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METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF TEACHING GERMAN AS A PLURICENTRIC LANGUAGE: THE ROLE OF THE AUSTRIAN NATIONAL VARIANT

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem Statement

According to the contemporary theory of pluricentrism, the German language is presented by equal national variants spread in German speaking countries. Current German studies are interested in research into such national variants of the modern German language, since it ties pure linguistics with ethnolinguistics and culture studies – branches of science that take linguistic research to a new level, making it possible to view verbal and speech phenomena through the prism of anthropocentrism. A particularly important aspect of the research of a national language and its variants is to study the national picture of the world and functioning of ethnically marked vocabulary as the contemporary linguistics does not only study specific national realia and their verbal manifestations, but also the interaction of the language and people's worldview and mental concepts.

The “Austrian” German language, being a national variant of a polycentric language, has its own linguistic norms. When learning and teaching German as the foreign language, there arises a question as to what extent the knowledge of morphological, grammatical, and pragmatic peculiarities is relevant for a German-language learner, to what extent these

divergences are substantial and which of their forms should be taken into consideration while teaching German as a foreign language. As of today, the norms and standards of Austrian German are mostly disregarded when textbooks and manuals are compiled. (Exceptions are those textbooks adapted to the realities of Austria, which are used in Austria for learning German as a second or foreign language, such as *Miteinander in Österreich* or *Schritte plus Österreich*.) The vocabulary and grammar presented in such texts are deemed a deviation from the norm, some colloquial, dialect, and exotic variation, which yields language additional emotiveness. This is the result of the existing asymmetry in teaching German as a foreign language. The existing differences between the national varieties of German are nevertheless rather substantial and comprise all the linguistic levels.

Austrian and Swiss varieties of the German language should be studied alongside the standard German variant in order to sensitize students and learners to the pluricentric linguistic palette of German-speaking countries, especially if their educational or career trajectories are linked to Germany or Austria. This issue represents a practical facet of linguistic and sociolinguistic research on pluricentricity, and this study aims to uncover insights into the benefits and challenges of including Austrian variants of German in language education programmes, with a particular focus on their impact on language proficiency and intercultural competence among learners.

1.2 The historical background

The national peculiarities of the German language in various areas of usage have been scrutinized by a number of researchers for some time: A significant contribution to the study of the German language variability was made by Ulrich Ammon who, on the basis of his studies of southern German dialects and ways of language standardization in the society, interpreted German as a pluricentric language since it fashioned some standard forms for a number of nations and regions (1995). The *Wie sagt man in Österreich?* dictionary of Austrian German (1998), edited by Jakob Ebner, became a basis for studies of the Austrian variety, performed mostly by Austrian linguists in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Rudolf Muhr singled out some grammatical, pragmatic, and phonological peculiarities of Austrian German, pointing to aspects of language policies and social linguistics in its functioning. Peter Wiesinger studied the history and the current state of Austrian German, paying particular attention to its functions within various styles, and specifically in fiction (1988–2009). Robert Sedlaczek performed comparative research on the German used in Austria and Germany, primarily at the level of vocabulary (2004), while Ukrainian studies focused on the Austrian ethnically marked phraseology (Wolodymyr Sulym (1993–2016), Oleh Ostapovych (1999–2017). These and other researchers extended the theory of pluricentricity / polyreality of the German language, studied some peculiarities of its variants, namely the Austrian one, singled out and

classified Austriacisms in the vocabulary, and described the Austriacisms' functions in various styles, particularly in the journalistic style.

However, a number of issues still remain unsolved. These include the 21st century linguistic processes in the Austrian German vocabulary, functional capacity of Austriacisms compared to their Standard High German counterparts, Austriacisms' role in the Austrians' linguistic picture of the world, the impacts of the Austrian language policy and media on linguistic processes in Austrian German, and native speakers' attitudes towards ethnically marked lexemes.

