Exploring language attitudes towards standard and dialect use in the Austrian linguistic landscape with the 'visual matched-guise technique'

Barbara Soukup
barbara.soukup@oeaw.ac.at

The Third Wave of variation study (Eckert 2012; Schilling 2013):

Focus on "stylistic practice": speakers are viewed "not as passive and stable carriers of dialect, but as stylistic agents" (Eckert 2012:97-98)

"It has become clear that patterns of variation do not simply unfold from the speaker's structural position in a system [...], but are part of [their] active–stylistic–production" (Eckert 2012:98)

"[T]he focus is on how speakers use linguistic variation in interaction to shape personal identity, interpersonal interactions, and, as individual usages cohere into individual and group styles, to shape group identities as well" (Schilling 2013: 340)
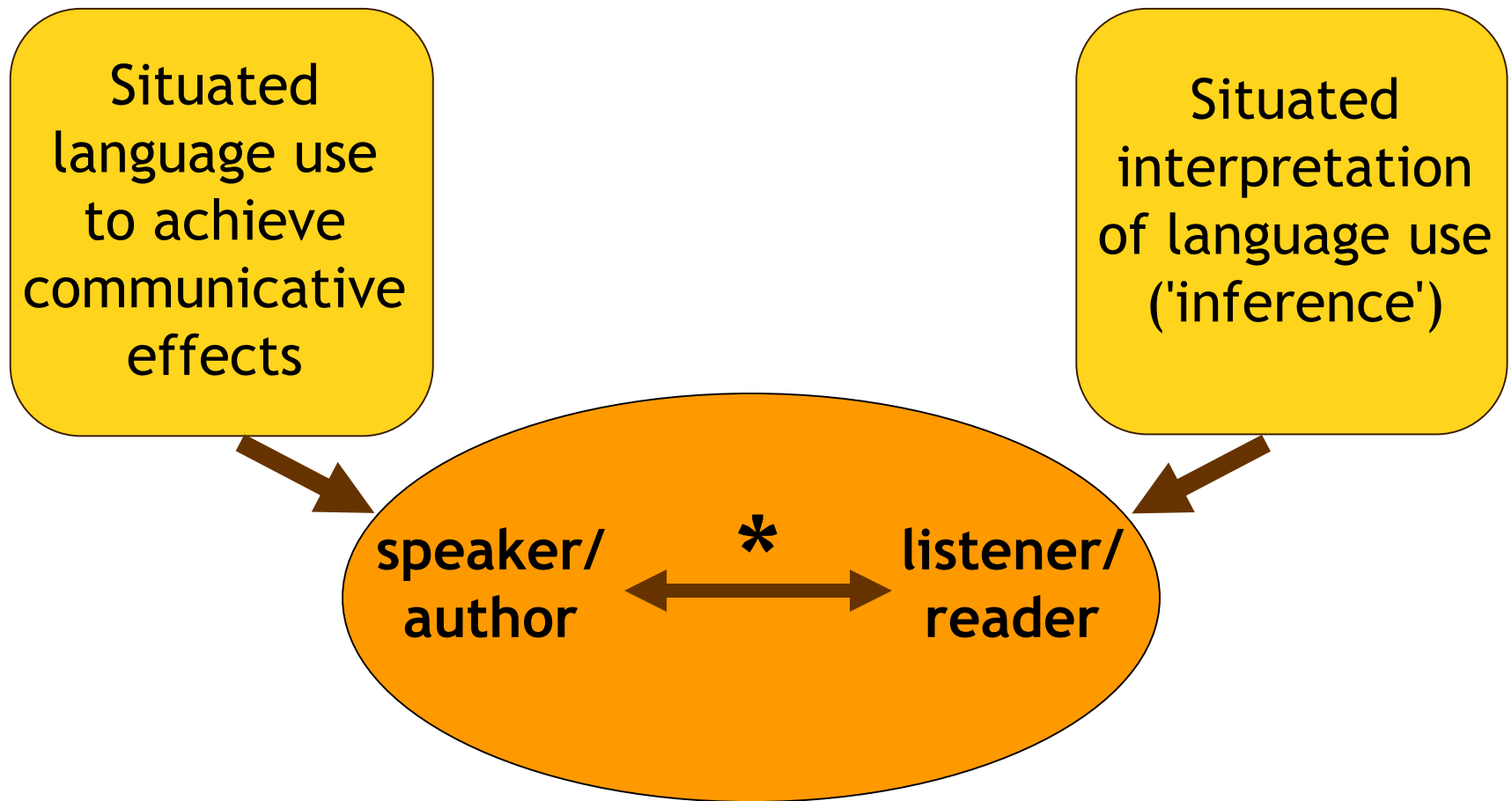
> 'Speaker Design'

Contextualization
(Gumperz 1982, Auer 1995):

- all activities by which participants activate, make relevant, maintain, revise, delimit, cancel – in short, index - any aspect of interactional context as relevant for locally situated meaning-making

  > One such activity is language choice (code-switching, style-shifting).

An interactional model of communication

Situated language use to achieve communicative effects

Situated interpretation of language use ('inference')

