

An Analysis of the Possible Non-Pluricentricity of German in Relation to Other Languages

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Abstract

How relevant is the idea, for instance, that pluricentric variation has been largely associated with separate nation-states and the political demarcation between them, to regional variants with varied degrees of recognition or to minority languages (autochthonous and immigrant) spoken inside or beyond governmental entities? A more dynamic interpretation of dominance may be required to explain new, emerging power relations between pluricentric varieties in various parts of the world, or the well-established distinction between dominant and non-dominant varieties of pluricentric languages, with its implicit assumption of asymmetric relationships, still holds true. If so, how should one account for shifting power dynamics in ex-colonial situations or which dialect of a certain language ought to be encouraged in contexts where foreign languages are taught and learned? Such concerns are ideological in nature, which emphasizes their importance for constructing identities. In language studies, pluralism is the acceptance of different educational goals and student outcomes as well as the acceptance of both new varieties and their native norms. A pluricentric language is one that is used in at least two nations and has official status as a state language, co-state language, or regional language. It goes without saying that German is a pluricentric language. However, others contend that it may also be seen as pluralistic in other areas, such as enregistrement or the plurality of German reality. This review paper is a cumulation and analysis of the possible case for the non applicability of the pluricentricity approach the German Language. The term "plurareality" has been used mostly in the context of a historical dialect continuum in the German language, and it has occasionally sparked a contentious controversy between its proponents and those who support a pluricentric approach. The distinction between the two should not be overemphasized, though. Both approaches, while from distinct ideological vantage points, focus on the systematic variance in language production.

Introduction

Pluricentricity refers to multiple acceptances of educational objectives and student results, as well as the dual acceptance of new varieties and their indigenous standards to linguistic studies. A pluricentric language is one that is spoken in at least two countries and has official status as a state language, co-state language, or regional language with its own (codified) norms that typically contribute to national/personal identity, making the country a norm-setting center through the purposeful use of the norms indigenous to that particular country. A historical word for pluricentricity was polycentricity. German is a pluricentric language that is a given. But some argue that it can be considered pluricentric in other aspects such as enregistrement or plura-areality of German. The dialect regions of the German language area have historically been separated geographically by transitional zones. It took hundreds of years for a "standard language" to evolve on top of this geographically diverse linguistic terrain, and it wasn't until approximately 1900 that it became widely spoken. As a result, many German speakers today still use a variant of the standard that displays signs of a dialectal substrate. There is evidence that these remnants have gotten more subtle over the years in Germany, and that a growing proportion of speakers who speak standard German are becoming harder to identify. . There is no denying, however, that there are still many geographically dispersed standard traits that support the idea of regional standard variations, or regional ways of speaking standard German.

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It is uncertain if these regional standards (still) coexist with the traditional dialect areas, if they adhere to wider distributions, or if they may be more impacted by the political boundaries of the Länder (states) of the Federal Republic of Germany. However, it is certain that they are seen as a template framework, with the big cities acting as compass points. Thus, in Munich, Hamburg, Stuttgart, Vienna, Berlin, etc., "educated" speech is cognitively associated with the archetypal forms of "Bavarian", "North German", "Swabian German," "Austrian," or "Rhineland" standard German. The spoken standard does not appear to be associated with any one city (save for Switzerland). German (standard) is a (regionally) pluricentric variant in this sense.

Pluri-areality of German

The study of language in oral and written historical sources is known as philology. Since the 1980s, pluralistic perspectives on global variations have been a foundation of English dialectology, albeit they are frequently suggested rather than explicitly stated. One philology now questions what is common knowledge in numerous philologies. It is argued from an English-German comparative viewpoint, in an effort to disprove arguments made on both sides, that the field's unity about how the standard is viewed in respect to other varieties is threatened by the unique handling of national variations in one context. It is demonstrated that an a-theoretical perspective on spatial diversity adhering implicitly to a one standard German axiom serves as the foundation of the "pluri-areal" paradigm. This meta-theoretical work offers three guidelines to avert future instances of terminological misunderstanding.