The topicality of this research can be substantiated by the current German studies' focus on the peculiarities in the various language varieties, in particular on the issue of Austrian German functioning according to the pluricentric approach.

The language standards are not unified in German-speaking countries, primarily in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, and German studies transitioned from a unicentric view to the pluricentric model of the development of the German language in Europe. The national variability of German manifests itself in divergences in phonetics, morphology, word formation, syntax, vocabulary, and pragmatics when the language is used by its native speakers in the three abovementioned states. The clearest divergences between different national centres are observed at the level of vocabulary.

1.3 Austrian Language Policy

The Austrian national consciousness has been constantly growing since 1955, and this had consequences for Austrians' language performance. The subject of *Deutsch* (German) was replaced by *Unterrichtssprache* (Language of Teaching), and a committee was established with the aim of publishing a dictionary of the Austrian language which would prove the self-sufficiency of Austrian German due to the high percentage of Austriacisms, such as expressions used in Austria as a variant of Standard German. According to A. Weiss, Austriacisms are the constituent element in the Austrian variant of the German language (Weiss, 2007).

Due to the dominance of *Bundesdeutsch*, Austrian cultural influencers and politicians see some challenges in the "promotion" of Austrian German abroad. For this purpose, Austrian lecturers, being native speakers and promoters of Austrian German, give classes in foreign universities. Austria itself organizes German language courses with a programme that covers the study of Austrian specific features. Austrians have also managed to develop their own diploma to rival the Goethe-Institut's language certificates.

This language issue has gained a special significance in the European Union. The EU is obliged to use terminological Austriacisms in the sphere of administration, law, etc., i.e. in all EU texts on Austria. Both supporters and opponents of the accession of Austria to the EU had their word during the negotiations on this process in 1993-1994. The opponents expressed some worries that Austria could lose its national identity, special

Austrian cuisine and Austrian titles. Even before joining the EU, in order to preserve its own identity Austria had assembled a committee for terminology which compiled a list of 1,500 Austriacisms different from the Standard German variants. These expressions were of use to EU translators, as they made it possible to introduce Standard German and Austrian vocabulary into European law and gave the Austriacisms equal status. However, this issue was deemed peripheral and, consequently, in practice ignored.

In 1994, it was decided that Austrian German would be officially represented in the EU as a short list of 23 food terms (the so-called Protocol No. 10), with these Austriacisms gaining official status. However, this list has been criticized for the lack of its linguistic substance and professional inaccuracy, and is considered to be more symbolic than have any practical use (Ebner, 2008). This protocol was most enthusiastically criticized by the Austrian linguist W. Pollak, who insisted on the unrestricted recognition of all existing Austriacisms. In his monograph *Austria and Europe: Language Culture and National identity* (Österreich und Europa: sprachkulturelle und nationale Identität) (1994), he proposed the equality of Standard High German vocabulary and Austriacisms. (Pollak, 1994). D. Zeman, however, noted such criticism and still maintained that Protocol No. 10 was, to some extent, the first recognition of Austrian German in international treaties, and thus a sign of its uniqueness (Zeman, 2009).

Our research focuses on the lexical level of the Austrian variant of the German language: those units, Austriacisms predominantly, which can be viewed as ethnically marked and are substantial constituents in the Austrians' linguistic picture of the world and correlate with the unique experience of the Austrian people. We also pay attention to the peculiarities of the functioning of Austriacisms in the modern press and those lexical units which we consider to be relevant for learning German. In a narrow interpretation, Austriacisms are those words which are codified in Austria. To be codified as such, they have to meet two requirements: 1) a certain Austriacism must be found in a dictionary of Austrian German (*Österreichisches Wörterbuch* 2016) not followed by any remarks which would limit its standardized use; 2) this unit cannot be found in the *Duden* dictionary as a constituent of the national language standard in Germany (Weiss, 2007).

