

THE DIFFERENTIATION OF THE GERMAN LANGUAGE INTO NATIONAL VARIETIES OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY (F.R.G.), THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (G.D.R.), AUSTRIA AND SWITZERLAND

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1. CONCEPTUAL AND TERMINOLOGICAL PRELIMINARIES

The German Language has official status at the national level in the F.R.G., G.D.R., Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Luxemburg; at a regional level in Italy (Alto Adige) and Belgium (the East), and in a even more restricted sense in a number of other countries (Namibia, Rumania, Hungary, U.S.S.R., Denmark). Only the F.R.G., G.D.R., Austria and Switzerland, however, possess undoubtedly their own standard varieties of German. Though it has been suggested, that other countries may have a few standard German peculiarities, e.g. Luxemburg (Luxemburgian German not Letzeburgisch! Cf. Clyne 1984:21-23), only for these four countries they have been generally acknowledged. Each of them possesses on the one hand an own *linguistic code* of some sort, incomplete as it may be, i.e. prescriptive grammars or dictionaries which have an official status in the following sense: teachers (or other authorities) are authorised officially, e.g. by their educational (or public) administration, to correct the language behaviour of students (or other persons) on certain occasions, in accordance with the contents of these grammars or dictionaries. Such corrections or prescriptions are *valid* in a norm-theoretical sense, because of the authorisation from above (cf. Wright 1986, chapter 10; Ammon 1986). The codes not only contain standard variants in each case which are specific for the respective country (together of course with a much larger quantity of general standard German forms), but usually also mark them as such. Or they even comprise variants specific for the standard varieties of the other German-speaking countries, and mark them as such. (I use the term *variant* for single linguistic units and *variety* for entire systems.) While specific standard variants are undoubtedly established in this manner for the four countries mentioned (cf. however 2.2.), this is not the case for any of the other countries in which German has official status, e.g. Liechtenstein, Luxemburg or Belgium; they merely adopt, it would seem, the standard forms from one of the four larger German-speaking polities.

It seems logical to call these various standards *national varieties* (cf. Clyne 1984:40; Clyne 1989), as it is common in other similar cases, e.g. with British, American and Australian English, or European and Quebecois French etc. In the case of the German-speaking countries this is, however, not unproblematic, since

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this terminology implies, that all four countries are different *nations*—which is at variance with the official view of the F.R.G., and has only become official in the G.D.R. in the constitution of 1974 (when the former specification of the G.D.R. as a socialist state ‘of the German nation’ was omitted). The official view of the G.D.R. before 1974 and of the F.R.G. until now is that both Germanies are still a single nation, in spite of their divergent socio-economic systems. Keeping this in mind, one may nevertheless use the term *national variety* (which is unproblematic with respect to Austria and Switzerland), which will be done in this essay. One would be even less hesitant to use this term, if one favours the present official view of the G.D.R.

With its four clearly distinguishable standard varieties, then, German can be called a *quadricentric language*, a special case of a *pluricentric language*, (or—in terminology derived from the Greek: *tetracephalous*, a special case of a *polycephalous language*). Each country which has its own standard variety is, according to this terminology, a *centre of the language*, i.e. a *German language centre*. This terminology classifies the German language into the general type of pluricentric languages, together with e.g. English (centres: Britain, U.S.A., Australia and perhaps others), Portuguese (centres: Portugal, Brazil) and others. This generalisation should, however, not palliate the specific circumstance that the German centres are not separated by oceans (which is not irrelevant for contacts, even in times of modern means of transport and communication) but that, on the other hand, one of them (the G.D.R.) is separated from the others by socio-political and ideological boundaries between East and West.

A national (standard) variety is not to be confused with a non-standard variety, e.g. a *regional dialect*. There is a good deal of dialect variation within each German language centre, and a large portion of it cuts across the borders, i.e. the same dialect is spoken on both sides. Cutting across the border does not occur in the case of the national standard varieties, whose regions coincide with the political borders. This coincidence with the political borders is due to the official character of the standard varieties as sketched above. The highest authority of prescription is in the end the individual state or its political institutions (cf. for details of a more explicit norm-theoretical analysis: Ammon, 1986). Each regional dialect or nonstandard variety is, as one sometimes says, *roofed by* (or *heteronomous with*), that particular standard variety towards which the speakers are (validly) corrected in their language behaviour (on certain formal occasions). This normative relationship is the basis of relating a dialect—or actually the speakers of a dialect—to *its* standard variety. This does not preclude that a single dialect is roofed by different standard varieties, if it cuts across political borders. It is not always clear in some writing whether a *national variety* comprises (1) only the respective standard variety or (2) the standard variety together with those non-standard varieties of the same language which are roofed by the standard variety. I shall adhere to the narrower sense (1) here.

