

Contrastive Sociolinguistics

Edited by
Marlis Hellinger
Ulrich Ammon

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Contributions to the Sociology of Language

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Editor

Joshua A. Fishman

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Part I
Bilingualism – Multilingualism

Contrastive Sociolinguistics: An introduction

Marlis Hellinger – Ulrich Ammon

In the following¹, we will briefly outline the scope of sociolinguistics (SL) and discuss recent developments in contrastive linguistics (CL), as both disciplines provide the theoretical as well as empirical basis for the studies included in the present volume. It will also be necessary to address the relationship between contrastive sociolinguistics (CSL) and contrastive pragmatics; this discussion will clarify the principles on which we have selected the papers. Generally, our model of contrastive sociolinguistics attempts to integrate various theoretical and methodological orientations, a position shared by most of our contributors.

1. Sociolinguistics

In 1974, Hymes distinguished between three types of sociolinguistics which are all fundamentally different from what he calls “conventional” linguistics. All three types define language as a social phenomenon.

Type 1 (Hymes 1974: 195f) is a kind of sociolinguistics which is both *social as well as linguistic*. Relevant studies simply apply the findings of “structural linguistics” (Hymes 1974: 79) to social contexts, e.g. to multilingual situations, language teaching, or the description of unknown languages.

A more sophisticated level of social awareness is represented by type 2, which Hymes calls *socially realistic linguistics*. Using empirical data from the speech community, this type of sociolinguistics attempts to integrate linguistic variation and change into linguistic theory. Clearly pursuing theoretical goals, it departs from the idea of homogeneity and replaces the *ideal speaker* by the *real speaker*. Of course, the paradigmatic example of type 2 sociolinguistics is the work as carried out by Labov (e.g. Labov 1966).

Thirdly, Hymes thinks of a *socially constituted* linguistics which identifies social functions as primary, while linguistic structures merely serve these functions. Thus, theories of grammar will eventually lead to theories of language, which are inherently concerned with an explanation of the ori-

gin, development, maintenance and loss of ways of speaking, and beyond that, with what this means for the individual. The final goal of sociolinguistics, as Hymes (1974: 206) sees it, is “to preside over its own liquidation”. Similar positions are held by a number of researchers, among them, e.g., Helbig (1988: 265) and Hudson (1980: 19). Hudson argues that the “socio” in sociolinguistics is redundant since linguistics must necessarily include the study of language in society. Therefore, no clear boundaries can be established separating sociolinguistics from general linguistics.

A future theory of language, i.e. one that is socially constituted, will incorporate “a kind of explanatory adequacy complementary to that proposed by Chomsky” (Hymes 1974: 203):

Chomsky’s type of explanatory adequacy leads away from speech, and from languages, to relationships universal to all languages, and possibly inherent in human nature [...] The complementary type of explanatory adequacy leads from what is common to all human beings and all languages toward what particular communities and persons have made of their means of speech. It is comparative and evolutionary in a sociocultural, rather than a biological, sense.

Interestingly, Hymes discusses the notion of *contrast* as a complementary term to *variation* and thus provides a direct link to contrastive linguistics. Among the examples given to illustrate the notion of contrast in sociolinguistics, he mentions both intralinguistic as well as cross-linguistic issues, e.g., “gross contrasts in speech activity, from great volubility to great taciturnity” or “gross contrasts in the complication, or simplification, of the obligatory surface structure of languages themselves” (1974: 203). Explanations for such surface contrasts must be sought at a deeper level.

Trudgill (1978: 11) sees sociolinguistics as being primarily concerned with the methodological and descriptive problems of variation, the mechanisms of language change and the structure of linguistic systems, defining the improvement of linguistic theory as the ultimate goal of sociolinguistics. Trudgill insists, however, that a linguistic theory account for socially determined variation and change.

Trudgill (1978: 4f) accepts discourse analysis and *the ethnography of speaking* as genuinely sociolinguistic concerns, pointing out that the investigation of ways of speaking in different cultures tends to require a cross-cultural – and necessarily, a cross-linguistic or contrastive – perspective. Examples for relevant topics range from politeness, formulaic speech and storytelling to kinship terminologies and linguistic relativity.