2 METHOD

The material for the study is a selection of Austriacisms from the *Variantenwörterbuch des Deutschen* and *Wie sagt man in Österreich?* dictionaries on the one hand, and articles from various sections of the Austrian press on the other.

Since in today's society all information manifests itself in various media forms, all instances of the language culture of a nation, ethnicity, region, or social group can be found in mass media. It is media that shapes the picture of the world of that people have, along with their values and social awareness. Our primary resources are the digital editions of

four Austrian daily newspapers from 2020: *Der Standard*, *Die Presse*, *Oberösterreichische Nachrichten*, and *Niederösterreichische Nachrichten*. The press demonstrates some vivid parallels of the national variants of the polynational German language which enabled us to analyse the use and functions of the Austrian vocabulary. The material was initially selected from dictionaries which codify Austrian German, we then verified those lexical units with the *Duden* dictionary, and then applied the method of continuous sampling to verify the use in the online editions of the focal Austrian newspapers in 2020.

At the initial stage of this research, we selected materials through the method of primary lexicographic sampling from two reliable dictionaries: *Variantenwörterbuch des Deutschen* and *Wie sagt man in Österreich?* Following this alphabetic list, we searched for Austriacisms in the four Austrian newspapers mentioned above. This synchronic “probe” proved that not all Austriacisms listed in these two dictionaries are widely used in the modern Austrian media discourse.

During the research, we were able to utilize the Austrian Media Corpus (AMC) as a source database, generously provided to us by the Austrian Academy of Sciences. This corpus contains contemporary Austrian press texts (10 billion words) and ranks among the largest German-language corpora.

The AMC is a substantial corpus created by the Institute for Corpus Linguistics and Text Technology at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in collaboration with the Austria Presse Agentur (APA), encompassing a wide range of digitized media texts from Austrian newspapers and magazines, APA reports, transcripts of Austrian radio and television broadcasts from the 1980s onwards (Ransmayr, 2014).

The use of this corpus allowed us to describe the changes occurring in the Austrian variant of the German language, providing a diachronic perspective and enabling us to test “intuitive decisions and linguistic theories on a large volume of authentic language material” (Lemnitzer, 2010).

Consequently, linguistic facts were collected and analysed through lexicographic selection, working with Austrian online versions of newspapers, and utilizing the Austrian Media Corpus, employing interpretative, comparative, and conceptual analysis. The analysis was also carried out through computerized searches with subsequent quantitative calculations of results, relying on the viewpoint of linguists who have long used statistical data, particularly regarding the frequency of the usage of a specific linguistic unit: “Frequency (or frequency of use) is arguably the most informative and most frequently sought-after information that can be obtained using a corpus” (Perkuh, 2012).

We thus selected 1,483 Austriacisms that can be found in the contemporary Austrian press and were deemed active.

For example, the word “heuer” has 96,680 occurrences in the press, 1,000 occurrences in “der Standard”, and 13,731 occurrences in “OÖN”.

Moreover, some Austriacisms presented in these dictionaries can also be found in Bavaria, and so they are not pure Austriacisms. However, since contemporary German

studies has not yet developed strict criteria to distinguish between the variants of the language, we selected lexical units that are relatively common in the Austrian press.

For example, the word “stad” is noted as Bavarian/Austrian (meaning “still” or “quiet”). In the analysed newspapers, it is documented as follows: “die Presse” – 36,068 occurrences, “der Standard” – 554 occurrences, and “OÖN” – nine occurrences. However, this word will not be considered for the next research stage because it is primarily attributed to Bavarian usage.

Some portion of the chosen Austriacisms is composed of the so-called semantic Austriacisms, i.e. lexical units which are used in Standard German but have an additional meaning in Austria, and such lexemes with that meaning are not observed in Germany.

For example, “anschaffen” means “to acquire or buy” in Germany, but in Austria: 1 (slang) “to command or order”; 2 (slang) “to order something in a restaurant or pub”.

The analysis of the latter group of Austriacisms could be only quantitative.