speaker/author ***** listener/reader

*'Interaction': "The reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another's actions when in one another's immediate physical presence" (Goffman 1959:15)
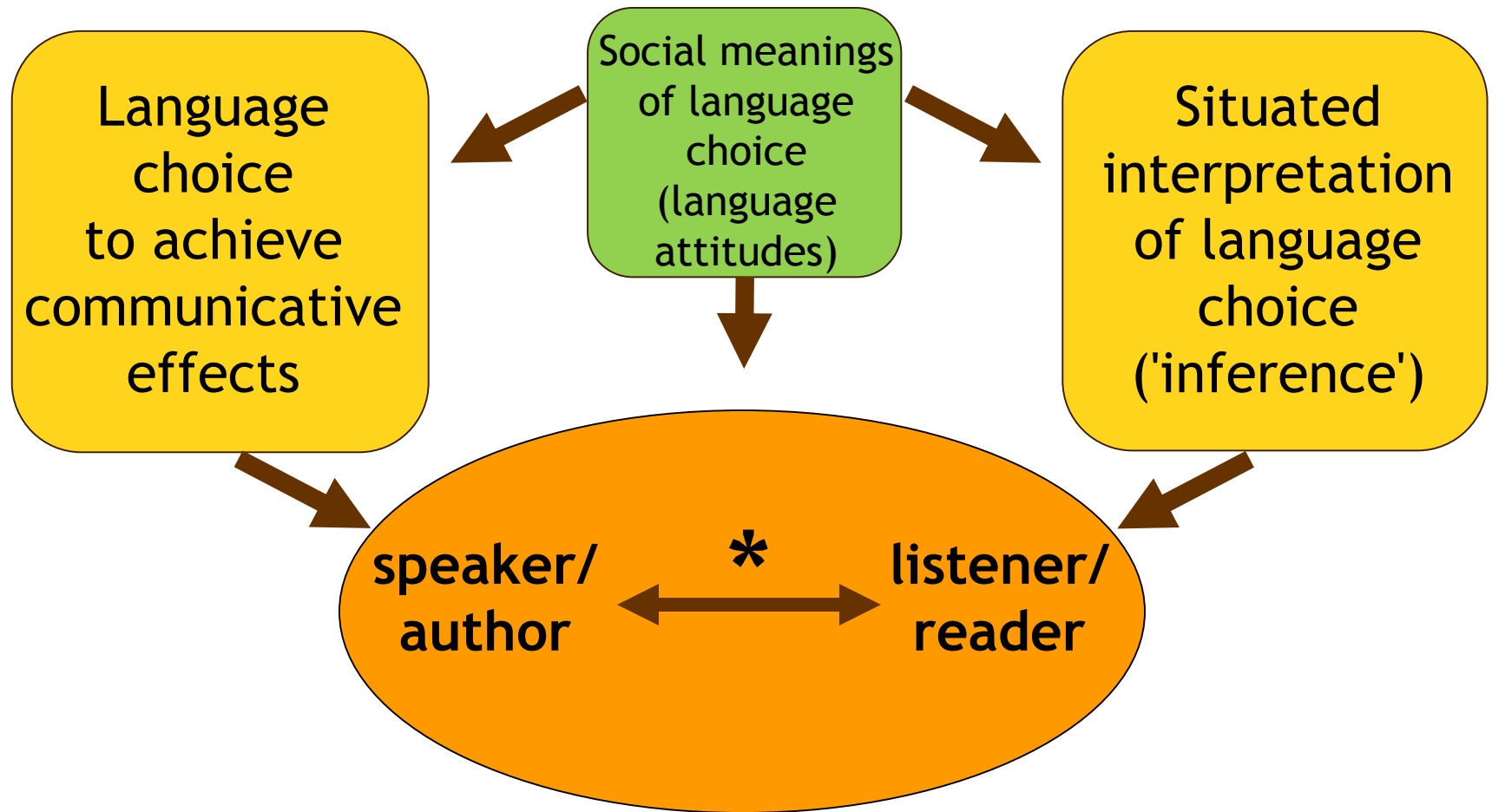
Bakhtin (1986[1952-53]:95-96)

- "When constructing my utterance, I try to actively determine [the listener's] response. Moreover, I try to act in accordance with the response I anticipate, so this anticipated response, in turn, exerts an active influence on my utterance [...] When speaking I always take into account the apperceptive background of the addressee's perception of my speech: the extent to which he [sic!] is familiar with the situation, whether he has special knowledge of the given cultural area of communication, his views and convictions, his prejudices (from my viewpoint), his sympathies and antipathies - because all this will determine his active responsive understanding of my utterance. These considerations also determine my choice of a genre for my utterance, my choice of compositional devices, and, finally, my choice of language vehicles, that is, the style of my utterance."
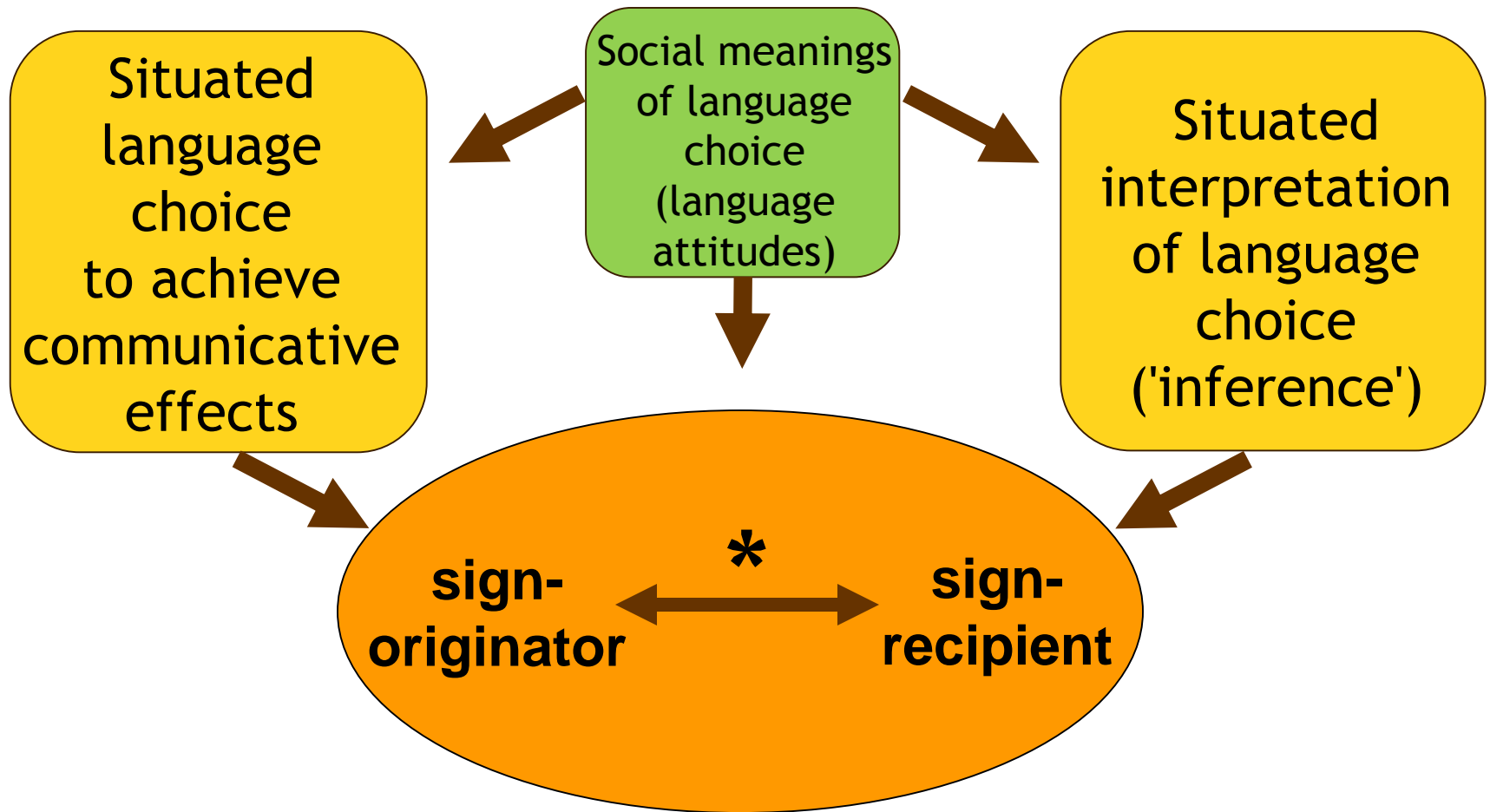
Erickson (1986:316)

