

Language change via satellite

The influence of German television broadcasting on Austrian German

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This article is concerned with media-induced language change in Austrian German (AG) which is caused by language contact with German German (GG) as presented in television programs broadcast via satellite. A detailed overview of the media situation and its impact on a number of linguistic features of AG is given. It is shown that the impact of this language contact is increasing and that it can be directly linked to the amount of TV-viewing time, especially of children. Examples of this are the emergence of the particle *mal* and other colloquial lexical items in informal AG, as well as the replacement of traditional items of core AG lexicon with their GG equivalents. Finally, factors which contribute to the ongoing process of language shift are considered: the relative powerlessness of a small language culture in permanent contact with a powerful one, the prestige of new media and their associated language usages which frequently symbolise modernity and worldliness, and lack of linguistic pride, such that the native variety is considered outmoded and provincial.

1. Introduction

This article focuses on current language change in Austria. At the centre of interest is not language change caused by developments internal to Austrian German itself, but rather changes caused by contact between two varieties of German, German German (GG) and Austrian German (AG). Language contact between AG speakers and GG speakers takes place largely in two contemporary contexts, tourism and television. The influence of tourism has not been investigated thus far; it seems to be concentrated mostly in the West

of the country and is presumably limited, as tourists usually only stay for short periods of time. The influence of television is quite a different matter. Television viewing starts in early childhood and can consume several hours daily. Moreover, the GG films and series which are viewed in large numbers in Austria are almost exclusively presented in Northern German — a variety of German which is linguistically distinct from AG but at the same time has high prestige, its forms being close or identical to codified forms of standard German. This prolonged intensive language contact has intensified since the introduction of satellite TV and private TV stations in Germany in recent years. All public and private TV stations now broadcast via satellite, and can be received day and night in Austria, attracting a large audience among young and very young TV viewers. The present article analyses the impact of this contact on the linguistic behaviour of Austrians as represented in contemporary mass media texts (newspapers and magazines), especially those associated with “youth culture”. The evidence suggests that recent increases in GG television broadcasting to and within Austria are accelerating an ongoing process of language shift from AG to GG.

2. Background to the language situation in Austria

Austria is one of three countries where German is spoken by the majority of the population and has the status of a state language. Austria shares this language with Germany and the German speaking part of Switzerland, and is a geographical neighbour to both countries. With eight million inhabitants, Austria has one-tenth of the population of reunified Germany, which is now at 83 million people.

German is therefore one of those European languages which can be termed “pluricentric” (Clyne 1992, 1995). In its status as a “state language” or “co-state language”, it spreads over several countries and has developed several centres which constitute a certain diversity within the language. This situation holds true for about 20 languages in the world, with English, which is used in 76 countries and spoken by about 450 million speakers, as the most striking example (Crystal, 1998).

With the exception of American and Canadian English, however, the major national varieties of English are geographically separated from each other, whereas the countries with national varieties of German all border on each other. Thus the ways in which national varieties of German develop linguistic

and communicative features of their own are more restricted than for varieties of English, and mutual influence plays an important role.¹ One factor which reduces linguistic diversification is the strong economic connection among the three countries. This is especially true for Austria and Germany, with Austria sharing 40 per cent of its total trade with Germany. Another factor is that five million German tourists visit Austria every year — particularly the western part of the country. Finally, and most importantly for the purposes of the present study, German TV stations broadcast to all parts of the country, bringing GG into almost every Austrian household.

In earlier work (Muhr 1995), I showed that lexical and grammatical shift from AG expressions to GG expressions was already taking place in the early 1990s. Examples of this were the shift from expressions like *angreifen* to *anfassen* (Engl. 'to touch/to attack') in certain phrases, a shift from *der Akt* 'file' to *die Akte*, *das Service* 'service' to *der Service*, etc. Similarly, in an analysis of the lexicon of leaflets and brochures of furniture stores, Glauninger (1995) found that most items were named with GG forms and only a few with the AG forms which otherwise prevail in everyday spoken AG.

It thus appears that ongoing language contact between these two national varieties of German is leading to adaptation and change among AG speakers towards the dominant (GG) variety. Language isolation, in contrast, normally leads to the contrary — the development of features intrinsic to a language or variety. Further evidence that convergence is in the direction of the dominant variety is the fact that only two TV series which are situated in Austria are also broadcast in Germany. In only one case have there been reports that German TV viewers picked up an AG expression from one of these TV series.²

The main source for this ongoing, gradual adaptation of AG to GG seems to be the mass media: specifically, programs broadcast by commercial German TV stations via satellite. This study addresses questions arising from this contact, showing areas of linguistic behaviour where the direct influence of media language of GG origin is already recognisable.

3. The situation of the television media in Austria

Austria has a state-owned TV company which operates two channels, *ORF1* and *ORF2*. At present there are no private TV stations; these will be introduced in 2003. The two national channels are regionalised to a certain degree, as the

national TV company has local studios in every province (*Bundesland*) producing individual programs.

In addition to the two channels broadcast by the national TV company, all German TV stations can be received in Austria. According to data collected by the media research centre of national Austrian TV,³ 38 TV stations could be received via satellite or cable in the year 2001. 23 (or 60.5 per cent) of these stations broadcast from Germany. The media research centre also supplies useful data about the number of households which have access to satellite TV and data about viewers and changes in viewing patterns for each station, especially the German ones. These data (see Table 1) show that by the end of the year 2000, 80 per cent of Austrian households had access to programs other than the national ones via satellite or cable TV.

Cable TV was introduced in Austria in 1984, satellite TV in 1991. The effects of this can be observed in the data of Table 1. In the 1980s there was a slow, gradual increase in the number of cable households, totalling a maximum of 25 per cent. At that time, most of such households were situated in Vienna, the city with the most cable-supplied households in Europe. From 1991 onwards, German commercial TV stations started broadcasting via ASTRA satellites and could be received via satellite dishes, which had become progressively cheaper. This led to a massive increase in households having either cable or satellite TV.