The second stage of this study presupposed the distribution of lexical and semantic Austriacisms. For this stage we incorporated the most reliable dictionary of the German language – *Duden* (online) – which is regularly updated. In that dictionary, we were examining the section Gebrauch, i.e. *the use*. If this section indicated the expression as *österreichisch* (Austrian) in the first place, we attributed it as a lexical Austriacism; if the same indication marked the second or third meanings of a polysemantic unit, we regarded it as a semantic Austriacism. After this, in the media discourse text corpus we then searched for the abovementioned lexical units and analysed the contexts of their use, since only a contextual analysis allowed us to draw conclusions on the meaning the unit was used with. The result of this analysis is quite ambiguous: we found that, on the one hand, in the Austrian press those lexical units were mostly used with the Standard German meaning, while on the other hand we managed to gather an extensive corpus of articles in which the authors used those lexical units with the Austrian meaning.

Sometimes the article helps determine an Austriacism. For example, the word “das Polster” in Austria is used either in the overall German meaning of “padding, upholstery on seats and sofas” or in the Austrian meaning of “pillow.” However, “der Polster” is Austrian and, therefore, has the Austrian meaning of “pillow”. The lexical and semantic analysis of the studied Austriacisms enabled us to distinguish some thematic groups of Austriacisms and define the most quantitative of them. As a result, we singled out three groups of the most used Austriacisms for quantitative and qualitative analysis.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As an outcome of our study we distributed Austriacisms into three groups:

- 1) To the first group belong words and expression, that are used in Austria but have no counterparts in the language used in Germany i.e. Austrian realia. These words

reflect the peculiarities of life in Austria. These include Austrian specialties, elements of Austria's administrative, political, or social systems, as well as phraseology with territorial markings. e.g. *Strudel* (a puff pastry roll), *Schmarren* (an omelette cooked in a special way), and *Maut* (a fee charged for the use of a road).

- 2) Second group – semantic Austriacisms – are the words which are common for both Austria and Germany, but they have different meanings in each. For instance, a lexical unit “die Bäckerei” denotes not only a bakery, as in Germany, but also pastry in Austria, or “der Sessel” (an armchair in Standard German) corresponds to “der Stuhl” (a chair) in Austria.
- 3) The third group – lexical Austriacisms – comprises Austrian vocabulary that has counterparts in Germany but is used in Austria instead of these. This category can be divided into two other groups: lexical units used solely in Austria and units used both in Austria and Bavaria. This group is the most common and the most represented. We can give the following examples: Germany: *doof* – Austria: *deppert* (dummy), Germany: *Abitur* – Austria: *Matura* (graduation from high school) and, surely, a number of words from the sphere of gastronomy: Germany: *Roastbeef* – Austria: *Beiried* (roast beef), Germany: *Hefe* – Austria: *Germ* (yeast), Germany: *Blumenkohl* – Austria: *Karfiol* (cauliflower), Germany: *Aprikose* – Austria: *Marille* (apricot), Germany: *Pfannkuchen* – Austria *Palatschinken* (pancakes), etc.

As our search words we used Austriacisms from all three groups included in the *Duden. Österreichisches Deutsch* dictionary. Lexical units belonging to three thematic blocks were found to be the most common. We thus suggest paying more attention to these blocks when studying the Austrian variant:

- language of gastronomy (302 lexical units),
- language of management and administration (293 lexical units),
- language of school education (82 lexical units).

The language of gastronomy is mainly a socially determined set of vocabulary used in communication. Love for Austrian cuisine is a vivid example of patriotism, and a manifestation of a special lifestyle and worldview. The famous Hapsburg motto *Bella gerant alii, tu felix Austria nube* (Let others wage war: thou, happy Austria, marry) is transformed into *Alle mögen Kriege führen, du Österreich, backe!* (Let others wage war, you, Austria, bake) by the press. The concept of Austrian cuisine is a strictly regional one, and lexemes from the sphere of gastronomy constitute the group of Austriacisms which is presented in the press the most fully.