The question could be raised why one should not rather assume the existence of four *different national languages*, instead of only four *national varieties of the same language*. Our terminology is justified by the close linguistic similarity (or the small linguistic dissimilarity/distance) between the four linguistic systems. As a consequence, the speakers perceive themselves as speakers of the same language, i.e. German. One may, however, equally assume, vice versa, that the different

national varieties have not drifted further apart as a consequence of the speakers' perception, or attitude of, belonging to the same language community: linguistic and perceptible (or attitudinal) relationships are interconnected in the form of a feedback process.

With respect to the concept '(independent) language' versus 'language variety' (or 'dialect of a language'), it seems generally useful to distinguish three degrees of linguistic dissimilarity (or distance). Let us call them *small*, *medium* and *great*. We have to be content here with intuitive notions of these three different degrees of dissimilarity, since the problems of measuring and quantifying them are too complex to be treated here and are as yet unsolved. If the linguistic dissimilarity between the two standard varieties is small, they generally belong to the same language (e.g. F.R.G. Standard German and Austrian Standard German). If the linguistic dissimilarity between two standard varieties is, however, medium, they belong to different languages (e.g. F.R.G. Standard German and Standard Letzeburgish in Luxemburg). A medium linguistic dissimilarity between a standard variety and a non-standard variety which is roofed by the standard variety, does, however, not preclude that both belong to the same language. Thus the Mosel-Franconian dialect within the F.R.G. has practically the same medium linguistic dissimilarity with F.R.G. Standard German as Letzeburgish; Letzeburgish is, in fact, Mosel-Franconian—linguistically speaking. While no one will question that the Mosel-Franconian dialect within the F.R.G. belongs to the same language (German) as the standard variety which roofs it (F.R.G. Standard German), Letzeburgish (Standard Letzeburgish together with its nonstandard varieties) is mostly considered a separate language (*Ausbausprache*, cf. Kloss 1978:23–30). If finally the linguistic dissimilarity between two linguistic systems is great, they belong to different languages under all circumstances, i.e. irrespective of roofing relationships. Thus Sorbian (in the region of the present G.D.R.) has never been considered German, not even usually Frisian (in the north of the present F.R.G.), in spite of roofing relationships of some sort. The Low German dialects of the north are a borderline case. Some scholars hold that their dissimilarity with standard (High) German (F.R.G. or G.D.R. Standard) is great enough—i.e. great in our terms—to call them a separate language; others consider their linguistic dissimilarity as not great enough, i.e. medium in our terms (cf. for detailed explications of the concepts 'independent language' and 'variety of a language' Ammon 1987, and 1989).

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOUR NATIONAL VARIETIES

(2.1) *General Considerations*

It seems that all four national varieties of German have only fully developed after World War II. Though there were certainly specific Austrian and Swiss standard German variants, they were hardly considered as equivalent in status with the German–German standard variants (*Reichsdeutsch*). Rather were they treated as a regional variety, in contrast to the general standard, somewhat on a level with northern German or southern German variants. Their inferior status was also evident as there had been no serious endeavours to codify them systematically. For the split of German into four national varieties initiated apparently, mainly during the Nazi period.

(2.2) *The Federal Republic of Germany*

The F.R.G. (together with West-Berlin) is the largest and most populous of the four German language centres. German is the only official language in the F.R.G. with some 61 million native speakers. In addition there are some relatively small linguistic minorities (Danish, Frisian (Northern, Eastern), Romany and Sinte), and some four million migrant workers and political refugees, of whom the Turks are the largest group (1.55 million), (all figures from Grimes 1984: 315–316).

The F.R.G. standard variety may be considered the most direct continuation of the former general German standard, in so far as there has been no attempt, at least none as radical, as in the other centres, to revise the old and to establish a new standard—either tailored to the socio-political system (as in the G.D.R.) or to the regional peculiarities of actual language use (as in Switzerland and Austria). Attempts at a revision of the old standard were—in contrast to the other centres—merely seen as modernisations of the old standard, not as an adjustment of the specific and—by comparison with the former German *Reich*—narrower national peculiarities of the F.R.G.