According to Trudgill, what has been called *the sociology of language* (cf. Fishman 1968) also falls within the scope of sociolinguistics, with such topics as bilingualism, diglossia, code-switching, language planning, and language attitudes. On the other hand, he excludes *ethnomethodology* from sociolinguistics on the grounds that its goals are purely social scientific and not at all linguistic. Thus, the study of language in social interaction uses linguistic data only “to get at the social knowledge that lies behind it” (Trudgill 1978: 3f), a goal which in Hymes’ classification would eminently qualify as belonging to sociolinguistics, presumably of type 3.

Of course, Trudgill admits to the problematic character of determining the boundaries between sociolinguistics and social scientific or anthropological research that uses linguistic data. It is no less problematic to decide whether a particular study belongs to general linguistics or to sociolinguistics. To take an example from pidgin and creole linguistics, a study such as Bickerton’s *Roots of Language* (1981) may be described as “purely” linguistic in nature since the bioprogram hypothesis seeks to contribute toward the understanding of language universals; at the same time, it may be called genuinely sociolinguistic, since it rests on empirical data that reveal the mechanisms of variation and change in creole speech communities.

We will close this section with a brief look at Fasold’s (1984/1990) comprehensive overview, which can be viewed as a kind of continuum with two, presumably fuzzy, endpoints. At one end of the scale we find *language* as the central notion, and a concern with language structure and language function as both are influenced by social forces. Typically, the focus is on the individual (as member of a social group or network), who uses language for many other purposes than simply for the transmission of messages:

... the speaker is using language to make statements about who she is, what her group loyalties are, how she perceives her relationship to her hearer, and what sort of speech event she considers herself to be engaged in. (Fasold 1984: IX)

At the other end of the continuum the central notion is *society*, with large-scale sociopolitical issues ranging from societal multilingualism, language choice, maintenance and shift, to language planning and standardization, vernacular language education and language attitudes. Fasold calls the two main sections of the continuum *the sociolinguistics of language*, and *the sociolinguistics of society*, respectively.

The concept of *continuum* is compatible with our integrative view of sociolinguistics, but may not be acceptable to Fasold, who insists on a

clear separation between macro- and micro-sociolinguistic issues. At the same time he supports the distinction between *language* ("grammar") and *language use*. In the preface to her recent introduction to sociolinguistics, Romaine (1994: viii) argues that this is an artificial and arbitrary division of labor, a position shared by the editors of this volume.

Our own understanding of sociolinguistics can ultimately be derived from Hymes' three types, and we believe that most of the papers in this volume can be characterized as being socially realistic, irrespective of the wide range of topics chosen for investigation. Topics include more form-oriented phenomena such as address forms, politeness markers or speech act categories, as well as large-scale issues such as multilingualism, language choice or language planning. In practically all cases, papers reveal a high degree of social awareness; beyond contributing to the description of particular languages, they seek to relate findings to underlying social, cultural or political structures.

2. Contrastive linguistics

2.1. The scope of contrastive linguistics

There is a similar diversity of approaches to Contrastive Linguistics (CL), ranging from a definition of contrastive linguistics as merely an application of linguistic theory to the practical problems of language teaching, to a type of contrastive linguistics that feeds into linguistic theory. The first approach can be illustrated by a quotation from Ferguson, who introduced the Contrastive Structure Series in 1959 claiming

... that a careful contrastive analysis of the two languages offers an excellent basis for the preparation of instructional materials, the planning of courses, and the development of actual classroom techniques. (Stockwell & Bowen 1965: V)

The second approach is represented by Hawkins, who believes that

The contrasts between English and German can therefore contribute to an important goal of recent linguistic theory, which is to discover the "regularities in the ways languages may differ from one another" (Keenan 1978: 90). By imposing principled limits on this variation, the theory will define the notion "possible human language". (Hawkins 1982: xiii)

Much of traditional contrastive linguistics can be described as having the following properties (cf. Bausch 1973; James 1980: 1f):

- it is synchronic rather than diachronic;
- it is interlingual or cross-linguistic rather than intralingual;
- it involves two different languages rather than varieties of one language;
- it is unidirectional, taking one of the two languages as frame of reference;
- it focuses on the differences rather than the similarities between the two languages.