Table 1: Percentage of Austrian Households with Cable TV under Satellite TV

	10	11	13	15	18	20	24	31	42	55	61	67	71	74	75	77	80
% of Cable and Satellite TV Households in Austria																	

Source: 1984-85 Optime; 1985-00 siehe <http://mediaresearch.orf.at/fermb13.htm>, 2000 = 2. Halbjahr © ORF-GNF 2001

4. Television viewing habits of Austrian adults

Austrian TV viewing habits have been measured since 1982. As shown in Table 2, the average TV viewing time of adults living in households with cable TV or satellite TV is 152 minutes per day. This time is almost evenly divided between the national TV station *ORF* (74 min./48 per cent) and the foreign

stations (77 min./52 per cent). An "adult" is defined as any person older than twelve years of age.

Table 2: Viewing Time on Cable TV and Satellite TV of Austrian Adults

	1982										1991										2000																	
	1982		1983		1984		1985		1986		1987		1988		1989		1990		1991		1992		1993		1994		1995		1996		1997		1998		1999		2000	
OFF total	110	93	75	100	78	79	76	81	83	60	66	66	65	71	71	70	74	72	74	110	107	93	128	110	112	108	110	116	53	151	150	147	150	148	145	149	151	62
Foreign TV stations	13	13	5	27	32	33	32	29	32	35	65	84	82	79	77	75	74	77	71	13	13	5	27	32	33	32	29	32	35	65	84	82	79	77	75	74	77	71
TV viewing time per day in min.	110	107	93	128	110	112	108	110	116	53	151	150	147	150	148	145	149	151	62																			

Source: Infratest Jahresbericht 90, ab 1991 Teletest / zum Teil gerundete Werte
 1982-83 Auslandsempfang möglich / 1984-90 Empfang über Kabel / ab 1991 KaSat-Empfang © ORF-GMF 2001

Every Austrian adult who watches TV spends on average one hour and 14 minutes watching foreign TV stations daily. These figures will be considerably higher for the younger generation between 14 to 25 years of age, who consider Austrian national TV unadventurous and boring. As an alternative, they watch private German TV stations, considered in detail in Section 6.

5. Television viewing habits of Austrian children

The data in Table 3 refer to households which have access to cable TV or satellite TV.

Table 3: TV Viewing Time of Austrian Children (<12) on National and Foreign TV Stations 1982-2000

	1982										1991										2000																	
	1982		1983		1984		1985		1986		1987		1988		1989		1990		1991		1992		1993		1994		1995		1996		1997		1998		1999		2000	
National TV total	63	61	60	60	65	61	52	46	48	20	19	20	20	29	28	25	25	24	23	63	61	60	60	65	61	52	46	48	20	19	20	20	29	28	25	25	24	23
Local TV																																						
Foreign TV total	9	3	9	14	19	22	31	30	33	51	54	58	61	56	63	51	49	47	49	9	3	9	14	19	22	31	30	33	51	54	58	61	56	63	51	49	47	49
TV total	72	69	69	74	84	83	79	81	71	72	78	80	88	89	76	74	71	73	72	72	69	69	74	84	83	79	81	71	72	78	80	88	89	76	74	71	73	

Source: Infratest Jahresbericht 90, ab 1991 Teletest / zum Teil gerundete Werte
 1982-83 Auslandsempfang möglich / 1984-90 Empfang über Kabel / ab 1991 KaSat-Empfang
 LTV = Lokal-TV Österreich © ORF-GMF 2001

Table 3 shows a massive decrease over time in the TV viewing time of children (aged three to twelve) watching national TV stations. This fell from 63 minutes per day in 1982 to only 23 minutes (a 63 per cent decrease) in 2000. In contrast,

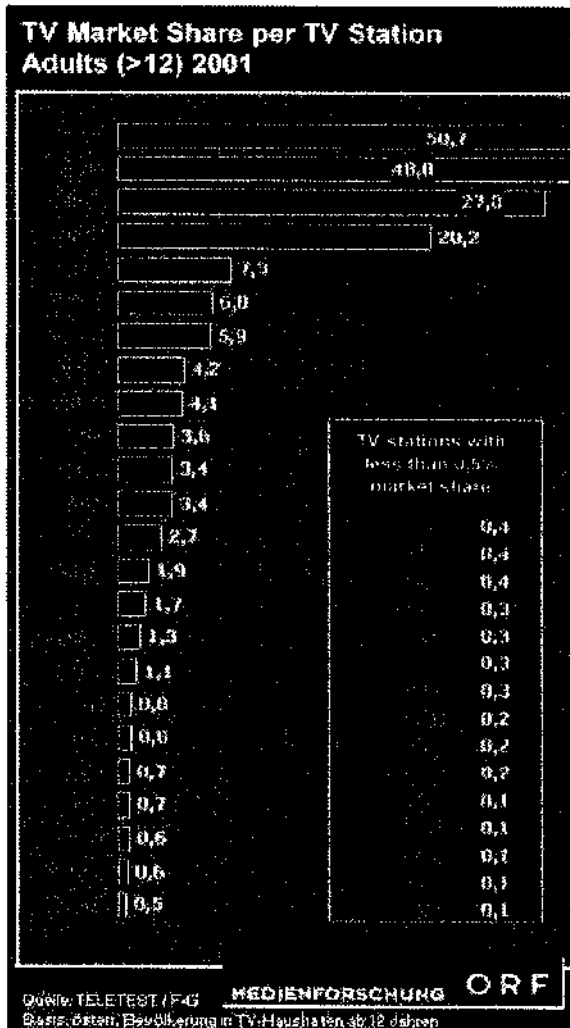
children watch foreign programs 49 minutes every day (67 per cent of their total TV viewing time), whereas only 23 minutes (31 per cent) are spent watching Austrian national TV. The same trend is even more strongly evident among older youth. The 14–25 age group tends to prefer private German TV stations to Austrian national TV, and is exposed to GG media language norms on an average of more than one hour per day. Viewers in the older age group watch up to ten hours of TV per day (see below). Given this level of exposure, and the exposure of younger children, it seems likely that Austrian young people would adapt over time to the linguistic norms modelled in the TV programs.