The linguistic code of the F.R.G. standard variety is perhaps the most comprehensive of the four German language centres, surpassing even that of the G.D.R. with numerous voluminous dictionaries and grammars for general and special purposes. Its core is the *Duden* volumes published by the Dudenverlag Mannheim (formerly *Bibliographisches Institut*). The Dudenverlag is a private publishing company which was established as the official source of standard spelling for the F.R.G. by the Committee of the ministers of education (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) of the nine federal states—the highest authority in matters of education, in 1955. Though the Committee's authorisation was actually limited to schools, it was accepted practically for all the domains of the society. Moreover, the authorisation as to orthography had the effect that the Dudenverlag was largely accepted as an authority on all grammatical questions. Its definitional dictionary (*Duden. Das große Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, 6 vols, 1976–1981), its grammar (*Duden Grammatik*, newest edition 1984), its stylistic dictionary (*Duden Stilwörterbuch*, newest edition 1971) and even to some degree its pronouncing dictionary (*Duden Aussprachewörterbuch*, latest edition 1974) have been accepted as the core of the linguistic codex of the F.R.G., though there are other respectable works on the market. Only for pronunciation is there an even more authoritative dictionary, the *Siebs* (latest edition 1969), which is the direct descendent of the first generally accepted codification of German standard pronunciation in 1898. The Duden volumes descend, on the other hand, from the oldest standard dictionary of orthography, first published in 1880, and whose revised version was legalised by the German National Assembly (*Reichstag*) in 1902 and also formally accepted by Austria and Switzerland. Its publishing company, the *Bibliographisches Institut*, was, however, located in Leipzig until the end of World War II. Then it was divided as happened to a number of renowned publishers located in the G.D.R.: one part moved to the West under the same name in Mannheim; the remaining part was nationalised (*Volkseigener Betrieb*), but also retained the old name. The Leipzig Duden is even now authoritative for G.D.R. spelling (which does not differ noticeably from the spelling of the other centres), but also publishes the standard pronouncing

dictionary of the G.D.R. and an important normative grammar (cf. 2.3.).

An attempt to list the linguistic peculiarities of the F.R.G. standard variety is somewhat unusual. It is more common to list the peculiarities of any of the other three centres of the German language and to use the F.R.G. variety as a point of comparison. This is due to the dominance relationship between the various German language centres, which will be elaborated under 3. There may in fact be relatively few linguistic peculiarities of the F.R.G. standard altogether, since what differs from the G.D.R. standard coincides with the Swiss and the Austrian standard, and what differs from the Swiss or Austrian Standard coincides with the G.D.R. Standard. The G.D.R., and more clearly even Switzerland and Austria, do by contrast have their own linguistic peculiarities, as will be shown in Sections 2.3 to 2.5, a situation which could be characterised as follows:

Let A represent the linguistic forms which are standard in the F.R.G., B those which are standard in the G.D.R., C those which are standard in Switzerland, and D those which are standard in Austria.

Then there are elements of B \neq any element of A or C or D, of C \neq any element of A or B or D, of D \neq any element of A or B or C.

But there are *no* elements of A \neq any element of B or C or D, i.e. any element of A is either = any element of B or = an element of C or = an element of D.

It is not certain whether, and to which degree, the idea that there are but very few peculiarities in the F.R.G. standard variety—if any at all—is factual, or an artifact of ideologically biased research. This idea has hardly ever been explicitly stated and has therefore not been challenged either: It is largely implicit in how the linguistic differences between the various German language centres are usually described.

It seems that there may actually be two classes of peculiarities of the F.R.G. standard:

- (1) designations of specific F.R.G. institutions (*institutions* in a wide sense),
- (2) loans.

(1) There are for instance no: *Kultusministerkonferenz* = 'Permanent Committee of the ministers of education', *Stiftung Volkswagenwerk* 'Volkswagen research foundation', *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* 'German academic exchange service', *Radikalerlaß* 'decree against political radicals (in the public service)' etc. in any of the other German language centres. It is, however, questionable whether these words are specific for the F.R.G. standard, as they are often presented (e.g. in Hellmann 1980:523; Clyne 1984:33). If for instance Austrian or Swiss refer to these institutions, they use the same terms, for want of specific alternatives, and this usage is accepted in Austria or Switzerland, too,—no teacher would be entitled to mark this usage as incorrect. That these terms are naturally used less often outside of the F.R.G. is a different matter, not pertaining to their being standard.