While studies within such a narrow framework dominated contrastive linguistics from its beginnings into the 1970s, there have been more comprehensive approaches to contrastive linguistics (cf. Bausch 1973). An early model is Trager (1949), which extends most of the dimensions of traditional contrastive linguistics. The major principles of this type of contrastive linguistics are the following:

- it describes the differences as well as the similarities of two or more linguistic systems;
- the notion *linguistic system* may refer to different languages (cross-linguistic perspective), or to varieties of one language (intralingual perspective); in other words, variation – a central object of sociolinguistics – represents a genuine concern of contrastive linguistics also;
- it may be synchronic or diachronic; on the diachronic level, the phylogenetic development of languages as well as the ontogenetic development of individual language acquisition are possible issues.

More than traditional contrastive linguistics, which has frequently taken a keen interest in "interference phenomena" as found in L2 learners' languages, Trager's model is open to include sociolinguistic perspectives.

Recent developments in contrastive linguistics have increasingly sought to move beyond more structurally oriented analyses. Sajavaara (1981: 5) suggests that in order to account for an individual's communicative competence, contrastive linguistics must be expanded into discourse analysis, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics. Liebe-Harkort (1985: 24) believes that "the linguist cannot compare languages without comparing the cultures in which they are spoken". Thus two languages, e.g. Mountain Apache Indian and English, may share the same surface phenomenon, such as the use of compliments regarding the other person's possessions, but unlike in English, 'paying a compliment' is interpreted as a request for the object concerned in

Apache. It is apparent that an Apache speaker's "socio-cultural competence" (cf. Sajavaara 1981: 46; Olshtain 1983) includes knowledge of the sociolinguistic conditions under which 'paying a compliment' is appropriate. On the other hand, a non-Apache speaker's failure to observe these rules might be explained as negative cross-linguistic transfer (cf. Odlin 1989: 25f). The concept of cross-linguistic transfer derives from Weinreich's (1953) notion of interference which was originally used as a general category covering all kinds of transfer.

2.2. Equivalence

One of the basic notions of contrastive linguistics is *equivalence*. Definitions of equivalence (for an overview, cf. Oleksy 1986), which are based on formal, especially syntactic and lexical-semantic similarities, and which cover only pairs of sentences or even smaller units, have been criticized for quite some time. Such definitions cannot capture the fact that two items in L1 and L2 may display formal similarity, but may nevertheless be n-ways ambiguous each. Also, formal definitions of equivalence can make no statements about how these items are appropriately used in communication.

This has led to a number of alternative approaches to equivalence (for a discussion of the terms *functional* (formal) and *communicative equivalence*, cf. Hansen 1985: 127). Kalisz (1986) and others see equivalence as a relative concept, which can best be described in terms of a cluster of formal and functional properties. The degree of equivalence between items may then be determined on the basis of how many of these properties are shared. Such a view of contrastive linguistics focuses on language use rather than structure, selecting utterances instead of sentences as the central units of analysis.

A large body of literature has been produced on the notion of *pragmatic equivalence*. Fillmore (1984) distinguishes between general pragmatic phenomena, among them politeness systems and patterns of indirectness, and the "small facts" of pragmatics such as the use of the past tense in a particular situation in Swedish and English, or the use of the German particle *schon* and possible equivalents in English. Often, these small facts are linguistic items that do not translate well. Fillmore maintains that all these items vary across languages, and are therefore genuine topics of what he calls *Contrastive Pragmatics* (CP). He insists that non-linguistic parameters of the social context such as setting or speakers' attitudes, must be part of any theory of Contrastive Pragmatics.

Oleksy (1984), who suggests the term *Pragmatic Contrastive Analysis*, also maintains that it is impossible to make statements about the felicitous use of a speech act unless the relevant sociocultural restrictions are considered. If, e.g., the goal of a contrastive analysis is to find out how to perform a direct request in two languages, one must specify how and to what extent such sociolinguistic parameters as age, sex, social class, status of participants, etc., interact with felicity conditions. Equivalence can then be established in terms of shared illocutionary force and felicity conditions.

Finally, equivalence can no longer be defined only in qualitative terms, it must also be recognized to have a quantitative dimension. Statistical as well as pragmatic/functional equivalence are in fact two of seven types of equivalence suggested by Krzeszowski (1984).

