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IN THE MARGINS: GERMAN LANGUAGE VARIETIES IN L2 GERMAN TEXTBOOKS

Abstract:
This study investigates how German as a second language (L2) textbooks construct the German language through images, layout, written and spoken language. Multimodal discourse analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) and critical discourse analysis (van Dijk, 1993) serve to uncover underlying ideologies and power relations in two L2 German textbook series: *studio d* and *DaF kompakt neu*.

Findings show the hidden curriculum reflecting patterns of marginalization and German hegemony: Although textbooks advertise themselves as introductions to life in German-speaking countries, Germany is featured as the default setting, whereas other German-speaking countries are often confined to chapters with special spotlight on them. The "German language" is understood as German Standard German, the existence of other German national standards downplayed, and languages other than German erased. Such patterns of German hegemony are more pronounced in the older textbook series, but not absent in the newer. Considering the clear efforts to broaden the definition of German according to recommendations to teach German as a pluricentric language, underlying ideologies in L2 German teaching need to be examined and discussed before they can be overcome. This paper will be of interest to scholars in applied linguistics as well as textbook authors and instructors.

Keywords: multimodal discourse analysis ◆ textbooks ◆ language ideology ◆ language learning ◆ German ◆ pluricentricity ◆ language variation

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Introduction

In this article, I investigate how task-based German as a second language (L2) textbooks construct the German language through images, layout, written and spoken texts. The Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach is based on communicative tasks based on real-world activities using authentic language in the L2 classroom (cf. Brandl, 2008, pp. 7-9). German is a pluricentric language with multiple national codified standards and regional varieties (cf. Ammon, 1995; Ammon et al. 2016; Clyne, 1992), and L2 German language textbooks therefore need to reflect linguistic realities in order to approximate authenticity (cf. de Cillia, 2006; Lam & O'Brien, 2014; van Kerckvoorde, 2012) to be in line with the textbooks' own aspirations to follow the TBLT approach. Several scholars from the field of German as a foreign/second language have examined whether L2 German textbooks follow and implement the pluricentric approach (e.g., Hägi, 2006; Jarząbek, 2013; Maijala, 2009). While these works revealed problematic general trends, their analysis typically relied on what is explicitly (not) said. However, textbooks are multimodal texts discursively constructing social reality, and as such, discourse analysis is an important tool to look beyond the surface of what is *said* to thoroughly examine what is *done* via language and images. With this study, I therefore aim to identify which and how language(s) and varieties are included in and taught by L2 German textbooks, using methods of multimodal discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis to examine the textbooks' portrayals of German language varieties, regions, speech communities, and speakers. This in-depth analysis of selected textbooks sheds light on power dynamics and ideologies tied to German standards and varieties, and provides a basis to identify potential gaps between language use in the world and in the textbooks, as well as in between pedagogical goals and their implementation. As a result, this study helps to uncover and challenge possible (re)productions of hegemonic and language ideologies, aiding educational content creators, instructors, and learners to bridge the gap between textbooks and the world, as well as contributing to the body of research regarding language standards and varieties (and attitudes towards them) in language education.

This paper addresses the following research questions:

> 1) What information do L2 German textbooks provide about the language they teach?
> 2) Which German language variety/varieties, including e.g., standard and non-standard, national and regional varieties as well as those spoken by L2 speakers, are represented in L2 German textbooks?
> 3) How are German language varieties, the regions in which they are spoken, and the people who speak them, portrayed in relation to each other?

Literature review

The L2 German context

The regions and countries in which a pluricentric language is spoken may be considered full centres if they have their own authorized standard codified in dictionaries and grammars, half centres if they do not have their own authorized dictionaries and grammars but the language has official status, or quarter centres if regionally specific features have emerged, but these are not codified in their own authorized dictionaries and grammars, and the language does not have official majority status (Ammon et al. 2016, p. xxxiv). The German language has three full centres, namely Austria, Germany, and the German-speaking part of Switzerland. (East) Belgium, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, and South Tyrol in Italy are half centres, with German also being Liechtenstein's sole official language. In addition, several quarter centres exist around the world, such as Rumania, Namibia, and parts of Mexico. I will refer to the national codified standards of German as Austrian Standard German (ASG), German Standard German (GSG), and Swiss Standard German (SSG), and the collective spoken language varieties as Austrian German, German German, and so on.

The German acronym DACH, less often DACHL, refers to Germany (D), Austria (A), Switzerland (CH), and Liechtenstein (L). It acknowledges German as a pluricentric language in teaching L2 German, and the aim to treat linguistic and regional differences equally (Bettermann, 2010, p. 41). The DACH/DACHL acronym and the reduction to countries in which German is the majority language reveals issues with this concept. The definition of German-speaking countries is not self-evident and instead socially and discursively constructed, as Shafer (2018) argued in her study of the concept of space and German-speaking countries in L2 German textbooks.

Interwoven with the question of space is that of authenticity. L2 German textbooks published in Germany generally follow the TBLT approach, and therefore aim to prepare learners for linguistic realities in German-speaking countries with authentic language, texts, and tasks. De Cillia (2006) discussed the pluricentric nature of German, the variational linguistic research, as well as speaker attitudes towards dialect, and argued that teaching German varieties would aid learners instead of being an undue burden for educators and learners. Lam & O'Brien (2014) examined the ability of L2 German learners in Western Canada to discriminate and understand regional varieties of German, as well as their attitudes toward them. They found that, while highly proficient learners were able to discriminate between dialects, comprehension of what was said was poor, regardless of proficiency. While acknowledging that course contents need to be tailored according to institutional restraints and target audiences, they recommended

exposing learners to non-standard varieties in order to improve comprehension (Lam & O'Brien, 2014, p. 162). Muhr (1996, 2000) and, in response, van Kerckvoorde (2012) suggested teaching a "general German", i.e. the parts of German German, Austrian German, and Swiss German that intersect and overlap, while instilling an awareness and knowledge of different national standards from the very beginning. However, there are arguments for the inclusion of non-standard varieties especially in light of the argument of authenticity. Abrams & Schiestl (2017) reported that in their study, L2 German learners in the US, including one Dutch, one Brazilian, two Chinese students, as well as three heritage speakers unanimously supported the inclusion of German non-standard varieties in the L2 German classroom. The reasons the participants cited included the belief that learning such non-standard varieties would lead to interacting more successfully in German-speaking countries, and improved understanding of their culture(s). Participants also reported particular attachment to different varieties, likely based on their individual backgrounds e.g. as heritage learners. Ruck (2020) pointed out that "[n]ational standard and regional non-standard varieties both fulfill important functions for their speaker's communicative realities" (p. 42) and that "[a] basic comprehension of speech in regional varieties enables learners to also participate in everyday interactions that are characterized by intimacy and informality" (p. 42).