(2) It is likely that there are loans, particularly from English, which are incorporated into the F.R.G. standard, but not into the standard of any other German language centre—while on the other hand older French loans are more readily substituted by German words or Germanised in spelling (cf. Schläpfer 1979:154, 158). Since this sector of the language has not been investigated comparatively, but only within single centres and is also prone to rapid change,

our assumption remains hypothetical.

At the present state of research it seems to be practical to list some of the attested peculiarities of the three other German language centres which at the same time distinguish these centres from the F.R.G., though not from the F.R.G. alone.

(2.3) *The German Democratic Republic*

German is the sole official language of the G.D.R. with 16.6 million native speakers. There is, however, the Sorbian (or Wendish) minority of the Slavic language family, around the cities of Bautzen and Cottbus, which has survived German colonisation since the Middle Ages. It comprises 0.07 million speakers and enjoys minority rights, its language having regional official status (figures from Grimes 1984:314).

Like the F.R.G., the G.D.R. possesses a comprehensive code of its own standard variety comprising all linguistic levels. In contrast to the F.R.G. this code has been produced under official auspices, in an attempt at discontinuing the previous general German standard. The latter is evident in the large definitional dictionary *Wörterbuch der Deutschen Gegenwartssprache* (1961–1968), for which detailed plans were presented as early as 1954, and for the dictionary of pronunciation *Wörterbuch der Deutschen Aussprache* (1964, latest edition 1982). The *Wörterbuch der Deutschen Gegenwartssprache* contains definitions of words in accordance with socialist ideology, which becomes clearly noticeable starting with volume four and in later editions (e.g. the fourth edition of 1980). The *Wörterbuch der Deutschen Aussprache* should create more realistic norms of pronunciation, an objective which was inspired by the democratic ideal that everyone should be able to follow these norms. Therefore they were based on the natural speech of radio speakers, instead of actors on the stage, which had been the basis of *Siebs* (cf. 2.2). This idea was adopted by the West German *Duden Aussprachewörterbuch* (cf. 2.2), as was the idea of a comprehensive six volume definitional dictionary: the *Duden. Das große Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache* (cf. 2.2) is often presented as an alternative to, or the Western counterpart of the *Wörterbuch der Deutschen Gegenwartssprache*. By contrast, the spelling dictionary (*Der große Duden*, Leipzig) or the various grammars (e.g. Jung 1965, and various later editions) have not attempted to establish alternative norms, but rather only to modernise the old ones. Particularly in spelling all German language centres cooperate to this date, in order to avoid separate developments.

When one tries to characterise the peculiarities of the G.D.R. Standard one encounters similar difficulties as with the F.R.G. Standard. The names of specific institutions of the G.D.R. (*Volkskammer* 'folk chamber = East German parliament', *Die jungen Pioniere* 'the young pioneers = youth organisation of the communist party' etc.) are not non-standard outside of the G.D.R. and therefore are no peculiarities in a strict sense of the G.D.R. standard variety. The same is true of the specific Marxist terminology (*Proletarier* 'proletarian', *Tauschwert* 'exchange value' etc.) or with Marxist definitions of terms which are also used with a non-Marxist meaning, e.g. *Freiheit* 'freedom', *Sozialismus* 'socialism', *Idealismus* 'idealism', etc which have complex denotational as well as connotational (evaluative) peculiarities of meaning in a Marxist context. They were also used in the other German language centres by Marxists and they are not

non-standard there because they are Marxist. Yet their acceptance and usage, particularly in the official domain, is noticeably different in the G.D.R. from the three politically Western or capitalist German language centres. It is different with words which are standard only in the G.D.R. but not elsewhere. These are, those words which have practically an identical meaning in the other centres, but which differ in form. Examples might be *Plaste* 'plastic' (vs *Plastik*), *Elternaktiv* 'parents' representatives of school classes' (vs *Elternbeirat* or *Elternpflegschaft*), *Zeitkino* 'news real theater' (vs *Wochenschau*), *Aspirant* 'junior academic in training for higher degree', *Broiler* 'fried chicken' (vs *Brathähnchen* and the like) (examples from Clyne 1984:33–34; 102).

The relatively small number of strict peculiarities in the narrower linguistic sense (cf. 2.2), does not imply that there are no difficulties in mutual intelligibility. These arise particularly from divergencies in the social and domain distribution of the names of institutions and of Marxist vs non-marxists definitions of terms. Thus words like *Volkskammer*, *Neuerer* 'innovative member of a company', *Volkseigener Betrieb* 'company in people's possession = socialised company', *Erweiterte Oberschule* 'extended high school', etc. are used extensively in the G.D.R. mass media and are therefore generally familiar within the G.D.R. They are, however, not familiar to the other German language centres, though they could legitimately be considered part of their standard, too, in the sense that they are certainly not incorrect if used with reference to the respective East German institutions.

