



Standard variation and linguistic attitudes in German-speaking Switzerland: From the etic to the emic perspective

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INTRODUCTION

The German standard language is used under different conditions in different parts of the German-language area. From the etic perspective (roughly referring to the objective perspective), these different sociolinguistic settings have led to structural differences between the varieties of standard German in the German-speaking countries on the lexical, phonological and grammatical levels, as documented in the *Variantenwörterbuch des Deutschen* (Ammon et al. 2004; Ammon, Bickel and Lenz 2016) as well as in the *Variantengrammatik* (Dürscheid, Elspaß and Ziegler 2018). The variation of standard German is lexicographically quite well researched and there is ample evidence of national and regional variants of standard German in text corpora. However, the influence of text genres on the frequency of variants and the individual speakers' perspective on the variants of standard German remain research desiderata. Based on the fact that public texts regularly contain variants of standard German, e.g. Helvetisms in Swiss texts, the question of how individual speakers react to such variants and use them in their own language production is of interest here. This chapter focuses on variation in standard German and speakers' attitudes towards languages and varieties in Switzerland. I begin by providing some essential facts and figures about the current situation of languages and varieties in Switzerland. By means of the re-analysis of an extensive corpus of public texts, which was used for the compilation of the *Variantenwörterbuch des Deutschen* (Ammon et al. 2004; Ammon, Bickel and Lenz 2016), I show the different distribution of variants in different text genres. I then turn to the question whether variation in standard German should be modelled as 'pluricentric' or as 'pluriareal' (these terms being defined further below). This question is a hot point of debate in German sociolinguistics. I argue that these two concepts are not incompatible. I then focus on the emic perspective (roughly referring to the subjective perspective), turning to the cognitive, emotive and conative dimensions of speakers' attitudes (Baker 1992; Kristiansen 2014) towards variants of standard German. These attitudes were analysed on the basis of data collected by means of an online questionnaire (Schmidlin

2011). In this questionnaire, 908 informants from all over the German-speaking area (Germany, Switzerland and Austria) and from different age-groups answered 85 questions concerning the choice of lexical and phonological variants in a written text, the standard or non-standard status of variants, and their knowledge about the German-speaking areas where particular variants are typically used. It can be shown that informants exhibit considerable variation with regard to these dimensions of attitudes. Furthermore, their attitudes vary depending on whether the items assessed in the questionnaire are phonological or lexical variants. In the case of Swiss standard German, the juxtaposition of an etic and an emic perspective on the variation of standard German shows that even variants that occur frequently in public texts and that are also codified in dictionaries are not always considered to be standard by the speakers in individual test situations.

LANGUAGES AND VARIETIES IN SWITZERLAND

The population of Switzerland is highly international and numbers about 8.5 million today, 25% of whom do not have Swiss citizenship. 20% of adult inhabitants say that they do not use any of the Swiss national languages, i.e. German, French, Italian or Romansh, as a dominant language in their everyday lives (Christen and Schmidlin 2019: 196; cf. Federal Statistical Office 2017).

Table 1: Permanent residents in Switzerland (N) and their dominant language(s) (in %) (Christen and Schmidlin 2019: 196; cf. Federal Statistical Office 2017; calculation on the basis of responses from 10,000 informants.).

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2015
Total population	6,011,469	6,160,950	6,640,937	7,100,302	8,131,033
(Swiss) German	66.1	66.5	64.6	64.1	63.0
French	18.4	18.6	19.5	20.4	22.7
Italian and Italian dialects spoken in the Ticino and the Grisons	11.0	9.6	7.7	6.5	8.1
Romansh	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.5
other languages	3.7	5.5	7.7	8.5	21.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	115.9*

*The total exceeds 100% because some individuals indicated multiple dominant languages.

Table 1 shows the distributions of the population's use of official languages in Switzerland over the past decades, which has been relatively stable. The French-speaking group has grown slightly since 1970, while the Italian-speaking group has lost some speakers, but has been growing again since 2000. Romansh speakers make up less than 1 percent. Finally, there has been a clear increase in languages other than the four national or official languages in Switzerland over the years.



Figure 1: Linguistic map of Switzerland (from Christen, Glaser and Friedli 2013: 23).

[‘Französisch’ = French, ‘Deutsch’ = German, ‘Rätoromanisch’ = Romansh, ‘Italienisch’ = Italian]

Figure 1 shows a map of the regional distribution of official languages. This situation has proved to be quite stable. The map shows that, in terms of languages used as official languages, Switzerland consists of largely monolingual territories. As to individual multilingualism, the Swiss speak about two languages in addition to their L1 on average (Schmidlin and Franceschini 2019: 1013; cf. Federal Statistical Office 2017). This figure is higher when only German speaking Swiss are considered, namely 2.2. The Swiss usually learn their additional languages at school and not through contact with their fellow citizens. The stability of Swiss multilingualism as an institutional phenomenon can at least be partially explained by the fact that it is protected by the federal constitution. Section 2 of Article 70 of the Swiss federal constitution states that “the Cantons shall decide on their official languages. In order to preserve harmony between linguistic communities, the Cantons shall re-

spect the traditional territorial distribution of languages and take account of indigenous linguistic minorities.” It is this so-called principle of territoriality that has led to the stability of Swiss multilingualism.