Research on textbooks

Textbooks are not collections of objective facts, but socioculturally and politically produced (e.g., Macgilchrist 2017). The reproduction and reinforcement of cultural hegemonies in L2 German textbooks has been studied e.g., regarding race (Weber, 2017), and several studies on L2 German have critically examined German varities in textbooks: Hägi (2006) found that German German variants were often unmarked especially (but not exclusively) in publications from Germany, and variants were sometimes used without explanation or when a different variant would have been more appropriate based on the context. In addition, textbooks featured mistakes, a lack of clarity regarding terminology and concepts leading to overgeneralizations and confusion between, for example, SSG and Swiss dialect (Schwyzerdütsch). Hägi also examined the content and context of German-speaking regions and German speakers. She argued that although some touristic consideration may be appropriate in an L2 textbook in order to keep in mind learner motivation, efforts should go beyond a mere reproduction of the stereotypes (pp. 185-186). However, she also pointed out that some textbooks used stereotypes as a starting point for discussion (p. 190). Acknowledging the difficulty of the task, Hägi criticized the lack of authenticity for scenes and tasks implementing German varieties other than GSG. In an analysis of L2 German textbooks published in Finland, Maijala (2009) also found that the portrayal of German-speaking countries was often restricted to stereotypes and

clichés. Focusing on the linguistic aspects, Jarząbek (2013) analyzed L2 German textbooks published in Poland, and found the implementation of the DACHL concept was unsystematic, imprecise, and mostly focused on GSG. Shafer (2018) applied spatial theory to L2 German textbooks to investigate the construction of "German-speaking countries". She found that space was primarily understood as living places and tourist destinations embedded in task-based language pedagogy, and presented as objective facts that remain largely unchallenged.

The issue of language varieties and regional representation in L2 textbooks has been the topic of studies on other languages as well. In her study of L2 French textbooks used at US universities, Chapelle (2009) found French Canadian content in 15.3% of the analyzed textbook sections, 6.5% of the workbook sections, and 29.9% of the audio sections. She argues that Canadian French should play a larger role in textbooks due to geographical accessibility and proximity, but that the hidden curriculum of L2 French textbooks teaches a preference for France.

Discourse analysis and ideology

The in- or exclusion and portrayal of national codified standards, regional language varieties and their corresponding speech communities in textbooks are discursive expressions and reproductions of power dynamics and *ideologies*, i.e., systems of ideas shared by group members with internal and external practices that are used to coordinate social practices with the goals of the group in mind (van Dijk, 1998; 2006). This paper concerns itself primarily with *language ideologies* (e.g., Woolard & Shieffelin, 1994) which tie social relations and phenomena to language (Woolard, 2020). Such ideologies held by those with socioeconomic power may be expressed and acquired in educational material such as textbooks (van Dijk, 2011), not necessarily explicitly as part of the official curriculum, but implicitly, i.e., as the *hidden curriculum*. In order to uncover the hidden curriculum, it is by definition necessary to investigate beyond the surface of what is explicitly said, and instead examine how people do things with language. Discourse analysis, in particular critical discourse analysis (CDA) (van Dijk, 1993) is therefore an indispensable tool to uncover and challenge the manifestations of ideological structures and power relations through discourse in educational material. Multimodal texts "incorporate semiotic resources beyond verbal language" (Jancsary et al., 2016, p. 181), for example images, layout, music, written or spoken language. Textbooks are one example of such texts, and according to Macgilchrist (2017):

> Two signal strengths of critical discourse analyses of textbooks are, first, their insistence on a research aesthetic of 'smallness' and 'slowness' (cf. Silverman 1999). They pay close attention to how, inter alia, semantic, argumentation and lexicogrammatical

> patterns construct knowledges and address readers as particular student-stubjects. Second, they draw on textbook discourse to trouble core conceptual issues such as the politics of visibility, [...] or the apparent closure of (dominant) discourse. (p. 677)

The framework developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) is a descriptive grammar of (Western) visual design, and a comprehensive approach to multimodal texts with visual elements which therefore lends itself well to the analysis of textbooks.

Methodology

Using CDA (van Dijk, 1993) and multimodal discourse analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), as well as elements of linguistic analysis, I examined the manifestations of ideological structures and power relations between groups through discourse in this in-depth qualitative case study of two L2 German textbooks published in Germany.

The selected textbooks were published in Germany, and therefore from a place of cultural power, which is something to be mindful of in the analysis. In addition, they are in use all over the world, whereas use of US-published textbooks tends to be limited to North America. Both textbook series are task-based, communicative, and conceptualized according to the CEFR. The first series is Cornelsen's *studio d* A1-B1(Funk et al., 2005, 2006, 2007), first published in 2005 and an access point into the books from the time of Hägi's (2006) work. *Studio d* is also available as Swiss edition (which is localized e.g., by using images and mentions of the Swiss franc rather than the euro), and precedes the modernized series *Studio 21*, but is still available and in use today. The other series is Klett's *DaF kompakt neu* (Braun et al., 2016), relaunched after the original *DaF kompakt* series was overhauled. *DaF kompakt neu* presents itself as deliberately inclusive of regional varieties. As the name suggests, it is, indeed, compact. With just over 300 pages for the *DaF kompakt neu* A1-B1 single-book edition, *studio d* B1 alone is almost as thick with 255 pages. The concept of *DaF kompakt neu* is based on a condensed, no-frills approach with fewer images and a more minimalistic layout, compared to a more playful and colourful *studio d*. Both book series are marketed towards adults used to learning, who wish to learn contemporary German and may intend to physically interact with German-speaking countries e.g., for study or work. They are monolingually German and therefore most suited for classroom learning with an instructor, and not specifically designed for learners from any specific country. The adherence to the CEFR means an increased frequency of German varieties can be expected and tracked from A1 to B1, i.e., beginners to early intermediate. The upper end of the range was limited due to *DaF kompakt neu* not being available beyond the level B1.

No quantitative data regarding market shares, geographical distribution, etc. is publicly available. By the time of submission, neither publisher had provided such data upon request. The choice of textbooks based on the publication year and the textbooks' self-description therefore does not allow for a generalization of the L2 German textbook market. The publishers Cornelsen and Klett are both well-known in the L2 German field, in particular outside of North America, but other textbooks with both more and less dedication to reflecting linguistic realities in German-speaking countries exist. The selection criteria only serve to compare these particular samples of older and more recent material to compare and trace possible differences in language ideologies in these specific instances.

Data analysis approach

Research question 1: I investigated the textbooks' explicit and implicit self-descriptions conveyed by maps and other linguistic and visual information on the cover and in the introduction. I examined how the visual and textual elements in combination give learners and educators an initial sense of the object of instruction. This also served as a foundation of comparing what the books aim to achieve with what they actually do.

Research question 2: I conducted a linguistic analysis of both the written and spoken data, identifying national codified standards and regional varieties through phonology, lexis, and morphosyntax according to *Variantenwörterbuch des Deutschen* (Ammon et al., 2016), a dictionary of variants for German. Then, I analyzed how the books situated the scenes, actions, and characters explicitly or implicitly, through linguistic and non-linguistic information on page or on the accompanying audio CD. I did not take into consideration whether L2 German pronunciation on the audio CD was real or fake, as determining the difference reliably would not have been feasible. The term *roles* in the phonology section refers to the role of one character per audio track, i.e., if there was the same person and character speaking on two different tracks, that counted as two roles.