There are practically no systematic peculiarities of the G.D.R. standard, except in vocabulary, style and idiomatics. Differences in frequency and socio-situational distribution of use, have not really been investigated comparatively. Orthography, orthophony and grammar do not clearly differ from the F.R.G. standard.

(2.4) Austria

In Austria, too, German is the only official language at the national level with 7.36 million native speakers. There are, however, a number of relatively small other language minorities which enjoy some special rights, particularly speakers of Serbo-Croatian (0.025 million) and of Slovenian (between 0.022 and 0.045 million) (Grimes 1984:308).

There have always been peculiarities of Austrian standard German, some of which are for instance incorporated in the *Regeln für die Deutsche Rechtschreibung nebst Wörterverzeichnis* 'Rules for German spelling with vocabulary, which appeared in several editions between 1903 and 1940, with a predecessor in 1879 (cf. Wiesinger 1980:367). The Austrian peculiarities are partly due:

- (1) to the dialectal basis of the standard, which is largely Bavarian—with the exception of the small western province of Vorarlberg, which is Alemanic;
- (2) to contacts with neighbouring languages like Hungarian (e.g. the word *Palatschinke* 'stuffed pan cake');
- (3) to a native administration of long standing and native institutions separate from the other German-speaking countries which developed its own technical vocabulary (e.g. *Lehrkanzel* 'professorial chair' instead of *Lehrstuhl*).

Only after World War II, however, have there been serious endeavours to codify a specific Austrian Standard. Before that time the Austrian peculiarities,

with the exception of the technical administrative terms, were rather treated as deviant or non-standard which should be eliminated ideally (cf. for an older example of this view, e.g. Lewi 1875). This attitude can be explained from the history of Austrian-German relations. Austria was finally excluded from the newly formed *Reich* in 1871 (actually already in 1866 after the Prussian victory over Austria), after having been the leading power of the old *Reich* for many centuries. In spite of the fact, that Austria established a considerable new empire together with Hungary (*Donaumonarchie*), it never seriously strove towards establishing a separate national variety of German. That the German-speaking Austrians did not really consider themselves a separate nation may for instance be deduced from the fact that as late as 1938 a majority apparently welcomed the union with Germany, even in the form of Hitler's annexation.

After World War II, however, the situation had changed altogether, partly as a consequence of the Austrians' experience what being part of Germany could entail, and partly because they had to accept a peace treaty which forbade them ever to join Germany again. Therefore it appeared quite natural not to look any longer across the borders for a linguistic standard, but to establish a national standard of German of their own.

This happened by way of the Austrian dictionary (*Österreichisches Wörterbuch*), with its first edition in 1951. Since then, no less than 36 editions have appeared, the 37th being in the press. The dictionary was collated and published under the auspices of the Austrian ministry of education (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht*). It was intended mainly, but not only, for school. Being of medium size (mittlere Ausgabe) it was not from inception meant to be a substitute for the large dictionaries published in the two Germanies (cf. Sections 2.2 and 2.3).

The *Österreichisches Wörterbuch* is mainly a guide to orthography, but naturally contains also information on morphology (e.g. noun gender) and meaning, and for rare words (loans) on pronunciation. The specifically Austrian words (Austriacisms) are not marked, so long as they are standard; Austrian regionalisms are, however, marked as such. In addition, non-Austrian German words, usually associated by the Austrians with the F.R.G. are also included, but are again marked as such (e.g. *Apfelsine* 'orange' instead of *Orange*, *Blumenkohl* 'cauliflower' instead of *Karfiol*).

There has been a more or less continuous debate about (1) which words should be considered standard vs dialect or (2) Austrian vs non-Austrian, reaching a peak after the 35th edition which came out in 1979, and which contained particularly many Austrian regionalisms. Among these quite a few which were unmarked, i.e. presented as standard, in spite of their limited regional range (cf. Wiesinger 1980; 1986 for a critical view, but Dressler/Wodak 1982 and particularity: Clyne 1985 for a more supportive view). The critics won with a good number of the disputed entries being eliminated or marked as non standard in the 36th edition (1985), without mentioning controversy in the introduction to the dictionary (cf. Wiesinger 1986).