6. The market share of TV stations in Austria

One might object that access to 38 TV stations makes it unlikely that the majority of viewing time of foreign TV channels will be spent on German TV stations. To find out whether this objection is valid, one must consider the market share of all TV stations in Austria.

Table 4 shows the market share of the national TV station, *ORF* (48 per cent), in comparison to its foreign competitors. All foreign TV stations combined have a market share of 50.7 per cent. The table also shows the market share of 35 individual foreign TV stations. Of these, only three do not broadcast in German and are situated outside Germany. These are *Eurosport* (*EUSP*; 1.1 per cent), *CNN* (1 per cent) and *ORB3* (Polish TV; 1 per cent). It can be concluded from these figures that 49.4 per cent of the total Austrian TV market share, or 97 per cent of the foreign market share, is made up of stations broadcasting from Germany. Thus the typical adult Austrian watches German TV stations for an average of 76 minutes per day.⁴

The amount of TV viewing time is even higher for the 14 to 25-year-old group, and their preference for German TV stations is the highest of all TV viewers.⁵ The authors of a large study on the media consumption habits of Austrian young people (Luger and Starka 1999: 14) conclude that “the popularity of foreign TV stations, particularly the private ones, is strongest in this age group”, with the private German TV station *Pro7* the most popular with a market share of 22.4 per cent. Unfortunately, the data do not contain the ratings for music TV stations like *MTV* and *VIVA 1+2*, which are also very popular with this age group, and would boost the figures even higher. Luger and Starka (1999: 14) further observe that older TV viewers, in contrast, clearly prefer Austrian national TV and its family programs broadcast in the early evening.



Another study by Paischer (1998), based on interviews with 505 youth of the same age group from Salzburg, reported that 60 per cent named *Pro7* as their favourite TV station, 49 per cent listed *RTL* (the largest private German TV station) in second place, and the Austrian national channels *ORF1* (38 per cent) and *ORF2* (22 per cent) followed in third place.

The popularity of TV viewing was confirmed by students attending a business school, who told me last year that they were watching TV up to ten hours per day during the weekends. Apart from going out, this was their main

leisure time activity. It seems inevitable that prolonged exposure to TV language would have some effect on individual linguistic competence and on the language use of Austrian society, as TV viewers are immersed in German German.

7. Additional sources of language contact

A further source of exposure to GG is through the Austrian national TV station. The national TV station devotes a large part of its broadcasting time to films or series of U.S. American origin. Typical examples are long-time series like *Friends*, *Al Bundy*, *Emergency Room*, *Chicago Hope*, *Baywatch*, *Melrose Place*, etc., which in some cases have been running for more than a decade. All American films and series are dubbed in Germany (mostly in Berlin at Wenzel Lüdeke, the largest firm for dubbing films) and broadcast in the translated German version, rather than in a subtitled original version. This means that everyday American language is translated into Northern GG everyday language, including slang and swear words of Northern German origin. The effect is that GG is prevalent even when Austrians watch their national TV.

In addition, several long-running TV programs are jointly produced by ORF together with German TV stations. Examples of these are programs like *Wetten dass* and a number of detective series like *Der Alte*, *Kommissar Rex*, *Derrik*, *Tatort*, *Die Kommissarin*, etc. which, with one exception (*Kommissar Rex*), are situated in Germany and portrayed by German actors. As a result, Northern German sounds quite familiar to the ears of Austrian TV viewers. Indeed, Northern GG is the standard variety of almost all entertainment on Austrian TV, including films, early evening series and detective films. This reinforces the (already strong) exposure arising from the daily viewing of private German TV stations.

8. Evidence of language shift towards German German

Thus far, we have considered evidence that Austrian TV viewers are frequently exposed to German German (and especially, Northern GG) varieties of German. In the following sections, we turn to examine the linguistic changes that are taking place in modern AG in the direction of GG. These changes can be subsumed under the label "language shift", a traditional concern of contact linguistics (see Goebel et al. 1996/1997, and, for lexical borrowing, Haugen 1950).

8.1 *Tschüss*

One of the first changes that was noticed by many Austrian parents was the use of the informal farewell greeting *tschüss* instead of *servus*. The appearance of *tschüss*, which is of GG origin, coincides with the introduction of the children's program *Sesamstraße* 'Sesame Street' in the late 1970s, as one of the first programs jointly produced by the ORF and German TV. *Tschüss* was used by the presenters to sign off from the program, as a marker of a casual, friendly interactional style. Although there are reports that *tschüss* was used in Vienna as early as the late sixties,⁶ it became noticeably more frequent and more widespread in AG in the early eighties, especially in the speech of small children of primary school age. It was strongly opposed by parents, but nevertheless became a common farewell greeting form from then on. It is now quite widely used among all sections of the population, except for the oldest generation and those living in rural areas. A study of Austrian farewell forms done by a group of my students showed that this form is often used in combination with other greeting forms: *tschüss dann*, *tschüss bis morgen*, *tschüss baba*. *Tschüss* is presently experiencing competition from Italian *ciao*, which has become popular in recent years.

8.2 *Mal*

Another striking example of the influence of GG on AG speech is the increase in the use of the modal particle⁷ *mal*⁸ in urban speech of young middle class speakers, as well as in texts of youth culture (contemporary music, video, lifestyle, entertainment etc.) and in marketing-related texts and advertisements.

The communicative function of modal particles is to give an indication of the relation which prevails between the speaker and the hearer. Modal particles are mostly used to downgrade or to intensify the content of the speech act, either as a whole, or selected parts of it. GG speakers usually consider the GG particle *mal* as a politeness marker and indicator of mitigation, whereas AG speakers, on the contrary, consider its use as giving the utterance an aggressive and pushy attitude. The AG equivalent of *mal* is *einmal*, which does not have any negative connotations for AG speakers.