Research question 3: I identified, then analyzed the portrayal of specific locations or communities as well as language use and portrayal in different types of situations present in the book by multimodal means and narratives. Next, I identified themes and categorized the findings.

Findings and Discussion

Research question 1: What information do L2 German textbooks provide about the language they teach?

Due to the pluricentric nature of German, one might expect textbooks to specify "which German" they aim to teach. However, neither textbook series provides explicit information on language, standards, and varieties beyond "German" and either "German-speaking countries" or a limited list of German-speaking countries. *studio d* A1 says on its back cover: "*studio d* richtet sich an Erwachsene ohne Vorkenntnisse, die im In- und Ausland Deutsch lernen" (*studio d* aims to reach adults learning German domestically and abroad without prior knowledge). The book does not specify what it considers to be "domestic" or "abroad". The term "German" remains ambiguous in an introduction to learners: "In Start auf Deutsch erhalten Sie einen ersten Einblick in die deutsche Sprache und das Leben in den deutschsprachigen Ländern" (In Start in German, you gain a first impression of the German language and life in the German-speaking countries) (Funk et al., 2007, p. 3). Further down it continues: "Sie werden mit interessanten Themen und Texten in den Alltag der Menschen in den deutschsprachigen Ländern eingeführt und vergleichen ihn mit Ihren eigenen Lebenserfahrungen" (You will be introduced to the daily life of people in the German-speaking countries with interesting topics and texts, and will compare it to your own life experiences) (Funk et al., 2007, p. 3). In other words, the book does not reference a specific country.

Figure 1. *studio d* A1 map

(Funk et al., 2005, inside cover)

Figure 2. *studio d* B1 map

(Funk et al., 2007, inside cover)

Maps on the inside of the cover page supplement some of this information indirectly. The levels A1 and A2 feature a map titled "Germany, Austria, and Switzerland" (Figure 1) which shows

these three countries fully. Through colour and level of detail, Switzerland, Austria and Germany are set apart from their only partially shown neighbouring countries. Liechtenstein is portrayed in the same way as other neighbouring countries: In light beige without further detail, and its name abbreviated, rendering it irrelevant. The map in the B1 textbook (Figure 2) does not mention Austria, Switzerland and Germany explicitly, and depicts the EU and the Euro zone instead. German-speaking countries as previously defined (or according to any other possible definition) do not stand out among the other members of the EU. As a result, they appear conflated with and confined to the European Union. As Switzerland and Liechtenstein are not members of the European Union or the Euro zone, both are excluded.

DaF kompakt neu seems more explicit in its self-introduction. On the back cover, it advertises cultural lessons from DACHL. On the first pages, it says: "Sie wollen in Deutschland, Österreich, der deutschsprachigen Schweiz oder in Liechtenstein studieren? […] Dann ist *DaF kompakt neu* genau das richtige Lehrwerk für Sie" (You want to study in Germany, Austria, German-speaking Switzerland or in Liechtenstein? […] Then *DaF kompakt neu* is exactly the right textbook for you) (Braun et al., 2016, p. 3). However, the lack of further detail regarding the language as object of instruction unduly homogenizes the countries listed.

Figure 3. *DaF kompakt neu* map

(Braun et al., 2016, inside cover)

The map on the inside of the cover page (Figure 3) is titled *DACHL-Länder* (DACHL countries). Liechtenstein is included, in contrast to *studio d*. The map circumvented the issue of having too little space to write out the country's name by drawing an arrow pointing to its geographical location on the map, and writing out its name using Italy as empty space. The map

shows Germany in green, Switzerland in purple, Austria in yellow, but Liechtenstein in the same beige that is used for all other neighbouring countries, diminishing its relevance as it shares this salient visual feature with non-DACHL countries.

As Shafer (2018) pointed out, the concept "German-speaking countries" is not a self-evident fact, but socially and discursively constructed. Even though a majority in Liechtenstein speaks German and its sole official language is SSG, the country is only included in *DaF kompakt neu*. However, German is also one of the official languages of Belgium and Luxembourg (both half centres), a minority language in France, Italy (South Tyrol being a half centre as well), and several other countries. Due to the lasting effects of colonialism, that includes Namibia. A German-speaking diaspora can be found in several other countries outside of Europe, such as Canada and Brazil, in particular in Mennonite regions (e.g., Ammon et al., 2016). The portrayal of German-speaking countries according to the textbooks therefore seems reductionist, arbitrary, based on a fictionalized image of German-speaking countries, and without taking colonial history into consideration. While just referring to "German" and "German-speaking countries" should include all national codified standards and regional varieties in all German-speaking countries, in practice this phrasing may rely on popular and stereotypical knowledge: The failure to clearly define what is taught therefore risks to favour GSG and Germany by default, and to erase other German standards as well as other languages in German-speaking countries.

Research question 2: Which German language variety/varieties are represented in L2 German textbooks?

In response to this research question, I first looked at how national standards of German are represented, e.g., if Swiss and Austrian Standard German are mentioned and recognized as national standards equal to German Standard German. Next, I examined if and how different varieties of German were included by analyzing phonology, lexicon, morphosyntax, and spelling. Lastly, I investigated the in- or exclusion of languages other than German.

Neither textbook series provides clear and accurate information on different German standards and varieties. *studio d* does not address the topic of national standards at all. Only once in A1 and in A2 respectively, words and expressions used in Austria and Switzerland are indicated as such: In A1, a chapter includes greetings from different German regions and greetings, and in A2, a text about urban legends uses terms it labels Austrian and Swiss respectively (see also Figure 4). The textbook does not differentiate between regional varieties and national standards. *DaF kompakt neu* includes more regional varieties, and chapter 30 is dedicated to the German language. Despite featuring a lexicon entry on the German language that addresses

standardization and varieties, however, the textbook does not mention Swiss and Austrian codified standards. Another text about German varieties discusses the relationship between standard German and colloquial German in Switzerland and Austria, again omitting information on their national standards. The text addresses the diglossia of Switzerland and parts of Austria by claiming: "Im Gegensatz zur Schweiz und teilweise auch zu Österreich spricht in Deutschland ein großer Teil der Bevölkerung auch im privaten Bereich Standard" (In contrast to Switzerland and partially Austria as well, a large part of the population in Germany speaks standard in the private domain) (Braun et al., p. 250). By conflating standard language in all three countries, and further claiming the "standard language in Switzerland" included "Helvetisms" (p. 250)—by which they mean lexical items specific to Swiss German—this implies standard language means GSG, diminishing the cultural and political importance of SSG and ASG, subordinating them to GSG. ASG and SSG are portrayed as regional varieties, their status as standards denied. Beyond this chapter, German varieties are used to stress but not necessarily systematize differences. While this occurs more often in *DaF kompakt neu* since it includes far more regional varieties than *studio d*, the *studio d* B1 chapter on the Ruhr region exemplifies this pattern: One speaker's regional accent from the Ruhr region may have been used to lend credibility to the character, whose role is to be an expert on the history of soccer in the Ruhr region. The textbook positions him linguistically as a local person without systematically making students aware of the phonetic differences between Ruhr German and GSG. At the same time, the lexical items relevant to the region have since found their way into GSG, and not including items that differ from GSG serves to further downplay differences.