Certain foods and dishes have distinct national or regional peculiarities, and some foods have different names in different regions of Austria. For example, *Marille* is a counterpart of the German *Aprikose*. Apparently, *Marille* comes from the Italian *armellino*, which is based on the Latin designation of apricots, *armeniacum*, that means the

Armenian apple. The lexical unit *Marille* can be found only in Austria and South Tirol, and the use is practically limited by the state borders of Austria. In Germany, this fruit is always called *Aprikose*. The word *Powidl* is borrowed from the Czech *povidlo* and is used predominantly in the east of Austria to denote a thick prune spread. *Powidl* is traditionally used as a filling for sweet pastry *Germknödel* (yeast dough dumplings), *Buchteln* (sweet pastry made of yeast dough with filling), and *Powidltatschkerln* (dumplings filled with *powidl*). The expression *Das ist mir Powidl!* means *Das ist mir egal!* (I don't care). As an outcome of our study we found that from 302 Austriacisms from the *Duden. Österreichisches Deutsch* dictionary, about 30% are common in the newspaper articles. The analysed text corpus demonstrates that this vocabulary is clearly ethnically marked; it appeals to the native speakers' idea of this or that phenomenon of the national culture, whether intangible or material. In contrast to these more common terms, 127 units are rare or unobserved (frequency from 0 to 10) in the analysed newspaper articles.

The second group, the language of management and administration, belongs to the common Austrian vocabulary. It is used everywhere on the territory of Austria, and its formation is determined by historical, political, and social factors. This group also includes some terms belonging to the semantic field of politics and administration, e.g. *Bundesrat* (Federal Council) is *Parlament* (parliament) in Germany, *Obmann* is *Vorsitzender* (chairman), *Kundmachung – Bekanntmachung* (notice); *Ansuchen – Gesuch* (application); *Erlagschein – Zahlkarte* (payment card).

We distributed these lexical units into three groups: realia Austriacisms, which have no counterparts in the Standard German language, and which are usually translated applying a method of description; lexical Austriacisms that have their counterparts in Standard German; and semantic Austriacisms which can have two different meanings – Standard German and purely Austrian.

The third thematic group is the language of Austrian school education, and we analysed 82 units from this group. Some of the words from this block have certain meanings in the common German language beside a specific Austrian one. It is a group of semantic Austriacisms, and so they are barely relevant for the quantitative analysis, for example, the word “Professor” in the context of the entire German-speaking world represents the highest academic title or denotes a university professor: a teacher at a higher education institution. However, in Germany it can also refer to a secondary school teacher (“Studienrat”). In Austria, it still means a secondary school teacher. The word “Gegenstand” in Austria, besides its meanings of “small body, topic, or object”, also carries the meaning of “academic subject” (school subject). In our view, the students of German studies should pay special attention to semantic Austriacisms since being unacquainted with this group of words can lead to mistakes, and especially in translation.

The analysis of the use of Austriacisms found in the *Variantenwörterbuch des Deutschen* dictionary, compared to their Standard German counterparts, revealed that out of 1,483 codified Austriacisms only 453 lexical units are more or less frequently used in

newspapers, accounting for 30% of the total. Another peculiar fact is that the same 30% of the codified Austriacisms from the three most numerous groups are in active use.

Regardless of the prevalent trends of convergence, the vocabulary which reflects the Austrian culture, customs, and everyday life remains mostly unaffected. It is the linguistic peculiarities of Austriacisms that ensures their stability.

It is essential to recognize that the significance of Austriacisms does not lie in their mere existence, whether in terms of quantity or specific categories, but rather in how Austrians perceive them and their role as cultural elements. The adoption of the Austrian variant is not only an inherent aspect of the social fabric that has developed in Austria, but also a substantial component of the nation's culture. This variant plays a crucial role in fostering Austrian national identity, underscoring the importance of delving deeper into its communicative functions within the framework of modern German studies.