3. Contrastive sociolinguistics

In the previous sections, the need for a contrastive sociolinguistics has implicitly become apparent. We pointed out that the notion of *contrast* has always played a central role in sociolinguistics, and that in contrastive linguistics there is a clear tendency away from structural comparisons to studies that account for functional and social characteristics.

The term contrastive sociolinguistics has not been used much. Fisiak (1983: 27) devoted only a few lines to contrastive sociolinguistics, simply mentioning a few papers by Janicki as "programmatic". Similarly, Hansen (1985: 126) does not elaborate on contrastive sociolinguistics, which he calls "a new branch of contrastive studies" illustrating "the immense broadening of outlook" of contrastive linguistics.

Among the few researchers who have attempted a description of contrastive sociolinguistics as an independent field of inquiry, is Janicki (1979; 1984). In 1979, Janicki criticized "orthodox" contrastive linguistics for comparing unspecified varieties of two languages, and for making illegitimate generalizations on the basis of introspective, and therefore unreliable data. He expressed the need for a contrastive sociolinguistics, whose goals should be (a) the systematic comparison of sociolinguistic patterns, and (b) the development of a theory of language use. Janicki's criticism is reminiscent of the objections Hymes raised against "conventional" linguistics.

Of course, the crucial point is the question of how sociolinguistic patterns can be considered to be equivalent. Janicki employs traditional sociolinguistic categories to solve the problem, based on the distinction between

variety according to user and *variety according to use*. For the language user, Janicki lists up such well-known parameters as social class, professional group, regional origin, age, and sex. Surprisingly, he considers the last factor largely irrelevant for languages such as English, German, or Polish. On the level of language use, he resorts to the classification of styles (registers) by Joos. An alternative would have been Labov's classification, with casual, formal and reading of word lists as the basic "styles".

Equivalence between varieties across languages is established in terms of their functional profiles (Janicki does not use this term). And while it seems plausible that standard varieties make an easy choice for contrastive analysis, the selection of comparable varieties becomes more difficult as one departs from the standard towards increasing social and regional diversification.

Janicki says nothing about how *social class* can be established as an independent criterion across national and cultural boundaries; nor does he elaborate on the notion of *function*. There exist a number of models in sociolinguistics that take function as their central notion. Ferguson (1959) and Fishman (1971) incorporated the distinction between *high* and *low functions* into models of diglossia, which are still relevant today. A more complex typology of functions comes from Ammon (1989), who distinguishes between linguistic, sociological and psychological dimensions of function (and status). One of eight dimensions is "use in the domains", which contains no fewer than 58 subcategories. Such models can be used to develop function and status profiles of languages and language varieties. A simpler model was used in Hellinger (1992) in a contrastive sociolinguistic study of three creole-speaking countries.

Janicki (1984) repeats much of what he said in 1979, emphasizing that a set of sociological indices must serve as the criterion of comparability. He insists that contrastive sociolinguistics cannot be taken as an extension of contrastive linguistics (1984: 17), because traditional contrastive linguistics does not recognize language as a social phenomenon, an assumption which is fundamental to both sociolinguistics and contrastive sociolinguistics.

Janicki (1984: 28) finally offers the following definition of contrastive sociolinguistics: "... contrastive sociolinguistic analysis ... may be tentatively defined as systematic juxtaposition of linguistic items as they are distributed in the multi-dimensional (multi-parameter) social space." "Linguistic items" include smaller structural categories as well as larger pragmatic units, e.g. speech acts; "multi-dimensional social space" relates to the functional status of these linguistic items and the sociolinguistic profiles of

users. This is a more narrow definition of sociolinguistics in that it does not account for all the phenomena that have been studied under the heading of *sociology of language*.

It appears that currently contrastive sociolinguistics may best be defined as a branch of sociolinguistics, and the topics discussed in the present volume generally fall within the scope of sociolinguistics as outlined above, or, as presented in the comprehensive *International Handbook* (cf. Ammon et al. 1987/1988). On the methodological level of data collection and processing, the papers tend to apply or refine methodologies developed in (empirical) sociolinguistics. Similarly, on a theoretical level, and in the absence of a socially constituted theory of language in the sense of Hymes, our authors tend to rely on existing sociolinguistic theories, including pragmatic and discourse models. In a number of cases, new theoretical orientations have been developed; cf., e.g., Wierzbicka (this volume), who proposes a theoretical framework that accounts for the comparison of cross-cultural sociopragmatic data.