With the exception of the dictionary no code exists for Austrian standard German. However, a leaflet was attached to the F.R.G.-*Siebs* (1961) with Austrian characteristic pronunciations, after which the Austrian standard pronunciation was later integrated into the *Siebs* of 1969 but not into any of the

other pronouncing dictionaries of the F.R.G. or the G.D.R. In addition, special volumes on Austrian German were published in the F.R.G. Dudenverlag (cf. Ebner 1969).

The Austrian standard pronunciation resembles largely the Swiss, which we shall sketch in more detail in 2.5, because there is a specific Swiss code for them. One prominent feature which it has in common with the southern regional (not the national) standard of the F.R.G., is that syllable initial , <d>, <g> and <s> followed by a vowel are unvoiced, in contrast to the F.R.G. and G.D.R. G.D.R. norm. There are, however, some differences from the Swiss Standard also (*Hotel* 'hotel' is for instance not stressed on the first syllable), and there are some peculiarities which differ from the other national varieties, e.g. second syllable stress in *Algebra* 'algebra', *Kaffee* 'coffee' or *Billiard* 'billiards'—with a long vowel and the elimination of the *d* in the last case (Siebs 1969:130).

The most salient characteristics of the Austrian national variety are, however, to be found in the lexicon, of which the following are a few examples:

(1) words: *Marille* 'apricot' (instead of *Aprikose*), *Ribisel* 'currant' (instead of *Johannisbeere*), *Jänner* 'January' (instead of *Januar*) etc. Some words which are often presented as Austrian standard are marked as *ugs.* 'colloquial' or the like in the 36th edition of the *Österreichisches Wörterbuch*, e.g. *Stanitzel* 'paper bag' (instead of *Tüte*).

(2) word meanings: *Schwamm* 'mushroom, sponge' (instead of only the latter), *Sessel* 'chair' (instead of 'armchair'), *Bühne* 'attic, stage' (instead of only the latter), etc.

(3) word formation devices: *-erl* for diminutives of nouns (instead of *-lein* or *-chen*), eg. *Sackerl* 'little bag', *Maiglöckerl* 'lilly of the valley' (*-erl* is not generally applicable, *-l* exists too, and in most cases *-lein* or *-chen* is standard); *Gesangsbuch* 'song book' instead of *Gesangbuch*, etc.

(4) noun gender: *Monat* 'month' is masc. or neutr. (instead of only masc.), *Sakko* 'jacket' is neutr. (instead of masc.) etc.

(5) noun inflection: *Wägen* 'carriages' (instead of *Wagen*), *Krägen* 'collars' (instead of *Kragen*) etc.

(2.5) Switzerland

German is only one of three official languages besides French and Italian, though numerically the strongest (4.123 million native speakers vs 1.142 million French and 0.761 million Italian speakers). Rheto-Romance has in addition regional official status in the Graubünden Canton (0.063 million) (Grimes 1984:327).

German-speaking Switzerland is the only one of the four German language centres which has preserved a *classical diglossia* sensu Ferguson (1959), as one of four illustrations of the concept. The Swiss dialects which are collectively called *Schwyzertüütsch* (various spellings) are practically the sole means of communication within the family domain. Consequently the dialects, not the standard, are the mother tongue of the German-speaking Swiss, while in the other German language centres the standard is—generally speaking—the mother tongue of the educated or upper classes. In addition, the use of the dialects has been continuously expanded, reaching some semi-official domains, e.g. a good deal of the radio and TV programmes (cf. *Des Schweizers Deutsch* 1985).

It is not only the relatively great linguistic distance between Schwyzertütsch and even the Swiss national (standard) variety which stabilises the use of the dialects, since the standard is hard to learn and to handle correctly and fluently. The linguistic dissimilarity is possibly even greater between the northern Low German dialects and the (High) German standard, but the Low German dialects are indubitably on the decline. The Swiss' preference for their Schwyzertütsch has additional ideological reasons, some of which were expressed, though more radically than they would be today, in Emil Baer's *Alemannisch: Die Rettung der eidgenössischen Seele* 'Alemannic: The Salvation of the Swiss Soul' (1936). In this book Baer argues very positively for the creation of a standard Schwyzertütsch (*Alemannic* is the dialectologist's name for Schwyzertütsch), a project which—if succeeded—would have split Schwyzertütsch away from German and would have transformed it into an independent language (own standard plus medium dissimilarity from any standard variety of German. vide 1). Baer's ideas are based on the observation, confirmed by renowned linguists of his times (1936!), that Swiss dialects were on the decline. He foresaw the days, where only standard German, or at least a close approximation, would be spoken in Switzerland. To these empirical findings, he applied an idea which was propagated by J.G. Herder and others 150 years ago, namely that a specific language is an essential factor of a nationality, in the sense that the nation dissolves without it. With reference to Switzerland's aggressive and powerful neighbour in the north he warned that if a clear linguistic differentiation was lacking the *Reich* would sooner or later, repatriate (*heimholen*) German-speaking Switzerland (p.45 and also pp.42–50). Though Baer and his *Schwyzertütsche Sprachbewegig* ('Swiss-German language movement') did not succeed with their radical attempt at creating an independent Swiss language, the attitudes which he expressed in his book *apparently* were among the motives, not only for the expansion of dialect usage, but also for the official creation of a Swiss national variety of German.