The use of *mal* is a prominent feature of colloquial GG speech, as reflected in TV broadcasts of German origin. It is also used in (American) films dubbed into German, but has thus far not been used in the language of the Austrian media or in Austrian TV series. Thus the main source for the borrowing of the

modal particle *mal* is the colloquial language of the German TV series and dubbed films which are consumed in large numbers by Austrian viewers.

Until a decade ago, there was a striking difference in the frequency and use of modal particles in speech between GG and AG speakers. In an empirical study based on answers to a questionnaire from more than 100 participants, Muhr (1987) found that modal particles like *mal* were at that time almost completely avoided in AG, but were used in large numbers and different combinations by GG speakers. The study also showed that the overwhelming majority of AG speakers tended to use fewer and different modal particles, and avoided combinations of modal particles, particularly with *mal*. The usage of the modal particle *mal* was considered by AG speakers as:

- a. unusual/not customary,
- b. impolite, and,
- c. in the case of combinations like *eben mal*, *gerade mal*, *doch mal*, *schon mal*, particularly impolite.

In a subsequent study of pragmatic features of speech (Muhr 1994), I investigated cross-cultural speech act realisations by means of a discourse completion test. The questionnaire was completed by an equal number of 200 informants (university students) from Austria and Germany. It presented different situations in which requests or apologies had to be realised. One of the situational frames asked the participants to imagine what kind of requests they would use if their flatmate had left the kitchen in a mess, preventing them from preparing a meal. The result was a list of different requests which contained the modal particles summarised in Table 5.

The overall findings of the study were:

- a. The GG informants used 23 instances of *mal*, as compared to only two by AG speakers.
- b. Not a single instance of *mal* was used in combination with other modal particles by the AG speakers, whereas many were used by the GG speakers (see Table 5).
- c. 50 per cent of the GG speakers used at least one modal particle in the situation, as compared to only 21 per cent of the AG speakers.

In the light of these observations, which date back barely one decade, it is striking that the modal particle *mal* has since gained wide acceptance among young urban Austrians, as evidenced in its spread in the language of youth culture. This usage is evident even in written documents. An Internet search on

Table 5. Modal Particles Used in Discourse Completion Test (Muh, 1994)

Austrian speakers		German speakers	
Erst	<i>einmal</i>	Erst	<i>einmal</i>
Dann	<i>einmal</i>	Schon	<i>einmal</i>
Nicht	<i>einmal</i>	Nicht schon	<i>einmal</i>
endlich	<i>einmal</i>	Jetzt	<i>mal</i>
inzwischen	<i>einmal</i>	Gleich	<i>mal</i>
vielleicht	<i>einmal</i>	Schnell	<i>mal</i>
noch	<i>einmal</i>	Schon	<i>mal</i>
		vielleicht endlich	<i>mal</i>
			<i>mal</i>
			<i>mal</i>
			<i>mal</i>
			endlich
			schnell
			hier

www.astronaut.at, the largest search engine for web pages related to Austria, turned up 39,298 documents containing the word *mal*. This number is not an accurate indicator as such, as there is a homonymous form of the word *mal* 'once' which is not a modal particle. Moreover, other adverbial sequences contain *mal* as well, and are included in the count. Unfortunately, there is no grammatically tagged corpus of contemporary Austrian German which could solve this problem. I therefore did a random count on selected search pages and extrapolated the results to the search results as a whole. This indicated that about 15 per cent of the search engine results (or 5895 documents) were instances of the modal particle.

The modal particle *mal* appears in documents related to music, lifestyle, leisure activities, films, games and in advertising. In certain text genres, particularly those connected with music groups and films, a large number of occurrences of *mal* was found. A striking example is the guest book of a rock band (<http://www.take4.at/booknobanner.html>), which contained entries from 153 different fans and 32 instances of *mal*. In the investigated documents, the modal particle *mal* appears to have two main functions:

a. Making a strong appeal to the hearer/reader

In most of these cases, fixed expressions containing *mal* in combination with imperatives are used. Examples of this are:

- (1) *Mach mal Urlaub in Lofer!* (<http://www.muehlpointhof-lofer.com>) 'Take your holidays in Lofer!'
- (2) ... *schau doch einfach mal vorbei.* (<http://www.gasser.at>) 'Just drop in!'

- (3) *Schauen Sie doch mal rein:* (www.sbg.at/staigerwirt) 'Come and have a look!'
- (4) *Studentenaktionen und vieles mehr! Komm' uns doch mal besuchen!* (<http://www.narrenkastl.at>) 'Come and visit us!'
- (5) *Interaktives Österreichisches Automagazin! Bilder/Videos/Berichte/Fun & mehr, einfach mal reinschaun* (<http://goodbye.at>) 'Simply have a look!'

b. Expressing informality, modernity and an attitude of easygoing, causal unaffectedness

Used in this way, *mal* may also indicate that things are done in an easygoing or casual manner. It can sometimes be translated into English as 'just' or 'quite'. Some examples:

- (6) *Oft ist der Chat so überlastet, dass es schon mal mehrere Anläufe brauchen kann, bis das Einloggen in die Gesprächsrunde klappt.* (<http://www.hallo.or.at/inhalt/life02.html>) 'Often the chat forum is so overcrowded that it may (just) take several attempts until access to the chat works.'
- (7) *da kann man ruhig mal weinen!* (<http://www.mophll-world.net/downtown4.htm>) '... then it is quite all right to cry.'
- (8) *Ich steh auch gerne mal hinter dem Geschehen.* (Interview with a hip-hop band). (<http://www.clipcorner.at/>) 'Sometimes I prefer to keep out of the action.'
- (9) *Mal eine andere Frage.* (On an Internet page about the card game "Magic" <http://www.austrian-magic.at/>). 'And now a completely different question.'
- (10) *da schaut man mal nur so ins Gästebuch vom Andi Schörg und findet sich mitten in einer Diskussion um Midifiles und live spielen wieder...* (<http://www.take4.at/booknobanner.html>) '... you're just having a look at Andy Schörg's guest book and find yourself in the middle of a discussion about midi files and playing live on stage...'