Generally, however, one of the urgent needs for future research is the explicit formulation of the theoretical basis on which sociolinguistic structures (from politeness phenomena to patterns of functional/status change and language policies) can be compared.

As in sociolinguistics, the concept of social awareness should also play an important role in contrastive sociolinguistics (as an example, cf. Hellinger (1990) for a comparison of mechanisms of linguistic discrimination and patterns of gender-inclusive language in English and German). The papers of this volume display different degrees of social awareness, e.g. from assumptions about the social nature of contact situations in two regions on the basis of a contrastive analysis of attitudes and patterns of dialect use to more explicitly political evaluations of phenomena of language change or language planning models in different countries. Thus, a study's goals may range from an improvement of the description of sociolinguistic patterns to a contribution towards social change.

Considering the overall structure of this volume, we have created three large sections, without contending that clear boundaries can be drawn between Parts I, II, and III. In Part I, the focus is on a comparison of (individual or societal) multilingualism in different countries/communities. Included are papers with a more theoretical interest (e.g. Ammon; Eichinger; Ornstein-Galicia), but also studies which concentrate on the comparison of selected multilingual issues, such as code-switching (Jacobson), attitudes (Bister-Broosen, Vandermeeren) or divergent developments among different groups of migrants (Lüdi).

In Part II, authors take a contrastive look at language planning and language politics. The first three articles approach the topic from a more theoretical point of view, illustrating the comparison of global categories such as the status of minority or non-standard languages, or language maintenance by examples from different speech communities. Skutnabb-Kangas, Mühlhäusler, and Coulmas also suggest new lines along which language planners might work in the future. Willemyns compares the different developments of the same language on both sides of a political border between two countries with a fundamentally different language policy.

The remaining three papers of Part II prefer a more explicitly descriptive/empirical approach. Pauwels compares recent changes in the (Australian) English and Dutch address systems for women as a result of feminist language planning in both countries. Romaine is concerned with status and function change of four Anglophone pidgins/creoles, arguing that the development of literary and poetic functions is sensitive to different degrees of autonomy (distance from English) and elaboration (standardization). Finally Görlach compares a number of pidgin/creole dictionaries discussing their role in processes of standardization/language planning.

The seven articles of Part III focus on cross-linguistic discourse analysis. In recent years, discourse analysis has become a major area of investigation in sociolinguistics, pragmatics and, of course, intercultural communication. Of particular interest have been categories of politeness which are described for several pairs of languages in this volume: Chinese vs. English; Japanese vs. German; French vs. Italian; German vs. English (Yamashita et. al., Matoba, Held, House). Whereas some authors use or extend frameworks, that have been developed e.g., in conversational analysis or speech act theory, others are involved in the elaboration of new models (cf. Wierzbicka's theory of cultural scripts).

Günthner uses a number of linguistic categories (phonological, syntactic, discourse phenomena, etc.) for her comparison of female and male speech behavior in different languages, while Quasthoff discusses the universal base of storytelling.

4. Conclusion

Though sociolinguistics has often implicitly been working on a contrastive basis, doing it explicitly can be a very useful methodological exercise. It helps sociolinguists to sharpen concepts, to build systematic theories, to

develop adequate and consistent research methods and to arrive at comprehensive empirical findings. The editors hope that the present volume will open up a path of sociolinguistic questioning that will be followed with vigor and enthusiasm in the future.

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Note

- 1 The following is based largely on material first presented in Hellinger (1993).

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原书缺页

On comparing the centers of plurinational languages: The example of German

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1. Concepts and terminology

In recent years, the concept 'pluricentric language' has become firmly established in sociolinguistics. Term and concept were developed partially by Heinz Kloss (1967: 31) and partially by William Stewart (1968: 534). The complementary concept 'national variety', however, derives from Soviet sociolinguistics (e.g.: Stepanov 1960; Riesel 1962). The concept 'language center' has had a long tradition in dialectology. It has mainly been used in reference to the large cities of a language region which tend to play a dominant role in language change and whose linguistic variants tend to be adopted by their surroundings. In the context of pluricentric languages such *language centers* are not, however, single towns but entire nations or entire countries. The term 'language center' can still be used as a generic term for all kinds of centers which can then be specified as national, communal or as otherwise necessary. With respect to national centers further distinctions are possible and indeed useful, in particular between whole nations (e.g. Austria), parts of nations within one state (e.g. the German-speaking part of Switzerland), and parts of nations in separate states (former Federal Republic of Germany and German Democratic Republic).

