Insiders‘ and outsiders‘ views on German from Austria‘s perspective:

Austrian Standard German and German Standard German - the odd couple

Jutta Ransmayr
EFNIL - Warsaw
20 September 2016
## Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>Germany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>population</td>
<td>8.6 million</td>
<td>82.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pluricentric languages?

Oscar Wilde / George Bernard Shaw

“England and America are two nations divided by a common language”

Karl Farkas

“Der Österreicher unterscheidet sich vom Deutschen durch die gemeinsame Sprache.”
German as a pluricentric language

The term “pluricentric language“ applies to a language which is used as a national or regional official language in more than one country and if various linguistic features have developed in its standard language.

Only countries and regions which have developed their own distinctive linguistic features in their standard language are called “centres“. The term “full centre“ is used if the special linguistic features in the standard language are codified and authorized in dictionaries.

This is the case for Austria, the German-speaking part of Switzerland and Germany, which are all considered “national full centres“ of the German language.

(taken from: Variantenwörterbuch des Deutschen p. XXXI)
German-speaking countries and regions
Lexicography
Research on Austrian German – why?
Views from outside:

ASG abroad

Ransmayr, Jutta: On the status of Austrian German at universities abroad. A study at university departments for German in Great Britain, France, the Czech Republic, Hungary.
The sample:

- University students of German: $n = 780$ (GB, FR, CZ, HU)
- University teachers of German: $n = 129$ (British, French, Czech, Hungarian, German, Austrian)

- Methodology: questionnaires, interviews

- Relevant domains:
  - attitudes towards ASG
  - ASG in German classes
  - Year abroad in Austria
  - ASG and exams
Interviews with university teachers

German lecturer in France:

“Well, the Austrians’ pronunciation – from my point of view – is somehow sunnier, not so uptight.“ [laughs] („Also die Aussprache, ganz subjektiv mal, das ist eine sonnigere Aussprache, eine weniger verklemmte [lacht].“)

“A very, very beautiful dance-like rhythm. And the other thing is the melody of speech. Harmonious, and very beautiful.“ („Ein sehr, sehr schöner, tänzerischer Rhythmus. Und sonst, was mir auffällt, ist die Sprachmelodie. Harmonisch, und sehr schön.“)
Interviews with university teachers

Czech Republic:

“We teach Standard German here. The Austrian lecturers really only add a bit of decoration.” („Wir lehren Binnendeutsch, Standarddeutsch. Die österreichischen Lektoren geben wirklich nur die Verzierung dazu.“)
Interviews with university teachers

France:

“What do you call “Austrian German”? Is it all the different dialects or is there a predominant dialect? Maybe it doesn’t exist at all, this so-called “Austrian German!” (“Was nennen Sie das österreichische Deutsch? Also sind das diese verschiedenen Dialekte oder gibt es einen vorherrschenden Dialekt? Vielleicht gibt es das gar nicht, dieses österreichische Deutsch.”)
Interviews with university teachers

German lecturer: “Rural.” (“Ländlich.”)

French lecturer: “Charming, but wrong.” (“Charmant, aber falsch.”)
Austrian German = “dialect“ (students):
Would you use “Austriazisms” in an exam? (students)
What can be the effect of an Austrian accent in an oral exam?

- **FR**: 30%
- **CZ**: 40%
- **HU**: 50%
- **GB**: 60%

Options:
- **no effect**
- **positive effect**
- **negative effect**
Correctness of Austrian and German expressions (lecturers)

- **FR**: I prefer the German expression.
- **DE**: The Austrian expression is wrong.
- **CZ**: I prefer the German expression.
- **HU**: The Austrian expression is wrong.
- **GB**: The Austrian expression is wrong.
France:

“Deviations [from the “German German” norm] are strictly counted as mistakes.”
Would you use Austrian texts in your language classes? (lecturers)
How much do you know about Austrian German?

1=very little, 6=a lot
Learning German abroad: In Germany or in Austria?

German lecturer: “Maybe in Germany, to be on the safe side?”

French lecturer: “There is the danger of acquiring an Austrian accent.”
Views from inside

Research project “Austrian Standard German as a language of instruction and education”

(September 2012 - April 2015; Rudolf de Cillia/ Jutta Ransmayr/ Ilona Fink)

- based on the theory of pluralicentric languages
- the role of the Austrian standard variety of German in the context of schools
- concepts of linguistic norms among Austrian teachers/students
- the attitudes of Austrian teachers/students towards ASG and GSG

FWF-Projekt Nr. P23913–G18
Austrian German is…

closely linked to Austrian identity; high emotional potential when discussed in the media

(Protocol no. 10/EU accession, “Marmeladenkrieg“)

something Austrians have ambivalent feelings about

characteristic among speakers of non-dominant varieties
Data

• Curricula for schools, Curricula for universities, books, survey, interviews, participatory observation in class, group discussions

The survey

• 1264 students of upper secondary level at 27 schools all over Austria (85.3% native German speakers, 3.4% BCS, 2.5% Turkish, 8.8% others)
• 164 teachers of all main school types, all across Austria.
Would you say that "Austrian Standard German" exists?