In addition to texts such as the above, which adopt an informal tone, official institutions such as state ministries and large public associations also use this modal particle alone and in combination with other modal particles.⁹

- (11) *Mail mal!* (Title of an Internet page of the Austrian ministry of education, asking Internet surfers to send the ministry e-mail answering several questions of interest.) 'Just mail us!'

- (12) *Augenblick mal!* (Headline on the homepage of an Internet site for Austrian families.) 'Just a moment!'
- (13) *Informationen über den Verein und dessen Angebot. Schau einfach mal vorbei!* (On a page inviting Internet surfers to visit the homepage of the Austrian association of youth centres.) 'Just come and have a look around!'
- (14) *Schauen Sie bei uns mal vorbei!* (On an Internet page of the ÖAMTC — the country's largest motorists association.) 'Come by and have a look!'

The particle *mal* also seems to have gained ground in newspaper articles. A search of twelve online newspapers archives showed that it is used in newspaper articles, although it is still a marginal phenomenon compared to its use in documents created especially for the Internet. The largest number of references was found in "lifestyle magazines" and liberal newspapers.¹⁰ These publications seek to convey open-mindedness and a cosmopolitan attitude by an increased use of linguistic and communicative features of the "dominating nation" (Clyne 1992), which in this case is Germany. Most instances of *mal* were found in letters to the editor and in comments in which writers express their personal opinions. The particle functions as a means to tone down the opinion of the writer, perhaps to make it seem less controversial. Some examples:

- (15) *Es reicht nun mal nicht aus zu sagen "Bei uns haben ja eh noch keine Asylantenheime gebrannt, so schlecht geht es den Ausländern bei uns eh nicht".* (In a letter to the editor published in the Austrian weekly magazine NEWS, 30.7.01) 'It's just not enough to say that not a single refugee asylum has been burnt down yet and that, therefore, foreigners seem to be well off in our country anyway.'
- (16) *Wenn man die Mutter eines Sohnes war, war das schon einmal schlimm, dann bestand nämlich schon einmal der Verdacht, dass man wieder einen Patriarchen großzieht. Und natürlich verhätschelt man das Kind, aber ein Sohn darf nicht verhätschelt werden, weil der muss ja mal einer Frau dienen.* (The Austrian writer Anna Migutsch in an interview in *Der Standard*, 5.1.01.) 'Being the mother of a son was bad enough, because that in itself aroused the suspicion that you were bringing up another patriarch. And of course you will spoil the kid. But you are not supposed to spoil your son because he is going to have to serve a woman later on.'

This last example shows that *einmal* and *mal* may be used alternatively and with similar pragmatic effect in the same text.

The use of *mal* in AG has been noticed by critical journalists. One of them, writing in 2001 in the Austrian newspaper *Der Standard*, wrote an entire series of articles on the appearance of this GG language feature, mocking the use of the word but also critically pointing out that Austrians seem to be eagerly picking up everything coming from Germany. This is accomplished in the following article by amassing as many instances of *mal* as possible:

- (17) *Gerade mal*. ... Nun gibt es deutsche Begriffe, bei denen es gerade mal völlig unmöglich schien, daß sie mal eben mühelos den österreichischen Sprachschatz erobern könnten. Aber wenn eine deutsche Redensart mal eben ins Österreichische eingeflossen ist, dann fällt das hierzulande gerade mal keinem mehr auf. Bisher fanden wir mit "bislang" gerade mal eben das Auslangen. "Gerade mal" hat uns mal eben gerade noch gefehlt. 'Gerade mal 'just like that'. ... Now there are German terms which you just wouldn't think could possibly invade Austrian vocabulary as easily as that. But as soon as a German German expression has just sort of slipped into the Austrian language, nobody here pretty much even notices. Until now we were quite happy to use *bislang* 'so far'. And *gerade mal* was really all we needed.' (Daniel Glattauer in *Der Standard*, 23.4.01)

Further evidence of the GG source of the current usage of *mal* is the fact that occurrences of *mal* are often accompanied by other GG lexical items, some of which are unknown or rarely used in Austria. In the data examined for this article, the following GG expressions co-occurred with *mal*:

flätzen 'to relax' (virtually unknown in AG; no equivalent)

Werbe-Gequatsche 'advertisement jabbering'

Abo (short form of French *Abonnement*) 'subscription'

Bevor gebuddelt wird... 'Before there's any digging...'

Noch 'ne Sendung mit der Maus (*Noch 'ne* is a colloquial GG form of *Noch eine*) 'another program with the mouse'

8.3 Colloquial expressions

The influence of GG is particularly strong within the lexicon of colloquial expressions commonly used in the dialogues of dubbed action films. Such expressions often have an emotional meaning component, and include swear words, terms of abuse and expressions of anger, fear or aggression. One example is the word *verarschen*, which is of GG origin and is used often in dubbed dialogues. *Verarschen* has a number of different meanings, the most

common of which is 'to make an ass of s.o., to ridicule someone, to have someone on, to make fun of someone'. In AG the usual expression for this semantic field is *jemand pflanzen*, which literally means 'to plant someone'. In the spoken language of the younger generations (ten to twenty-five years), *pflanzen* has been entirely replaced by *verarschen*.

