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PETER LANG
EDITION

Rudolf Muhr (ed.)

Pluricentric
Languages and
Non-Dominant
Varieties Worldwide

Part I: Pluricentric Languages across Continents.
Features and Usage

In collaboration with Kelen Ernesta Fonyuy,
Zeinab Ibrahim and Corey Miller



PETER LANG
EDITION

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Language loyalty to Austrian German: Conclusions of a research project at Austrian schools

Abstract

The FWF-funded project "Austrian Standard German as a language of instruction and education"¹ has examined the role of Austrian Standard German in everyday school teaching routines and teacher training, by means of a survey, group discussions with teachers and students, interviews with teachers and the analysis of curricula and course books. This article focuses on the following questions: When correcting student essays, do teachers apply and aspire to linguistic norms commonly referred to as "High German" or "Deutschländisches Deutsch" rather than Austrian Standard German, as stated in literature (Ammon 1995, Heinrich 2010, Legenstein 2008)? Which attitude do Austrian teachers and students have towards their own variety? Are "Austrian German" and the "pluricentric concept" dealt with in Austrian curricula, books and teaching materials?

1. The project – a brief description

In many linguistic publications, references have been made to a linguistic inferiority complex among Austrian speakers of the German language towards German-speakers from Germany (e.g. Muhr 1989, 2005). In addition, subject literature also provides evidence of an ambivalent attitude among Austrians towards their own variety and a less marked language loyalty² in comparison to speakers of

* In: Rudolf Muhr (ed.) (2016): *Pluricentric Languages and Non-Dominant Varieties Worldwide. Part I: Pluricentric Languages across Continents. Features and Usage*. In collaboration with Kelen Ernesta Fonyuy, Zeinab Ibrahim and Corey Miller. Wien et. al., Peter Lang Verlag. p. 267–280.

1 The project was conducted by Rudolf de Cillia, Jutta Ransmayr and Ilona Elisabeth Fink. All publications were discussed within the project team. The content of this article represents the discussions of the collaborative work in the project.

2 Under the impact of socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural factors groups can be more or less language loyal (de Cillia/Dressler 2006). Wolf Peter Klein (2001) defines language loyalty as the circumstance that speakers do not abandon their language in favour of another despite a certain pressure (e.g. language contact situations).

the German variety. In some publications, the feelings of inferiority have been linked to a lack of knowledge about or at least vague concepts of the pluricentric variation within the German language. Linguists also presume that pluricentric variation is only rarely an issue in school teaching and teacher training. Therefore, the research project Austrian Standard German as a language of instruction and education" (FWF-Project No. P23913-G18) focussed on the question if and how both students and teachers at Austrian schools get in touch with variation within the German language during their education and teacher training.

The project was conducted from September 2012 – February 2015 and is based on the theory of pluricentric languages (Ammon 1995, Clyne 1992, 2005, Muhr, 2012). The objectives were:

- Researching the role of the Austrian standard variety of German (ASG) in the context of schools;
- To get reliable findings about the knowledge of Austria teachers concerning the pluricentricity of German and Austrian German;
- Exploring the attitudes of Austrian teachers/pupils towards ASG and whether pluricentric or monocentric concepts prevail among Austrian teachers and pupils.

Some of the issues researched in the context of the language loyalty to the Austrian variety of the German language among Austrian teachers and pupils were:

- How do teachers and students conceptualize Austrian German (monocentric/pluricentric views)?
- What is the attitude of teachers/students as regards correctness of ASG?
- Are there tendencies to follow an exonormative orientation when students' essays are correct?
- Are there preferences in language use with regard to the use of Austriacisms/Deutschlandisms

In order to get reliable data, both qualitative and quantitative surveys were conducted within the framework of this project. Firstly, curricula for teaching German at primary and secondary level, curricula for teacher training at universities and teacher training colleges (Pädagogische Hochschulen), and the most commonly used German course books were examined with regard to the representation of the varieties of German. Secondly, a survey among 164 teachers of various school types (primary school, secondary school, secondary upper school) and 1253 pupils at upper secondary level was carried out throughout Austria, examining language attitudes of both pupils and teachers of German, and the role of Austrian Standard German in everyday school teaching routines. Furthermore, 21 interviews with

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Table 1: Data sets

School curricula:
Curricula for teacher training
German text books used
Questionnaires:
Interviews:
Group discussions:
In-class participatory observations

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2. Results of data

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teachers of German, two group discussions with teachers and pupils and 7 participatory observations in class were conducted.

