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Herausgegeben von Rudolf Muhr und Richard Schrodtt

Rudolf Muhr (Hrsg./ed.)

## **Standardvariationen und Sprachideologien in verschiedenen Sprachkulturen der Welt**

## **Standard Variations and Language Ideologies in Different Language Cultures around the World**

**4**

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## **Vorwort / Preface**

Der vorliegende Sammelband umfasst 27 Beiträge der Sektion 6.1 “Standardvariationen und Sprachauffassungen in verschiedenen Sprachkulturen” der internationalen Tagung “Das Verbindende der Kulturen / The Unifying Aspects of Cultures”, die vom “Research Institute for Austrian and International Literature and Cultural Studies (INST)” ([www.inst.at](http://www.inst.at)) organisiert wurde und vom 7.-9. November 2003 in Wien stattfand. Herrn Herbert Arlt, dem wissenschaftlichen Direktor des INST, für sein unermüdliches Engagement und das Zustandekommen dieser großen Tagung gedankt.

Das große Interesse am Sektionsthema hat mich als Organisator der Sektion angenehm überrascht und veranlasst, die Arbeiten zusätzlich zu den Kongressakten als gesonderten Band herauszugeben, da der Frage der “Sprachauffassungen/Sprachideologien” in der Linguistik bisher keine übermäßig große Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt wurde. Die Beiträge gehören zu fünf Themenbereichen: (1) Standardvariation in plurizentrischen Sprachen und damit verbundene Fragen wie die Festlegung der “korrekten” Norm sowie Einstellungen zur eigenen oder anderen Varietäten. (2) Die Behandlung von Standardvarianten bei der Kodifizierung bzw. im Übersetzungsprozess. (3) Sprachauffassungen in verschiedenen Sprachkulturen bezüglich des Einflusses aus dominierenden Sprachen wie dem Englischen, Deutschen oder Französischen. (4) Sprachauffassungen in europäischen bzw. amerikanischen Minderheitensprachen bzw. in Sprachen Mittel- oder Südamerikas. (5) Soziale Auffassungen kodiert im Lexikon als kulturelle Basisbegriffe bzw. Elemente zum Ausdruck von Emotionen.

Der Sammelband umfasst Arbeiten zu insgesamt 23 Sprachen, respektive nationalen Varietäten in 20 Ländern/Regionen der Welt: Amerikanisches Spanisch, Marrokanisches Arabisch, Belgisches Niederländisch, Deutsch, Doukhobor Russisch, Englisch, Guaraní, Hutterer-Deutsch, Japanisch, Kroatisch, Maya, Nahuatl, Österreichisches Deutsch, Quechua, Romani, Russisch, Schweizerisches Deutsch, Serbisch, Spanisch, Tok Pisin, Tzotzil, Türkisch, Ungarisch. Sie behandeln ein breites Spektrum an Fragen, die in verschiedenen Sprachkulturen mit dem Konzept der “Sprachauffassungen/Sprachideologien” verbunden sind. Als Herausgeber hoffe ich, dass die Darstellungen reges Interesse finden und der Anknüpfungspunkt für weitere Forschungen sein werden.

Rudolf Muhr

Graz, im November 2004

## **Preface / Vorwort**

This volume comprises 27 papers of section 6.1 “Standardvariations and Language Conceptions in different Language Cultures” of the international conference “Das Verbindende der Kulturen / The Unifying Aspects of Cultures”, which was organised by the “Research Institute for Austrian and International Literature and Cultural Studies (INST)” ([www.inst.at](http://www.inst.at)) and held in Vienna/Austria from 7.-9. November 2003. I would like to thank Mr. Herbert Arlt, the scientific director of the INST for his never ending engagement and his skill in organising this huge conference.

The enormous interest in the theme of the section was a positive surprise for me and encouraged me to publish the papers of the section as a separate volume additionally to the proceedings of the conference. This seems also justified by the fact that the question of “language ideologies” has not caused much interest in linguistics so far. The papers fall into 5 thematic sections: (1) Standard variations in pluricentric languages and questions arising from finding a “correct” norm as well as attitudes to the own and to other varieties. (2) The treatment of standard varieties during codification and in translation. (3) Language ideologies in different language cultures in respect to the influence coming from dominating languages like English, German or French. (4) Language ideologies in European and American minority languages and in languages in Meso-America and in South-America. (5) Social attitudes codified in the lexicon as cultural core terms or as elements for the expression of emotions.

The papers of this volume deal with 23 languages/national varieties in 20 countries/regions of the world: American Spanish, Moroccan Arabic, Belgian Dutch, German, Doukhobor Russian, English, Guaraní, Hutterer-German, Japanese, Croatian, Maya, Nahuatl, Austrian German, Quechua, Romani, Russian, Swiss German, Serbian, Spanish, Tok Pisin, Tzotzil, Turkish, Hungarian. The papers also deal with a wide range of questions connected with language conceptions in different language cultures. As editor of this volume, it is my hope that the results presented here will find a large number of readers and stimulate further research.