- "[T]alking with another person [...] is like climbing a tree that climbs back."

An interactional model of communication

Language choice to achieve communicative effects

Social meanings of language choice (language attitudes)

Situated interpretation of language choice ('inference')

speaker/ author ← ***** → **listener/ reader**

*'Interaction': "The reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another's actions when in one another's immediate physical presence" (Goffman 1959:15)
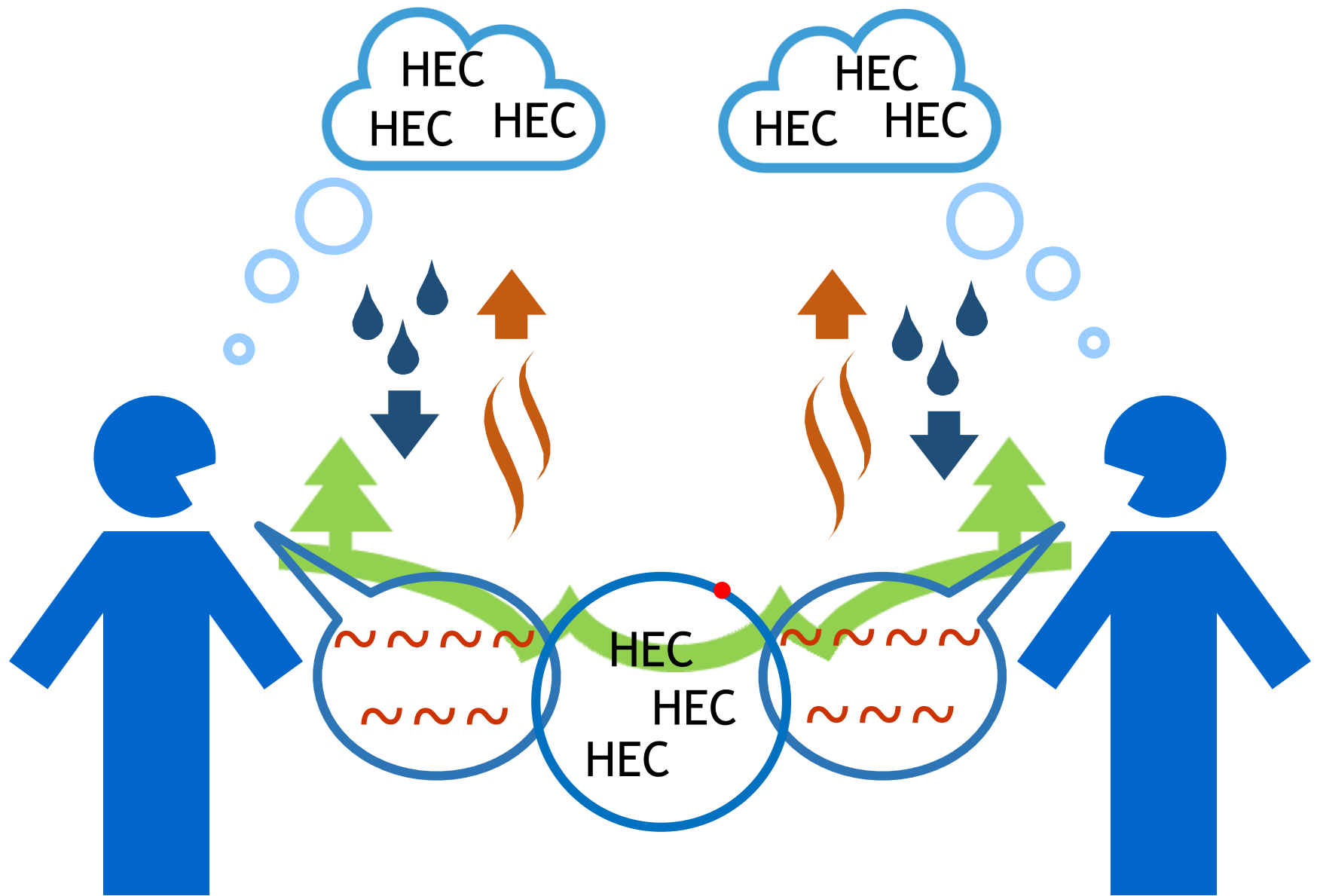
The social meaning of language (=language attitudes) as Human Epistemological Constructs (HECs) in the discourse cycle
(Soukup 2015, following Scollon 2003; Scollon & Scollon 2004)

An interactional model of communication

Situated language choice to achieve communicative effects

Social meanings of language choice (language attitudes)

Situated interpretation of language choice ('inference')

sign-originator **＊** **sign-recipient**

＊'Interaction': "The reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another's actions when in one another's immediate physical presence" (Goffman 1959:15)

Variation as dialogue in the linguistic landscape

sign-originator ⟷ sign-recipient

Social meaning of English (in Austria, versus German): 'modern', 'international', 'dynamic', 'youth language', 'cool', 'prestigious' etc.