4 AUSTRIACISMS AND TEACHING

For the practical purpose of teaching we compiled a translation dictionary of Austriacisms. It is validated by the examples from various Austrian newspapers. Austriacisms were found in almost all sections of the newspapers, but they are the most common in those covering *society, economics, leisure, politics, education, and professional life*. The translation of Austriacisms depended on the lexical unit being a realia, like *Bundesheer* (Austrian armed forces), or whether it had an ethnocultural connotation, e.g. *Dirndl* (a women's folk dress from the German-speaking areas of the Alps), or if it was an Austrian counterpart to the Standard German lexeme, like *Billeteur* (usher). When studying Austrian German, it is possible to use the results of our research and choose the focal vocabulary based on the 30% of all the Austriacisms currently used in the press, and pay attention to those three thematic groups in which Austriacisms manifest themselves most frequently. It is also important to pay attention to the distribution of Austriacisms into the following two large groups: I. Lexical Austriacisms: the words limited in their use by the territory of Austria, e.g. *Bassena*, meaning the place by the entrance to an apartment block where it was possible to fetch water, or *Erdapfel* – potatoes; and II. Semantic Austriacisms: words with a different meaning in standard German, e.g. *Sessel* – an armchair, but a chair in Austria; *Kasten* – a box, but a wardrobe in Austria; *Bäckerei* – a bakery, but in Austria a pastry. It is not that these words have a totally different meaning in Austria, but rather the meanings of Austriacisms and their German counterparts are somehow connected by polysemantic relations, and sometimes Austriacisms have an additional meaning.

This group of words, i.e. semantic Austriacisms, deals with lexical equivalents which are not correlated to a foreign language concept, and are the so-called *false friends of a translator*. This group may include: 1) semantic homonyms, e.g. *Pfusch* which in Germany denotes work performed carelessly and is a colloquial variant for “illegal work”

in Austria, *Polster* is furniture upholstery and a cushion in Austria; and 2) lexical units which can have completely different prototypes: when we speak presumably about the same thing, but imagine absolutely different objects. For instance, the units that have totally different connotations belong to this group. This includes nationally specific abstract concepts, which can be explained by some specific factors of the surrounding world, history or religion which shape the national mentality, such as the polysemantic Austrian concepts *Schmäh* (gimmick) and *Gemütlichkeit* (coziness, quality time) which are among those terms which characterize the Austrian national sphere of concepts. These abstract concepts do not have adequate correlates in other languages.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The national variants of the German language acquire special significance when it comes to the methodology of German language teaching. The methodologists of German note that the idea of pluricentrism is generally accepted and, according to this, all the variants must be regarded as equal. However, despite this recognition, many textbooks and methodological guides for teaching German do not adequately incorporate these variants. An analysis of textbooks reveals that some manuals introduce certain lexemes from these variants as supplementary materials, incorporate them into lesson glossaries, or provide them in handouts. Upon examining various German language textbooks, it becomes evident that the incorporation of national variants is not uniform. Some textbooks only introduce these variants in the final lessons or as additional materials. For instance, the widely used textbook *Sicher! B2* briefly explores the linguistic diversity of the German language in its final lesson, titled “Languages and Regions”. However, it dedicates just one exercise to Austrian German, labelled “Misunderstandings”, where six Austriacisms are discussed: “die Eierspeis” (scrambled eggs), “der Bub” (boy), “angreifen” (attack), “der Paradeiser” (tomato), “die Marille” (apricot), and “der Topfen” (quark). Similarly, other textbooks in the *Sicher!* series also provide sporadic mentions of language variations. This pattern extends to textbooks from the *Menschen* series (Levels A1-B1).

The majority of educational materials for teaching German as a foreign language predominantly focus on Standard High German, without taking into account the various regional differences within the language. This is because Standard German is often viewed as the ideal form with the broadest communicative capabilities. However, this emphasis on Standard German can sometimes neglect the importance of receptive language skills.