Both textbook series therefore fail to convey the significance of different national standards. Moreover, in doing so they also unduly elevate GSG over SSG and ASG, establishing a hegemonic relationship. This teaches learners that "German Standard German" and "German" can be used interchangeably, without any awareness of other national standards.

My analysis of the audio tracks revealed a similar pattern. I found that GSG and German German accents are most common. In *studio d* A1, learners hear only GSG. Characters that are introduced as L2 beginners speak GSG without a non-German accent, even pronounce their non-German names with a German accent. A2 includes three speakers with a Spanish, Russian, and Turkish accent respectively, speaking GSG, and two characters in B1 are spoken by people with an Argentinian and a French accent. This could be due to the popular belief that "foreign" accents would confuse learners or teach them "wrong" pronunciation.

The pronunciation exercises do not mention how pronunciation may differ across German-speaking regions and countries, and favour GSG and Northern German, such as the voiced and

voiceless pronunciation of plosives and fricatives which tend to be voiceless in Austria, Switzerland, and Southern Germany (Ammon et al., 2016, p. lxix). In *studio d* A1, chapter 5, the distinction of voiced and voiceless plosives is the point of the exercise. *DaF kompakt neu* does not include pronunciation exercises. The speakers almost exclusively use GSG, but with exceptions: Nine roles in A1 are spoken by SSG speakers. In A2, there are six SSG speaker roles, eight ASG speaker roles, one speaker with a slight Cologne accent, and one with a Munich accent. Three speakers speak the Cologne dialect strongly and deliberately hard to understand. Another example is a speaker from Stuttgart, whose only regional pronunciation feature was the word-initial production of the letters "ch" as /k/ instead of /ç/, typical for Southern Germany and Austria (Ammon et al., 2016, p. lxx). Like in *studio d*, even learners of German typically speak GSG without non-German accents. In B1, there is a section with exclusive focus on German varieties and no context for the sentences read and repeated in different varieties for contrast. An exercise prompts the learners to distinguish between speakers from DACHL countries, another from regions in Germany. This exercise constitutes a rare but still merely implicit acknowledgement of distinct national standards and the difference between national standards and regional varieties.

Overall, pronunciation exercises do not promote understanding and comprehension of the phonological differences between regional and national varieties of German. Such phonological differences are sometimes acknowledged but then through their portrayal or the lateness of their inclusion constructed as problems for learners. L2 features are inconsistent and rare, elevating L1 German as the ideal, and missing an opportunity to hone learners' comprehension of L2 pronunciations in German.

An easy, beginner-level way to foster awareness of regional language differences are greetings. Greetings and leave-taking expressions are indeed a salient regional lexico-pragmatic feature in both book series. In the pre-chapter at the beginning of *studio d* A1, a person uses a Southern German/Austrian greeting, which is neither identified as such nor explained. It is situated correctly in Southern Germany, but given how rare such instances are, learners may not be able to inductively form hypotheses about the use of this greeting. In an interim section following chapter 4, regional and international greetings are introduced. Formal GSG greetings and leave-takings are described as "neutral" and informal GSG greetings as "not as formal". The text adds that *Servus* (hello, informal) is common in Austria, *Grüezi* (hello, formal) and *Auf Wiederluege* (goodbye, formal) in Switzerland, and *Grüß Gott* (hello, formal) in Southern Germany, without mentioning its use in Austria. Meaning or formality of these phrases are left unexplained. The textbook further says that Northern German people say *Moin Moin* instead of *Guten Tag* (hello, formal). Equating this regional greeting with a corresponding GSG greeting makes this the only

example with any information regarding its formality, even if implicitly. Labelling formal GSG greetings as neutral, i.e. unmarked, is doubly incorrect: A formal greeting is context-sensitive by definition and would be inappropriate to use with friends or family unless the speaker is ironic or sarcastic. Furthermore, this greeting may be marked in other German-speaking countries or regions. In *DaF kompakt neu*, regionally specific greetings are mostly embedded in chapters with focus on these particular regions. For example, Swiss greetings occur in chapter 8, taking place in Bern. In the same chapter, there is additional information on leave-takings in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. The order in the book is determined by the DACH acronym. Chapter 14 is situated in Munich, and the title "Griasdi in München" (Hello [in Bavarian, informal] in Munich) mirrors the title of chapter 8, "Grüezi in der Schweiz" (Hello [in Swiss German, formal] in Switzerland).

Figure 4. *studio d* A2: Urban legends

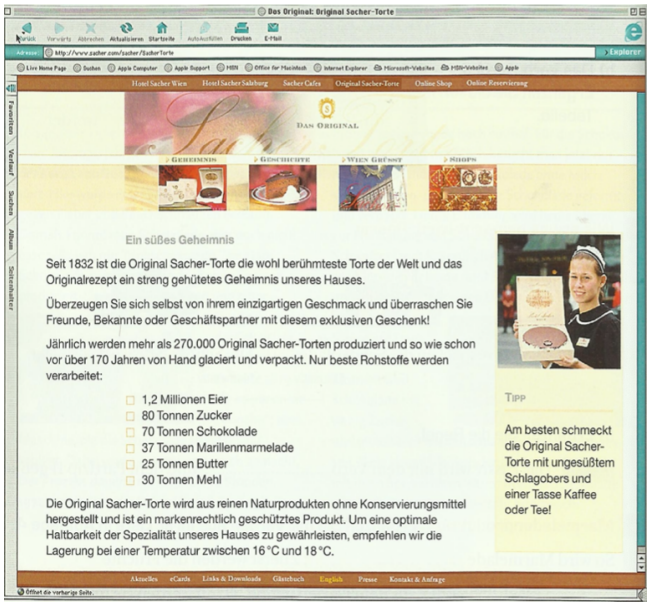
SKIFAHRER RAMMTE PENSIONISTIN IM STIEGENHAUS

Eine Party bei Studenten. Das Geburtstagskind hat von den Eltern eine Skiausrüstung bekommen. Um Mitternacht kocht die Stimmung und die Gäste haben die Idee, Frank soll die neuen Skier im Stiegenhaus ausprobieren. Es ist ein altes Haus mit schönen Holzstiegen. Oben klappt es gut und alle klatschen. Fast unten passiert es: Die Pensionistin Clara F. ist auf dem Weg in ihre Wohnung, als der Skifahrer sie rammt. Die alte Dame muss ins Spital. Drei Tage später wollen die Studenten sie mit einem Strauß Blumen besuchen und sich noch einmal entschuldigen, aber sie ist nicht mehr da. Die Krankenschwester erzählt: Der Arzt hat am nächsten Morgen gefragt, wie das denn passiert ist, und die Dame hat erzählt, dass es ein Unfall mit einem Skifahrer im Stiegenhaus war. Da hat er sie in die psychiatrische Abteilung bringen lassen.