Pluricentricity in English linguistics is deeply implied and is most visibly the foundation of the field of World Englishes, having roots in the early post-war era. From both a postcolonial and an old-world perspective, the idea of pluricentricity explains and partially predicts how national types evolve. Many have rejected the pluricentric perspective altogether. It appears appropriate to take stock and consider what each of the two conceptions represents, how they model certain sociolinguistic contexts, and which notion more accurately depicts speaker reality. For more than a century, the majority of philologies, if not all of them, have argued that national varieties are valuable tools for linguistic research. Language is influenced by factors such as age, gender, geography, social factors, and others, so the national level is certainly not the only significant component. Nevertheless, the identity-forming aspect of national constructs is now well documented.

In terms of the Inner Circle variations, which are those that descended from settler types, the situation in English is rather different. Sea boundaries are common in English, and since they are not continuous, it is more probable that emerging standard types, such as Irish English, American English, or New Zealand English, will be more easily identified. The Canada-US border and the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are the only two continuous land borders in the Inner Circle. The English-Scottish border is the most linguistically varied and contiguous border in the Inner Circle, while not being (yet or any longer) an international boundary. Contiguous boundaries are possibly more prone to be questioned than sea borders, as the conflicts and renegotiations between English and Scottish over that boundary throughout the ages have demonstrated. The predominance of maritime boundaries in English has generally allowed for a concentrate on the more utilitarian concerns of language and national identity.

Peter Trudgill's model is a schematization that is not based on a specific data set per se, but rather on well-informed perceptions. Since Canadian English is fundamentally a North American variant and is frequently heard in the Midland and Western parts of the United States, there isn't much of a distinction between western Canadian and western US speech objectively. The reason Canadian English exists as a national variation of English is not so much due to its linguistic distinction from American English as it is because its speakers have chosen that Canadians deserve their own variety. A new detailed account of this 80-year process of describing, codifying, and celebrating Canadian peculiarities has been published.

The standard variants (the peaks) of world Englishes as well as their regional and social variations and cross-border characteristics may be accurately modeled. There are several examples of this feature, such as the cross-border continuum between Slovak and Czech or the North Germanic dialect continuum dividing the Swedish-Norwegian border. In each of these situations, the regional dialects are regarded as variations of Swedish, Norwegian, Canadian, American, or Czech and Slovak based only on the consensus of its speakers. The dynamic nature of the border and its consequences on speakers on both sides of the border in terms of attitudes and cognitive processes is one of the main results of this research. Over time, a superficial political boundary develops into a significant language barrier.

Borders frequently have an impact on change, notably causing [dialect convergence] between dialects on the same side of the border and [dd] [dialect diversification] between dialects on either side. Borders can be man-made (such as tribal, governmental, and religious boundaries) or natural (such as rivers, swamps, and mountain ranges). According to perceptual dialectology, linguistic attitudes and popular views are significant factors in the processes involved in forming identities. Britain (2010) examines the perspectives on how dialectologists view space from a perceptual, linguistic, and social perspective. Naturally, these three impacts are also present along boundaries. Perhaps most significantly, speakers on both sides of the border may perceive themselves as "different" from one another, altering their cognitive and attitudinal dimensions. This can have further cognitive effects and may result in linguistic differentiation. Over time, each of these impacts influences how a standard is codified, and vice versa. The significance of political boundaries spanning the boundaries of conventional dialect zones has historically been minimized in continental European dialectology. Political borders within a language, such as those between Germany and Austria, are frequently modeled substantially differently from those across languages, such as the Dutch-German situation, even if this viewpoint has been steadily shifting since Kremer's work. For several of the smaller European nations, there are exceptions. For instance, Luxembourg has codified its Moselle-Franconian German dialects into Luxembourgish, the country's official language, since WWII.