Table 1: Data sets

School curricula:	primary school, secondary schools level I and II
Curricula for teacher training:	(German) at universities and pedagogical colleges
German text books used at schools:	primary level, secondary level I and II
Questionnaires:	pupils (secondary level II), n=1253 teachers (primary school, secondary schools level I and II), n=164, in all federal states
Interviews:	n=21 with teachers of all school types in all federal states
Group discussions:	1 teachers' group, 1 pupils' group
In-class participatory observation:	7 classes

The statistical analysis of the collected data was performed using SPSS³; furthermore, a content analysis and a discourse analysis of the data were conducted.

2. Results of document analysis (curricula, textbooks)

The analysis of the school curricula showed that there is no systematic presentation and use of an appropriate terminology when it comes to refer to linguistic "norms". No reference is made to pluricentric variation or mentioned as such at any point. With only a few exceptions, the same applies to teacher training curricula. The analysed textbooks contain country-specific standard variation, but specific and unspecific Austriacisms/Helvetisms/Deutschlandisms remain uncommented for pupils.

In addition, there is no reference given to the national Austrian dictionary (Österreichisches Wörterbuch) or to any other dictionary about lexical variation in German (e.g. Variantenwörterbuch). Theoretical background information on Austrian Standard German (ASG) or linguistic variation between the standard varieties of German is only mentioned in one course book ("Deutschstunde, 8. Schulstufe, Basisteil plus"). It has a single chapter with a linguistic comparison

³ Statistical procedures and methods used for the analysis of the collected data were: descriptive statistics (frequencies, cross tables, mean, median, standard Deviation), inferential statistics: comparison of means (analysis of variance, T-test for independent samples), nonparametric tests (Mann-Whitney U-test, Kruskal-Wallis-test), Chi-Square-test.

of "Austria German vs. German German (GG)" but does not provide any factual information. Instead, expressions used in informal speech are being presented with AG standard expressions.

The instruction reads as follows: "Try to teach someone from Germany Austrian German step by step". The expressions and their GG equivalents presented in this chapter are: "Gschlader" – "ungenießbares Getränk" (unpalatable drink); "Gstättten" – "ungepflegtes Grundstück" (neglected plot of land); "Gschrapp" – "Kind" (child); "Dippel" – "Beule" (bump) and "Jauckerl" – "Injektion" (injection).

Apart from this course book, Austrian Standard German is not dealt with in any of the course books examined in our research project and there is mentioning of the pluricentric concept. Therefore, the presentation of pluricentric and the specific features of the Austrian variety of German is completely left out in the textbooks and to the random activities of individual teachers.

3. Findings of the survey concerning language loyalty of German teachers and pupils at Austrian schools

As already mentioned, a survey was conducted including 1253 pupils who attended schools at level II of the Austrian educational system (27 schools in all of Austria, 2–4 schools in each of the federal states). 85.3% of the pupils were native German speakers, 3.4% Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, 2.5% Turkish and 8.8% others. In addition, 164 teachers working in various types of schools⁴ in all "Bundesländer" (federal states) took part in the survey.

Figure (1) shows the results of the survey in respect to the conceptualisation of Austrian German. The respective question in the survey was:

How would you describe German? Please mark:

- a uniform language with one single standard in all German-speaking countries. (1)
- a language with differences in its standard form (in High German) between the German-speaking countries. (2)

The vast majority of teachers (89,6%) and pupils (79,2%) consider German to be "a language with differences in its standard form among the German-speaking countries".