Why start off a discussion of standard languages in Switzerland with facts and figures about Swiss multilingualism? First of all, the French-, German- and Italian-speaking parts of Switzerland are exposed to language contact with each other; some variants in Swiss standard French, Swiss standard German and Swiss standard Italian can be explained by this language contact. For instance, *attendre sur quelqu'un* (‘to wait for someone’) is a German loan construction (from ‘auf jemanden warten’) in Swiss French, corresponding with *attendre à quelqu'un* in French standard French. In Swiss standard Italian, *rolladen* (‘roll shutter’) replaces *tapparella* as used in standard Italian in Italy. There are also quite a few Helvetisms in Swiss standard German derived from French or Italian, e.g. *Trottoir* (‘pavement’), *Peperoni* (‘sweet pepper’) and *Secondo/Seconda* (referring to people of the second generation of immigrant families). Furthermore, there are morphological variants in Swiss standard German that can possibly be explained by French and Italian equivalents, for instance *Reservation*, which is morphologically related to French *réservation* and Italian *riservazione* (for further examples and references cf. Schmidlin and Franceschini 2019).

Secondly, the common political system has led to some parallel terminology in the Swiss standard languages. A federal council is called *Bundesrat* in German, *consiglio federale* in Italian, *conseil fédéral* in French and *cussegl federal* in Romansh. The word for ‘popular vote’ is *Volksabstimmung* in German, *votation populaire* in French, *votazione popolare* in Italian and *votaziun dal pievel* in Romansh. This political terminology is very distinct when it comes to the description of Swiss standard German as a variety of standard German. Indeed, the fact that political terminology is a salient part of national variants is often used as an argument against models of national standard varieties, with critics claiming that this and other kinds of specific terminology constitute only a very marginal area of the lexicon (Besch 1990; Koller 1999; cf. Eichinger 2005 for a categorical analysis of variants). However, it remains unclear where the line is to be drawn between technical terms and other lexical items. Moreover, in modern democratic societies, the lexical fields of administration, law and institutional vocabulary are not marginal at all, both in terms of frequency, socio-politically and thus cognitively in the speakers’ repertoire. The issue of how technical terms feature in standard varieties opens up the more general discussion about which variants are constitutive elements of a variety. Why wouldn’t frequent lexical elements be included here, even if they are ‘only’ technical terms? The third reason why multilingualism matters when discussing concepts of standard languages in multilingual societies is that the different language groups have developed different attitudes towards their own standard

languages and their specific features. We could call this diversity of linguistic attitudes ‘multiattitudinism’. For instance, a rather centralistic and normative French perspective on standard language in Swiss French speakers, which takes its cues from France, contrasts with a rather affirmative attitude towards linguistic variation in general and diglossia in particular in Swiss German speakers (Knecht and Py 1997; Pedretti 2000; Widmer et al. 2004). These attitudes, referring to the speakers’ own standard languages, tend to be transferred to the other standard varieties respectively. This is why it is typically difficult for the Swiss French to comprehend that Swiss Germans use a dialect as their everyday language. It is often ignored that these dialects have become *Ausbaudialekte* so that they can serve any communicative function in society, even formal ones, and that using a Swiss German dialect is not socially stigmatized, but is the default mode of communication in German-speaking Switzerland. From the French perspective, with its centralistic conception of linguistic norms, dialects can even be associated with a lack of education. Consequently, distinctive features of Swiss standard varieties, i.e. Helvetisms, are more likely to be perceived as dialect and thus generally viewed more critically by the French-speaking Swiss than by the German-speaking Swiss.

VARIANTS OF STANDARD GERMAN FROM THE ETIC PERSPECTIVE

From an etic (‘objective’) perspective, and due to (partially) independent political-historical developments, standard languages, in terms of national languages or official languages, have developed their own distinctive features. To a certain degree, this is true for all Swiss national languages (Haas 2006: 1777; Thibault and Knecht 2012). However, discussion about the normative autonomy of the standard varieties is more intense in the German-speaking area than in the Romance-speaking area. Compared to the French-speaking area, which is traditionally more oriented towards a uniform norm, the more federalist structure of the German-speaking area has generally led to more tolerance towards independent regional developments. This linguistic attitudinal contrast is also reflected in Switzerland.

Variants of standard German are not restricted to individual words. Very often, they consist of polylexical constructions, which are difficult to describe lexicographically. For instance, in Germany the construction *Anlieger frei* or *Anwohner frei* is used to express the traffic rule that residents of a street where there is a general driving ban are allowed to pass. In Austria, the construction *ausgenommen Anrainer* is used. In Switzerland, the most common construction is *Anwohner gestattet* (Ammon, Bickel and Lenz 2016: 40).