The conceptualization of the pluricentric model also fits within the wider, universal language framework of ausbau variety, difference by social consensus, and abstand variety, variation by delayed growth. When taken to its logical conclusion, data-driven, bottom-up theory construction is challenged by a scientific, epistemological issue. The proponents of "pluri-areality" argue that the application of the standard in German has altered and that non-standard variety have been resisted in favor of a "new" method of modeling standard varieties. This new normal is based on the claim that "the majority of Germans do not speak dialect" in modern times, which is untrue in Austria or Switzerland, where a wide range of dialects are in use. Numerous statistics to that effect are available for Austria. For instance, instructors in Austrian schools say that 51% of their pupils speak Austrian "dialects" and 85% speak "Umgangssprache" or colloquial standard, whereas just 3% of students utilize Standard German German. In comparison to their instructors' responses, a majority of 50% to 60% of secondary school pupils in Austria claim to speak "dialect" with their friends and in all types of home situations.

The pluri-areal data-driven technique lacks the sensitivity necessary to capture such speaker realities. Due to the custom of functioning with smaller territories, such as Germany's Northeast, Northwest, and Midwest, which by definition precludes any sense of a national viewpoint, Austria and Switzerland are granted a limited number of regions. The argument against the pluricentric notion of standard is because it has an allegedly "idealized notion of standard," whereas "pluri-arealists" assert that their standards are constructed using their facts. This logic appears to be based on confusing the standard with what are known as norms in English linguistics, which are the characteristics that predominate in a certain environment, including how they are regarded socially. The argument that "pluri-arealists" research the standard variety is less credible, even if they investigate norms and may certainly add to that discussion. Four phases of the development of a standard—the choice of a variant, its elaboration, codification, and acceptance—have been examined. All four are highly social processes. The "pluri-arealists" appear to disagree with this method and refer to it as "top down," despite the fact that no standard variety has ever been produced in this manner.

"Pluri-arealists" repeat and make unchangeable the traditional model that is based on the standard that has been predominating throughout Germany; while the characteristics of such a single standard may be disputed, its existence is put beyond question, and the one standard axiom is born. Therefore, proponents of "pluri-areality" tacitly endorse a pictorial monocentric approach to Standard German. While their stated goal is to define the standard of German in terms of "regional standards," they use an unspoken top-down strategy that disadvantages the nondominant nations beyond repair. The study of "standard" in a program that does not recognize the legitimacy of national boundaries can, and probably should, be seen as inherently colonial: the biggest, most powerful nation gets to preserve its standard, demoting all other standards to "regional local standards." Such reasoning, presented as a fair, bottom-up account of actual language use, is blind to its inherent biases, and this is true regardless of one's expertise in English linguistics.

It is simple to envisage a non-linguistic interest along similar lines, which raises the question of why only the pluricentric approach should be motivated by ideology. "Pluri-areality" may have a significant ideology behind it. Such blind spots have not gone unnoticed by historians.

Following World War II, "decades of West German 'post-national' thinking" led to a "diminished sensitivity to the continuing significance of national issues for many neighboring countries," according to historian Joachim Whaley (2002: 35), who summarizes prevailing intellectual tendencies. It is conceivable that "pluri-areality" is the result of such "diminished sensitivity" to identity-forming realities in smaller European nations.

Some linguists contend that Clyne's idea of national varieties would be rendered "anachronistic" by an integrationist European Union. As a result of metaphorical extension, the original idea of pluricentricity—in which centers are frequently aligned with national centers, though there are half-centres and quarter-centres depending on the degree of codification—is transformed into "pluri-national," and then further into "pluri-uncentric" on the theory that nations as centers are not completely homogeneous, which "pluri-arealists" consider a requirement for using the term center.