- yes
- no
- don’t know
Would you say that Standard German as it is used in Austria is as correct as German Standard German?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% teachers</th>
<th>% pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don’t know</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Would you say that Standard German as it is used in Austria is as correct as German Standard German?

- Yes: 86
- No: 8.5
- Don’t know: 5.5

% teachers
Would you agree with the following statement? (teachers)

German Standard German is more correct than Austrian Standard German.

- 44.1% disagree with this statement.
- 39.8% agree a little.
- 14.9% agree to some extent.
- 1.2% fully agree with this statement.
Would you agree with the following statements? (teachers)

- British English is more correct than American English:
  - I fully agree: 15.2%
  - I agree to some extent: 27.8%
  - I agree a little: 25.3%
  - I disagree: 31.6%

- German Standard German is more correct than Austrian standard German:
  - I fully agree: 39.8%
  - I agree to some extent: 14.9%
  - I agree a little: 1.2%
  - I disagree: 44.1%
Ausdrücke in Deutschland und Österreich

Wir Österreicherinnen und Österreicher sprechen zwar Deutsch – aber vieles hört sich doch ganz anders an als in Deutschland. Während wir von einem „Sessel“ und einem „Kasten“ sprechen, sagen die Deutschen zu denselben Möbelstücken „Stuhl“ und „Schrank“.

5 Versuche einer/einem Deutschen das „österreichische Deutsch“ Schritt für Schritt beizubringen!

Für Anfängerinnen und Anfänger: ... heißt auf gut Deutsch ...

„Extrawurst“ – Dippel –
Flasche – Beistrich –
Nickerchen – Grant –
Gschäftshuber – Gschau –
Gschlader – Gschrapp –
Gstätten – Gupf –
Häferl – Hutsche –
Jauckerl – Kampel –
Bartwisch – Bosnigel –

üble Laune, Blick, Spaß, kurzer Schlaf, Komma, Ohrfeige, Beule, Wichtigtuer, Ausnahme, Erhebung, Kind, Kamm, Injektion, kleiner Besen, boshafter Mensch, Tasse, Schaukel, unge- niesbares Getränk, ungepflegtes Grundstück
“Language loyalty“

When you find German expressions for Austrian dishes in the menu of an Austrian restaurant – how do you react?

(f.ex. Rinderbraten, Quarktasche, Schorle)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reaction</th>
<th>% Students</th>
<th>% Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am very irritated.</td>
<td>23,8</td>
<td>44,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am rather irritated.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a little irritated.</td>
<td>28,3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t mind.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When you find German expressions for Austrian dishes in the menu of an Austrian restaurant – how do you react?

(f.ex. Rinderbraten, Quarktasche, Schorle)
Language attitudes of Austrian teachers towards spoken ASG and GSG

- likeable
- correct
- melodious
- soft
- pleasant
- familiar
- natural
- fast
- beautiful
- comfortable
- polite
- educated
- direct

- unlikeable
- incorrect
- unmelodious
- harsh
- unpleasant
- unfamiliar
- artificial
- slow
- hideous
- uncomfortable
- impolite
- uneducated
- indirect
Language attitudes of Austrian teachers and pupils towards spoken ASG
(ÖSTERREICHISCHES)
DEUTSCH
als
Unterrichts-
und
Bildungssprache
Reactions in Germany

Headline in *Augsburger Allgemeine*:

How Austrians fight off “High German”

Wie sich Österreicher gegen Hochdeutsch wehren

Heißt es "Paradeiser" oder "Tomate"? Österreichs Bildungsministerin fürchtet, dass das Österreichisch zu sehr eingedeutscht wird. Deshalb gibt es jetzt in Österreich eine Offensive. *Von Pia Jakob*

Reactions in Germany

Headline in *Die Welt*:

“Austria declares war on High German”
Reactions in Germany

Headline in Spiegel:

“Austria fights against German German”
Reactions in Switzerland

Headline in *Tagesanzeiger* :

“Dialect protection in Austria. Austria wants to defend its dialect against German”
• Strong reactions show how much language is part of our identity

• Touchy subject → needs to be addressed carefully

• Initiatives and research projects need to be clearly dissociated from nationalism or chauvinism

• It is all about creating more language awareness: make people aware of diversity within German, its national varieties, functions and domains
Résumé

- Terminology of varieties (standard, dialect, non-standard…) and the domains of the varieties need to be clearly sorted out for teachers and learners

- Relevant for schools, universities, language training institutes, translators…

- Not a one-way road: interaction needs to take place from more than one side

- Enrichment: With proper knowledge about more than just one variety you can reach out much further.
Thank you.

Questions?