⁴ The school types were: Volksschulen (primary schools), Hauptschulen (general secondary schools), Neue Mittelschulen (a new type of secondary schools replacing the "Hauptschule"), level I and II secondary schools and Berufsschulen / Berufsbildenden Schulen (vocational training schools).

Figure (1): The conceptualisation of Austrian German

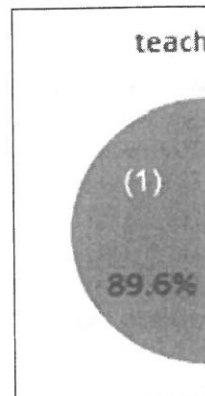
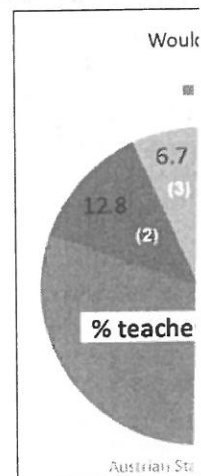


Figure (2) presents the results of the survey in respect to the question: "Do you think that Austrian German exists as such?" The respective question in the survey was:

Figure (2): Responses to the question: "Do you think that Austrian German exists as such?"



These results indicate a high level of language loyalty, as such is only known to a

Figure (1): The conceptualisation of linguistic variation in Austria mono-centric vs. pluricentric.

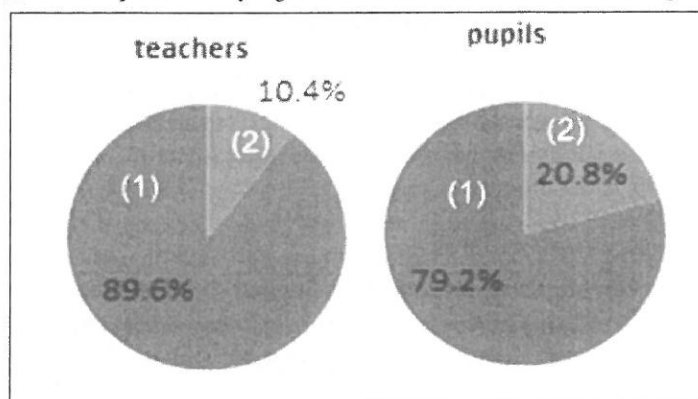
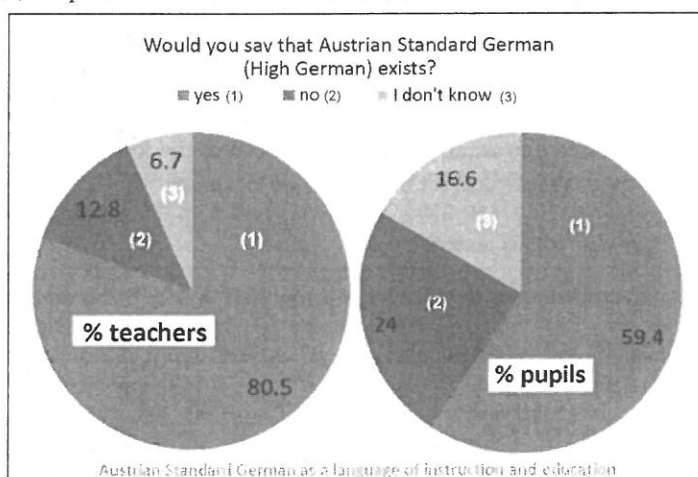


Figure (2) presents the results of question (2), asking the respondents whether they think that Austrian German exists at all. A clear majority of teachers (80,5%) and two thirds of the pupils (59,4%) are convinced that Austrian Standard German as such exists.

Figure (2): Responses Does Austrian German exist?.