Pensionistin (A): Rentnerin, Stiegenhaus (A): Treppenhaus, Spital (A, CH): Krankenhaus

(Funk et al., 2006, p. 110)

Figure 5. *studio d* A2: Austrian cake



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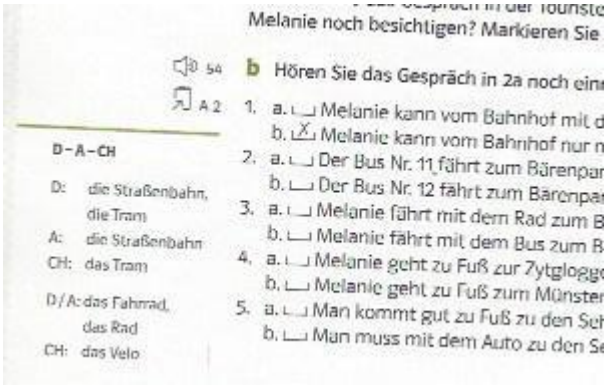
(Funk et al., 2006, p. 198)

In *studio d*, regional lexical items apart from greetings appear in a total of three separate situations across A1-B1. The textbook presents new vocabulary through picture rows with corresponding words, vocabulary boxes or footnotes in texts. An A2 text about urban legends (Figure 4) uses terms that are repeated below the article text as footnotes and labelled *(A)* or *(A, CH)* to mark them as Austrian or Swiss. The GSG equivalent follows as "translation". As a result, Austrian and Swiss German are acknowledged, but GSG remains the default. In addition, the terms *Pensionistin* (retiree, female) and *Stiegenhaus* (stairwell) are not only common in

Austria, but Southern Germany as well, and *Rentnerin* (retiree, female) is also used in Switzerland (cf. Ammon et al., 2016). Another example illustrates the conflation of Austrian and German German: An educational text about an Austrian cake is supplemented by a box labelled *Tipp* (tip, hint, here: recommendation) which advises how to best enjoy this cake with whipped cream (Figure 5). The term *Schlagobers* for whipped cream is (East) Austrian, but this is not explained or explicitly pointed out. Again, the context is appropriate but the learner is left with little help to understand this. The only other example of regional lexical items can be found in B1 in a chapter about the Ruhr region and its history of heavy industry: Words like *Kumpel* (friend, historically someone working in a mine), and *malochen* (to work, from Hebrew) have originated in the region and are tied to immigration and mining, but have since spread far beyond. While focussing on common ground may provide first access to the region and its language, the textbook does not teach the difference between varieties.

Figure 6. *DaF kompakt neu*: Vocabulary in margins

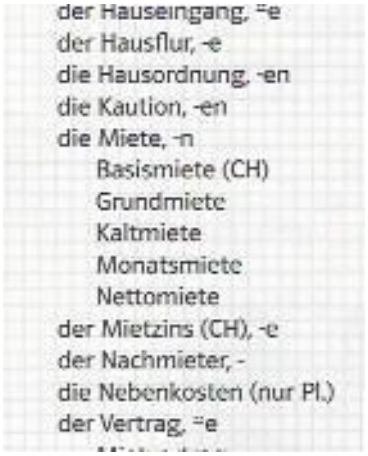


(Braun et al., 2016, p. 72)

Figure 7. *DaF kompakt neu*: Vocabulary list 1

(Braun et al., 2016, p. 78)

Figure 8. *DaF kompakt neu*: Vocabulary list 2


der Hauseingang, ¨-e
der Hausflur, -e
die Hausordnung, -en
die Kaution, -en
die Miete, -n
Basismiete (CH)
Grundmiete
Kaltmiete
Monatsmiete
Nettomiete
der Mietzins (CH), -e
der Nachmieter, -
die Nebenkosten (nur Pl.)
der Vertrag, ¨-e

(Braun et al., 2016, p. 94)

DaF kompakt neu features vocabulary lists with about 150-200 items each at the end of every chapter. Words that differ in ASG, GSG, and SSG are listed alphabetically on the vocabulary lists and labelled by country (Figure 6). From chapter 10 onward, the vocabulary lists only label words that are not GSG (Figure 7): Out of the 178 words on this chapter's list, six are explicitly labelled as Swiss, whereas the German German words referring to the same thing are not. This renders GSG as the default and makes everything else marked and therefore a deviation. Regional lexical items are typically prompted by regionally specific chapters which serve to situate the language. One typical example is chapter 8, taking place in Bern (Figure 8): In the audio text with a German and a Swiss speaker, different words for tram are used: *Tram* (tram) is common in Switzerland, but also Austria and north-east Berlin. Information in the margins indicates that *Tram* is used in Germany and Switzerland, and *Straßenbahn* in Austria and Germany, whereas the vocabulary list only indicates Swiss and German usage. Additionally, the German speaker in the audio text uses a GSG word for bicycle (*Fahrrad*), and the Swiss speaker uses the SSG term (*Velo*), illustrating that the word use depends not on context, but speaker identity. The margins again supplement information on the Austrian, Swiss, and German words. Chapter 10 explains in the margins that in Switzerland (listed first, labelled *CH*), the word for rent is *Mietzins*, whereas in Germany (listed second, labelled *D*) it is *Miete*. This exemplifies a noticeable effort not only to situate language, but also to make learners aware of varieties. While this is generally laudable, and in line with the textbook's own goals, the still overall low number of such regionally specific settings especially in countries other than Germany puts these efforts at risk of tokenizing and confining German varieties only to chapters specifically dealing with particular regions. Lastly, not all such chapters even include non-GSG

vocabulary: Chapter 15 takes place in Vienna, but does not include any specifically Austrian German words.

The inclusion of non-GSG lexicon is therefore mostly lacking in *studio d*, whereas *DaF kompakt neu* makes a noticeable if inconsistent effort. Furthermore, *studio d* and (due to the overall lack of such varieties in *studio d*) moreso *DaF kompakt neu* tend to present information on regional varieties, in particular the lexicon in the margins. This presentation comes, for example, in the shape of additional short vocabulary notes of typically one to three items, or explanations of regional differences. While there are certainly important bits of information likewise found in the margins, by definition and the rules of layout, the smaller font size and location removes the information from the focus, rendering it less relevant—a literal marginalization.

Less salient than the lexicon are morphosyntactic features, and in the following section, I show a continuation of the previously discussed pattern that lacks a systematic and consistent approach to different language varieties. In *studio d*, there is no explicit mention of regionally different morphosyntactic elements. While the expression *auf Schalke gehen* is syntactically rather than lexically typical for the Ruhr region and means going to watch a FC Schalke 04 (a soccer club from the Ruhr region) game in their stadium, it is presented as a vocabulary item. By teaching the phrase as a chunk instead of specifying the syntactic feature, the textbook glosses over non-standard syntax. *DaF kompakt neu* is more inclusive: For example, chapter 8 mentions a different auxiliary verb used in GSG on the one hand, Southern Germany and ASG on the other to form the past tense of *sitzen* (to sit*)*. Different auxiliary verbs and genders do not occur in the main body of the texts and exercises. The authors may have tried to avoid confusing learners, but morphosyntactic differences do not make it past curious but ultimately irrelevant tidbits of information. Furthermore, differences and overlaps between standard and regional varieties are neglected.