The categorical evaluations of language usage that do not take into account the gradual processes and probabilistic distributions that are so typical for linguistic variation are known as the axiom of categoricity, according to Chambers. The axiom is not new; Saussure introduced it to linguistics in the early 1900s, and early Generative linguists adopted it. Of course, variationists never held that belief. At the height of the structuralist paradigm, Martin Joos made one of the most incisive statements on the axiom: "We must make our 'linguistics' a kind of mathematics, within which inconsistency is by definition impossible." Such claims obviously go against probabilistic linguistics, which aims to forecast as many situations as possible while acknowledging that there will always be some fuzziness due to language's social nature. The "pluri-arealist" approach, however, must be viewed in an odd way as a mathematical effort to sweep out any abnormalities formed inside what is called a language, in a Plato-like, essentialist type of view. The distinctions between the types of German German and Austrian German are viewed as categorically different from those between German and Dutch, despite the fact that German and Dutch are assumed to be mutually exclusive.

Enregisterment is the cognitive association of linguistic properties with things, in this example nations, and is commonly conducted against more complex behavioral data. Despite being popular worldwide, eh has gained prominence in Canada through registration. Instead of using enrollment as evidence against national differences, pluri-arealists should consider it a "real" process that is equally as important as behavioral data. People's propensity to label words as German, Austrian, or Swiss is compelling proof that each variant actually exists. There are obviously normative differences between Austrian, Swiss, and German Standard German, which contribute to the pluralism of the German language today both locally and nationally.

The histories of standardization in English and Germany are not as unlike as Glauninger would have us think. Although there was a London-based standard in use throughout colonial English periods, it had little impact on the development of new national variations since the vast majority of speakers who emigrated did not speak it. According to Dollinger, just 7% of immigrants to Ontario, Canada, were from southeast England. The great majority of English immigrants were from lower social classes, and the vast majority of Scottish and Welsh people spoke regional and social dialects.

It's doubtful that the standardization procedures in English and Germany differ significantly. This is also due to the fact that written Standard British English had mostly developed by 1550, more fully by 1700, and completely by around 1800. Similar developments may be seen in German before to 1800. As of 1750 in Austria, the two standards of the 16th century—a Southern Imperial Standard, which included Austria—and a Northeastern Central German Standard, which was influenced by Luther, were abandoned in favor of the latter. As a result, around 1800, standard German started to be more frequently linked with northern variants.

"Pluri-arealists" have more recently used mathematical models to analyze dialect geography. The method that locates isoglosses acts as the theory in the absence of any other theory. To estimate dialectometric distances, one such approach uses geographic distances. The technique steadily alters established dialect borders and, on occasion, entirely eliminates them. It "frequently happens that differences in individual variables that coincide with structural dialect borders are straightened, shifted, or otherwise blurred," according to pluri-arealist practitioners.

The uniformitarian principle, which was introduced from geology into linguistics in the 1860s, has been a pillar of historical linguistics to the point where sociolinguists saw the need to resurrect it. Labov finds it to be "so central to [his] work" that he goes into great detail on how to use it. Comparing various diachronic language states to one another may be thought of as a vertical application of the uniformitarian principle, while contrasting various contemporary variations can be thought of as a horizontal application.

We need to watch out for social circumstances in the horizontal application that might skew that analogy. Such a unique position for Germans is unjustified, as I discussed above. According to sociolinguistic practice, the comparison aspect has been emphasized and has even thrived. The subjecting of theory-derived hypotheses to independent testing, or, to use Popper's language, the exposure to falsification, is a fundamental necessity in academic research. The tactic of asserting from a German perspective that Standard German German and Standard Austrian German are equally "accepted" in Austria, with the support of 80 million people, ignores the socioeconomic context of the country. To support such assertions, interpretations should be grounded on Occam's razor, favoring the theory that relies on the fewest and most basic presuppositions. This would support linguistic insecurity rather than Herrgen's assertion of "de-nationalization" as an explanatory element. In either scenario, it would be necessary to make predictions based on the theory that are either supported by the data or not.

Geographical variety is hampered by political borders, a fact that is now generally understood. The pluricentric method has no trouble adjusting to variation both inside and beyond state lines. Any standard language, including Standard German German, is an artifact and a consequence of language and variety design, as Haugen (1966) shows for Norwegian.