(see Soukup 2016)

Variation as dialogue in the linguistic landscape

Marün!

sign-originator ⟷ sign-recipient

Social meaning of dialect vs standard use (in Austria):

?
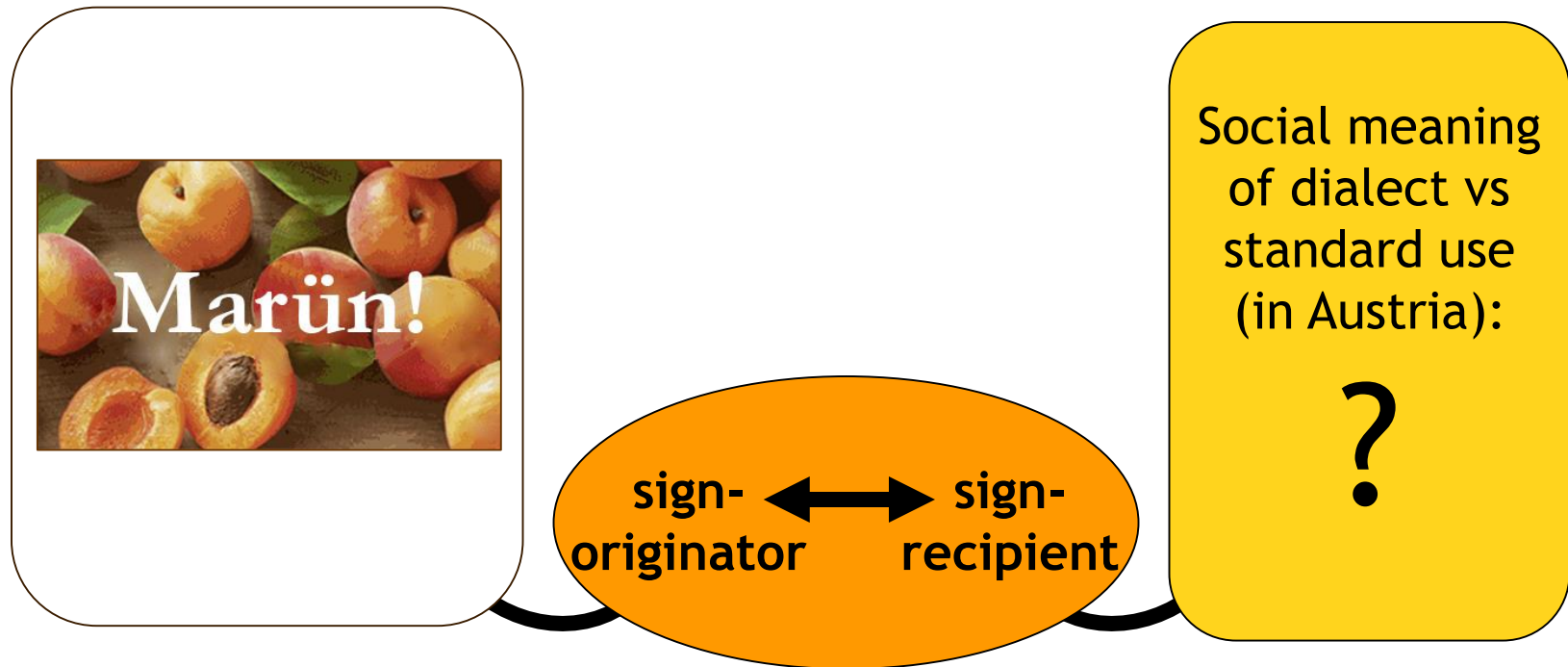
A visual matched-guise study (V-MGT) of standard and dialect use in the Austrian LL

- 6 pairs of images:
  one standard, one (Central Bavarian-Austrian) dialect each

- Topics: food, holidays, second-hand clothing

- actually, an 'open-guise technique' design (Soukup 2013)

Marillen!
Da komme ich her!
Jetzt frisch im Geschäft.

Marün!
Då kumm i her!
Jetz frisch im G'schäft.

Servus Nachbar
Frisch von daheim!
Jetzt neu im Geschäft.

Servas Nochba
Frisch vo dahoam!
Jetz neich im G'schäft.

A visual matched-guise study (V-MGT) of standard and dialect use in the Austrian LL

- 20 five-point bipolar semantic differential scales:

sympathisch	ansprechend
vertrauenswürdig	österreichisch
lustig	bodenständig
höflich	umweltfreundlich
emotional	gute Qualität
intelligent	nachhaltig
derb	schmeckt wahrscheinlich gut
natürlich	gute Werbung
aggressiv	Produkt würde ich kaufen
konservativ	dieses Schild gefällt mir

(plus their opposites)

A visual matched-guise study (V-MGT) of standard and dialect use in the Austrian LL

- 22 informants
  (13♀, 9♂, age 39-77, median age 43)

- all Austrians
  (Vienna: 10; Lower Austria: 9; Upper Austria: 3)

- online survey (soscisurvey.de)

Marün!

Dä kumm i her!