Yet, variation in the German standard language is not only structured along national borders, as is the case with *Abiturient* used in Germany, *Maturant* used in

Austria and *Maturand* used in Switzerland for a student who is completing grammar school. It is, in fact, quite rare that areas where certain linguistic variants are used are clearly defined by national borders (cf. Elspaß and Kleiner 2019). When this does happen, variants often refer to country-specific institutional terms (as already discussed above), such as variants referring to Swiss democracy and parliamentarism (Löffler 1997: 1859), e.g. *Stimmbürger* ('voter') and *Souverän* (referring to all inhabitants who are entitled to vote; 'electorate'). In the majority of cases, however, variants are used in regions straddling national borders. The word *allfällig* ('possible', 'possibly occurring') is used in Austria as well as in Switzerland. *Paprika* ('sweet pepper'), for which in Switzerland as well as South Tyrol *Peperoni* is used, is common in both Austria and Germany. At the same time, *Paprika* referring to the spice is used in the whole of the German-speaking area. Furthermore, many variants are relative rather than absolute in their distribution, in that they occur in various regions of the German-speaking area with different frequencies. For instance, the grammatical gender of *E-Mail* tends to be feminine in the North of the German-speaking area, whereas in the South both neuter and feminine are used (Niehaus 2017: 76). However, it may turn out that neuter is nevertheless perceived to be the prototypical gender for E-Mail in, for instance, Swiss standard German.

Lexicographically, the variants of standard German, be they national or regional, absolute or relative, are quite well documented, on the one hand in separate dictionaries of Helvetisms, Austriacisms or Northern German regional variants (Bickel and Landolt 2018; Ebner 2009; Meyer 2006; Seibicke 1983) and, on the other hand, by means of regional labels in general monolingual dictionaries, e.g. DUDEN *Universalwörterbuch* 2015, DUDEN *Grosses Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* 1999, and dictionaries for German as a foreign language (e.g. Langenscheidt *Grosswörterbuch für Deutsch als Fremdsprache* 2003). The *Variantenwörterbuch des Deutschen* (Ammon et al. 2004; Ammon, Bickel and Lenz 2016) is the first to collect and comparatively represent standard German variants from the whole of the German-speaking area.

The corpus on which the *Variantenwörterbuch* is based consisted of more than 1,000 items: daily and weekly newspapers, journals, magazines, popular non-fiction books, literary texts, all dating from 1970-1995 (with the literary texts covering a longer period, some of them dating back to the 1950s). There were also brochures and official documents, e.g. public authority communication, included in the corpus. To determine the origin of the texts, attention was paid to the biographical origin of their authors and, where this was not possible, e.g. in the case of newspapers, to the place of publication. These texts were all triple-checked for variants of standard German in several readings by the teams in Austria (Innsbruck), Switzerland (Basel) and Germany (Duisburg).

The potential variants identified in this way were then compared with evidence in previous lexicography and subjected to a frequency analysis. The possibility of domain-specific queries in the World Wide Web was decisive (site:de for Germany, site:at for Austria and site:ch for Switzerland). Words that are not variants, such as *Baum* (tree), *Mensch* (human) or *Tisch* (table), were distributed in a ratio of 80% to 10% to 10% among German, Austrian and Swiss websites. In the case of findings that deviated strongly from this ratio, the assumption was substantiated that these could be variants of standard German. Thus, almost 98% of the references of the Helvetism *Maturand* (grammar school student) were found on Swiss websites and only 1% on German and Austrian ones. After this frequency check, about 45% of the variants identified by the corpus readings remained as potential entries for the *Variantenwörterbuch*. For further information concerning the corpus and the empirical process behind the documentation of variants cf. Ammon et al. 2004: 911–939, Schmidlin 2011: 134–144, Schmidlin 2013: 26–27). With this approach, it was possible to map the overall frequency of variants, but not differentiated by text type.

In order to get a picture of this distribution in various text genres, I re-analysed a representative selection of 537 documents out of the *Variantenwörterbuch* corpus. The selection of 537 documents for the corpus re-analysis amounts to 48,379 pages. In the dictionary project database, I was able to trace back all comments on words considered to be potential variants by the members of the research group, and to identify all variants that, after the frequency analyses mentioned above, had actually ended up as entries in the *Variantenwörterbuch* (Schmidlin 2011: 147). This procedure makes it possible to identify the frequency of codified national and regional variants of standard German variants in various text genres from different time periods: German, Austrian and Swiss newspapers (local and supra-regional, tabloid and quality), literary texts, non-fictional prose. Different content domains, e.g. traffic, tourism, cookery, institutions, health etc., were also taken into account. There were two formats of texts considered in the data selection: books with an average page of around 200 words and newspapers with an average page of around 2,000 words. For reasons of scope, these average numbers were extracted via random sampling.

In one-way analyses of variance and correlation analyses, I studied the influence of the factors mentioned above on the density of variants in the selected German, Austrian and Swiss texts. The dependent variable was the number of national or regional variants of standard German that were discovered within 100 pages of each text and that were entered in the project database.

