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

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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')

*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')**

*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)
Situated language choice to achieve communicative effects

Social meanings of language choice (language attitudes)

Situated interpretation of language choice (‘inference’)

**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

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!

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!
Jetzt frisch im Geschäft.

Marün!
Jetzt frisch im Geschäft.

Servus Nachbar
Jetzt neu im Geschäft.

Servas Nochba
Jetzt neich im G'schäft.
Schmeckt nicht lecker, sondern urguat!
Die Krenwurzel-Jause aus der Region.

Schmeckt net lecker, sondern urguat!
De Krenwurzn-Jausn aus da Region.

Brot aus der Nachbarschaft
...weil es einfach gurk schmeckt!

Brot aus da Nachbardschaft
...weil es einfach gurk schmeckt!
Vintage

Alter!

Oida!

Wo das Herz höher schlägt,
"Der nächste Urlaub wird der Hit"

Wo es Herz hechschlägt,
"Da nächste Urlaub wird da Hit"

Wir freuen uns auf dich!
A visual matched-guise study (V-MGT) of standard and dialect use in the Austrian LL

• 20 five-point bipolar semantic differential scales:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard English</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sympathetic</td>
<td>ansprechend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vertrauenswürdig</td>
<td>österreichisch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lustig</td>
<td>bodenständig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>höflich</td>
<td>umweltfreundlich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional</td>
<td>gute Qualität</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intelligent</td>
<td>nachhaltig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>derb</td>
<td>schmeckt wahrscheinlich gut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>natürlich</td>
<td>gute Werbung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aggressiv</td>
<td>Produkt würde ich kaufen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>konservativ</td>
<td>dieses Schild gefällt mir</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(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)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>syntatisch</th>
<th>unsyntatisch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vertrauenswürdig</td>
<td>nicht vertrauenswürdig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lustig</td>
<td>nicht lustig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>höflich</td>
<td>unhöflich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional</td>
<td>unemotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intelligent</td>
<td>unintelligent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>der</td>
<td>vornehm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>natürlich</td>
<td>unnatürlich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aggressiv</td>
<td>nicht aggressiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>konservativ</td>
<td>modern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ansprechend</td>
<td>nicht ansprechend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>österreichisch</td>
<td>nicht österreichisch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bodenständig</td>
<td>abgehoben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>umweltfreundlich</td>
<td>umweltfeindlich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gute Qualität</td>
<td>schlechte Qualität</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nachhaltig</td>
<td>nicht nachhaltig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schmeckt wahrscheinlich gut</td>
<td>schmeckt wahrscheinlich schlecht</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gute Werbung</td>
<td>schlechte Werbung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produkt würde ich kaufen</td>
<td>Produkt würde ich nicht kaufen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dieses Schild gefällt mir</td>
<td>dieses Schild gefällt mir nicht</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results
servus Nachbar

Frisch von daheim!

Jetzt neu im Geschäft.

servas Nochba

Frisch vo dahoam!

Jetzt neich im Geschäft.

Potato

likeable

trustworthy

globe
diplomat

appealing

course

Erd Std

Erd Dial
Schmeckt nicht lecker, sondern urguat!
Die Krenwurzel-Jause aus der Region.

Schmeckt net lecker, sondern urguat!
De Krenwurzn-Jausn aus da Region.
The 'best' items:

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>trustworthy</td>
<td>4x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>humorous</td>
<td>3x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austrian</td>
<td>2x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coarse</td>
<td>2x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>down-to-earth</td>
<td>2x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like this sign</td>
<td>2x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polite</td>
<td>2x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aggressive</td>
<td>1x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appealing</td>
<td>1x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional</td>
<td>1x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environmentally friendly</td>
<td>1x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good ad</td>
<td>1x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good quality</td>
<td>1x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intelligent</td>
<td>1x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would buy product</td>
<td>1x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likeable</td>
<td>1x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sustainable offer</td>
<td>1x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the context of written LL signs in Austrian German,

**standard** may appear more:
- trustworthy
- likeable
- appealing
- polite
- intelligent.

**dialect** may appear more:
- coarse
- emotional
- aggressive
- humorous
- down-to-earth
- Austrian.

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

- It suggests a more sustainable product.

(see Soukup 2009)
In the context of written LL signs in Austrian German, standard may appear more:

- trustworthy
- likeable
- appealing
- polite
- intelligent.

Soukup (2009):
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 they 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


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