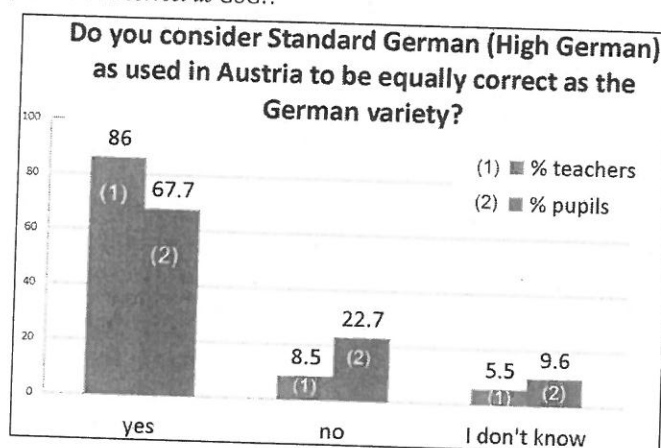


These results indicate a pluricentric view; however, the pluricentric concept as such is only known to a small percentage of the participants of the survey: only

14,7% of the teachers and 8,1% of the pupils state that they have already heard of the concept of pluricentric languages.

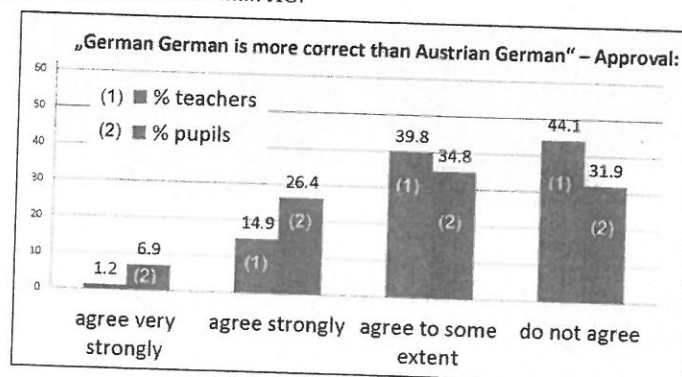
Attitudes concerning the "correctness" of Austrian Standard German compared to German Standard German proved to be ambiguous though: firstly, teachers and pupils were asked whether they consider Standard German as used in Austria to be equally correct as the German variety. The majority of both teachers (86%) and pupils (67,7%) chose the correct answer „yes“:

Figure (4): Is ASG as correct as GSG?



The answers to a control question differ somewhat from the results above. The informants were asked to what extent they approve of the following statement: "German German is more correct than Austrian German".

Figure (5): GG is more correct than AG.



As figure (5) show pupils, whereas 16 very strongly and We confronted the results. This led to discussions confir wards their own v

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As figure (5) shows, it is only rejected by 44,1% of the teachers and 31,9% of the pupils, whereas 16,1% of the teachers and 33,3% of the pupils approve strongly or very strongly and therefore believe GG to be more correct than AG:

We confronted the participants of group discussions with the above-mentioned results. This led to lively debates, both in the teachers' and pupils' groups. These discussions confirmed the ambivalent and conflicting attitude of Austrians towards their own variety.

One pupil for example stated: "Well, in terms of grammar, I would almost say that Austrians are incorrect, but apart from that actually not at all."⁵

Even some teachers believe that Germans stick to grammar rules closely more than Austrians: „Ah, I guess that ...er.. people in Germany..er... obey the grammar rules probably a little more. Well, I think of sentence structure, subordinate clauses, which begins with „because“, I guess that most Austrians construct it in the wrong way. Grammatically incorrect, so to speak.”⁶

A statement made by a teacher from Northern Austria in an interview also shows an ambivalent attitude towards Austrian German in general: "Well, the Germans are lucky since their dialect has been proclaimed the standard language by accident. This is what I tell my students. They should not feel ashamed. It is such a big linguistic area, there are so many varieties and East-Central German was selected as standard language and in that sense the Germans appear as more eloquent when they use the variety quite naturally which they have grown up with. And we always sound like peasants.”⁷

4. Preference for variants in sample sentences

In order to determine the preference for national variants, the participants of the survey were given 30 sample sentences. Each of them contained two lexical