First of all, it can be stated that none of the texts considered in this analysis is free of regional or national variants of standard German. However, the analysis showed that the number of such variants occurring in a text depends on the origin and type or genre of the text. Swiss texts contain the most national and regional

variants (187 variants per 100 pages), followed by Austrian texts (116 variants) and German texts (48 variants). The national origin of the texts has a significant influence on the density of variants ($p < 0.01$). Not surprisingly, local newspapers contain more variants than supra-regional ones. However, it has to be noted that the supra-regional quality press – e.g. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (German), *Die Presse* (Austrian) and *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (Swiss) – use national and regional variants of standard German, too. Literary texts contain the fewest variants. Furthermore, when comparing older texts, some of them dating back to the 1950s, with texts from around 2000, no clear diachronic development in the frequency of variants can be observed. Regional and national variants of standard German, on the one hand, and elements that are common to the whole German-language area, on the other hand, seem to be equally frequent, but sensitive to text genres. It can be concluded that the number of regional and national variants of standard German in public texts is small, but stable and salient (i.e. they were quite reliably identified by the members of the research group and passed the frequency tests).

Recent studies show that since 2000, lexical convergence between Austrian and German standard German has increased (Wiesinger 2015). Similarly, Bickel, Hofer and Suter (2015) state that, in the new edition of the *Variantenwörterbuch* from 2016, 68% of the lexical entries that, in the first edition, had been identified as German national or German regional variants of standard German and labelled as “increasingly used”, are by now commonly used. Yet, 30% of the variants that had been documented as Helvetisms in the first edition have also become more common by now in the dictionary corpus, e.g. *Urnengang* (‘round of vote / election’) and *Schuldenbremse* (‘debt ceiling / brake’). This could indicate that the lexical convergence of the variants of standard German consists not only of the process of adopting Northern German (regional) variants in the South of the German-speaking area or in Switzerland, but also of southern variants spreading to the whole of the German-speaking area.

Outside of the lexical, there are also phonological differences that differentiate the varieties of standard German. The majority of speakers of Swiss standard German produce phonological variants that are typical of Swiss standard German, using apical /r/ and not uvular /R/, using voiceless /s/ and not voiced /z/ in words like *Sonne*, and using non-reduced final syllables, for instance in words like *machen*. In Swiss standard German, intervocalic consonants tend to be longer, e.g. in *Watte*, final /r/ is usually not vocalized, e.g. *Mutter*, and there is no fricative in the suffix <ig>, e.g. in *König*. For further discussion of phonological variants see Guntern (in press); Hove (2002); Kleiner and Knöbl (2015); Krech et al. (2010); Ulbrich (2005). Although there are some tendencies of convergence towards German standard German pronunciation in some speakers, and although they might speak differently in different contexts (cf. Christen et al. 2010), the phonological variants of Swiss

standard German can currently still be observed in the majority of speakers. Remarkably, the increasing use of the standard language as a spoken language with allochthonous speakers, especially with German speakers from Germany, has so far not led to the levelling of national and regional phonological variants of the German standard language. Further systematic empirical studies of the Swiss pronunciation of standard German are actually a research desideratum.

CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF STANDARD GERMAN: PLURICENTRIC VS. PLURIAREAL

To recap so far, from the *etic* point of view, the variants of standard German are a fact for which there is empirical evidence, as my discussion has shown. Yet, in terms of types, national and regional variants of standard German constitute only a small proportion of the entire German lexicon – probably around 5% (Schmidlin 2013: 23). De Cillia (2015: 152) referred to Freud’s “Narzissmus der kleinen Differenzen” (‘narcissism of small differences’) in order to describe the process whereby members of a nation try to establish differences between their own nation and another nation which is actually very similar to their own. Wardhaugh (1987: 31) referred to *flavor* rather than *substance* when describing the differences between the varieties of standard English. However, in terms of tokens, variants of standard German occur frequently enough in texts to be noticed by the readers especially from the allochthonous perspective (Schmidlin 2011: 299). Meanwhile, the national and regional variants of standard German have been described extensively in lexicography and most recently also in grammatography (see Dürscheid, Elspaß and Ziegler 2018). Nevertheless, teachers often correct variants for being non-standard, even if they are codified as standard in dictionaries (cf. Davies et al. 2017; see also further below).

From a theoretical point of view, there are two approaches within sociolinguistics in order to conceptualise variation in standard German: the pluricentric concept (for instance Ammon 1995; Clyne 1992; de Cillia 2015), which is sometimes (but not always) used synonymously with a plurinational concept, and the pluriareal concept (for instance Niehaus 2017; Scheuringer 1996). The pluricentric view assumes that there are varieties of German that are of equal value and that are influenced by state borders, similar to the difference between American and British English. In contrast to the pluricentric concept, the pluriareal (or pluriregional) concept refers to linguistic differences within Germany between North and South and within Austria between East and West (Greule 2002: 58), as well as the numerous commonalities across borders (cf. Budin et al. 2019: 31; Pickl et al. 2019 referring to differences within Austria and Bavarian-Austrian commonalities; Shafer