Rudolf Muhr

Graz, in November 2004

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# **Language Attitudes and language conceptions in non-dominating varieties of pluricentric languages**

### **Abstract**

The paper examines the attitudes and language conceptions of dominating and non-dominating language communities of pluricentric languages which differ in many ways. It is shown that in dominating nations the one-nation-one-language concept is an undisputed basic concept which is shared by most speakers of these varieties and brings about a clear distinction between linguistic „standard“ and „nonstandard-forms“. Contrary to this speakers of non-dominating varieties find themselves under pressure to legitimate their „deviating“ language behavior, even though they might use the standard variety of their country. The situation also leads to a kind of „diglossia“ between the own national norms and the exogene norms of the dominating nation. The paper also looks at the psychological effects of this situation and at possible ways to overcome them. It is shown that the non-dominating varieties face a dilemma as a thorough codification of their actual linguistic norms sooner or later leads to a separation from the norms of the dominating variety and to the development of a language of it's own.

### **1. Non-dominating varieties of languages – A brief definition**

The terminology “dominating” – “other varieties” (= non-dominating) has been introduced into sociolinguistics by M. Clyne in his 1992 anthology „Pluricentric languages – Differing norms in differing nations. Dominating varieties (DV) are usually identical to the varieties of the country where the language originates. In most cases the DV are also the ones with the largest population and the most powerful country behind them. Non-dominating varieties (NDV) are the varieties in all the other countries sharing that

language – quite often they are also the “younger” ones. This is the case with Chinese, Dutch, German, French, Greek, and Swedish which are typical examples of “asymmetrical pluricentricity”<sup>1</sup>, while Arab and English are examples of more “symmetrical pluricentricity” (at least for the major varieties). Portuguese is an example where the power relation has been reversed – all “new” varieties, especially Brazilian Portuguese have larger populations than the “mother variety”. The language situation of the “other varieties” therefore differs considerably from language to language. Languages which are rather relaxed in respect to the inner-linguistic divisions are Arab, English, Spanish and to some extent Portuguese.

## **2. Introduction – The believes of monocentric language communities**

To begin with I would like to present a quotation from George Lüdis article on „French as a pluricentric language“ (1992:153f) which describes some central notions of linguistic and cultural monocentrism which are often shared by speakers of dominating varieties of pluricentric languages:

„Monoglossic unilingualism has indeed often been seen not only as warranty for the unity of the nation but also for the salvation of its citizens.“ And French is not an exception to this attitude but rather a forerunner and model.“ ... The key term of the centralist and monoglossic linguistic ideology developed in the seventeenth century was *bon usage* i.e. correct usage. Vaguelas conceived the idea that there is one unique *bon usage* (that of the elite: „the sanest part of the court“) and many „bad usages“ (those of the majority of the speakers), the concept „bad usage“ including social as well regional deviations from the norm.“

This short quotation assembles all the central notions of monocentric believes. Following on from this and from observations of other pluricentric languages, the core of monocentric conceptions of languages can be summed up in six points:

- (1) There is only one language with a certain name (French, German etc.) and there is only one language norm for it.
- (2) A specific nation is represented by that language and the nation represents that language as its most valuable asset and symbol.
- (3) Any person belonging to that nation is supposed to speak only one

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<sup>1</sup> Clyne (1992: 455)

variety of that language – the norm – which is the only correct one. This is to be done in all communicative situations be they private or official ones.

- (4) The „good and correct usage“ of the language is only achieved by a small minority. The majority of the speakers are not in command of this kind of language which makes the norm the elite’s social dialect and anyone wanting to belong to them has to adopt and to adapt to this norm.
- (5) The norm of the language is decided at the centre of the nation – in and around the capital city and thus denying any participation to the periphery of the language.
- (6) The central objectives of monocentric language policies are to fight moves which potentially endanger the unity of the language and to spread the language to other countries and regions of the world in those cases where the language is backed by a demographically and economically powerful nation.

The central notions of monocentrism can thus be summed up under the following terms: *centralist, elitist, monolingual, mono-normative and derogatory towards non-core-norm speakers.*

Every single point in this concept is basically contrary to the principles of democracy which most countries now have now adopted as their governing system. If democracy means participation, plurality and the right to express this plurality via political participation by forming political bodies and institutions these principles seem to fail completely with respect to national languages and in particular to pluricentric languages. They are still governed by the idea of one-to-one uniqueness towards other languages in quietly neglecting the national variation which usually exists within the language itself. This is justified by arguments of the necessity of having a single standard and that the linguistic life of modern industrialist societies would become too confused and unstable if too much variation were allowed.