One important initiative towards that end was the semi-official constitution of a Commission in 1954, which had the task to present rules for the pronunciation of Swiss Standard German. The Commission which comprised representatives of the radio stations, the schools, the church, the theatre and the universities presented its proposals in 1957 (Boesch, ed.). These are still valid today, though there have been attempts at up-dating them. They are seen as a compromise which on the one hand avoids the typically North German features of the F.R.G. (or the G.D.R.) Standard, but also, on the other, the more extreme Swiss peculiarities (Boesch, ed. 1957:7). Hand in hand with this general characterisation, the Commission, which had given itself the name *Schweizerische Siebs-Kommission* ('Swiss Siebs-Commission', explicitly related their results to the *Siebs* Dictionary of Pronunciation, which later on included them (cf. 2.2).

Their rules are mostly formulated in relation to the *Siebs* (edition of 1956). A few of the more spectacular particularities are listed here, all of which are due to phonetic features of the Alemannic dialects of Switzerland. A number of them occur also in Austrian standard pronunciation (cf. Reiffenstein 1973), because of the similarities of the regional dialects of both countries (Alemannic and Bavarian), and for the same reason in the south of the F.R.G.—without being standard in the F.R.G.

Some words have short vowels (instead of long ones in *Siebs*), e.g. *Jagd*

'hunting event', *Krebs* 'crayfish, cancer', *Obst* 'fruit', *Liter* 'liter', *Titel* 'title' (Boesch, ed. 1957:20).

Family names and names of communities retain falling consonants (which do not exist in *Siebs*), e.g. /ie/ in *Rieter*, *Dieterswil* etc., /ue/ in *Fueter*, *Hueb* etc., and /ye/ in *Rüegg*, *Üetikon*, etc. (pp.25–39).

Double consonants are accepted besides simple consonants (*Siebs* has only the latter) (p.27).

Word-initial <ch> may generally be pronounced <k> (while *Siebs* has [ç] in *Chemie* 'chemistry', *China* etc.) (p. 30).

Syllable-initial , <d>, <g> are not voiced, and not aspirated at the end of the syllable (as they are in *Sieb*) (pp.30–31).

The <s> is never voiced (as it is in syllable-initial position in *Siebs*) (p.31).

Prefixes like *ab-*, *vor-*, etc. are stressed instead of their root in words like *Abteilung* 'department', *vorzüglich* 'excellent', etc. (p. 33).

There is no other code of Swiss standard German for general purposes. But there is a dictionary for students in the final classes of primary and in secondary school, which is published by the Dudenverlag in the F.R.G. with the help of Swiss scholars (*Schweizer Schülerduden* (1972^s), cf. also Schläpfer 1979). It provides mainly information on orthography, but also on the grammar of words (e.g. the gender of nouns) and word meaning. Otherwise the Swiss use the Duden volumes (cf. 2.2 published mainly in and for the F.R.G. which contain Swiss (as well as Austrian) particularities, marked accordingly. Some Swiss experts even think that the Duden volumes are at times too tolerant with respect to Swiss particularities, by marking as Swiss, i.e. as Swiss standard, what the Swiss themselves consider dialect (cf. Schläpfer 1979:159).

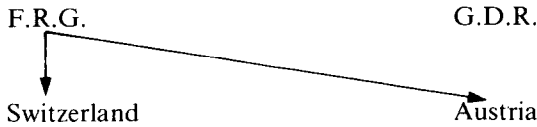
Swiss orthography is generally the same as in all German-speaking countries, with the minor exception that they use <ss> instead of <ß> and tend to write French loans in the original French spelling which appears archaic or elitist, but not incorrect in the other German-speaking countries, e.g. <chic> 'elegant', <Manicure> 'manicure' instead of <schick>, <Maniküre>. The latter feature is due to contact with French speakers within the country.