Jetz frisch im G'schäft.

sympathisch	○○○○○○	unsympathisch
vertrauenswürdig	○○○○○○	nicht vertrauenswürdig
lustig	○○○○○○	nicht lustig
höflich	○○○○○○	unhöflich
emotional	○○○○○○	unemotional
intelligent	○○○○○○	unintelligent
derb	○○○○○○	vornehm
natürlich	○○○○○○	unnatürlich
aggressiv	○○○○○○	nicht aggressiv
konservativ	○○○○○○	modern
ansprechend	○○○○○○	nicht ansprechend
österreichisch	○○○○○○	nicht österreichisch
bodenständig	○○○○○○	abgehoben
umweltfreundlich	○○○○○○	umweltfeindlich
gute Qualität	○○○○○○	schlechte Qualität
nachhaltig	○○○○○○	nicht nachhaltig
schmeckt wahrscheinlich gut	○○○○○○	schmeckt wahrscheinlich schlecht
gute Werbung	○○○○○○	schlechte Werbung
Produkt würde ich kaufen	○○○○○○	Produkt würde ich nicht kaufen
dieses Schild gefällt mir	○○○○○○	dieses Schild gefällt mir nicht

Weiter

Results

Apricot

Marille_Std   Marille_Dial

Bread

Brot_Std   Brot_Dial
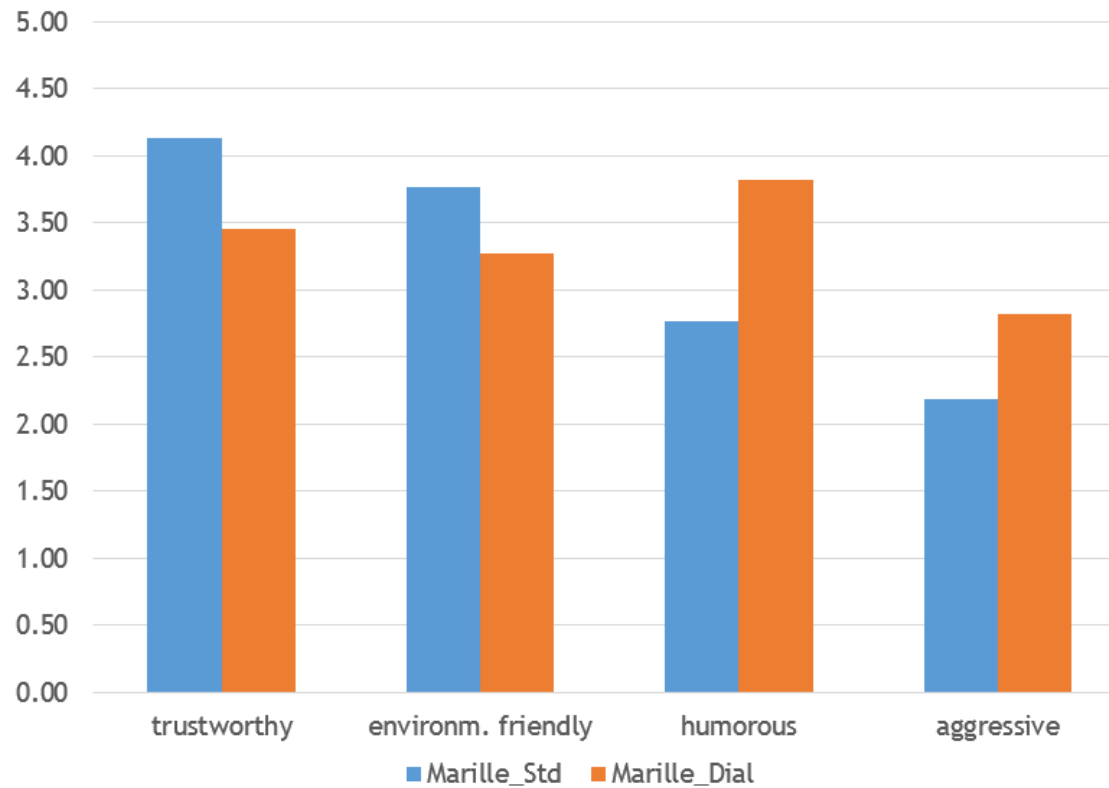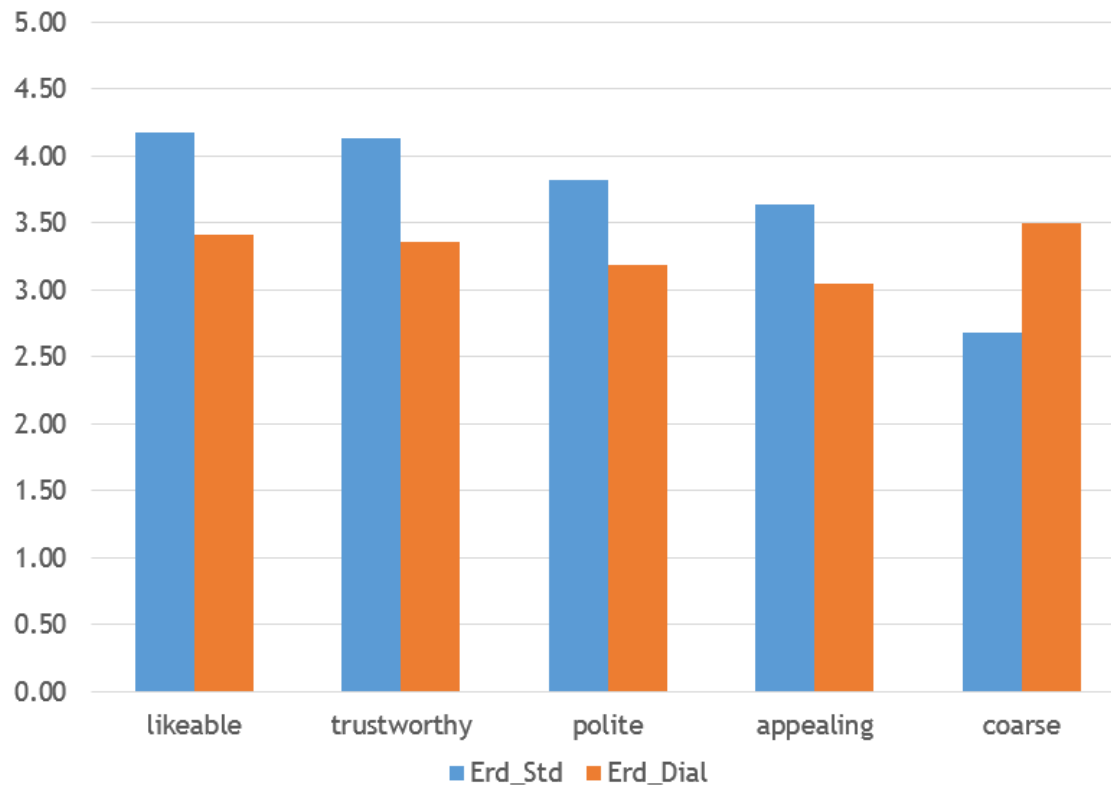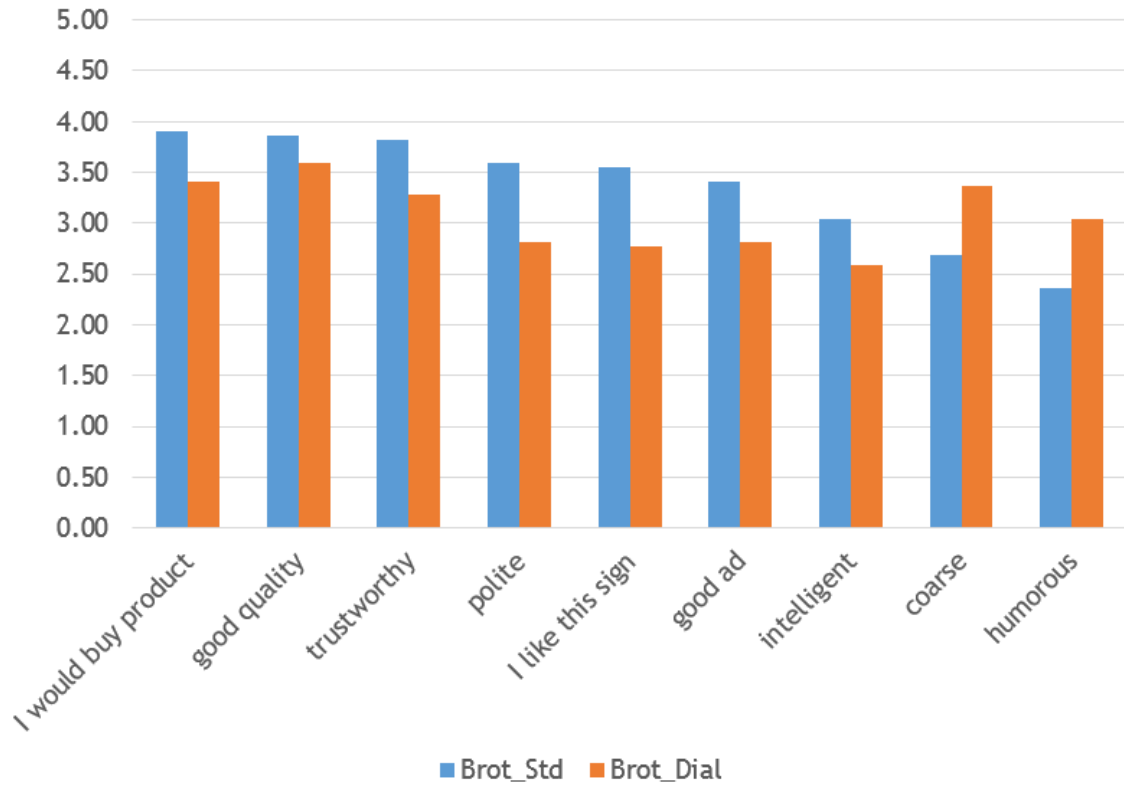
Schmeckt nicht
lecker, sondern
urgut!