2018: 23–39 for a concise contrastive report of both the pluricentric and the pluriareal concepts; Scheuringer 2018: 222 for his biting criticism of the pluricentric concept from the Bavarian perspective). Pluriarealists argue against national borders as linguistic borders. Indeed, on the whole, trans-national and regional variants of standard German are more numerous than national variants (cf. Elspaß, Dürscheid and Ziegler 2017). However, certain semantic areas still prove to be especially productive of national variants. In the case of Swiss standard German, national (i.e. nation-specific) variants are quite frequent in a) public administration, law, institutions (see above), b) as loan words, e.g. in sports terminology, c) as dialect words integrated into the standard language, d) as variants circulated by national and regional media as well as distributors of consumer products (Sutter 2017: 36f). Thus, depending on the semantic fields represented by the variants, both the pluricentric and the pluriareal concepts are applicable to model the varieties of standard German.

A further argument used against pluricentricity is the fact that most variants are relative rather than absolute: variants may occur predominantly, but not exclusively, in a certain region. Many of them are used side by side with variants commonly used in the whole of the German-speaking area or even with variants typical of other regions. Yet this is actually not at all denied from the pluricentric perspective. Referring to variants of Swiss standard German, Haas used the term *Frequenzhelvetismus* to describe this phenomenon as early as 1982.

Auer (2014) argues that the national interpretation of pluricentricity only dates back to the postwar period, whereas in earlier times the term had referred to regional varieties formed by dialect differences. But in its current cast, the national concept of pluricentricity endorses the ideology that every nation should have its own (standard) language, according to Auer (2014). This criticism seems justified. However, there are undeniably certain even historical grounds for a pluricentric notion in application to German-speaking Switzerland, at least. As far as the Swiss *Schreibsprache* ('written language') is concerned, the discussion of its individuality dates back at least to Bodmer and Breitinger (1746: Bd 2 S. 613), who criticised the "Tyrannie der Sachsen über den schweizerschen und alle andere Dialekten der deutschen Provintzen". Moreover, Switzerland was de facto separated from the *Deutsches Reich* in 1499, de jure in 1648. Furthermore, in comparison to the standard varieties in Germany and Austria, there seem to be more specific (i.e. national) variants in the Swiss standard variety (as per the number of entries in Ammon et al. 2004; Ammon, Bickel and Lenz 2016). Also, there is less intra-regional variation in Swiss standard German than in the German and Austrian varieties, which of course can be explained by the size of the language areas and a stronger historical interconnection between Germany and Austria. Consequently, on the whole, the pluricentric concept seems to be more adequate to describe the standard variety in Ger-

man-speaking Switzerland than in Germany and Austria, where there is a greater degree of intra- and transnational linguistic variation (for further references to historical aspects of pluricentricity cf. Durrell 2017; Fingerhuth 2019; Scheuringer 2018).

Niehaus (2017), when describing the compilation of the corpus on which the *Variantengrammatik* is empirically based, mentions that the regional subdivisions are mostly geopolitical, referring to *Bundesländer* or *Bezirke*. At this point, the question arises whether favouring the term *region* rather than *centre* – provided that *region* is not defined dialectologically but geopolitically – really solves the theoretical problem of defining what the core and periphery of a *centre* are (cf. Auer 2014; Wolf 1994). In a narrow sense, using the term *pluriareal* (or *pluriregional*) instead of *pluricentric* just shifts the theoretical problem of defining a linguistic area from one administrative level to another, lower, level. Interestingly, in both the pluricentric and pluriareal concepts, one might expect that institutional borders – even more than dialectological borders – have the potential to maintain or even reinforce differences between standard varieties. In the case of national borders, “national constructs” such as state schools, political constitutions, laws, public media etc. undoubtedly give rise to specific structures in a community of communication (cf. Bickel, Hofer and Suter 2015; Auer et al. 2015 on different phonological phenomena used on each side of the national border between Baden and Alsace; Brandner 2015 on syntactic phenomena in Alemannic which differ across the national border between Switzerland and Germany; Bülow and Kleene 2019 on distinctive variants at the Austrian-Bavarian border). Nevertheless, there are other fields of communication where the horizontal-areal (i.e. geographic) variation of the German standard language is confined by neither regional nor national borders.

Pertaining to the linguistic levels involved in geographical variation, phonological differences between the varieties of standard German can be conceptualised quite well from a pluricentric perspective – at least when speakers of the public service media, who are important authorities with respect to the phonological norms of a linguistic community, are compared with each other. Even Herrgen (2015), who is rather critical of the pluricentric approach, especially when varieties are conceptualised as national varieties, mentions that within public service radio and TV, the authorities responsible for phonological norms in the media are organised at the national level. Phonological norms used by professional speakers in Bavaria and Austria are still surprisingly distinct. As for German-speaking Switzerland, public service broadcasting still has a high share of the media market, with a radio market share of 60% and a TV market share of 40% (SRG SSR 2019), which is considerable, given that there are 25% foreign residents, most of whom do not speak German as a first language. The presence of public service broadcasting thus contributes to

the establishment of phonological norms (proto)typical of standard German in Switzerland.