Only if the borders of nations and states coincide, do we have nation-states. What we mean by states, seems to be clear enough. The concept 'nation', however, is not so clear. It is inappropriate to identify 'nation' with 'state' or ('country'), although this is widespread practice, as we could not then conceive multinational states. With respect to the former Soviet Union for instance, we could only speak of a nation and not – as seems more adequate – of a multinational state. In addition, the conceptual specification of a nation-state would then be superfluous. Another concept of 'nation' which has been fostered in Germany appears equally inadequate, namely equalizing 'nation' with 'language community' (in German *Sprachnation*). If we accepted this concept, all German-speaking states (countries)

would belong to the same "nation". Instead, I want to make a clear distinction between (1) states (or countries), (2) language communities and (3) nations. An essential criterion for the difficult concept 'nation' is the will of the great majority of its population to live together in one more or less autonomous state (country) and to decide about their own political fate. A common language is not a necessary requirement (cf. Switzerland with its four languages), nor is the actual existence of a separate state; thus, the Ukraine was a nation even under Soviet rule (for conceptual details see Ammon 1995: chapter 2). The examples of the former Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic show that not only different nations but also different states of the same nation can be different centers of the same language. One could, accordingly, distinguish "national centers" (in a strict sense) from "state centers" which extend over different states of the same nation. The latter are restricted to cases of divided nations. National centers of a language (in the strict sense) can, furthermore, either be entire nations (e.g. Austria) or part of a nation, i.e. the members of a language community within a nation (e.g. German-speaking Switzerland). Languages which comprise of several such centers can, more specifically, be called *plurinational languages*. It is obviously easy to find examples of such plurinational languages, e.g. English, Spanish, French, German and others (c.f. Clyne 1992b). Depending on the number of their national centers these languages can be specified as bi-, tri-, quatro-national etc.

That a language extends over several nations is only a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for its plurinational centrality or plurinationality. In addition, it is necessary for such a language to have various national language varieties. This is the case only if there is noticeable language diversity between the various nations. An important difference becomes apparent here between the nations over which a language extends and its national centers. The latter are a subset of the former, comprising only of nations with their own specific national varieties. Thus, German extends over at least seven nations where it is an official language either on the national or on a regional level (Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxemburg, Switzerland, Belgium (the East), and Italy (South Tirol)). There are, however, only three clearly distinguishable national varieties, and accordingly only three national centers: Austria, Germany, and (German-speaking) Switzerland. Therefore, German is only a tri-national, not a septa-national language.

A final remark is necessary in order to define what exactly constitutes a 'true' national variety. We follow here the widespread idea that a national

variety has to be a standard variety not some non-standard dialect, slang or the like. A nation's true national variety, therefore, has to contain at least a number of specific standard forms. This immediately raises the question how such specific standard forms can be identified. The simplest way is to refer to what has been called a nation's *linguistic codex* (dictionaries, grammars and the like). There we can find specific standard forms or variants which are not marked as non-standard ("dialect", "slang", etc). The identification of specific standard forms is more difficult, if codification is missing or only rudimentary. In this case the language use of model speakers or writers has to be analysed for specific features.

It goes without saying that the identification of *specific* standard forms requires comparison between the various nations of a language, either of their linguistic codices or their model speakers and writers or both. Let us now focus on these questions of comparison, in accordance with the overall topic of this volume.

2. Comparing different plurinational languages versus comparing the centers of a single plurinational language

Any contrastive description of plurinational languages should carefully distinguish between the following two levels of comparison: the comparison of the various national centers of a single plurinational language versus the comparison of different plurinational languages. In some cases it may even be interesting to compare different national centers of different plurinational languages. Even the answer to the question, which of the various nations over which the languages extend are actually national centers, requires comparison. How else should specific national features of a standard variety be identified? After such an identification one can, for instance, rank order the languages according to the number of their nations (the nations over which they extend) or, more specifically, the number of their national centers.