Die Krenwurzel-Jause
aus der Region.

Schmeckt net
lecker, sondern
urguat!

De Krenwurzn-Jausn
aus da Region.

Sandwich

5.00
4.50
4.00
3.50
3.00
2.50
2.00
1.50
1.00
0.50
0.00

emotional

■ Anker_Std   ■ Anker_Dial

Vintage

	Vintage_Std	Vintage_Dial

Categories: trustworthy, down-to-earth, Austrian

Holiday

Legend: Urlaub_Std, Urlaub_Dial

Categories: Austrian, down-to-earth, humorous, sustainable offer, I like this sign
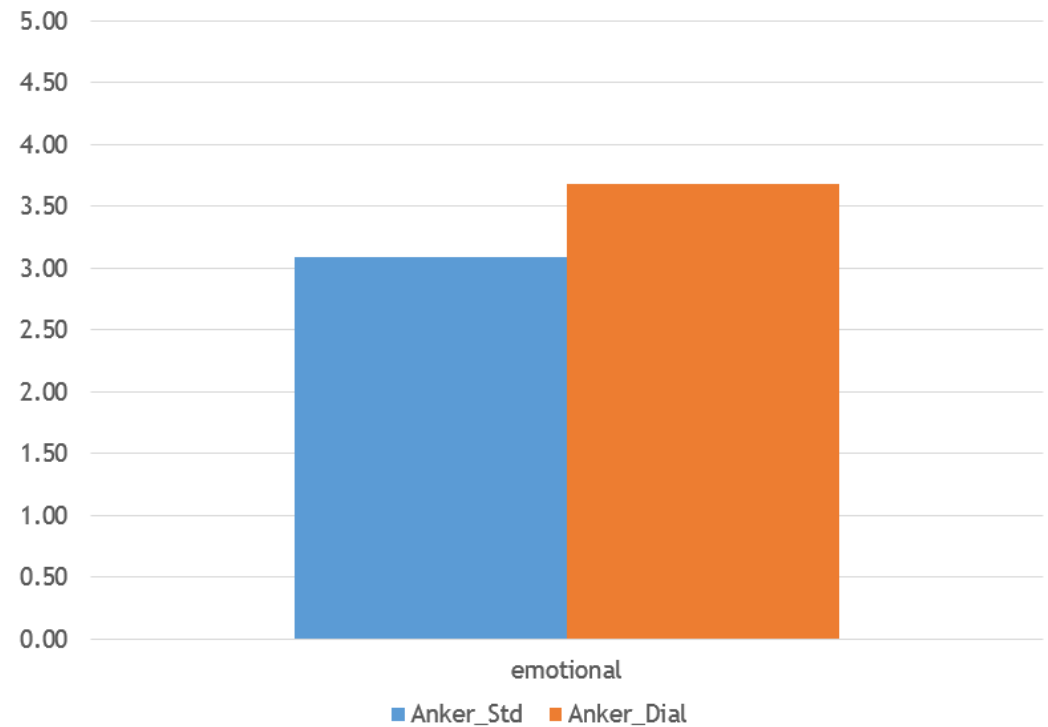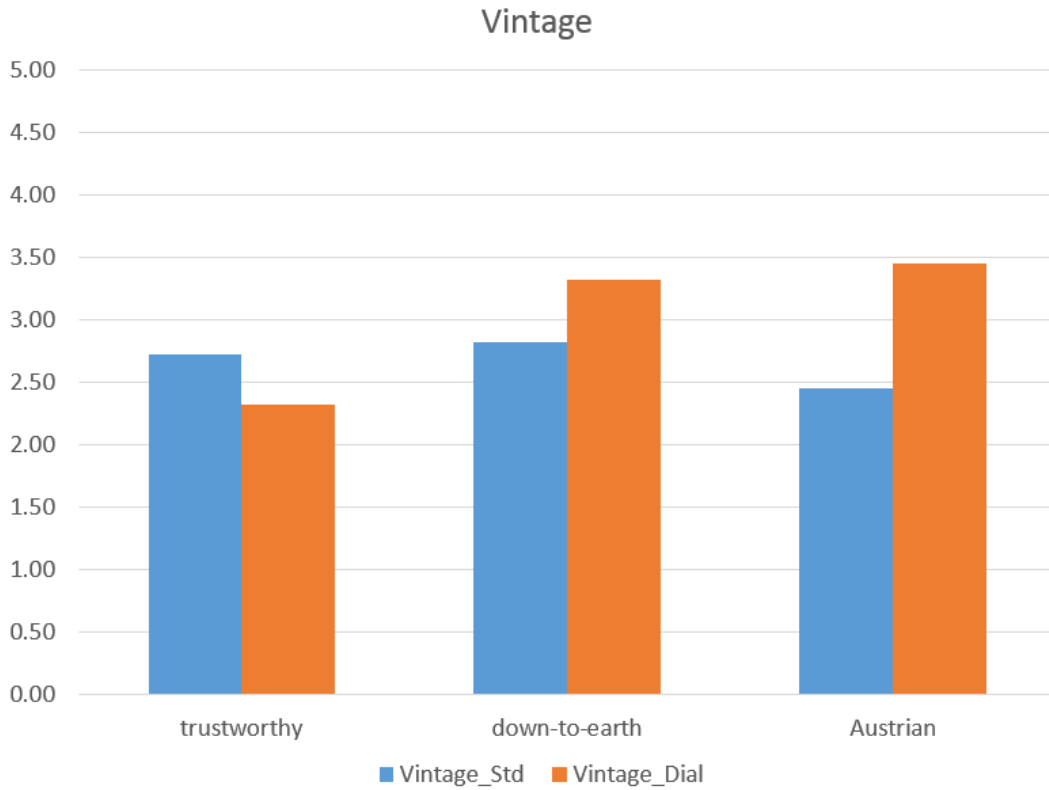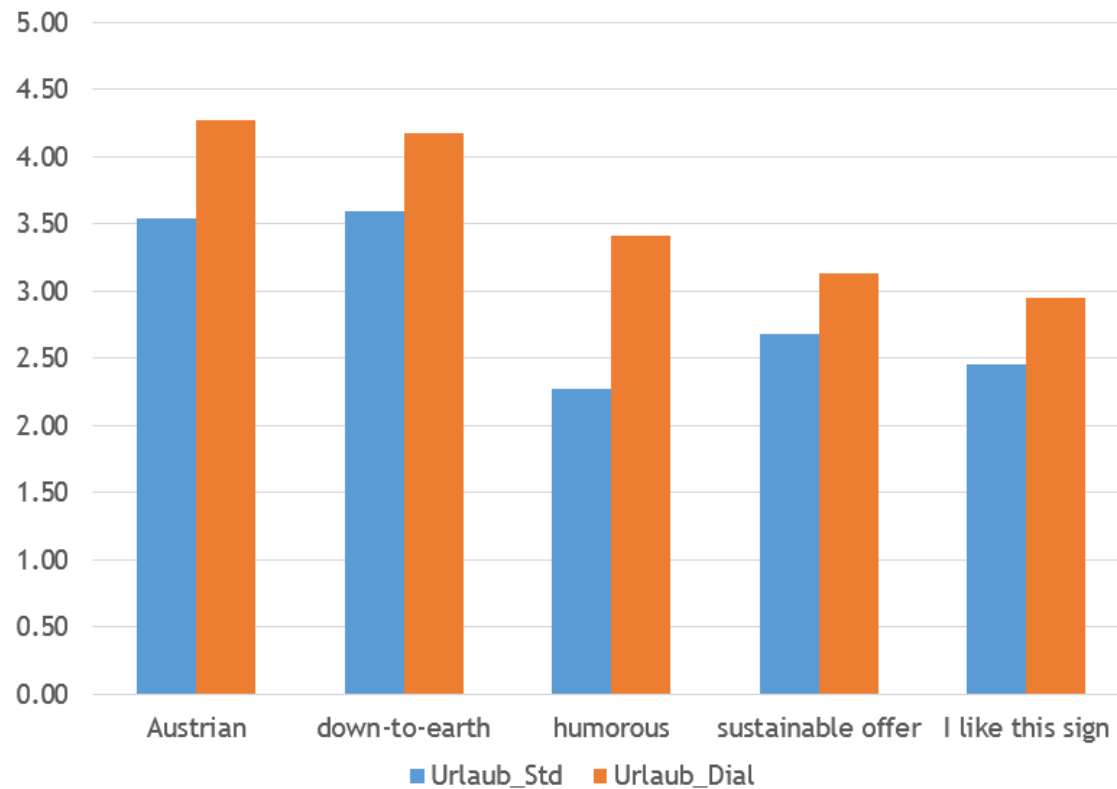
The 'best' items:

- Significant differences in assessment and standard deviation (mostly) below 1:

trustworthy	4x	aggressive	1x
humorous	3x	appealing	1x
Austrian	2x	emotional	1x
coarse	2x	environmentally friendly	1x
down-to-earth	2x	good ad	1x
I like this sign	2x	good quality	1x
polite	2x	intelligent	1x
		I would buy product	1x
		likeable	1x
		sustainable offer	1x

In the context of written LL signs in Austrian German,

standard may appear more:

- trustworthy
- **likeable**
- appealing
- polite
- intelligent.

