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

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[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).

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[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 dicționar 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

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[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

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[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

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[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.

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[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.

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[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	Abendkass<u>a</u>	Abendkass<u>e</u>	Abendkass<u>a</u>	Abendkass<u>e</u>
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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