

## Chapter 12:

### The description of pluricentric languages - Methods and measures – A Checklist

This chapter is devoted to the description of PCLs and their NDVs. It identifies general principles and measures. The research question is: Which methods and measures have to be taken to correctly describe PCL and NDVs? The text presents *principles of research on PCLs and a checklist of features that to be researched and methodological measures to be taken.*

#### 1. Basic foundations

1. The description of PCLs belongs to the field of *sociolinguistics, as well as to comparative and descriptive linguistics.*
2. The primary aim of the description of PCLs is to *research the differences and variation that exist between the different varieties.* This also includes linguistic, pragmatic and conversational characteristics of the different varieties of the PCL.
3. *The framework of the description is the territory of the variety - that is the territory of a self-governing entity: a nation state or a self-governing region of a nation state.*
4. *All linguistic elements that are used by the language community of a NDV on the territory of a NV of a PCL have to be taken into account and must be registered according to the common usage by the population (and not only by educated speakers).*
5. *The object of pluricentric research is the language of a self-governing entity (nation state) as a whole and not just the standard variety of the PCL.* The reduction of research to the standard variety leads to the "*normative circle*": *standard is what looks like (dominant) standard.*" It is also insufficient to reduce research to the formal (written) standard, as there are many other formal and informal standards that are of equal importance in their context of use (mentioned in the previous chapter).
6. A standard expression is any expression that the speakers of a variety habitually use with a some frequency in their daily life. They need to be distinguished according to the domain and the social group in which they are used.

7. Standard expressions can be classified according to the 10 criteria outlined in Muhr (2013a: 36f) and must be compared with the expressions of other varieties. They show: (1) internal occurrence, (2) external occurrence, (3) sufficient frequency of use, (4) codification, (5) communicative relevance, (6) awareness/acceptance by the speakers, (7) denotative power, (8) usability, (9) language spread and use in the classroom, (10) Conformity with the given morpho-grammatical system of written language.

In such a codification system, the conformity to the given morpho-grammatical system comes last, because criteria such as frequency of use, communicative relevance and awareness/ acceptance etc. decide about the social-semiotic nature of the linguistic feature.

8. This approach avoids the usual practice to search only for elements that "*deviate from the norm* (of the dominant variety)" and avoids relying solely on the language of the so called "*educated speaker*".

## **2. Key points for the description and codification of PCLs and NDVs**

### **Part 1: Description of general features**

1. Name of the language to which the documented variety(ies) belongs to
2. Other varieties and location(s) of the same language
3. How many varieties are there: dominant/non-dominant?
4. The name(s) of the variety: official name / other name(s)
5. Country of origin of the variety
6. Number of speakers of the variety (estimated or official)
7. Use of the variety: written and spoken or only spoken
8. Writing system/alphabet of the variety: Specific or shared with other varieties?
9. What type of alphabet is used (Latin/Arabic/Cyrillic etc.)?
10. Is the variety intelligible with other varieties of the same language?
11. Linguistic fragmentation: Is there a second level of pluricentricity within the NDV, e.g. pan-regional varieties forming larger areas within the country?

### **Part 2: Key points of the codification of linguistic features**

1. Corpora: Are there electronic text corpora of the NDV?
2. Linguistic features: Are the linguistic features of the variety well studied /

little studied / not studied?

3. pragmatic features: Are the pragmatic features of the variety are well studied / little studied / not studied?
4. Pronunciation: Are there scientific studies / pronunciation dictionary(ies) about the specific phonetic / phonological features of the NDV?
5. Lexicon: Are there scientific studies / dictionary(ies) of the NDV? (Spelling-dictionaries, learner's dictionaries, universal dictionaries, thesaurus, etc.)
6. Grammar: Are there scientific studies on morphology and syntax of the NDV? / Are there complete grammars of the NDV?
7. Pragmatics: Are there scientific studies on the pragmatics of the NDV?
8. Dominant variety and norms: Is the general language norm of the PCL/NDV mainly determined by the dominant variety?
9. Do the NDVs codify their own norms?
10. Which codification strategy is applied? Exonormative or endonormative?
11. Is the codification primarily aimed at linguistic differences or does it include sociolinguistic and pragmatic aspects?

### **Part 3: Describing sociolinguistic characteristics of the NVs**

1. Awareness: Is there linguistic awareness of the features of the PCL / the NDVs in the speaker-community?
2. Linguistic identity: Are the linguistic features part of the individual, social and national identity?
3. Language loyalty: Are speakers of the NDV generally loyal to their variety by avoiding the features of the dominant variety(ies)?
4. Language loyalty of the elites: Are the elites loyal the variety of the community or show a tendency to favour the features of the dominant variety(ies) (linguistic cringe)?
5. Language development / shift: How strong is the linguistic contact between the non-dominant and dominant variety? Is there a shift towards or away from the dominant variety?

### **Part 4: Language Policy / policies of the PCL and in single NDVs**

1. Is there an explicit/implicit language policy concerning the codification, status- and corpus-planning of the NDV?

2. Are there specific measures and institutions for the codification of the NDV?
3. Is there a co-operation between the norm-setting (codifying) institutions of the d-variety(ies) and the NDV?
4. Does the NDV have any impact on the norm(s) of the PCL?
5. How is the variety dealt with in education? Is there an emphasis on the linguistic features of the NDV in primary and secondary education?
6. How are publishing houses dealing with the linguistic features of the NDV in literary works? Are they corrected?