A comparison of the various national centers within a single national language presupposes an answer to the question: "Which nations really are national centers?" One can, for instance, rank order these centers by means of different criteria, depending on research interests, e.g. numerical or economic strength, size or quality of linguistic codices etc. I will proceed in this article to concentrate on the comparison of different national centers within one and the same plurinational language.

3. Comparing centers: An overview

There are numerous ways of comparing the centers of a plurinational language not all of which are of immediate relevance to sociolinguistics. From a sociolinguistic viewpoint, the following four aspects are of particular interest:

- political and sociological aspects,
- aspects of the sociology of language,
- sociolinguistic aspects,
- linguistic aspects in the narrower sense.

The distinction between these levels is not always easy to draw and remains to some degree arbitrary.

Politically and sociologically important distinctions are for instance: the numerical and the economic strength of the centers and their political structure. As to their numerical strength, one can, for instance, distinguish between the number of citizens and the number of inhabitants, or the number of native and the number of foreign speakers of the national variety. With respect to any of these numerical parameters one would, for instance, arrive at the following rank order for the German language: Germany > Austria > Switzerland.

From a sociology-of-language viewpoint one can, in particular, compare attempts at cultivating or modernizing the various national varieties. One would then, among other things, pay attention to the institutions or societies (clubs) involved in endeavors to "purify" the national variety. The comparison between the various national centers of German reveals that Austria, and to a lesser degree also Switzerland, try to keep their own national varieties "clean" of language imports from Germany. Thus, in the government-supported Austrian dictionary (*Österreichisches Wörterbuch*) or in the Swiss dictionary (*Unser Wortschatz* 1987), a number of words are marked as being not Austrian or, respectively Swiss, but German (German German). These words are well-known in Austria or Switzerland and even, to some extent, used there. However, the authors of the dictionaries have identified them as being imports from Germany. This opinion was also shared by the more aware Austrian or Swiss language user.

Another question of the sociology of language or of sociolinguistics, as some researchers may prefer to clarify it, is the comparison between the different social forces on which a standard variety is based. This question is intricately connected to the definition of the national varieties. In order

to tackle this question, it is important to be aware of the fact that there are various factors which define what is standard in a language. These include not only the linguistic codex, the codifying individuals or institutions, and the model speakers and writers. Rather, there are at least two other social forces which are involved in this sort of decision. These are the expert linguists on the one hand, and the norm authorities, who correct other peoples' (the "norm subjects") language behaviour, on the other. Figure 1 illustrates the interaction between the four social forces on which a standard variety is based and their interaction with the rest of the population.

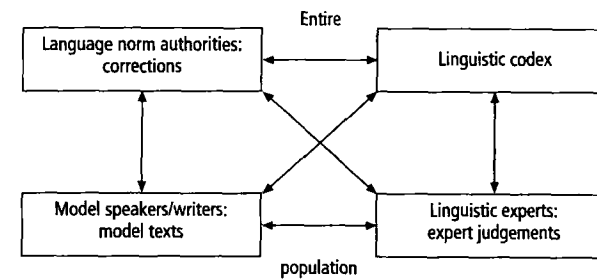


Figure 1 The social forces on which a standard variety is based

Linguistic forms which are unmarked in the linguistic codex, i.e. not marked as non-standard, count as standard – but only in terms of the linguistic codex. It may very well happen that the norm authorities, the teachers for instance, do not accept them as standard, at least not all of them, but follow their own idea of what is standard in the respective community. Their corrective behaviour may be supported by the linguistic experts against the linguistic codex, which the linguists may for instance consider partially outmoded. The corrective behaviour of the teachers, or of other norm authorities like superiors in offices, or the judgements of the linguistic experts, may later be taken as a point of orientation in the revision of the linguistic codex. On the other hand, the norm authorities or the model speakers and writers will usually follow the linguistic codex in their corrective behaviour or, respectively, their language behaviour to some degree. Even linguists often accept what the linguistic codex defines as standard. In fact, all the components of figure 1 tend to interact and thereby influence the definition of what is standard, or more or less standard.

