Exploring Linguistic Standards in Non-Dominant Varieties of Pluricentric Languages Explorando estándares lingüísticos en variedades no dominantes de lenguas pluricéntricas
Codifying linguistic standards in non-dominant varieties of pluricentric languages - adopting dominant or native norms?

Abstract

This paper examines the standardisation and codification in non-dominant varieties of pluricentric languages (NDVs). It focuses on the specific challenges that are connected with the fact that NDVs are sharing a common language and at the same time develop their own linguistic norms which, among other things, serve to express the social and national identity of their speakers. The paper informs about the state of the art in the codification of different pluricentric languages and it explores general models of codification, quantitative and qualitative stages of standardisation and the stages of linguistic decolonization which lead to endonormative stabilization and dialect birth. In this respect, specific corpus planning strategies that either retain the linguistic connection with the other varieties of the language or lead to different degrees of linguistic independence are also explored. Criteria for the delimitation of standard and non-standard features of NDVs are discussed and a list of relevant criteria for the selection of linguistic items of NDVs (in a self-defining codifying concept) is presented.

1. The codification of non-dominant varieties of pluricentric languages – obstacles and political struggles

The concept of domination and non-domination in pluricentric languages has been developed by Michael Clyne (1992) and elaborated through the papers of the first and second conferences on non-dominant varieties in 2011 und 2012 and the papers of this volume. From those features that are fundamental for non-dominant varieties (NDVs) and listed in Muhr (2012: 39ff) the following can be expected to have an impact on the codification and standardisation of NDVs:

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1 See Muhr (2012).
1. Have insufficient or no codification of their national norms and no codifying institutions or such that are not sufficiently equipped;
2. Show reluctance of the elites of the NDVs to solidarise with the own national norms as they are often considered a symbol of low social status (dialectally marked);
3. Have limited and undifferentiated knowledge of the norms of the proper national variety that is mostly restricted to shibboleths
4. Show strong uncertainties about the correctness of the proper standard norm and in case of doubt give preference to the dominant norm.
5. Have difficulties in distinguishing “local” and "national" standards and a tendency to ignore pan-regional similarities of their own variety.
6. Have a tendency to devaluate the status of their own norms by marking them as “colloquial”, “regional” or “dialectal”.
7. The effect of codification is often minimized by codifying only those features of the NDVs that comply with the existing norms of written language.

One might be tempted to ask why speakers of NDVs should want to standardise their language? In most cases they already have a written language which they share with at least one other country – but it is not a language that solely belongs to one nation alone! Pluricentric languages are either the result of colonisation or of a split of nations due to political events. After decolonisation and whenever new nations are born, the new political entities have the wish to express their new-gained identity. One of the means to achieve that is language. Rustow (1968:104) quite appropriately states:

In fact, language is a variable, dependant on political factors. The revival of Gaelic in the late nineteenth century was the consequence, not the cause, of Irish discontent with British rule. The landsmaal movement in Norway emphasized the non-Danish elements of the vernacular to reinforce the earlier political separation from Denmark. Literary Romanian since the nineteenth century has emphasized the Latin as against the Slavic elements of common speech, [...]

However it may take decades until the nation building process has gained enough ground and collective self-assurance to "build away"² the national variety from the mother/sister-variety. Serious obstacles may be conservative language attitudes of the educated elite, fear to sever the connection with the mother/sister-varieties etc. The history of standardisations shows (Fodor/Hagège, 1983, Fishman 1993, Clyne 1997, Deumert/Vandenbussche, 2003) that any attempt to codify and to

² For the term see Fishman (2000, 2006).
standardise the native norms of a NDV is faced with a number of serious obstacles which in its outset are all centred about questions of status planning. Some of the questions and objections which I encountered during a period of more than 30 years dealing with a NV like Austrian German (AG) are the following:
1. Is it legitimate to have national norm that departs from the common written standard language (SL)?
2. Is it necessary to insist on a national norm, as (allegedly) there are only a few words which are different?
3. Does it really matter which words we use in written language as we have our own spoken language which serves to express who we are?
4. Are we not becoming too provincial if we give preference to our national norm?
5. Aren't our own norms so diverse that we have difficulties to decide which is our common norm and accepted by the majority of speakers?
6. If we write like any of the common people, isn't that a degradation and loss of language culture severing the ties to the famous writers of the past?
7. Aren't we moving towards creating a language of our own that leads us away from a common language with many speakers which has a lot of advantages as it means participating in a large community of speakers? And so on and so forth!