While spelling conventions largely overlap across the different national standards of German, some differences of spelling norms and writing conventions do exist. Writing emails and formatting them according to accepted conventions is an important skill commonly taught by L2 textbooks, and making learners aware of differences between the countries the textbook aims to cover is therefore important. Email punctuation and capitalization conventions are among the differences between SSG and other German standards. While in GSG and ASG, the greeting line ends with a comma, and the next line is not capitalized, the greeting line in an SSG email ends without punctuation, and the next line is capitalized. Neither textbook series mentions this difference, favouring the GSG/ASG convention.

Another salient feature of SSG orthography is the use of *ss* where GSG and ASG would use the letter *ß*. This spelling difference is pointed out e.g., in section C in chapter 8 of *DaF kompakt neu*, and implicitly in chapter 15, both times in the margins. In a section focused on Austria, the German (D) spelling of *ski* is contrasted with the Austrian spelling, with GSG preceding ASG, and yet again in the margins. As with morphosyntactic features, differences are pointed out but do not have relevance beyond this list.

Lastly, as the textbooks aim to teach the language in the German-speaking countries, at least a mention of languages other than (spoken) German might be expected. The official languages of Switzerland are German, French, Italian, and Romansh. German Swiss Sign Language is a minority language. However, while the official languages of Switzerland are sometimes mentioned in passing, e.g., in chapter 1 in *DaF kompakt neu*, other languages in German-speaking countries are not mentioned by either textbook series. Such minority languages in DACHL include: Danish, North Frisian, Sater Frisian, Romani, Lower and Upper Sorbian, Lower German, and German Sign Language in Germany, Burgenland Croatian, Hungarian, Slovenian, Czech, Slovakian, Romani, and Austrian Sign Language in Austria. Regionally specific chapters could have mentioned the existence, status, and relevance of these languages, and a section on a German movie about the hearing daughter of Deaf parents in *studio d* could have been an opportunity to include the sign languages used in different German-speaking countries. Turkish or Arabic, for example, could also have played a role in the German context due to immigration. Excluding such speaker communities from *Landeskunde* sections, i.e., information on countries and people, means that German-speaking countries are portrayed as homogenous and monolingual. This disregards the linguistic reality, but reinforces the common perception of monolingual German society (e.g., Davis, 2012.; Ellis et al., 2011).

In sum, several varieties of German as well as L2 German pronunciations make largely inconsistent appearances in both textbooks, and although *DaF kompakt neu* makes a more conscious effort to include regional varieties, German Standard German dominates explicitly and implicitly. In the next section, I investigate the relationship the textbooks construct between German and non-German varieties further.

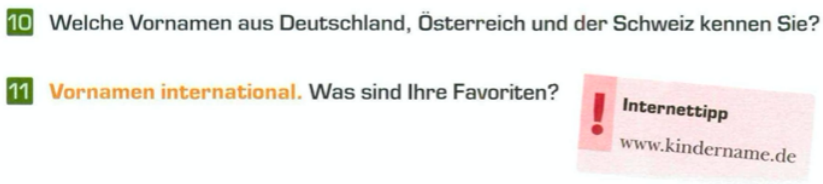
Research question 3: How are German language varieties, the regions in which they are spoken, and the people who speak them, portrayed in relation to each other?

To answer my first research question, I identified the textbooks' own aims and scopes. Then, I analyzed the actual language used. Finally, in order to understand the power dynamics reproduced, an analysis of the relationships between language, regions, and speakers is necessary.

Figure 9. *DaF kompakt neu*: Hierarchies through line breaks

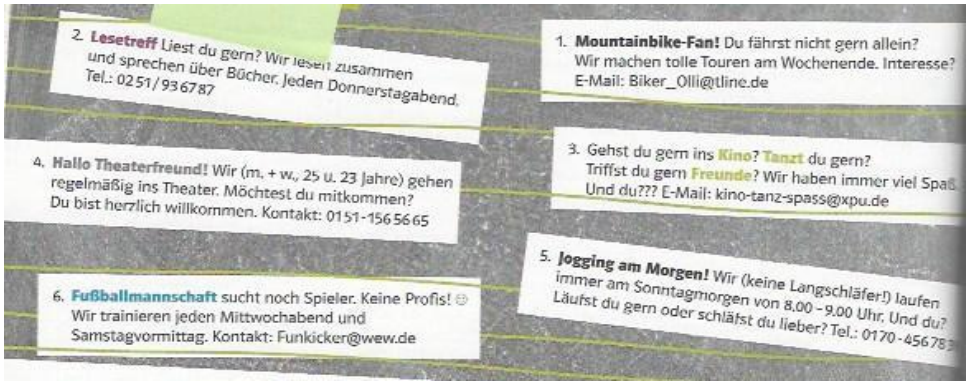
(Braun et al., 2016, p. 185)

Figure 10. *studio d* A1: Details situating scenes



(Funk et al., 2005, p. 13)

Figure 11. *DaF kompakt neu*: Details situating scenes



(Braun et al. 2016, p. 48)

Figure 12. *studio d* A1: Currency

(Funk et al., 2016, p. 23)

Representation needs to be considered in the overall book structure down to individual elements. Countries are multimodally represented through images such as photos of landmarks, products, maps, and symbols. People whose origins and locations are explicitly identified serve as representatives of the country. Written texts identify countries through explicit or implicit references. Both textbook series spotlight chapters on specific regions. Spotlight here refers to chapters that specifically and deliberately introduce a country or city.

In *studio d*, these spotlight chapters are on Leipzig and Berlin in A1, Weimar in A2, the Ruhr region in B1, all located in Germany. Switzerland and Austria are typically only mentioned in conjunction with Germany or other countries, not individually. Scenes of daily life almost exclusively take place in Germany: The school system of Germany is illustrated but does not once offer information on the grading system in Switzerland or the high school diploma in Austria, both different from the German system. The book does not depict dishes as "typically German" but instead uses a more fine-grained approach by specifying the regional origin. Swiss and Austrian dishes are usually only identified as "typically Swiss" or "Austrian", not from specific Swiss or Austrian regions. For example, in a text about internationally renowned cakes in A2 chapter 12, *Rüblitorte* (carrot cake from the northern canton of Aargau in Switzerland) or the Viennese *Sachertorte* (a type of chocolate cake) are only identified by their country of origin in chapter 12. In the same text, the regional origin of *Schwarzwälder Kirschtorte* (Black

Forest cake) from Baden-Württemberg in Germany is specified. This again homogenizes Austria and Switzerland, and the lack of detailed information removes them from the centre of focus.

DaF kompakt neu also features spotlight chapters on specific regions, e.g., chapter 11 in A2 on Cologne. Other chapters clearly ground the chapter plot in a city, region or country, without being spotlight chapters for the place. Both spotlights (five out of eight) and localizations (four out of six) are predominantly situated in Germany. In two additional cases, the chapter was about one specific aspect of life in Germany, i.e., studying in Germany and politics in Germany respectively. Chapters generally revolve around the situation in Germany outside of these special spotlight chapters as well. Like in *studio d*, chapters on the school system, seeing a doctor, getting a driver's license, etc. in *DaF kompakt neu* are typically limited to information in Germany with occasional additional information on other countries placed in the margins or separated visually e.g., through line breaks (Figure 9). This sets Germany both apart from and on top of the other countries spatially, establishing its importance over the others.