In contrast to phonological variants of standard German in the public media, lexical and grammatical variants occurring in public texts show more heterogeneous patterns of variation: as mentioned earlier in this section, some of them are relative variants, i.e. they exist in the entire German-speaking area but occur much more frequently in one region than elsewhere, and many of them are used in several regions across national borders. These different types of variation are taken into account by both the pluriareal and the pluricentric perspectives. Thus, on the whole, the adequacy of the theoretical concepts discussed here, whether pluricentric or pluriareal, depends on which region of the German-speaking area is being considered, as well as on the linguistic level of variation (phonological, lexical or grammatical) that is of interest.

VARIANTS OF STANDARD GERMAN FROM THE EMIC PERSPECTIVE

After having discussed the frequency and the theoretical conceptualisation of the national and regional variants of standard German in the previous sections, I now turn to the perspective of speakers' attitudes towards variants of standard German in German, Austrian and Swiss texts. Given that national and regional variants of standard German are frequent in written language, what are the speakers' attitudes towards this kind of linguistic variation? In order to test speakers' attitudes to both national and regional variation of standard German, an internet questionnaire was used to collect data on the use of national and regional variants of standard German from speakers from the whole of the German-speaking area (for an extensive description of the methodology cf. Schmidlin 2011: 208–287). First, it was tested how loyal speakers from different regions are with respect to the variants typically used in their own region (according to the state of research presented in Ammon et al. 2004). Over 900 informants filled in the questionnaire. Their task was to choose from a series of standard German variants the ones they would most naturally use in order to complete some example sentences in the context of a letter or a school essay. For instance, they were asked whether they would rather use *Schuhbänder*, *Schuhbändel*, *Schnürsenkel* or some other variants for 'shoe laces' in order to complete the sentence "Er stolperte und bemerkte, dass seine ... offen waren" ('He stumbled and realized that his ... were undone). For the example sentences, variants were chosen that according to the corpus research for the *Variantenwörterbuch* were particularly clear and frequent cases of national or regional variants of standard German. In order to analyse the answers statistically, the value 1 was set when informants exclusively used variants from other regions. From the southern German

(East and West), Swiss and Austrian perspectives, this type of answer mostly meant the choice of a North/Central German variant or of a so-called Teutonism. The value 2 was set when the informants chose a variant or variants from their own region as well as variants from other regions. The value 3 was set when the informants only chose variants from their own region or variants that are common in the whole of the German-speaking area, assuming they existed for the specific example sentence. Whether informants select or deselect “their own” variants depends on the informants’ regional origin ($p < 0.01$). It could be shown that the informants from the northern and central regions of the German-speaking areas were most loyal and always chose the variants from their own regions. This might possibly be explained by the fact that, in the linguistically more uniform northern varieties of the German-speaking area, there are fewer variants in the linguistic repertoires at the speakers’ disposal, compared to Southern Germany. However, even the informants who had grown up in the South East or South West of Germany were more loyal towards the variants of their own region than the Swiss informants. Whereas for Southern German informants, the southern variant *Schuhbündel* was the first choice, many Swiss informants chose the northern variant *Schnürsenkel*. Another example: even though the Swiss informants all learn the word *Vortritt* in their road safety education to denote the right to pass at a crossroad or a junction before another approaching vehicle, many of them chose the word *Vorfahrt* in the questionnaire in order to complete an example sentence (for further information on the study design cf. Schmidlin 2011: 337f). What is interesting here is that Swiss informants show significantly lower loyalty values than informants from South West Germany and Western Austria / Vorarlberg, even though all these regions are dialectologically related and all speakers use an Alemannic dialect in their everyday life and a standard variety with many variants. Despite the similar linguistic situations in these three regions, the speakers’ attitudes towards national and regional variants of standard German differ considerably. The national border seems to function as a demarcation line for loyalty towards linguistic variants, with the following tendencies: in a situation similar to a test situation, when having to produce a sentence in standard German, informants from all over Germany choose lexical variants that are typical of their own region. Informants from the whole of Austria choose both their own and German German variants. In some cases, Swiss informants tend to prefer the German German variants to the Swiss variants. With respect to linguistic attitudes, the national borders prove to be cognitively relevant.

What is to be concluded from this with respect to the Swiss German informants? Although they read texts containing Helvetisms daily (see further above), when asked to select variants in a virtual situation of language production they choose these Helvetisms less often than, for instance, the Austrian informants choose Austriacisms. When in doubt, they tend to avoid Helvetisms in a situation which ap-

proximates a test situation. This result constitutes an interesting contrast to the frequent use of Helvetisms even in the quality press, but also to spontaneous individual language production. This also becomes evident in another section of the questionnaire, where the informants were asked whether selected variants in their view were dialectal, rather dialectal, rather standard or standard (cf. Schmidlin 2013: 37). Remarkably, even well-established Helvetisms, e.g. *besammeln* ('assemble', especially said of school children), are judged to be rather dialectal. In an individual test situation, the informants seem to conceive of the lexical variants of standard German as a socio-vertical type of variation, whereas in public texts lexical variants appear rather as an areal-horizontal type of variation (cf. Budin et al. 2019: 20).