The idea to give preference to native/national norms in a NDV and to allow them to be used in written language usually causes social tensions and opposition. The reason for this is that adapting new norms leads to a change/devaluation of actual norms and a loss of social capital in the sense of Bourdieu for those who consider them as a symbol of their own high social status. As the knowledge of written language is linked to formal education, any change of written norms, particularly if it includes former non-standard forms, potentially has to cope with accusations that it is an act of social downgrading. A striking example for this are the protests of Austrian conservatives and linguists from some German departments against the attempt by the authors of the 35th edition of the "Österreichisches Wörterbuch" (Austrian Dictionary) (published in 1979) to de-stigmatize colloquial expressions which were widely used in spoken language. A similar discussion (dialect/variety/language etc.) is presently going on about the status of Scots (Heidinger, 2008), Cyprus Greek (Karyolemou, 2012), and Moldavian and others. French in Quebec (FQ) and

Belgian Dutch (BD) are examples of successful language planning as these varieties very quickly developed from once despised "dialects" to acknowledged NVs - in the case of FQ (due to constitutional reasons) a NV that almost enjoys the status of an independent language. Croatian, Bosnian, Luxembourgish, Macedonian and Nynorsk are examples of varieties that were linguistically closely related to surrounding varieties, but were declared languages of independent states or co-standard languages (Nynorsk). Croatian and Bosnian in particular underwent intensive corpus planning activities during the last 20 years and have developed their own written language norms. These examples show that it is only a matter of political will among the elite of a nation and/or of substantial political events whether a NV or a so called "dialect" develops into an acknowledged NV or even a language or remains uncodified, retaining a low status. The activities that give a variety a status of social/national acceptance precede all other activities in order to have a firm social and political foundation for all measures leading to standardisation and codification of NDVs. The factor "identity" sometimes surpasses the factor "power" if the language is a significant symbol of identity and backed by deep-rooted experiences in the social history of its speech community.6

2. The state of the art of codification and standardisation of non-dominant varieties of pluricentric languages

Since the 1960s, an immense amount of literature about the standardisation and codification of languages has been published.7 However, almost no attention has been paid to the standardisation of pluricentric languages and non-dominant varieties (NDV) – at least not in connection with this term. It is important to note that there are substantial differences in different pluricentric languages (PCL) in respect to their standardisation and codification. I am therefore presenting a sample of selected PLCs and the codification of their NDVs which also represent specific types of codification and standardisation.

I would like to begin with English which is the most wide-spread PLC in the world, spoken in 72 countries (Crystal, 2003). In the English-speaking world much has been written about "post-colonial English", "post-imperial English", "core-varieties", "outer-circle-varieties" etc. The concept of "dominance" did not play any role in these

8 Fishman et. al. (1997).
works, except only marginally and indirectly through the terms "inner" and "outer" circle (Kachru, 1985) which are however not quite equivalent to the concept of "non-dominance". While the term "non-dominance" is not used, it must be assumed that both the "smaller" varieties of the "inner circle" and the varieties of the "outer circles" are to be considered as NDVs. According to the terminology of *The Electronic World Atlas of Varieties of English* (Kortmann / Lunkenheimer, 2011), this would primarily include the "High-contact L1 varieties" and some of the "indigenized varieties". Although American English (AME) is now a dominant variety (DV) it went through all the stages of standardization like any of the other new varieties. The codifying efforts of AME started soon after the independence of the United States in 1776 and reached a first climax at around 1850 (Simpson, 1986). In less powerful (non-dominant) varieties like Australian English (AUE), Canadian English (CNE), South African English (SAE) and New Zealand English (NZE) which all belong to the so called "inner circle" of New Englishes, codification and thus standardisation began in the 1950ies and sincerely only in the 1980ies after computerisation took hold. They all have dictionaries of their NAVs and are also well documented in respect to their specific features in pronunciation, morphology and grammar. The codification of these varieties is primarily in the hands of large publishing houses like Oxford University Press, Merriam-Webster and others. Although there is a considerable amount of description about the new Englishes in Asia, Africa and elsewhere, there is only a small number of dictionaries of varieties of the outer circle. Examples are the *Dictionary of Sri Lankian English* (Meyle, 2007) and the *Dictionary of Nigerian English* (Igboanusi, 2010).