There are in addition a number of features in word grammar, which in most cases derive from the Swiss Alemanic dialects: differences in noun gender (e.g. *Radio* 'radio' is masc. or neutr. instead of neutr. only); differences in word formation (e.g. *Kuckuckuhr* 'cuckoo-clock' instead of *Kuckucksuhr*, *Sonntagsausgabe* 'sunday edition' instead of *Sonntagsausgabe*); differences in word meaning (e.g. *Steigerung* 'auction' instead of 'increase'); *wischen* 'sweep' (instead of 'wipe'); specific word roots (lexems) *aper* 'schnee- und eisfrei', *Hag* 'fence' (instead of *Zaun*); specific compounds (*Berufsmann* 'tradesman' instead of *Handwerker*, *Altjahr* 'new years eve' instead of *Silvester*).

3. PLURICENTRICITY WITH DOMINANCE

The four German language standards are not equal in respect of their origins, as may have become clear in section 2. One might be inclined to call two of the national varieties—the Swiss and the Austrian—partly *heteronomous*, in contrast to the *autonomous* F.R.G. and G.D.R. standards, if these terms were not already

in use for distinguishing dialects from languages, or partially *exonormative* as against *endonormative*; if again these terms were not already in use in another sense, namely for the standards of languages which have been imported from outside (e.g. English in an African country). In order to avoid misunderstanding, I choose here instead the terms *dominance* (symbol: \rightarrow) vs *indominance*. We then find the following relationships between the four centres.



The F.R.G. centre dominates the Swiss and the Austrian centres with respect to their standards; otherwise there are no clear dominance relationships between the four centres.

The dominance of one centre over another (which has been noted also in the case of other pluricentric languages, e. g. Britain \rightarrow Australia) has, as a rule, no legal basis, since each centre is an autonomous state. It must be based on another kind of superiority: economic, technical or other, or on prestige derived from some sort of superiority in former times. With respect to the F.R.G. on the one hand, and Austria and Switzerland on the other hand, there is definitely an economic superiority because of the difference in the size of the population, roughly 8.2: 1 (Austria) or 14.8: 1 (German-speaking part of Switzerland) (CNP: F.R.G. \$683 Million, Austria \$69 Million, Switzerland (entire) \$105 Million in 1984, according to *Fischer Weltalmanach* 1988. Frankfurt.) In addition, the F.R.G. claims succession of the *Reich*, which has always been dominant for similar reasons with respect to the standard of the German language; this successor role is shown, for instance, in the traditional prestigious codes—*Duden* and *Siebs*—being continued in the F.R.G. (though the former also in the G.D.R.).

The linguistic dominance F.R.G. \rightarrow Austria or F.R.G. \rightarrow Switzerland shows mainly in the following:

- (a) Considerable parts of the code produced in the F.R.G. are also used in Austria and Switzerland, since the Austrian code is limited to a mainly orthographic dictionary of only medium size, and the Swiss code to rules of pronunciation (code for general purposes).
- (b) Parts of the code for Switzerland (for the special purpose of the secondary school level I: *Sekundarstufe I*) is produced by the publishing company of the F.R.G. which is most authoritative in questions of the F.R.G. Standard (*Dudenverlag*).
- (c) There has been successful pressure on the Austrian code (*Österreichisches Wörterbuch*), supported by scholars from inside, to incorporate forms as unmarked Austrian standard, which formerly were marked as non-Austrian (*Als bundesdeutsch empfunden* 'felt to be FRG standard'). Examples are words like *Tomate* 'tomato' or *Müll* 'garbage' (cf. *Österreichisches Wörterbuch*³⁶ 1985:9). The justification of this change lies in the fact that these forms have come to be widely used in Austria.
- (d) The native standards of pronunciation of Austria and Switzerland are not

used on the stage, at least not for the performance of classical theatre: but rather the standards of pronunciation of German German (of the F.R.G.—which is largely identical with that of the G.D.R.) are applied.

This dominance relationship certainly counteracts tendencies towards greater divergence between the three centres. Since it is, however, experienced as unpleasant by some speakers and fans the national pride of some linguists, it may provoke reactions, as seen in the extended use of the dialect, particularly in Switzerland. Therefore, any prediction as to whether the future will bring more convergence or divergence between the four German national varieties is highly speculative.

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