My list of monocentric features may sound very extremist and will probably cause objections such as that no known language entirely pursues all these features. This list is therefore rather hypothetical and only typical for asymmetrical pluricentricity. I think that such an objection is correct to some

extent. However, this does not make the list of features invalid as different languages use a mix of these features when we take a closer look at them.

The reason for starting off with a description of language attitudes which are typical for in monocentric languages or dominating varieties is that non-dominating varieties (NDV) are strongly influenced by the attitudes of their dominating sisters. Additionally, this list contains all the counterpoints which NDV have to cope with in maintaining their variety. The list also explains many sociolinguistic and socio-psychological phenomena which occur in NDV and also to some extent the differences in the linguistic self-confidence of the language communities of dominating and non-dominating nations which themselves differ largely, - depending on the general language situation of the particular pluricentric language.

The scope of the problem is clarified by a little anecdote told by Thompson (1992:55) who reported a conversation with the Peruvian linguist Alberto Escobar. In 1975 he had travelled to the USA and on the way had met colleagues from universities in Quito (Ecuador), Bogotá (Columbia) Caracas (Venezuela), San Juan (Puerto Rico), Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) and in the USA. He was pleased to find "that Spanish was really one language and that slight differences in phonology, lexicon and syntax were more exciting topics for discussion than barriers to communication." On the return flight he stopped at the same cities but this time without guides, sleeping in modest hotels and eating in popular cafes and restaurants. After this trip he concluded that "it would have been easy to believe that in each of the seven countries a different language was spoken, and each one was unintelligible to the inhabitants of the next".

This anecdote makes what we are talking about here clear: It is the relation between language and identity, the relation between language and power and the linguistic divisions existing within the linguistic communities and countries sharing a pluricentric language.

### **3. The language situation and language conceptions in non-dominating varieties of pluricentric languages**

Taking the monocentric language conceptions as a starting point we can now give an outline of the precarious language situation of most NDV. Important features of that situation are:

- (1) There is a split between language and nation – the nation cannot (primarily) be represented through the official language of the country as it is shared with other countries and its ownership is often symbolically occupied by the dominating nation. It is not possible to link the individual identity to the national language and to argue that one is “Austrian” or “Belgian” because one’s native language is “German” or “Dutch” etc.
- (2) A common reaction to this situation is a general confusion about the status of one’s own language and to develop a kind of unofficial bilingualism which uses the common standard norm in formal and official situations and a native norm (usually developed on the basis of the norm of the capital city or large towns) in everyday and personal situations of interaction. This is the case in Austrian and Swiss German, Belgian Dutch, Belgian and Swiss and African French. It is also standard practice in Arab speaking countries and in the Spanish speaking world.
- (3) There is a more or less strong division in the use of language norms between the elites of an NDV and the general population of that country. As M. Clyne already indicated (1992:459) the elites of an NDV has a strong tendency to adapt to the norms of the DV and to avoid their own norms as they are either dialectally and sociolectally marked or considered to be a potential obstacle for an envisaged career in the dominating nations. The effect of this attitude is that expressions of NDV are avoided or lowered in status as the cultural elites is not loyal to them. A second effect is a sociolinguistic split in society – the norms of the elites are opposed to the norms of the general public but have to be acquired in institutions. A side effect of this is a devaluation of the general public norm. Due to the existence of dialectal varieties, this phenomenon also exists in DV, but is much stronger in NDV.
- (4) Depending on the dialectal fragmentation and the linguistic self-confidence of the country (which is directly linked to the age of the variety), speakers of ND varieties often do not follow the one-language-one norm paradigm of language usage. They instead practice undeclared innerlinguistic-multilingualism (innere Mehrsprachigkeit) in conversation using local, regional, pan-regional, national and even international varieties of their language side by side and switching between them depending on the specific needs of the communicative situation.

This linguistic practice is not, however, often considered as a positive skill but rather denounced as a lack of linguistic competence in the standard norm. In the case of most speakers this kind of “double language use” mostly happens as a semiconscious practice and not as a structured process.

Generally speaking there are many positive effects connected with this language behavior as it leads to a greater adaptability in social interaction and is, as a result, a source of social success. The richness in language skills and the tensions between official and unofficial language norms in other varieties can also be a source of linguistic creativity and lead to particular literary productivity. A good example for this is Austrian literature which is known for its disproportional large literary productivity ever since World War II. This phenomenon is explained by some authors through the linguistic plurality within Austrian German.

If however Austrian authors try to publish their writings in Germany they find themselves struggling with the desk editors of the publishing houses over the particularities of their national variety and often see them removed from their manuscripts as they are not considered “standard”.