- It suggests better quality and a better ad
- and makes a sale more likely.

dialect may appear more:

- coarse
- emotional
- aggressive
- humorous
- down-to-earth
- Austrian.

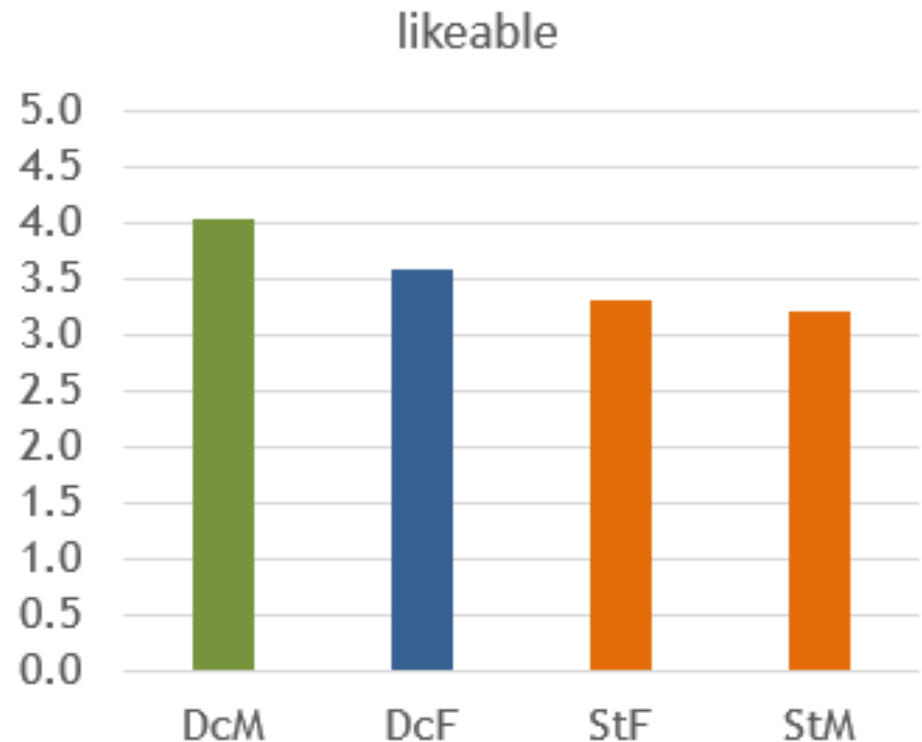- It suggests a more sustainable product.

(see Soukup 2009)

In the context of written LL signs in Austrian German,

standard may appear more: Soukup (2009):

- trustworthy
- **likeable**
- appealing
- **polite**
- **intelligent.**

likeable

Conclusion(s)

- New tools are needed to investigate meaning-making via (written) language choice in the LL (where sign-readers have been under-researched).

- The V-MGT may be such a tool. It works, though it needs much further testing (re: stimulus choice, item choice, language choice/mixing, traditional MGT design).

- Comparing results between verbal guise and visual matched-guise may get at identifying potential context effects of the medium (spoken vs. written language use).

Conclusion(s)

- Context effects (variability, context-relativity) are indicators of the fact that language attitudes emerge in situated interactional processes. Yet the must also be storable and retrievable in future interactions. Thus, they are best conceptualized discursively, as Human Epistemological Constructs (Scollon 2003) that arise from and precipitate in interaction.

- This conceptualization provides the required theoretical basis for mixed-methods research that integrates discourse exegesis with experimental language attitude research. Such experimental research can generate empirical evidence for the workings and potential for success of strategic language choice activities and behavior (Soukup 2015).

References

Auer, Peter. 1995. The pragmatics of code-switching: A sequential approach. In L. Milroy & P. Muysken (eds.), *One Speaker, Two Languages: Crossdisciplinary Perspectives on Code-switching*, 115-135. Cambridge, UK: CUP.

Eckert, Penelope. 2012. Three waves of variation study: The emergence of meaning in the study of sociolinguistic variation. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41, 87–100.

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday.

Gumperz, John J. 1982. *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge, UK: CUP.

Schilling, Natalie. 2013. Investigating stylistic variation. In J.K. Chambers & N. Schilling (eds.), *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*, 2nd ed., 327-349. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.

Scollon, Ron. 2003. The dialogist in a positivist world: Theory in the social sciences and the humanities at the end of the twentieth century. *Social Semiotics* 13(1), 71-88.

Scollon, Ron, and Suzie Wong Scollon. 2004. *Nexus Analysis*. New York: Routledge.

Soukup, Barbara. 2009. *Dialect Use as Interaction Strategy*. Vienna: Braumüller.

Soukup, Barbara. 2013. On matching speaker (dis)guises – revisiting a methodological tradition. In T. Kristiansen & S. Grondelaers (eds.), *Language (De)standardisation in Late Modern Europe: Experimental Studies*, 267-285. Oslo: Novus.

Soukup, Barbara. 2015. Mixing methods in the study of language attitudes: Theory and application. In A. Prikhodkine & D.R. Preston (eds.), *Responses to Language Varieties: Variability, Processes and Outcomes*, 55-84. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Soukup, Barbara. 2016. English in the linguistic landscape of Vienna, Austria (ELLViA): Outline, rationale, and methodology of a large-scale empirical project on language choice on public signs from the perspective of sign-readers. *Views* 25: 1-24.

Exploring language attitudes towards standard and dialect use in the Austrian linguistic landscape with the 'visual matched-guise technique'

Barbara Soukup

barbara.soukup@oeaw.ac.at