One can even compare the various national centers of a language as to the role which these components play in the definition of the standard variety in

each case. Thus, for instance, Austria's linguistic codex (*Österreichisches Wörterbuch*) has mainly been based on the intuition of its authors. In comparison, Germany's linguistic codex, the core of which are the volumes of the *Duden Verlag* (e.g. *Duden. Rechtschreibung* 1991), has largely been based on extensive empirical analysis of model speakers and writers. One can also compare the centers as to which degree the various components of figure 1 converge or diverge in their definition of the standard. Accordingly, the researcher will have to decide which linguistic forms should be counted as elements of the various national varieties.

The comparison of the respective populations' attitudes towards their national varieties, or the use they make of them in various situations or domains, is the more genuinely sociolinguistic research approach. Thus, for the Austrians their national variety is an important means of national identification. In comparison, for the German-speaking Swiss, their national variety does not carry much weight as a national symbol. They only use it in very formal situations and otherwise speak in their dialect. The Germans are hardly aware of having a national variety of their own but only know about Austrian and Swiss linguistic peculiarities of German. There are, of course, particular reasons for these differences which should be explained in the context of such a comparison.

Finally, the national varieties can be compared linguistically in the narrower sense. This presupposes, of course, their precise definition which, as has been demonstrated, is in most cases by no means self-evident. There are even more problems in defining national variants, i.e. elements of national varieties, than have been mentioned above. These shall be treated in chapter 5 below. Linguistically, the national varieties of a language can be compared on the various linguistic levels:

- graphy (writing system and orthography),
- phony (phonology and subphonemic peculiarities),
- grammar (morphology and syntax),
- lexicon including compounding and idioms,
- pragmatic aspects (e.g. greetings, address forms or even text structures).

The national varieties of German show differences on all these levels, even in the writing system. Thus, the letter <ß> is only used in Austria and Germany, while it is substituted for <ss> in Switzerland. Pragmatic differences have been researched very little so far but peculiarities have been observed informally. An example is the Austrians' inclination to use titles extensively in all situations (*Frau Doktor, Herr Hofrat*, etc.).

4. Comparing the linguistic codices

A national variety does not strictly require codification. It may exist only as the preferred language use of model speakers and writers, or in the form of model texts, or on the basis of corrective behaviour of language norm authorities. In such cases it would, as a rule, be quite variable and hard to define. Through codification it gains stability and also usually more general recognition.

It can be rewarding to compare the linguistic codices of the various national varieties of a pluricentric language. There are numerous interesting aspects of comparison. One of them is simply the size or the comprehensiveness of the codices. Often the numerically stronger national centers, i.e. those with a larger population, have at the same time the larger or the more comprehensive codex for their national variety. This is very obvious in the case of German where Germany's linguistic codex is considerably larger and more comprehensive than the codices of Austria or Switzerland. Germany has produced numerous volumes, in particular large-size dictionaries, which constitute its linguistic codex. The *Duden* volumes of Germany, which are part of this codex, are far more comprehensive than either the linguistic codex of Austria or Switzerland. They comprise of no less than twelve different volumes each of which is dedicated to a special aspect of the national variety: orthography, pronunciation, grammar, stylistic questions etc. In contrast, the Austrian linguistic codex consists of only one relatively small dictionary which contains the description of all aspects of the Austrian national variety: spelling, pronunciation, grammar etc. (*Österreichisches Wörterbuch*). German-speaking Switzerland also has a linguistic codex of only a very limited size: a couple of dictionaries, of a similar type as the Austrian dictionary but even smaller (*Unser Wortschatz* 1987; *Schweizer Schülerduden* 1976; 1980), and a thin brochure for its particular pronunciation (Boesch 1957a). There is, however, a more comprehensive coverage of the Swiss-German standard pronunciation in print (Hofmüller-Schenk). In contrast, Germany has three different dictionaries of pronunciation alone, each of considerable size (*Siebs* 1969; *Duden. Aussprachewörterbuch* 1990; *Großes Wörterbuch der deutschen Aussprache* 1982).

There are various other aspects of linguistic codification which are interesting to compare. One important difference can be made between *internal* and *external codification* of a national variety. The national variety of Germany, i.e. German German, is exclusively internally codified, i.e. all its variants or forms can be found in the numerous volumes of the lin-