- 5 „Also grammatisch würd ich fast sagen, dass die Österreicher inkorrekt sind, aber sonst eigentlich gar nicht.“
- 6 „Ah, ich glaub [...] dass, äh, Menschen in Deutschland, äh, sich eventuell ein: w:enig stärker an die Grammatikregeln halten. Aso, ich denk jetzt an Satzbau, ah Nebensatz, der mit weil beginnt, ich glaub, dass ein Österreicher oder eine Österreicherin den eher folsch baut. Sozusagen nicht grammatikalisch korrekt.“
- 7 „Naja, die Deutschen haben das Glück, dass ihr Dialekt zufällig zur Standardsprache erklärt worden is. Sog i a meine Schüler. Sie brauchen si net genießen, das is so ein großer Sprachraum, da gibt's viele Varietäten und die ostmitteldeutsche is hoit gewählt worden ois Standardsprache und insofern wirken die Deutschen dann eloquenter wenn sie des womit sie aufwohcn donn a natürlicherweise onwenden. Und unsaans klingt immer wie so a Bauer.“

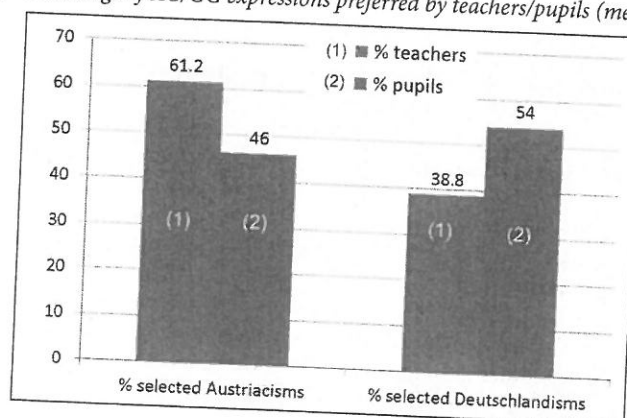
and grammatical items (one Austriacism/one Deutschlandism or eastern/western Austrian variants) to choose from.⁸ Among other things, the options in the sentences contained lexical variants, e.g. *der Junge/der Bub*, the use of perfect tense and articles, use of prepositions, gender, linking elements etc.

In a further step we analysed the frequencies of the selected variants and the relation between preferred variants and several variables, such as age, region etc. The following excerpt shows the instruction as well as several sample sentences:

Please read the following sentences and underline the expression, which you would prefer to use in a written text. Please underline only one expression per sentence.

1. Nach dem Aufstehen trinke ich gerne ein Cola/eine Cola, um wach zu werden. [After getting up, I like to drink a Coke to wake up.]
2. Zum Geburtstag bekam der Junge/der Bub endlich seine ersehnte Modelleisenbahn. [For his birthday, the boy finally got the model railway he longed for.]
3. Sie hat ihm gestern noch eine Email/ein Email geschrieben. [Yesterday she wrote to him an email.]
4. Die Wimmerl/Pickel in seinem Gesicht sind ihm sehr unangenehm. [The pimples on his face are very unpleasant to him.]
5. Tut mir leid, ich habe die SMS/das SMS nicht erhalten. [I'm sorry, I have not received the SMS / SMS.]

Figure (6): Percentage of AG/GG expressions preferred by teachers/pupils (mean value).



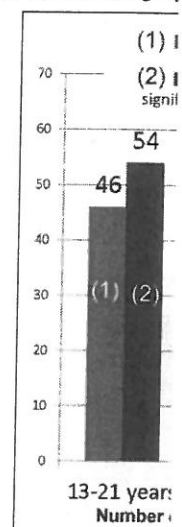
⁸ The reference literature used for these sample sentences are Variantenwörterbuch, ÖWB, Ebner (2009).

The results in figure (6) show that teachers preferred variants by teachers more often (54%) than pupils (46%).

In other words, teachers preferred more variants than pupils.

Another result is that teachers preferred more variants than pupils.