In the Spanish-speaking world on the other hand, the codifying of its varieties is in the hands of no less than 22 language academies which are united in the Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española (Association of the Academies of the Spanish Language). The codification of the American varieties of Spanish started in the second half of the 19th century with the foundation of the Academia Colombiana de la Lengua in 1871. Within the following 16 years another seven other South-

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9 See Schneider (2013) (this volume) who deals with non-dominance in English.
10 High-contact L1 varieties: Transplanted L1 Englishes or colonial (standard) varieties: new indigenized varieties of English with native speakers from early on that have been formed by settlers with diverse linguistic and/or dialectal backgrounds roughly within the last 400 years.
11 Language-shift Englishes: varieties that have replaced the erstwhile primary language in the community and that have adult and child L1 and L2 speakers forming one speech community.
12 For a detailed account of the stages of the development of AME see Schneider (2007: 251-307).
American language academies were founded, followed by many more in the first half of the 20th century. The pluricentric character of Spanish is now fully recognized by the Real Academia Española – the mother of all Spanish language academies, founded in 1713. The work of these academies is guided by the principle "Unidad en la diversidad" (unity in diversity) and its general policy is clearly stated at the web pages of Real Academia Española13:

Se consideran, pues, plenamente legítimos los diferentes usos de las regiones lingüísticas, con la única condición de que estén generalizados entre los hablantes cultos de su área y no supongan una ruptura del sistema en su conjunto, esto es, que ponga en peligro su unidad.
[We take into account fully legitimate uses of the different linguistic regions, with the only condition that they are widespread among educated speakers in their area and do not involve a breach of the whole system and threaten its unity.]

The Spanish academies therefore regulate the spelling, the dictionaries (lexis) and the grammars. It is difficult to image how the usage in 22 countries can be bound together without moving away from the language use of the majority of the population of these countries.

The Portuguese-speaking world is considerably less organized than the Spanish-speaking one. There is also a language academy for (European) Portuguese (EP) (Academia das Ciências) situated in Lisbon and the Academia Brasileira de Letras (founded in 1896/97), but none in the other Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa and Asia. Both academies had a rather restricted role in codification and were primarily regulating the spelling and edited dictionaries. Both the Brazilian academy and the Lisbon Academy published a full dictionary. The Dicionário da Língua Portuguesa Contemporânea (2006) of the Academia das Ciências includes lexis from Brazilian, African and Asian varieties of Portuguese. However, there are an increasing number of projects, particularly in Brazil, such as the Historical Dictionary of Brazilian Portuguese project (HDBP) - an earlier work is Schneider's (1991) dictionary of African borrowings in BP. While it seems that BP is gradually drifting towards becoming a language of its own, there is little or no codification of the other national varieties of Portuguese at the moment.

A still more diverse and almost dramatic history of standardisation and codifying took place in the NVs of Dutch which are the result of the split of the Low Countries in 1585 into a Catholic (Belgium) and a Protestant (Netherland) part. However, French became more and more predominant in Flanders (particularly af-

13 http://www.rae.es/rae/Noticias.nsf/Portada4?ReadForm&menu=4 [acc. 15.01.2013].
ter 1795) resulting in the total loss of official status of Dutch in Belgium between 1830 - 1930 (Willemyns, 2003). There were long periods of language struggles resulting in the "Dutchification" of Flanders through two constitutional laws in 1963 and 1973. Belgian Dutch (BD) therefore has a history of more than 200 years of corpus planning (De Groof, 2002). A massive and quite successful campaign in the 1950s and up to the 1970s propagated the adoption of standard norms of Dutch Dutch (DD) to improve the status of BD (De Caluwe, 2005). This seems to have been overcome by the development of a new intermediate norm (tussentaal) (De Caluwe, 2012) and a strong awareness for the BD norm (Deprez, 1997: 297). Recent developments include the joint codification of BD and DD lexis in the Van Dale dictionary (De Caluwe, 2012) and the editing of a general grammar (Algemene Nederlandse Spraakkunst). The codifying activities are undertaken by the Nederlandse Taalunie (Netherlands Language Union) where Belgium, The Netherlands and Suriname work together. The Instituut voor de Nederlandse Lexicologie (Institute for Dutch Lexicology) in Leiden is the central institution which turns Dutch into a bi-centric language providing BD with an equal status and Suriname Dutch with full acknowledgment. This situation of symmetry is unique among the pluricentric languages.