As far as attitudes towards *phonological* norms are concerned, the national origin of the informants, which proved to be relevant when assessing lexical variants, seems less relevant here. Herrgen (2015: 155) was able to show that the German (i.e. bundesdeutsche) phonological norm is considered by speakers from all over the German-speaking area to be the one representing the standard pronunciation per se. In Schmidlin (2011: 271), it was also shown that the great majority of informants from all regions consider the standard German spoken in (Northern) Germany to be the 'best'. Herrgen argues that such attitudes are a sign of the denationalization of the pronunciation of the standard language. I do not quite agree with this view. I see rather an interesting difference between lexical and phonological variants of standard German and their etic development. The proportion of lexical variants in the varieties of standard German is quite stable, whereas there are some tendencies of speakers' convergence towards phonological norms that can be identified as (Northern) German, not de-nationalized ones. Kleiner (2015) also shows that some phonological variants that have been specific to the South East seem to be starting to disappear. Whereas southern lexical and grammatical variants are not simply continually replaced by northern variants, this seems to be different in the case of the phonological norms of standard German. Accordingly, informants judge phonological variants in a different way from lexical and grammatical variants, in that the pronunciation prestige seems to surpass all other levels of variation. Scharloth (2004) was able to show that, when lexical Helvetisms were pronounced by a Northern German speaker, they were considered to be standard language, whereas northern variants pronounced by a Swiss speaker were considered to be non-standard – purely based on the way they were pronounced. Thus, phonology weighs more than lexis and grammar in determining attitudes towards variants of standard German.

On the one hand, this can be explained by the fact that phonological variables have a higher frequency than lexical and grammatical ones, and on the other hand, possibly also by the fact that sound structures are at least partly based on the subjective recognition of the relationships between sound sensations, e.g. as *light* or *dark*

(Schmid 2010: 131), *soft* or *hard*. The perception of sound structures, which is also ontogenetically a primary area of speech perception, thus shapes the overall impression one has of a speaker, and for this reason may also be more important than the perception of grammar and lexis.

If, from a constructionist point of view (Soukup 2015: 76), a standard language is what people think it is (and not what linguists, based on empirical data, claim it is), these results raise many questions with respect to the definition of a standard language as well as to the teaching of German as L1 and L2 (Davies et al. 2017; Schmidlin 2018; Schmidlin 2019; Shafer 2018). Saying this, I am in no way trying to dismiss attitudes and perceptions of linguistic variation because they are inconsistent. It is much more about showing the modularity of speakers' attitudes and how they depend on the type of linguistic data presented. Herrgen (2015: 150), too, points out that, when presenting varieties as stimuli to informants, who then have to assess them on a scale between dialect and standard, one has to be careful to present the whole continuum, so that the rating scale is calibrated. Otherwise, if informants are confronted with a sample of spoken standard language produced by a professional German speaker next to an only slightly regionally identifiable standard language, they might evaluate the second sample as being very close to dialect. In my view, this is more than just a methodological problem that we have to be aware of in future studies on attitudes towards standard varieties. Peter (2017) justly points to the fact that the assessment of linguistic variants is not only an expression of linguistic attitudes, but also an expression of the informants' linguistic awareness or linguistic knowledge. The emotive and cognitive dimensions of linguistic attitudes cannot easily be separated from each other, as Herrgen's discussion of scale calibration and different judgments of dialectality shows. This is why Peter claims that if the assessment of linguistic variants is studied, we need to include data about the informants' linguistic knowledge. In my 2011 study of the assessment of national and regional variants of standard German, the informants did not hesitate to judge whether some variants were acceptable as standard or not, even if they said that they did not actually know these variants. Interestingly, Austrian informants tended to accept variants they did not know or hardly knew as standard, in contrast to informants from Germany, who tended to reject variants they did not know or hardly knew as non-standard. This difference may be explained by the non-dominant vs. dominant view of linguistic norms adopted by the individual members of the speech communities (Dollinger 2019; Muhr 2012).

Another example of the inconsistency of attitudes towards linguistic variation is given by Brumann 2014. She interviewed Swiss journalists who show a neutral or positive overt attitude towards Swiss German standard language but who, when confronted with particular Helvetisms, reject them, showing a negative covert attitude. Others show a critical attitude towards Swiss German standard language but

don't see any reason to reject the same series of Helvetisms rejected by the other group. This confirms the well-known phenomenon that general, stereotypical attitudes towards a linguistic variety may be contrary to the attitudes towards sample items of this variety.

This modularity of speakers' attitudes is also documented in yet another recent thesis submitted to Basel University (Gatta 2017), where it was shown that grammar-school teachers correct syntactic Helvetisms when marking students' texts, whereas they are more tolerant of lexical Helvetisms.