In the context of teaching German to foreign learners, it is essential to acknowledge the existence of national variants and promote the concept of pluricentrism. This involves recognizing that there are multiple regional varieties of the language that hold equal significance. To enhance language learning, it is beneficial to raise awareness about these

national variants and incorporate them into the curriculum. This can involve integrating elements of Standard German with materials from Austrian sources, such as newspapers, and including listening exercises that feature typical Austrian vocabulary.

The differences in vocabulary between Austrian German and Standard German are particularly notable in areas related to Austrian social and public life. As a result, German can be considered a pluricentric language with three equivalent variants. These lexical distinctions, especially between Austrian German and Standard German, are substantial enough to potentially hinder comprehension and navigation in German-speaking regions for learners who are unaware of them.

Native speakers typically do not encounter difficulties in comprehending other variants of the language, but foreign learners, especially when in Austria, may face challenges. Translation tasks can also be problematic without a deep understanding of the linguistic nuances of each variant. Therefore, when teaching German as a foreign language, it is crucial to consider this variability factor. Effective language instruction should strive to closely mirror the linguistic and communicative realities of German-speaking countries, accounting for the unique features of each regional variant. The study of peculiarities of the Austrian variant of the German language must be included in the modules of sociolinguistics and dialectology (variantology).

Our experience at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv is as follows. In the Department of Germanic Philology and Translation, we have integrated the course “Varieties and Registers of the German Language” into the curriculum for undergraduate students majoring in German studies. As part of this course, students gain knowledge about German in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg, and Liechtenstein (following the DACH principle).

Master’s students in Intercultural German Studies have modules on varieties within courses on sociolinguistics and dialectology.

Good materials and teaching suggestions for these courses are provided by the programme “Kultur und Sprache”, which is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science, and Research of Austria and implemented by OeAD, the Agency for Education and Internationalization. The programme supports German language instructors in teaching the German language as well as a contemporary image of Austria, and it is based on the pluricentric approach and the DACH principle (<https://www.kulturundsprache.at/oer>). This means that teaching German in Austria, as well as Austrian culture, history, and the present, are essential components of German language instruction. The materials cover levels A1-C1 and address various topics related to life in Austria.

In conclusion, the inclusion of the Austrian national variant is a crucial aspect of teaching German as a pluricentric language. Understanding and incorporating the unique features of Austrian German enriches the language learning experience, enhances communication skills, and fosters a deeper appreciation of the linguistic diversity within the German-speaking world. By recognizing the significance of national variants like

Austrian German and integrating them into language instruction, educators can better equip learners to navigate the multifaceted German language landscape with confidence and proficiency.

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POVZETEK

METODOLOŠKI VIDIKI POUČEVANJA NEMŠČINE KOT PLURICENTRIČNEGA JEZIKA: VLOGA AVSTRIJSKE NEMŠČINE

Prispevek proučuje metodološke vidike poučevanja nemščine kot pluricentričnega jezika, s posebnim poudarkom na vlogi avstrijske različice. Teorija pluricentrizma zagovarja stališče, da v različnih nemško govorečih državah obstajajo enakovredne nacionalne različice nemščine, katerih raziskovanje je zelo pomembno, saj združuje področja jezikoslovja, etnolingvistike in kulturnih študij ter tako omogoča boljše razumevanje jezikovnih pojavov z antropocentričnega stališča. Pomemben vidik proučevanja nacionalnega jezika in njegovih različic je analiza narodovega svetovnega nazora in delovanja etnično zaznamovanega besedišča. Učbeniki za pouk nemščine kot tujega jezika pogosto ne upoštevajo pravil in značilnosti avstrijske nemščine, čeprav so razlike med nacionalnimi različicami nemščine prisotne na vseh jezikovnih ravneh.