Of course, it is permissible to only be interested in regional differences in language, but in that case, one's statements must exclude the social aspect. In any instance, the linguist would be wise to refrain from using the word "pluri-areality" simply because dialectologists already have established terminology for the phenomena of "geographical variation" and "regional variation," none of which has colonial overtones and, more crucially, neither of which causes confusion. The concept of "pluri-areality" envelops the speakers of non-dominant standard varieties in a heavy fog of linguistic history from which they can never emerge.

Enregistrement of German

Despite the large number of Teutonisms, there are only a small number of Austriacisms and Heleviticisms because the majority of the candidate traits are also present in southern Germany. The intriguing subject of how Austrian and Swiss standard German were enregistered (Agha) as separate varieties is brought up by this. The belief that the creation of "registers" is more illuminating than the registers themselves serves as the foundation for this argument. This means that, in relation to our topic, we should be less interested in the German language in the structural-positivistic sense (as much of the literature on plurilingualism is), or object differences between language varieties, or more or less diverging grammars, or phonetics, and should instead focus on language usage models that are transmitted over recognizable paths in social space. It is acknowledged that the alignment of roles between social type and linguistic form groups captures this particular reflexivity. There is reason to believe that for any investigation into the registration of national standard varieties, it will be crucial to look into the dissemination of models of language use across groups of speakers via "discursive artifacts." Such role alignment can occur in face-to-face communication and the media, through stylized and non-stylized displays and ascriptions of socially relevant membership categories.

Language forms acquire social significance through enregistration processes. These social values have two aspects in the case of a pluricentric language's standard variations. On one dimension (the internal one), they encode (as all standard languages do) at least a subgroup of the traits listed below, which are partially metonymically transferred from their typical speakers to the language varieties: respect, formality, complexity, correctness, stiffness, arrogance, high social status, intelligence, ambition, modernity, etc. They encode national identity against the diversity of the other language centers of the same language on a different dimension (the external one).

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The two dimensions are mapped upon the first in the sense that German StdG, when construed (enregistered) from an Austrian or Swiss perspective, has all the (negative and positive) features (Austrian/Swiss) standard German also has when compared to the dialects or regional dialects. This is an important distinction between the three varieties of standard German. German StdG becomes an ultra-standard in this respect.

From a German perspective, the Austrian and Swiss dialects of the standard have all the characteristics of non-standard, dialectal modes of speech (registers), such as being inarticulate, archaic, showing solidarity, etc. The opposite is also true. Particularly Swiss standard German speakers report time and time again receiving compliments for their understandable dialect when speaking Swiss StdG in northern Germany.

In addition to morphology, syntax, and vocabulary, these archetypal standard varieties must also have certain phonological and phonetic characteristics. The majority of them are objectively shared by numerous regional standard variants, however others are unique to one archetypal standard. Although east/west patterns can also be seen, the distribution of these characteristics with a greater reach frequently follows a south/north pattern (as the examples presented in section 4 have indicated). However, some elements are chosen as salient for the enrolment of the regional standard varieties (and hence their folk-dialectological perception), which may or may not be (objectively) unique to the variety in question and which may or may not be in regular usage. For instance, although it occurs in many areas of the Middle German dialect region as a standard feature, including Upper Saxon in the extreme East, the coronalization of *std* is listed as a characteristic of the Rhineland standard. Consider the realization of the syllable-initial cluster /*st*/ as [st] instead of [St], which is unique to the north German standard and prototypically connected with the city of Hamburg, as a measure of frequency.

Even while the regional pluricentricity of German is an undeniable truth, it is still below the threshold of normativity since the regional standard variations of German are neither required nor penalized for non-use. Contrarily, the primary concern expressed in this study, namely pluricentricity on the national level, is primarily concerned with issues surrounding the normativity of the German, Austrian, and Swiss versions of StdG. This national pluricentricity is a relatively recent development of the post-war era, in contrast to the older regional pluricentricity of the German language area, which results from its dialectical structure and translates more or less directly into dialectal substrates for regional standard varieties. By advocating that every nation should have its own (standard) language, it adheres to the philosophy of European nation-building.