Figure (6): Percentage of AG/GG expressions preferred by teachers/pupils (mean value).



It is also interesting to note that teachers preferred the most frequently selected variant (usage) 'schmeckt sehr gut' [tastes very good] more often than pupils.

⁹ „Schmeckt sehr gut“ however, it is remarkable that teachers did NOT select the variant 'schmeckt sehr gut'.

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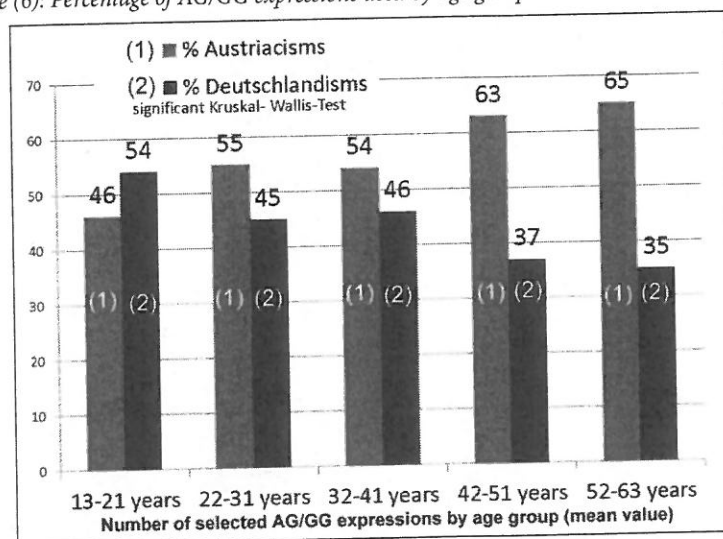
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The results in figure (6) show that 61,2% of the Austriacisms were selected as preferred variants by teachers but only 38,8% by pupils, who chose Deutschlandisms more often (54%) than the teachers (46%):

In other words, our results point to a tendency among pupils and younger teachers to prefer more "German" expressions to the "Austrian" ones.

Another result is that, middle-aged and older teachers tend to prefer a higher amount of Austrian expressions:

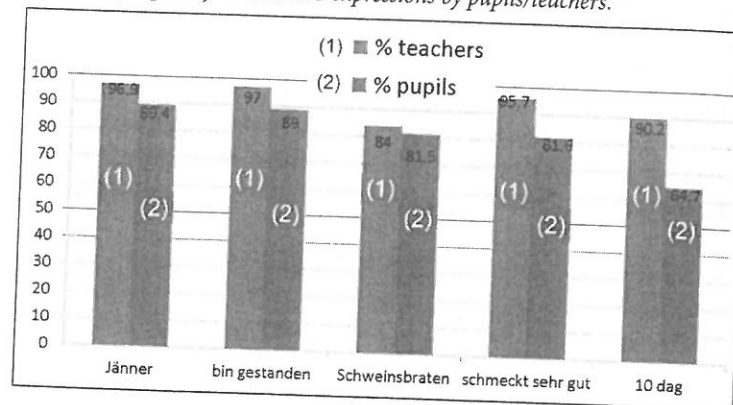
Figure (6): Percentage of AG/GG expressions used by age group.



It is also interesting to ask which AG expressions are preferred most often: The most frequently selected Austriacisms are: *Jänner* [January], *bin gestanden* [have been standing] (usage of „sein“ as an auxiliary verb), *Schweinsbraten* [roast pork], *schmeckt sehr gut*⁹ [tastes great] and *dekagramm* (dag) [10 grams]:

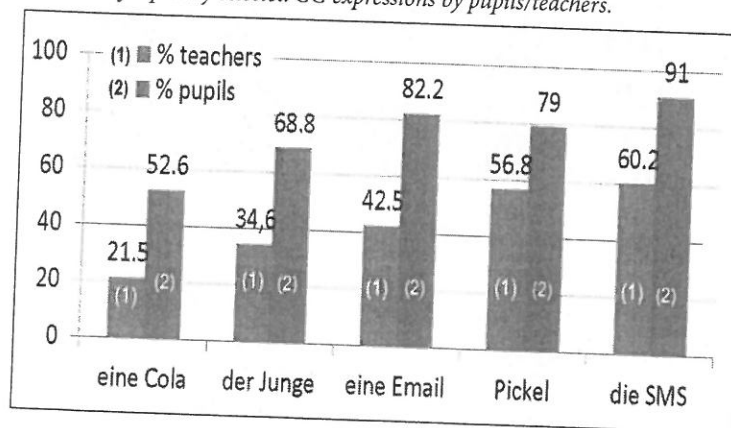
9 „Schmeckt sehr gut“ is not a specific Austriacism, but a common German expression; however, it is remarkable that 95% of the teachers and more than 80% of the pupils did NOT select the GG expression „lecker“.

Figure (7): Most frequently selected AG expressions by pupils/teachers.



The most frequently selected Deutschlandisms are: *eine Cola*, *der Junge*, *eine Email*, *Pickel* and *die SMS*.

Figure (8): Most frequently selected GG expressions by pupils/teachers.



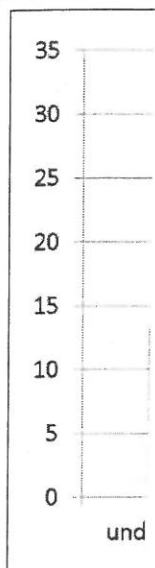
5. The corrections of GG/AG expressions in students' essays by teachers

In the teachers' questionnaire, teachers were asked to correct a fictitious student essay that contained Austriacisms and Deutschlandisms. These corrections were analysed according to the following categories:

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2) corrected (cr
3) not correcte

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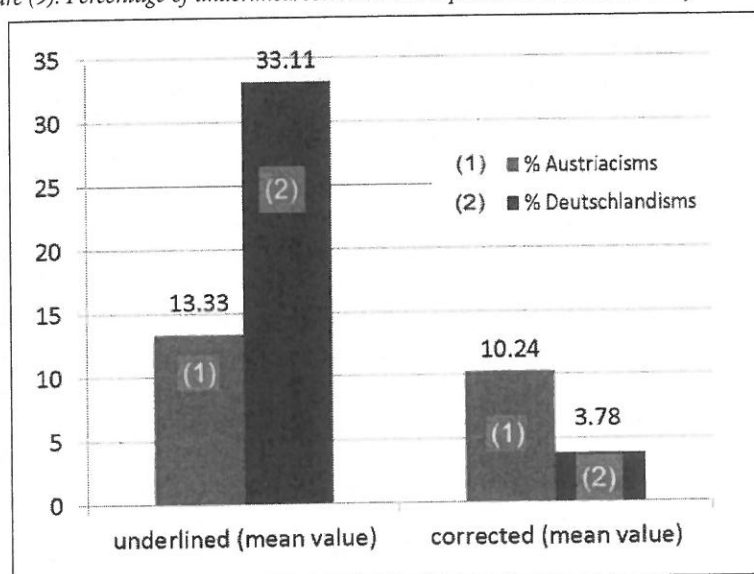


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- 1) marked, but not crossed out
- 2) corrected (crossed out)
- 3) not corrected nor marked.