Več raziskovalcev se je posvetilo proučevanju različic nemškega jezika, zlasti avstrijske nemščine, z vidika slovničnih, pragmatičnih in fonoloških posebnosti ter vloge v različnih slogih in okoliščinah. Med neraziskane pojave pa še vedno sodijo jezikovni procesi, ki vplivajo na besedišče v avstrijski nemščini, funkcionalna zmogljivost avstrijajizmov (izrazov, značilnih za avstrijsko nemščino) v primerjavi s standardnimi sopomenkami v visoki nemščini ter vpliv avstrijske jezikovne politike in medijev na jezikovne procese.

V raziskavi smo analizirali avstrijacizme, ki smo jih našli v slovarjih. Preverili smo njihovo rabo v avstrijskih časopisih in se pri tem osredotočili na njihove leksikalne in semantične prvine. Nato smo jih razvrstili v tri skupine: izključno avstrijski izrazi, semantični avstrijacizmi, ki imajo v Avstriji drugačen pomen kot drugje, ter leksikalni avstrijacizmi, ki v Avstriji nadomeščajo sopomenke iz drugih različic nemščine. V prispevku predstavljamo rezultate analize, pri čemer izpostavljamo tematska polja, ki so v avstrijski različici zelo izrazita; mednje sodita polji gastronomije in menedžmenta/upravljanja.

Razumevanje metodoloških vidikov poučevanja nemščine kot pluricentričnega jezika in upoštevanje avstrijske različice je za učitelje nemščine ključno. S prepoznavanjem jezikovnih posebnosti avstrijske nemščine in njihovim vključevanjem v jezikovna učna gradiva lahko pedagogi zagotovijo celovitejši in natančnejši prikaz jezika, kar omogoča učinkovito učenje jezika in razvoj medkulturnih kompetenc.

Ključne besede: avstrijska različica nemščine, avstrijacizmi, pluricentrični jezik, nemščina kot tuji jezik

ABSTRACT

METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF TEACHING GERMAN AS A PLURICENTRIC LANGUAGE: THE ROLE OF THE AUSTRIAN NATIONAL VARIANT

This scientific article explores the methodological aspects of teaching German as a pluricentric language, with a specific focus on the role of the Austrian national variant. Pluricentrism theory suggests that the German language is characterized by equal national variants present in German-speaking countries. Researching these national variants is crucial, as it combines linguistics with ethnolinguistics and cultural studies, providing a deeper understanding of language phenomena through an anthropocentric lens. One important aspect of studying a national language and its variants is examining the national worldview and functioning of ethnically marked vocabulary. While textbooks and manuals for teaching German as a foreign language often overlook the norms and standards of Austrian German, the existing differences between national varieties encompass all linguistic levels.

Several researchers have contributed to the study of German language variability, particularly the Austrian variant. They have examined grammatical, pragmatic, and phonological peculiarities, as well as the language's functions in various styles and contexts. However, certain issues remain unresolved, such as linguistic processes in the Austrian German vocabulary, the functional capacity of Austriacisms (Austrian-specific terms) compared to Standard High German counterparts, and the impact of Austrian language policy and media on linguistic processes.

The study employs a methodology that involves analysing Austriacisms found in dictionaries and verifying their usage in Austrian newspapers. The researchers explore the lexical and semantic

aspects of Austriacisms, categorizing them into three groups: Austrian realia, semantic Austriacisms with different meanings in Austria, and lexical Austriacisms used in Austria instead of German counterparts. The article presents the results of this analysis, highlighting thematic groups such as gastronomy and management/administration, which are prominent in the Austrian variant.

Understanding the methodological aspects of teaching German as a pluricentric language, specifically considering the Austrian national variant, is essential for language educators. By acknowledging and incorporating the linguistic peculiarities of Austrian German into language teaching materials, educators can provide a more comprehensive and accurate representation of the language, facilitating effective language learning and intercultural competence development.

Keywords: Austrian variant of German, Austriacisms, pluricentric language, German as a foreign language