If speakers' attitudes are considered essential when it comes to the definition of standard languages, how do we deal with the fact that, as shown in this chapter, there is no de-nationalized, de-regionalized speaker perspective? And how do we deal with the fact that lexical, grammatical, and phonological variants are judged differently by speakers when they evaluate a linguistic variety as being standard or non-standard? The modularity of linguistic attitudes, as shown in this chapter, needs to be considered even more systematically in future research.

SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH: CORPUS DYNAMICS AND ATTITUDINAL DYNAMICS

The standard languages used in Switzerland have developed their own features, which differentiate them from standard French as used in France, standard Italian in Italy, and standard German, as used in Germany or Austria, respectively. The discussion of the autonomy of the German language in Switzerland dates back at least to the 17th century. This chapter brings together the *etic* and the *emic* perspectives on variation in standard German in Switzerland. It reports on an empirical analysis of the frequency of national and regional variants of standard German in public texts. This novel analysis was made possible by the re-analysis of an extensive corpus of public texts which had already been used for the compilation of the *Variante nwörterbuch des Deutschen* (Ammon et al. 2004; Ammon, Bickel and Lenz 2016). It could be shown that the distribution of national and regional variants of Standard German is highly variable depending on the text genre. I would like to call this the *corpus dynamics* of standard variation. It could also be shown that the Swiss texts analysed for the study contain most variants per page as compared to Austrian and German texts. Despite some tendencies of lexical convergence in the German-speaking area, the number of regional and national variants of standard German found in public texts has proved to be pretty stable over the last few decades. The fact that variants are also used in the quality press points to an areal-horizontal type of variation rather than a purely socio-vertical type of variation (cf. Budin et al. 2019: 20).

How can variation in standard German be conceptualised theoretically? Both the pluricentric concept and the pluriareal concept include variants by frequency, i.e. relative variants, in their model. Both models include variants which straddle national borders and regional variants. Both models can be applied to specific variational dimensions. Despite some tendencies of convergence towards (Northern) German phonological norms, speakers of standard German can still be quite easily identified by nation. On the whole, the pluricentric concept has proved to be more adequate to describe the standard variety in German-speaking Switzerland than that in Germany and Austria, where there is a greater degree of intra- and transnational linguistic variation. Hence, this chapter argues that the pluriareal and the pluricentric concepts are not incompatible. Nevertheless, in sociolinguistic debates on pluricentricity vs. pluriareality (or pluri-regionality), emotions often come into play, especially when the standard varieties in Austria and Bavaria are under consideration (cf. Dollinger 2019; Muhr 2012; Scheuringer 2018; Seifert and Seifert 2015). It seems to be a short step from the ‘narcissism of small differences’ to mutual recriminations, with ‘pluricentrists’ being accused of parochialism and of leaning towards conservative nationalism, while ‘pluriarealists’ are accused of considering standard variation purely along a stylistic-vertical dimension, thus ultimately coming close to an outdated standard ideology. One of the reasons for sometimes antagonistic discussions about varieties of standard German may be the fact that the pluriareal (or pluri-regional) concept already allows for two interpretations and that it is not always clear which one is opposed to the pluricentric concept. On the one hand, the pluriareal concept can be interpreted in a way according to which variation in the standard language is located within a vertical continuum between dialect and standard. The pluriareal concept would then maybe describe regional everyday standard language, leaving out the upper end of the continuum, which would still be seen as homogeneous. On the other hand, the pluriareal concept can be interpreted as a sort of radical pluricentrism, which claims that there is an even broader range of variation in even smaller language areas, which would lead the discussion away from issues such as language hegemony, norm authorities and the question of what standard language is and what it is not (cf. Gloy 2010).

After discussing the frequency of national and regional variants of standard German from the *etic* perspective and issues surrounding their theoretical conceptualisation, this chapter reported on a second study dedicated to speakers’ attitudes towards these variants. First of all, it could be shown that there is a discrepancy between the regular use of variants in public texts, on the one hand, and speakers’ scepticism about their normative status when variants are presented to them in isolated sentences, on the other. It could be shown that the cognitive, affective and conative dimensions of linguistic attitudes towards varieties of standard German are not congruent. I would like to call this the *attitudinal dynamics* of standard varia-

tion. Data concerning attitudes towards national and regional variants of standard German in Germany, Austria and Switzerland were collected in the whole of the German-speaking area. Linguistic attitudes depend on speakers' origins and linguistic backgrounds; the assessment of whether certain variants are dialectal, rather dialectal, rather standard, or standard, depends on where the informants come from, their nationality even outweighing their regional origin. National borders tend to be attitudinal borders when standard varieties are assessed. For instance, informants from all six German regions assessed a selection of southern lexical variants as tending towards dialect, whereas Swiss and Austrian informants thought of the same variants as tending towards standard. What is surprising here is that the informants of South East and South West Germany shared their attitudes with their northern fellow citizens rather than with their fellow Alemanni or Bavarians. National borders seem to correlate with attitudinal borders. The attitudinal dynamics can also be shown with respect to the linguistic level of the variants. Phonological variants carry more weight than lexical and grammatical variants. Future research on linguistic attitudes needs to further consider the modularity of linguistic attitudes.

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