- (5) The codification of the particular linguistic features of an NDV is a central criterion for the status planning of an NDV but is impeded by a number of restrictions. The (unofficial) guideline for the codification of NDV usually is to avoid a split of the common language into separate languages and not to lose the connection to the DV. This leads to a reduction in the codification of variety-specific features in two respects:
  - 5.1. The number of codified features is reduced by picking only those features which are thought to be “standard” in the sense that they are used by so called “educated speakers”. As this layer of society usually has a tendency to avoid linguistic features and expressions of their own variety, many common and widespread features of the NDV do not find their way into the dictionaries.
  - 5.2. If the expressions nevertheless find their way into reference books, they are often marked with terms like “colloquial”, “dialectal”, “slang” or “regional” which significantly reduce their status. There are two such markers in German dictionaries which are almost

universally used for that purpose: “umgangssprachlich” (colloquial) and “landschaftlich” (regional) – the latter used to “denationalize” lexicon entries by denying them the national status they have in many cases.

5.3. The codification is also hampered by the unresolved question of how words and expressions should be treated which do not have the proper phonological standard forms. There are two possible solutions for this:

a) They are adapted to the standard forms and hence lose their original linguistic form and often enough become strange to their users.

b) The forms are codified according to their original phonological quality, causing an enlargement of the phoneme set of the language and through this become unintelligible to speakers of other national varieties.

The common answer of codifiers to this central question is to adapt the non-standard forms to the rules of the given phonological system underlying the written language and to “neutralize” them by removing the features of their non-standard origin.

5.4. Another obstacle for the codification and shaping of the national norm in NDV is the concentration of the norm-setting institutions in or around the capital city or large urban agglomerations leaving peripheral regions aside. This practice leads to a certain alienation from the “central” norm of the NDV for speakers living in other areas outside the urban centres. This regional imbalance in the codifying process is partly caused by the “standard” paradigm which assumes that the “standard language” is always linked to the norm of the elites who, by definition, live in the political and economical centres.

5.5. If the codification of the norms of an NDV (like in the case of Swiss German which does not have a dictionary of its own) takes place in the DV, even fewer features of NDV are accepted. They are usually marked with a respective national marker whereas the equivalent features of the DV remain unmarked.

- 5.6. Linguistic innovations in DVs are codified as soon as they have achieved a certain spread as dictionary makers try to keep up with linguistic changes. Contrary to this are linguistic innovations in NDV are seen as attempts to split the common language and are disapproved by the codifiers of the DV.

The effect of this codification policy is that the NDV pay a huge tribute to the norms of the DV and constantly devalue their own norms in order to uphold the unity of the language.

All this quite often leads to massive inferiority-complexes on the side of speakers of NDV whereas speakers of DV have the tendency to consider their norm as the only correct one and any other as “dialect”. Most speakers of NDV therefore have a tendency to consider their variety as inferior to that of the dominating one. This is mainly caused by the fact that the educational institutions of NDV usually do not convey their national norms in contrast to other countries sharing that language and do not make pupils aware of their proper linguistic norms.

The undeclared guideline of native language teachers in primary schools in their daily work is that (a) there is only *one* language and (b) that there is only *one good norm* for it – the so called standard norm which often is contrary to the daily norm and far from the national norm. The effect of this educational practice on the side of speakers of NDV is widespread ignorance of the particular linguistic and communicative features of their own variety which contributes massively to the devaluation and avoidance of linguistic features of the NDV. A resulting effect of this lack of knowledge is what I call “linguistic schizophrenia”: The proper national norm is heavily practiced but officially depreciated – the official norm is rarely practiced but officially highly appreciated.

If we sum up this situation we can conclude that for NDV of a pluricentric language there are three basic options to resolve its situation:

- (1) Leave everything as it is – may be codify the variety without paying too much attention to your own variety as the unity of the language and the participation in a large language is the dominating objective.
- (2) Properly codify your variety according to the real use, irrespective whether this changes the language or even creates a new language as the central objective is to have an agreement between actual oral usage and

codified, resp. written language. This inevitably leads to a new language in the long run and might cause social and political opposition.

A solution which combines option (1) and (2) could be the development of systematic bilingualism teaching both norms (the own and the former dominating one) in school. Whether this option is feasible depends on different factors which are difficult to predict. In any case, a self-confident and culturally progressive political class seems to be a precondition in order to take the necessary steps to achieve such a fundamental change in language policy.

- (3) Give up the idea of having a norm of your own as language in modern society is not a predominant feature of individual identity and foster multilingualism towards other languages instead. It makes the world an easier and more communicative place to live in. And may be you will wait a for introducing language-planning measures (codification and measures to improve language awareness). Global TV-satellite networks will achieve the levelling of your norms without extra effort. The motto of this option is: Just join the linguistic superpowers and forget about self determination.

Which of these three options is chosen by a given language community depends on their history, their social and political development and on many other factors and will probably largely differ from country to country. The quest for linguistic and cultural distinctiveness will however remain a permanent need in all communities irrespective of their economic and political welfare.

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