revised edition of The Concise Defining Dictionary of Hungarian, published in 2003 (Pusztai ed. 2003), included several words and definitions that are not used in Hungary, but are present in the language used in minority Hungarian regions. Only 383 words in the dictionary that represent the specific elements of the Hungarian language variants that exist outside of Hungary have entered the dictionary. This makes up 0.003% of its entries (Kiss 2004). These words were not included in the dictionary as part of the Hungarian standard in Hungary. In addition to each title, the dictionary indicates that the word is part of the Hungarian standard in Romania, Slovakia or Ukraine. Thus, these lexical elements, together with numerous others, constitute a part of the non-dominant varieties of Hungarian (Máté and Csernicskó 2020). These words display the characteristics of a standard variety and should, therefore, be included in dictionaries that play a significant role in codifying Standard Hungarian. Since The Concise Defining Dictionary of Hungarian (Pusztai ed. 2003), some of the special lexical elements of the Hungarian language varieties outside Hungary have also been included in other dictionaries (Eőry ed. 2007).

These lexical borrowings, along with numerous others, constitute a part of what is best regarded as a Transcarpathian Standard Hungarian variety. As has been argued for by Beregszászi (1997) and Csernicskó (1997), this variant displays the characteristics of a standard variant and should, therefore, be acknowledged as such, along with other regional standards of Hungarian, such as Slovakian Standard Hungarian and Transylvanian (Romanian) Standard Hungarian, and included in dictionaries that play a significant role in codifying Standard Hungarian. In the future, Hungarian dictionaries must be representing not only the Hungarian language in Hungary.

3. Conclusion

Such inclusion of regional standard words in major dictionaries published in Hungary, and the acknowledgement of their source variants that this entails, reinforce the view proposed by Lanstyák (1995a, 1995b) and Lanstyák and Szabómihály (1997), and shared by us, that Hungarian is a pluricentric language (that is, a language with more than one national variant and a different set of linguistic norms, like German, English, Spanish etc.) and should be regarded as such, with all the linguistic and sociolinguistic consequences that this entails.

The Termini Hungarian-Hungarian online dictionary is absolutely innovative and unprecedented. The professional value and social benefits of the dictionary are already significant, as lexicographers, researchers, and university teachers have also collaborated with the Termini Hungarian Language Research Network on the display of cross-border language varieties in newly published Hungarian dictionaries. The database offers plenty of analytical options, so the editors of the dictionary and their regional staff will pay more attention in the future to making the database more accessible for research purposes as well.

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