As it is a very vulgar word, *verarschen* is not normally found in daily newspapers, except as a quoted form. I therefore did a search on the Austrian search engine *astronaut.at* to determine whether the word is in use in written documents on the Internet. The search yielded 177 documents containing the word, showing that it also has a noun form *Verarschung* which has additional meanings such as 'practical joke', 'satire', 'pun', etc.¹¹ *Verarschen/Verarschung* has become so widespread in usage that it is now turning up on "serious" Internet pages like announcements of seminars, book reviews and texts of alternative political groups situated in large urban areas. Some examples follow:

- (18) *Das besonders große Desinteresse an Politik bei jungen Menschen schließe ich daraus, dass Jugendliche sich 'verarscht' vorkommen, weil sie nie ernst genommen werden und nur mit leeren Versprechungen abgespeist werden.* (In an Internet document of the "Young Greens" describing their political program for young voters.) 'Young people's lack of interest in politics can be assumed to originate in the fact that many youths feel that they are being ridiculed. They feel that they have never been taken seriously and that they have been put off with empty promises.'
- (19) *Verarsche Dich täglich, das ist die beste Möglichkeit der Zukunft mit einem Lächeln ins Auge zu sehen!* (Initial quotation in an announcement of a theatre workshop organised by a large Austrian newspaper and a free theatre group.) 'Make an ass of yourself. That's the best way to face the future with a smile.'
- (20) *Die Sendung mit der Maus — Verarschung, genial. Noch 'ne Sendung mit der Maus — Verarschung.* (Found on an Internet fun page, presenting videos which make fun of well known TV programs.) '“The Mouse Program”, what a great send-up. Another “Mouse Program” — a send-up.'

Example (20) shows an interesting and quite common feature which consists in imitating GG speech behaviour in written form: *Noch 'ne Verarschung*. This is spoken language of Northern German origin commonly used in dubbed dialogues of American series. Several other references of this kind were also found, including the following from a review of the film *Dogma*, which was shown in Austrian cinemas in 2000:

- (21) *Überhaupt lernt man hier einiges über Kirche und Religion, und der Film bringt nebenbei noch eine durchaus ernst gemeinte Message 'herüber' — nämlich, daß dem totalen Verlust des Glaubens auch der Verlust der Lebenslust folgt und der Mensch unaufhaltsam in eine Krise schlittert. Hey, glaubt doch alle was Ihr wollt. Ich glaub, ich brauch jetzt 'ne Zigarette. Der Film ist ein Hammer. 'Generally, the film teaches you a lot about church and religion, and in addition, it conveys a serious message: that a loss of faith entails a loss of joy, leading mankind unstopably into crisis. Believe whatever you want. I think I really need a cigarette now. The movie is a killer.'*

Other examples of the recent lexical borrowing of colloquial expressions from GG into AG are:

- (22) *Kohle haben/Kohle machen* (cf. AG: *Geld haben/Geld verdienen*) 'to have money/to make money'
- (23) *was drauf haben* (cf. AG: *gut sein*) 'to be skilled/good in one's profession'
- (24) *lecker sein* (cf. AG: *gut schmecken*) 'to be delicious'
- (25) *pennen* (cf. AG: *büßeln, pfeifen*) 'to sleep'. The noun form *Penner* Br. 'tramp', Am. 'bum' has not yet been borrowed. The AG equivalent is *Sandler* 'a good for nothing'.
- (26) *Quasselforum für Quasselstrippen* (cf. AG: no equivalent, 'chat forum for chatterboxes'.) (Headline on the homepage of an Internet site for Austrian families.)
- (27) *Das geht mir auf den Arsch* (cf. AG: *das zipft mich an*) 'That is pissing me off/getting on my nerves'
- (28) *kotzen* (cf. AG: *brechen/speiben*) 'to puke/throw up'

8.4 Core lexicon

Like most national varieties, AG possesses a core vocabulary which is rich in lexical fields like alimentation, household goods, institutional language, etc. Language change is taking place in this core vocabulary as well, under pressure from the influx of GG TV language. Below are several illustrative examples:

a. The case of *Verkühlung* being replaced by *Erkältung*

Until about 1981, the only AG standard expression for 'to have a cold' was *Verkühlung/verkühlt sein*. At that time, commercial TV spots were introduced

on Austrian TV showing an increasing number of ads which praised medications produced by German firms against the common cold. The GG word was first used in medical centres and in businesses dealing with health and health-care. Now it has almost completely replaced the AG word. An Internet search using different Austrian search engines turned up 902 documents for *erkälten*, as compared to only 158 documents with the word *verköhlen* or forms of both words. In example (29), which comes from the Web page of a fashionable health club, the AG word *verköhlen* is even called "antiquated".

- (29) *Jetzt wird es wohl endgültig wieder kühl und feucht werden. Mit Herbst und Winter kommen die Verkühlungen. Dieses fast schon antiquiert klingende Wort ist doch um einiges bildhafter und aussagekräftiger als der moderne Ausdruck des "grippalen Infektes".* (http://www.bioclub.at/z5_grippezeit.htm) 'Looks like it's finally getting cold and damp again. Fall and winter bring in the colds. This word (*Verkühlung*), which sounds almost antiquated, is much more illustrative and meaningful than the modern term "grippaler Infekt".'

Some other examples:

- (30) *Erkältungsalmanach: Egal ob Sommer oder Winter, eine Erkältung droht immer dann, wenn man zu lange in der Kälte steht, friert und womöglich auch noch naß wird. Aber nicht die Kälte ist die eigentliche Ursache für die Erkältung, sondern Viren und Bakterien.* (<http://www.solvopret.at/almanach.html>) (From a health advisory page) 'Cold Almanac: Summer or winter, a cold is always imminent if you spend too much time in the cold, if you're freezing and also get wet. But it's not the cold that is the true reason for colds, but viruses and bacteria.'
- (31) *Eine harmlose Erkältung?* (On an Internet page of the medical school of the university of Vienna presenting a case study. — <http://www.unet.univie.ac.at/~a9204828/fallerkaeltung.htm>) 'A harmless cold?'
- (32) *Auch bei Erkältungen kann ohne Risiken weitertrainiert werden. Verkühlungen und Schnupfen sind noch lange kein Grund, auf Fitness-Training und Sport zu verzichten, lautet das Resümee einer aktuellen Studie, die in der amerikanischen Fachzeitschrift Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise veröffentlicht wurde. Für diese Untersuchung ließen sich 50 gesunde Studenten mit Rhinoviren, den Erregern von Erkältungen der oberen Atemwege, infizieren.* (*Der Standard*, 17.2.99, p.44) 'Working out can even be continued in the case of a cold. Colds and sneezes are no excuse to do without workouts and sports. This is the result of a current

study which has been published in the American journal *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*. In the course of the study, 50 healthy students were infected with rhinoviruses, which are the pathogens of the upper respiratory tract.'