Be aware that Switzerland has never adhered to this philosophy throughout its history, and that it was unpopular in Austria before the First World War (i.e., under the Habsburg empire). But over the past several decades, this worldview has gained popularity, particularly in Austria.

Given the internal standard variety in Germany (with its multiple Enregistering pluricentric German regional centers and their accompanying regional standards), it was noted that this enrollment must cope with risky facts. The issue is that while Teutonisms (forms only used in Germany, though not in every region) are simple to locate, Helvetisms or Austriacisms (forms only used in Switzerland or Austria) are much harder to locate. This is because there is almost always at least one regional standard in Germany that shares the disputed feature. (Only a tiny portion of the lexicon, such in the case of Austria, administrative terminology. In order to create one feature as the German feature, which may subsequently be contrasted to the Swiss or Austrian version, it is necessary to eliminate standard variance within Germany. This ideological erasure of the competing varieties in Germany is an excellent illustration of what Irvine and Gal have named erasure, one of the three main processes of linguistic ideology they examine together with "iconization" and "fractal recursivity." Erasure is the "process in which ideology makes some individuals, behaviors, or sociolinguistic occurrences invisible by oversimplifying the sociolinguistic field. Facts that contradict the ideological framework are either overlooked or explained away.

The Austrian and Swiss philosophies of StdG indicate a double stereotyping that is missing from the German standard ideology, which is common for asymmetrical pluricentricity. They reject German StdG as well (although the enrolment of German StdG lacks this contrastive component), in addition to national non-standard registers and varieties like dialects and regiolects. Finally, it was noted that the registration of a Swiss standard is far less significant for Austrian national identification than it is for Swiss national identity, which is founded on pluridialectality and plurilinguality.

Analysis

Such speaker realities cannot be captured by the pluri-areal data-driven approach because of its lack of sensitivity. Austria and Switzerland are given a small number of regions due to the tradition of operating with smaller areas, such as Germany's Northeast, Northwest, and Midwest, which by definition eliminates any sense of a national viewpoint. The argument against the pluricentric notion of standard is because it has an allegedly "idealized notion of standard," whereas "pluri-arealists" assert that their standards are constructed using their facts.

Scheuringer eliminated pluralism, which provides testable hypotheses, on his own, without providing anything more than a moniker for "geographical variation" in its place. Clear, testable theoretical predictions are provided by pluricentricism. For instance, it suggests that speech patterns may eventually diverge across a border region, such as between Braunau, Austria, and Simbach, Germany, or between Vancouver, Canada, and Bellingham, USA.

Additionally, it states that the dialects of the bordering towns on each side of the line will converge (see Auer et al., 2005). German being a "pluri-areal" language simply indicates that there is some type of geographical diversity. It would be preferable to maintain the established phrase "geographical variation" and state unequivocally that one is opposed to pluricentricity rather than employing synonymous language that attempts to supplant tried and true theoretical notions.

Conclusion

The fact that German is a pluricentric language should go without saying. Others disagree, arguing that it may also be viewed as pluralistic in other contexts, such as enregisterment or the diversity of German reality. One of the key findings of this research is the dynamic character of the border and its effects on speakers on both sides of the border in terms of attitudes and cognitive processes. A little political divide eventually turns into a huge linguistic barrier. Borders typically have an effect on change, namely producing dialect diversity on either side of the border and dialect convergence amongst dialects on the same side. One of these terms is "One-Areality," which is coined from Scheuringer's neologism "Einräumlichkeit" to support the one standard German axiom. These expressions show how "pluri-areality" has been used to describe a variety of situations without being properly defined. The main components of any theory are missing according to the pluri-areal approach, which states that it "is theoretically little elaborated in comparison with pluricentric ones."

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