Germany appears to be a contextualizing cue in *studio d*; other German-speaking countries rarely stand alone and instead are mentioned together with Germany if they are mentioned at all. Only three images unmistakably depict Switzerland (not including photos of generic scenes that are in the text identified as Swiss, or Swiss delicacies without context), compared to eight for Austria and 114 for Germany. *DaF kompakt neu* explicitly aims to teach learners about life and language in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein, but Germany is still heavily overrepresented. Even details like .de endings in URLs, physical and email addresses situate a scene, and do so predominantly in Germany.

This pattern of using German examples to illustrate situations not directly tied to a location is alleviated in *DaF kompakt neu* somewhat by the more frequent spotlight chapters situated in specific regions. The effort to include other German-speaking countries beyond particular spotlight chapters is especially visible in at least two chapters: A chapter in A1 pairs the topic of apartment hunting with a spotlight on Zürich. Another chapter on volunteering happens to be located in Switzerland in B1, and here, a volunteer organization is introduced with both its German and Swiss url. The farms' contact email addresses are Swiss, and several towns in Switzerland are mentioned as the farm's locations. Neither apartment hunting nor volunteering are inherently tied to the Swiss context, breaking the pattern of using locations outside of Germany only when the topic makes it relevant.

Beyond these two chapters, however, *DaF kompakt neu* defaults to Germany through currencies, word choices, urls and phone numbers, and so on, much like *studio d*. Sometimes,

this is quite subtle: Figure 11, for example, shows German email addresses and area codes in phone numbers, 0251 being the area code for Münster in Germany. The currency used and mentioned in *studio d* is consistently the Euro, a currency shared by Austria and Germany, but not Liechtenstein and Switzerland. A special section on the Euro in A1 (Figure 12) is divided into two parts: The first shows Euro bills and coins. A short text to the right provides information on which countries (sorted alphabetically) and how many people are using the Euro. The exercise explains that the bills look the same in all countries, but the coins are imprinted with national symbols of all member states on the back of the coins. The coins that illustrate this text are all from Germany. The second part of the section shows an Austrian coin as one of several European coins. Six coins are depicted, with choices listed from Austria, Germany, Greece, Spain, Ireland, and Italy. Austria is already solved; the learner then has to guess where the other coins are from. These pieces of information are more complete and thorough in *DaF kompakt neu*, which does refer to the Swiss franc used by Switzerland and Liechtenstein—although the latter is not mentioned in the book.

Figure 13. *DaF kompakt neu*: Cologne and beer culture

(Braun et al., 2016, p. 100)

Inaccuracies or incomplete information can be observed on several levels, and typically afflict the varieties and regions with less cultural power. A transnationally observed festival from the Alps regions celebrating the transfer of cattle from the mountain meadows to the valley is identified by its Bavarian term only (*Almabtrieb*), without mentioning e.g. the Swiss names (*Alpabzug, Alpabfahrt*). Chapter 11 takes place in Cologne and features the Cologne dialect. The photo (Figure 13) accompanying the audio text about friends drinking *Kölsch* (beer from Cologne) does not, in fact, show Kölsch. Kölsch is always served in a narrow and straight cylindrical glass. The beer pictured is served in a glass with a bowl and a stem, typically

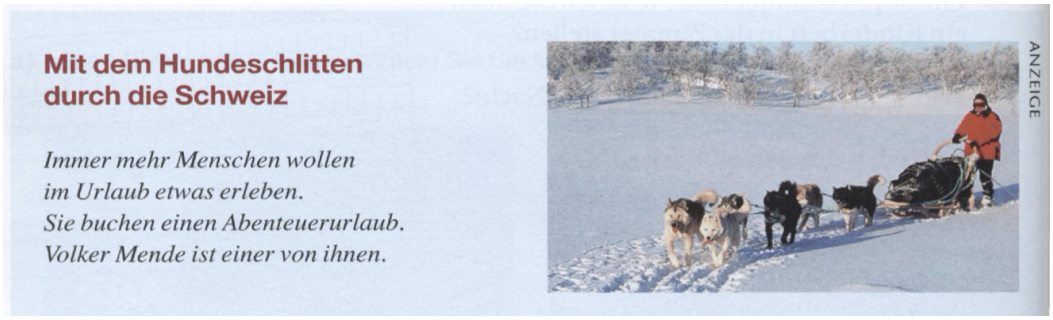
reserved for pilsner. Considering the importance of German beer culture (and rivalry), in addition to the audio text specifically stating that they are drinking Kölsch and even referencing the traditional local beer culture in their jokes, this inaccuracy is a cultural faux pas.

The incorrect or incomplete information, and a lack of specific information on countries other than Germany and GSG could imply that these other countries are not different at all, that information on Germany is the same as information on German-speaking countries. If textbooks fail to provide information on these cultural aspects, how are learners to know when information is universal for German-speaking countries or specific? Hägi (2006) raised this point in her previous work, and problematic patterns persist to this day despite some noticeable effort to be more inclusive.

Figure 14. *studio d* B1: National caricatures

(Funk et al., 2007, p. 178)

Figure 15. *studio d* B1: Winter sports as national stereotype



(Funk et al., 2006, p. 50)

The blatant national and regional stereotypes, even caricatures that Hägi (2006) criticized, seem to have all but disappeared. The only national caricature appeared in *studio d* B1 (Figure 14), depicting Germany as a stocky blond man in traditional Bavarian clothing, holding a white

sausage, next to him a *Brezn* (Bavarian soft pretzel), and mustard, all Bavarian symbols. He is kneeling in front of a blue wooden fence with a star-shaped hole in it. The background on the other side is yellow, and the fence or rather the connection between via the star-shaped hole thus represents the EU. From the other side, a man with dark hair, nonspecific light clothes, offers a bottle with a red liquid, and a wine glass to the Bavarian/German man. The label on the bottle shows the Italian flag. The stereotypes piled onto the Bavarian man are far more explicit and numerous than in the caricature of the Italian man who seems quite bland in comparison. Bavaria often represents Germany in other countries, less frequently in Germany. This caricature might therefore cater to non-Germans. It is the only one found in this series. That does not mean stereotypes are absent: Austria and Switzerland in *studio d* often serve as vacation destinations especially for Germans, related to mountains and winter sport (see Figure 15). The books advertise German holiday destinations, but not specifically for Austrians, thereby focusing on the German perspective while othering Austrians. This pattern cannot be observed in *DaF kompakt neu* to this extent. While the attraction of Austria from a winter sports and tourism perspective does come up, and there are examples of Germans moving or travelling to e.g., Austria, the reverse occurs as well. Some chapters do not include Germany or Germans at all. For example, chapter 10 is situated entirely in Switzerland, and features Swiss people moving from Geneva to Zürich, using SSG vocabulary for city districts, rent, and furniture. Overall, this series still contains the tourism element, but manages to move beyond this reductionist view and stereotypization, in line with Hägi's (2006) recommendation.