This example shows that both words can appear in the same text. However, *Verkühlung* is usually outnumbered by *Erkältung*.

b. The case of *in der Früh/die Früh* being replaced by *morgens/am Morgen*

A more recent shift is the replacement of the expressions *in der Früh* and *die Früh* 'in the morning/the morning', which typically describe the time between sunrise and 8:30 am. In GG, *der Morgen* refers not only to the early morning, but also (as in English) to the first half of the day. Interestingly, the loan word has not replaced the word *Vormittag* 'morning', but rather seems to be confined to the replacement of only a part of the meaning of the AG word. Some examples:

- (33) *Ein 10-jähriger Bub kommt im Frühsommer in Begleitung seiner Mutter zum praktischen Arzt. Die Mutter gibt an, daß der Bub seit Beginn des Frühjahrs während der Nacht — besonders zwischen 2 und 4 Uhr morgens — hustet.*
(On the Web page of the medical school of the university of Vienna — <http://www.unet.univie.ac.at/~a9204828/fallerkaeltung.htm>) 'Accompanied by his mother, a ten-year-old boy goes to the doctor in early summer. The mother explains to the doctor that her son has been coughing every night since the beginning of spring. It is especially bad in the morning between 2 and 4 a.m.'
- (34) *KIZ News — Morgens um sieben. Das KIZ Team stellt sich vor: Geschichte — Kindergarten — Schüler — Nachmittagsbetreuung.*
(On the Web page of a Vienna child care centre.) '7 am. The KIZ team introduces itself: History, kindergarten, students, afternoon care.'
- (35) *Spezielle Kontaktlinsen die man morgens abnimmt und weiter scharf sieht?*
(On an internet page of an optician — <http://www.fachoptiker.at/leserbriefe/brief102.htm>) 'Special contact lenses that you can take out in the morning and you will still be able to see clearly?'
- (36) *Meine Frau glaubt immer, ich sei morgens nicht ganz wach — wie unsinnig. Witze, kostenlos Spiele, SMS Sprüche, Handy Logos, Bilder, Psychotests...* (On an Austrian fun page — http://www.witzig.at/buero_02.htm) 'My wife always thinks I'm not fully awake in the morning — how stupid.'

Jokes, free games, SMS quotes, logos for mobile phones, pictures, psycho tests...'

c. Other core lexical items under pressure from GG equivalents¹²

Bub/Bursch vs. *Junge* 'boy/young man'

Both words are under pressure as many children nowadays listen to audio cassettes and watch dubbed films where *Junge* is the only form used.

Paradeiser vs. *Tomate* 'tomato'

This well-known Austrian word comes from *Paradeisapfel* 'apple of paradise'. It has been almost entirely replaced by the GG form *Tomate* (originally from French). The main reason appears to be the use of *Tomate* in advertisements and by food producers and retailers exporting their products to Austria. *Paradeiser* primarily remains in use in compound words like *Paradeissuppe* 'tomato soup' and *Paradeissalat* 'tomato salad'.

Schlagobers/Obers vs. *Sahne/Schlagsahne* 'whipped cream'

The AG terms are still used in the East of the country but have been largely replaced in the West where there is an influence from GG caused by tourists from Germany. The GG terms are also used in films and in advertisements on TV and radio.

Heraus/hinein vs. *Raus/rein*

The deictic adverbs *heraus* 'out' and *hinein* 'in' are more and more often replaced by the GG short forms *raus* and *rein*. These forms are typical for informal spoken language, and seem to be influenced especially by the language of dubbed films.

8.5 Grammatical changes

The national varieties of German differ most in lexicon and pronunciation, and less so in grammar, at least at the level of formal standard language. Accordingly, grammatical changes in AG in the direction of GG are less evident than lexical borrowing. However, some such changes are discernible, and can be related to the influence of GG as used in mass media programming.

a. Change of gender in certain nouns

A certain number of nouns have a different gender in AG than in GG. Three of them are in the process of taking on the gender used in GG. They are:

- *der Akt* — *die Akte* 'file' This case can be attributed directly to the title of the American series *Die Akte X* — 'The X-files' (the secret files of the FBI).
- *Der Einser* — *Die Eins* 'A-grade' Grades in school are masculine in AG, but feminine in GG.
- *Der Schranken* — *Die Schranke* ('barrier') Again the AG masculine form is being replaced by the GG feminine form.

b. Change of the perfect auxiliary verb *sein* in AG towards the auxiliary *haben* with certain verbs of movement

In AG (as in Swiss German and in southern German German varieties), a restricted number of verbs (*liegen, stehen, sitzen* 'to lie down', 'to stand', 'to sit') constructs the present perfect tense in AG with the copula verb *sein* instead of *haben*, as in Northern German. The verb *stehen* increasingly takes *haben* instead of *sein* for the perfect tense in AG. *Haben* is used exclusively with *stehen* in dubbed films broadcast on German TV stations.

Other grammatical changes are not directly attributable to GG, but rather to the influence of English on German in general.¹³ This influence is mediated by broadcasts in GG, especially dubbed films which Northern German dubbing firms import to Austria. Examples of this include:

c. Use of the modal verb *lassen* in the construction *lass uns was machen*

This construction seems to be a direct translation of the English 'Let us make/do something'. The usual way to express this in AG would have been to say *Komm, machen wir was!* 'Come on, let's do something.' The English-based calque first started to be used in the 1980s.

d. Increased use of constructions with the verb *machen*

Examples of this are analytical constructions like *Geld machen* 'earn money', *Liebe machen* 'make love', and *etwas macht Sinn* 'something makes sense'. Formerly their content was expressed by semantically full verbs: *Geld verdienen*, *sich lieben*, or in the case of *Sinn machen*, the expression *Sinn haben*. The expression *Sinn machen* is quite recent.