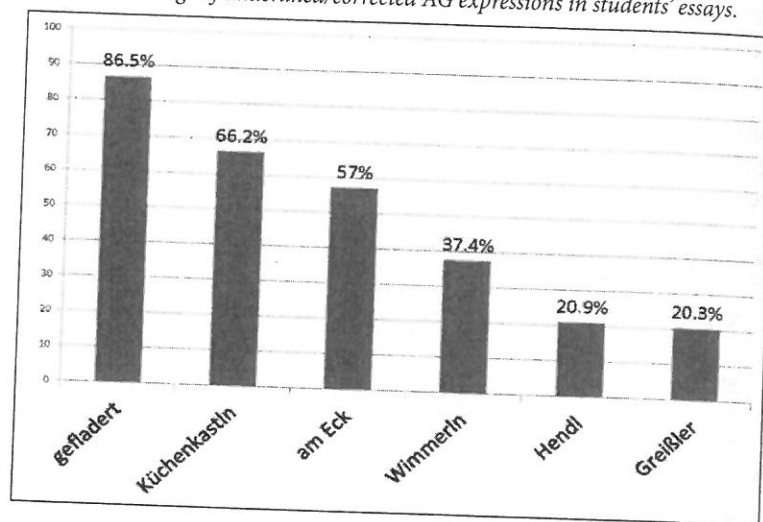
All corrections were recorded. The collected data were statistically analysed by using SPSS. Among others, we analysed the differences in the frequency of the correction patterns according to various variables.

Figure (9): Percentage of underlined/corrected GG expressions in students' essays.



The statistical analysis of the corrections show that Deutschlandisms were underlined more often than Austriacisms; however, Austriacisms were marked as errors and thus corrected more often than Deutschlandisms.

Figure (10): Percentage of underlined/corrected AG expressions in students' essays.



One possible explanation for this correction pattern is that Deutschlandisms sound unfamiliar to Austrian teachers and are therefore underlined more often than Austriacisms. On the other hand, Deutschlandisms are assumed to be more correct than Austriacisms and hence are being corrected less frequently.

Figure (1) shows the most frequently corrected Austriacisms: *gefladert* (nicked), *Küchenkastln* (kitchen cabinets), *am Eck* (at the corner), *Wimmerln* (pimple), *Hendl* (chicken) and *Greißler* (grocery shop).

Interestingly, the perfect tense as narrative tense in the student's essay was accepted by a large percentage of teachers (almost 65%) (despite the GG norm). Only about 35% of the teachers marked the usage of perfect tense as an error, insisting on past tense as narrative tense.

6. Summary

The results of this research project strongly suggest that linguistic variation ought to be dealt with in a systematic, neutral and explicit manner in teacher training, in teaching material as well as in school teaching. ASG and the pluricentric concept are not mentioned in curricula, academic programs or text books, which can be an indication that they all represent a monocentric concept.

Although the concept of pluricentricity is unknown to most participants of the survey, it appears that teachers and pupils implicitly adopt pluricentric ideas. As

regards the correction pattern, the results are less marked than

The surveys of teachers' corrections of pluricentric expressions are contradictory results. The results are not desirable answers to the question as to a rather Austrian variety.

In view of the pluricentric concept are not mentioned in text books

Therefore, the pluricentric concept is not in the instruction deals with conveying respect about their acquisition situation in Austria of the German language

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regards the correction patterns, the tendency to correct Austriacisms seems to be less marked than assumed, but it still exists.

The surveys of linguistic attitudes among Austrian teachers and pupils yield contradictory results with regard to language loyalty: on the one hand socially desirable answers, on the other hand downgrading of the Austrian variety. This is a clue as to a rather ambivalent attitude of a number of speakers in relation to the Austrian variety. It also points at a low degree of language loyalty in some cases.

In view of the fact that both variation of the German language and the pluricentric concept are neither taken into consideration in curricula nor teacher training nor in text books, this cannot come as a surprise.

Therefore, the results of this survey clearly point to the necessity that school instruction deals with the issue of standard varieties in the German language, conveying respectful handling of different varieties as well as an open discussion about their acceptance. Critical awareness should be raised about the linguistic situation in Austria, implying awareness about the equality of national varieties of the German language and a confident use of the Austrian variety.

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Variety c pluricentric Germ

This paper asks whether re-evaluated as markers the linguistic distinction symbolic meaning is evic in 1994 and 2004. Starti use of selected French-, ing on the database of tl use in the media partly incline of increasingly c of Romance-based lexic a loss of culture and id southern neighbor lang

1. Areal language national stand

The large number of can be adequately ch: guistics only if we ir ties, in particular the long-standing contac other languages dete this day. The present:

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