The portrayal of speakers is meaningful as well. In both *studio d* and *DaF kompakt neu*, the inclusion of speakers of non-GSG varieties is deliberate and their language a central part of how they are positioned, often in chapters that explore regional culture and language thematically: In an audio file in *studio d*, a speaker who was introduced as expert on the history of soccer in the Ruhr region speaks with a local accent. No one outside this chapter does so, adding an element of exoticization and instrumentalization. An example from *DaF kompakt* is an Austrian character who moved to Cologne and is discouraged by his new friends' use of the Cologne dialect, purposefully used to exclude him. The new friends then translate for him, and he later says that he is starting to learn some of the Cologne dialect. While learners of German may find themselves in a similar situation, this seems like a missed opportunity. This chapter could have been about the sense of pride and identity people in Cologne derive from their language, but instead it is shown in a negative light. Furthermore, if the intention was to offer a situation that learners might relate to, teaching them strategies to cope with a linguistically difficult situation or maintaining motivation in such circumstances would not have gone amiss.

The last chapter in the *DaF kompakt neu* explores language differences in the German-speaking countries, raises awareness of the German varieties, and, although it is not focused on comprehension, lets learners differentiate and identify them. Several issues are noticeable here. Liechtenstein is practically erased from *studio d*, but even *DaF kompakt neu* refers to its language only as German, diminishing the differences between German German and German in Liechtenstein. Especially as a small country, Liechtenstein does not seem to have the cultural and economic weight to be included. Alarmingly, the chapter omits information on the codified standard language of Austria and Switzerland and suggests they are using the same standard as dictated by Germany, thereby reproducing a hegemonic idea of the role of Germany and GSG in the German-speaking countries in the hidden curriculum.

Standard German means GSG, and ASG and SSG do not exist as codified national standards, merely as regional varieties that happen to extend beyond the borders of Germany. Instead of being taught systematically and equitably along with GSG, their features can be supplemented with notes and in margins. This placement of information on countries and language in Austria, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein in the margins frames it as additional and not essential, i.e. as a side note merely adding to the content in the body on the page that defaults to Germany and GSG. The lack of systematic information on countries other than Germany while only sporadically labelling specifically German language and culture as German in the beginning reveals a similar bias as *studio d*. Countries other than Germany and varieties outside of GSG are thereby marginalized.

Conclusion

Both textbook series implicitly claim a broad pluricentric approach to German, especially *DaF kompakt neu*. However, by using GSG practically exclusively, omitting information regarding the difference between codified standards and dialects, and focusing on the touristic perspective on Austria and Switzerland, *studio d* effectively constructs GSG as "German", and subordinates varieties of supposedly equal status, such as Austrian and Swiss Standard German. *DaF kompakt neu* makes noticeable efforts to include German varieties and information on Austria, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein, but GSG remains predominant, and regional varieties are largely irrelevant, confined to notes in the margins.

The construction of German-speaking countries by both textbook series is problematic and could instead be expanded to explore the German language elsewhere. By blurring the lines between different national standards, GSG is in practice the only standard language considered, reflecting ideologies in German and Austrian Studies as practiced in particular in Germany and Austria, reproducing German hegemony, and thus shaping the hidden curriculum of the

textbooks. This "one size fits all" approach elevates GSG as an ideal for language learners, and delegitimizes codified standards of autonomous countries, contributing to Germany's hegemony among the German-speaking countries and therefore preventing equal relationships.

In addition to the delegitimization of national standards, regional varieties suffer as well. As speakers of dialects e.g., in Germany are subject to discrimination such as lower pay (Grogger et al., 2020), this further exclusion contributes to the issue of inequality. While some may argue that this discrimination is a reason to exclude regional non-standard varieties, they are still part of the linguistic reality that learners are faced with when participate in daily life in German-speaking countries, and therefore need to be systematically addressed. Excluding regional varieties further marginalizes their speakers and takes away autonomy from learners.

German-speaking countries are furthermore portrayed as *only* German-speaking countries. Furthermore, the textbooks reflect Germany's monolingual self-perception (Ellis et al., 2011) by largely erasing other languages spoken in the so-called German-speaking countries. Therefore, actual linguistic diversity is denied instead of promoted. By excluding linguistic minorities such as the Sorbian people or immigrant communities from textbooks that explicitly claim to teach learners about language and people in German-speaking countries, it is implied that linguistic and ethnic minorities are less German, thereby also contributing to their marginalization.

A decolonial approach to German Studies needs to take the hegemonic portrayal and treatment of languages and their speakers as described above into account, as discrimination based on language has always been a tool of oppression. Efforts to decolonize the German curriculum and to critically examine how we define German are not new, although particularly emerging from the US and Canada (cf. Criser & Knott, 2019; Malakaj, 2019), organized in scholarly initiatives such as Diversity, Decolonization, and the German Curriculum (DDGC). It is therefore not surprising, perhaps, that textbooks attempting to challenge oppressive patterns are produced in or for North America. The two German publications I examined do seem to aim for an inclusive approach to the German language, at least according to their own self-descriptions. My analysis shows that underlying ideologies permeate both texts despite these goals, and indicates a need to reflect and challenge these ideologies.

A pluricentric language such as German requires explicit information for both learners and instructors, and a more systematic approach to different national standards, regional varieties, and the regions they correspond to. Especially given the differences in prestige and attitudes regarding standard and non-standard language, textbooks may want to more clearly address the difference. Proficiency in the standard language(s) is without question important for learner

success in the host culture, but authentic communication in daily life also often requires some understanding of non-standard varieties. Furthermore, the definition of German-speaking countries is not a given fact, but actively constructed. Preparing learners for life and language in the German-speaking countries does not mean including everything at the same time, but to enable them to make autonomous choices based on their needs and interests, and that requires transparency, awareness, explicit information, and strategies.

Limitations and outlook

The textbook series I studied here were both published in Germany to examine a German perspective. One of them, *studio d*, indeed had a specifically Swiss localized edition which was not considered for this paper. Due to its age, it might have decreased relevance today, but future research might want to continue applying discourse analysis to textbooks published in other countries, including e.g., the USA. In addition, while textbooks enjoy institutional authority, and particularly L2 German books published in Germany are often specifically designed to minimize lesson planning, textbooks are still tools and not intended to dictate lesson plans. It is therefore also important to investigate what is actually taught in courses, e.g., if and how L2 German instructors support or challenge the textbook content, and how instructors and learners understand and construct the German language, in line with the recommendation of Smith and Sheyholislami (2022) to triangulate findings from textbook discourse analysis.

Future L2 German textbooks might want to reconsider how to implement the DACHL approach or even question and expand it. Minority language communities are part of German-speaking countries, and learners should not only find out about them by random chance. I join Ruck (2022) in recommending the inclusion of regional varieties in the L2 German curriculum, and doing so early. Of course, standard language is important for academic and professional success, but that surely cannot be the only measure of the overall success of L2 acquisition. Furthermore, regional varieties are not exclusively confined to informal contexts, and enabling learners to do well in academic or professional settings may well require awareness and comprehension of regional varieties.

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