A rather similar case is the standardisation of Swedish in Sweden and Finland where there is also a high amount of symmetry in the relation of the two NVs. Swedish has been the second official language in Finland since 1922 and enjoys a high status as it is the second national language of Finland. Codification of Swedish Swedish (SS) is achieved by the Svenska Academien (Swedish Academy) and the Swedish language council (Språkrådet). It edited a dictionary, a Swedish Wordlist (125.000 entries) and an authoritative grammar which are also a reference point for Finland Swedish (FS). The FS codifying institution is the "Institutet för de inhemska språken" (Institute for the languages of Finland) which has a Swedish division (Svenska språkbyrån i Finland). It issued a Finlandsvensk ordbok (Finland Swedish dictionary) with 2.550 entries. The Swedish Language Council in Finland is in charge for language planning activities. Its work strives not to allow the two varieties to become too different so that the status of FS will not be endangered, which is similar to aims on national language planning in the Spanish-speaking world:

Ett viktigt mål för den finlandssvenska språkvården är att hindra finlandssvenskan från att fjärma sig från rikssvenskan. 14
[One of the key aims of our Swedish language planning team is to prevent Finland Swedish from growing too distant from the standard variant spoken in Sweden.]

A different case in many ways is French which only reluctantly acknowledged its status as a PCL but seems to have come to terms with it via the "Organisation internationale de la francophonie" which was founded in 1970 and has 77 member countries that cooperate at the level of governments. French has a long history of standardisation which started in 1530 when it was declared the sole language of the law courts. Ever since 1635, corpus planning has been in the hands of the Académie Française, established in that year by Cardinal Richelieu. This resulted in a considerable amount of standardisation and centralization of French already before the French revolution and created a strong connection between language and nation that lead to the concept of "bon usage" – which was declared as the solely acceptable norm for all citizens. Some of the NDVs of the inner circle (Lüdi, 1992) - Belgian French (BF), Swiss French (SF), Quebec French (QF) - have developed codifications of their own norms. The best developed of all is QF. Ever since Canada became bilingual in 1867, QF has more and more developed into a burgeoning variety with many specific lexical and grammatical characteristics codified among others in the Dictionnaire du francais québécois. This language policy is strongly supported by government agencies. Due to the adjacency to France, BF is in a much weaker position and has a rather low amount of endonormative awareness\textsuperscript{15}, although there is also a dictionary of specific belgicisms (Delcourt, 1998). Swiss French is in a quite similar position but has a number of lexical characteristics which are documented in the "Petit dictionnaire Suisse romand" (Thibault/Knecht, 2000). The varieties of the second circle in West-Africa and Asia are also well documented through the work of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique at the University of Nice which issues the journal "Le Francais en Afrique".\textsuperscript{16} This journal contains descriptions of many varieties in Africa and shows a surprising acceptance of the varieties outside France. In 1998 a Dictionnaire Universel Francophone has been issued which is comparable to the Dictionary of International English. French is generally marked by strong purism which also holds true for the varieties of the inner circle.

The codification of the NDVs of German is yet another case and marked by the geographical adjacency of the German-speaking countries and the massive asymmetry between German German (GG) and the other varieties. Of the three major varieties only GG and Austrian German (AG) have full dictionaries, but not Swiss German (SG). The early history of standardisation of German was marked by the conflict between the Catholic south and the Protestant north. The codification of GG gained momentum in the late 18th century with the dictionary of Adelung. The influential

\textsuperscript{15} Christian Delcourt (personal communication).

\textsuperscript{16} http://www.unice.fr/ILF-CNRS/ofcaf/index.html [accessed 15.01.2013]