9. Conclusion

In this article, evidence has been presented that mass media, and particularly satellite television broadcasting, is creating an intensified situation of language contact that is resulting in accelerated language shift on the part of a smaller national variety of German, Austrian German, in the direction of a dominant national variety, German German. As such, it supports the sociolinguistic principle that contact leads to convergence (Weinreich 1953), and adds to the literature an illustration of how a mass medium can create new kinds of contact situations.

The process involved in the AG case involves several key components. First, a new communication technology (in this case, a broadcast technology that diffuses news but also entertainment) is introduced into a situation of relatively stable contact based on geographical proximity, trade relations, and a shared language (German, broadly defined). This technology becomes popular and ubiquitous, such that it makes its way into nearly every home. Reflecting economic and political realities, the new technology disproportionately and asymmetrically communicates norms and practices of a dominant group — in this case, Germans in Germany — to a smaller, regionally-defined group — Austrians. As a result, the exposure of Austrian German speakers to German German has increased significantly in a relatively short period of time. Austrians have now become well acquainted with German German and do not consider this variety as particularly foreign to them.

Austrian speakers gradually adopt more and more GG words and expressions, incorporating them first into their speech (especially in colloquial usage), and then into the written language. The Internet as a context of written language tends to be more informal than traditional forms of print media such as newspapers, and hence colloquial GG borrowings appear more commonly in the former than the latter, especially in contexts of advertising and youth culture where a friendly, casual tone is desired. At an advanced stage of spread, some (such as *mal*) make their way into newspapers, albeit not without resistance (cf. example 17). Individual lexical items and phrases are the words most often borrowed, along with some grammatical features and constructions, including calques borrowed into GG from English. The borrowed forms in many cases compete with AG forms, and sometimes effectively replace them (e.g. *erkälten*).

Various social factors facilitate this borrowing. First, Austrians tend to adopt GG forms easily, as they assume that the GG variants are better or more

standard than their own expressions. This reflects the relative size, political power, and global prestige of Germany in relation to Austria. Young people are especially susceptible to this perception, as they pass through a stage of restlessness and seek to define themselves in contrast to the local values represented by their parents' generation. To this we may add the prestige of new media *themselves, which frequently symbolise modernity and worldliness*. Thus the informal standard of dubbed films has become a reference point for the informal speech behaviour of youth between the ages of twelve and 20, who use GG swear words, slang expressions and colloquial terms to index values outside those of their regional culture.

These media-induced changes must be considered against a general background of language change in Austria, whereby forms evolve due to internal forces and in some cases are replaced by words in other languages due to external forces.¹⁴ To a certain extent, external changes can be accommodated without threatening the identity of the language. However, the overall effect of continuing external change is a gradual fading out of certain traditional Austrian linguistic features, which then become restricted to the spoken language of the older generation, socially powerless groups and/or regional varieties. At the very least, television-induced contact with GG is accelerating this effect. It is unclear at the present time how far this process of accommodation will go, and what the reaction of the Austrian society will be.

Notes

1. An overview of the Austrian German situation is given in Muhr et al. (1995) and Muhr and Schrodt (1997). The effects of external linguistic and pragmatic influence are dealt with in detail in Muhr (1995).
2. The detective series *Kommissar REX* 'Detective REX' stars a dog which helps its owner — a police detective — solve complicated crime cases. As the dog likes sausage-spread rolls (*Wurstsemmel*), in every series there is a particular scene where the dog performs tricks in order to obtain those rolls.
3. All data on TV viewing habits and market share of TV stations in Austria are taken from the ORF Teletest, which is the official institution for the measurement of data concerning TV consumption. The actual data can be accessed via Internet at the following address: <http://mediaresearch.orf.at/fernsehen.htm>. The tables have been translated and reduced in detail when the data were not relevant to the purposes of the present study.
4. This number was calculated by multiplying the number of minutes of adult foreign TV viewing in the year 2000 in Table 2 by 97 per cent.

5. The results of a survey on the TV viewing habits of young Austrians and their relation to different lifestyles are reported in Parschalk (1998).
6. I would like to thank Eva Wächter for this information.
7. Modal particles are lexical elements which cannot be inflected and are dependent on other elements to which they are usually attached, in the sense that they are not movable to other positions in the sentence without them.
8. The particle *mal* cannot be directly translated, as it is a politeness indicator which has no equivalent in English. The most common ways to express its meaning are elements like 'please' and modal verbs (*Könntest du mir mal helfen?* 'Could you please help me?').
9. This seems to be a completely new development. It is possible that the Internet itself is exercising an influence towards greater informality (cf. Herring 1998). As such, the Internet may effectively be accelerating the diffusion of GG forms, which enter AG first through the spoken language (e.g. via TV), into written AG.
10. Here again it is not possible to give exact figures, as the search results are a mixture of different semantic types of the word *mal* which cannot be differentiated using available search criteria. Extrapolations from random counts of combinations of *mal* with other modal particles revealed about 400 instances of the word in all issues of the mainstream Austrian newspaper *Der Standard* since 1996. In contrast, a random count of *mal* in the weekly lifestyle magazine *News* showed ten instances in one issue alone.
11. The nearest AG equivalent would be *Pflanzerei* 'bad joke' which was used until recently throughout Austria. *Pflanzerei* has a slightly different meaning from *Verarschung*, as it only refers to 'making fun of a person', whereas the newcomer word also entails meanings like 'making fun of products/institutions/ideas'.
12. This list can only give a glimpse of many ongoing changes.
13. The influence of English on German and other European languages is dealt with in a new publication: Muhr and Kettermann (2002).
14. Muhr (1981) reports a similar case of shift in the south of Burgenland (an Austrian province). Lexical and phonological forms of the local dialect were replaced within a decade by the supra-regional forms of Vienna and Eastern Austria due to the fact that many residents had started commuting to Vienna and other cities. The two cases have in common intensive language contact, and lesser prestige of the "smaller" variety.

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