Critical Multilingualism Studies
an interdisciplinary journal

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE: NATIONAL STANDARDS – LOCAL VARIETIES

Language stands at the core of L2 studies, that is, the study of additional, second, or so-called "foreign" languages. Despite this central role – or perhaps precisely because of it –, what is meant by language is often taken for granted among L2 educators and researchers: it is typically associated with a codified standard variety; different manifestations of a language are traditionally seen as a linguistic and/or, at best, pragmatic question, dividing a language into various registers and modes in an array of formal or informal contexts of language use. With that said, instructors and learners of L2s often have clear ideas and expectations of where a language ought to be located geographically and how it ought to look and what it should sound like in different contexts of communication. Specifically, language in L2 studies is often equated with a nation and, more specifically, a national standard language, that is, a national territorially bound prescriptive system with clear norms for what is "right" and "wrong", which can be looked up in grammar books and dictionaries. For L2 pedagogy as the field that studies how languages are taught and learned, these norms have been crucial as a way to reduce the complexity and dynamics of a language into manageable, straight-forward pieces that learners can realistically process and that instructors can reliably assess. This approach, though, bears a number of challenges and risks. Reductions of complexity may produce overly simplistic, homogenizing, and likely distorted representations of a language as well as of language users. Moreover, linguistic norms are anything but objective; rather, they are human made and

Ruck, Julia, & Naomi Shafer. "Introduction to the Special Issue: National Standards – Local Varieties." *Critical Multilingualism Studies* 8:1 (2020): pp. 1–16. ISSN 2325–2871.

therefore reflective of human social systems and their intricate hierarchies, hegemonies, and regimes.

The ideas that connect languages with nations go back to 18th century German romanticist writers (McNamara 2019). Philosophers such as Herder, Fichte, and Humboldt have deeply shaped the idea that a nation has one language and, likewise, that a language has one nation – the one nation-one language ideology. This political and territorial view of language, together with the idea that the standard variety is the best, most correct, and ideal form that a language can take – the standard language ideology (Milroy and Milroy 1999) – have fundamentally shaped the notion of language in L2 studies and, in particular, in L2 teaching and learning. The one nation-one language ideology prevails until today as indicated by the fact that extensive discussions on the teaching of Canadian French, Argentinian Spanish, Swiss German, Moroccan Arabic, or Taiwanese Mandarin in L2 studies form the exception rather than the rule. Or, to reframe George Orwell's (1945) famous words: All languages are equal, but some languages are more equal than others (Pandey 2016).

In the second half of the 20th century, sociolinguists started to counter monolithic and monocentric notions of language by proposing pluricentricity as a concept for languages that are used and codified in more than one nation (e.g. Clyne 1984; Ammon 1995). They have argued for multiple standard varieties in different centers that are all to be seen as equally correct and legitimate varieties of one language. The general ideas of pluricentricity are reflected in the teaching and learning of many L2s. English certainly forms the most prominent example with vivid discussions on concepts such as World Englishes (Kachru 1992), English as a Global Language (Crystal 2003), English as a Lingua Franca (Seidlhofer 2011; Jenkins 2007), or Linguistic Imperialism (Phillipson 1992), which have opened and transformed the notion of language, norms and standard varieties in L2 pedagogy. These approaches raise critical questions about centers and peripheries, about dominant language varieties and the corresponding ideologies that help perpetuate them, about legitimate usage of language, native and non-native language users as well as their language identities, and, finally, about social representation, inclusion, and the reproduction of social inequalities in L2 studies.

The goal of this special issue of Critical Multilingualism Studies "National Standards – Local Varieties: A Cross-Linguistic Discussion on Regional Variation in L2 Studies" is to incite a conversation on how topics such as linguistic norms and variation, dominant practices, ideologies, identities, and politics surrounding languages are discussed from a view outside of the dominant centers of linguistic norms. Critical Multilingualism Studies provides us with a

stimulating platform to question the very norms of our field from different perspectives and in line with a critical approach to applied linguistics in order to, as Pennycook (2001) writes, problematize givens and consider the limits of our own knowing:

> [Critical Applied Linguistics] involves a constant skepticism, a constant questioning of the normative assumptions of applied linguistics. It demands a restive problematization of the givens of applied linguistics and presents a way of doing applied linguistics that seeks to connect it to questions of gender, class, sexuality, race, ethnicity, culture, identity, politics, ideology, and discourse. And crucially, it becomes a dynamic opening up of new questions that emerge from this conjunction. (14)

The call for papers of this special issue invited contributions that would critically examine the challenges of monocentric approaches to L2 studies on a theoretical, empirical, and pedagogical level. Specifically, the focus of the call was on regional linguistic variation among languages whose use transcends the territories of one nation-state and for which multiple codified norms, (standard) varieties, and centers exist. We were interested in how linguistic hegemonies among regional varieties are reflected and discussed in the context of the teaching and learning of different languages. Although the focus of this special issue is on regional linguistic variation, it is important to note that we, by no means, intend to reduce language variation merely to geography. As Pennycook's quote underlines, we need to connect our questions to many more categories of our social lives, and we acknowledge that a focus on regional varieties does not fully capture the complexity and dynamics of any language. However, as many of the contributions in this special issue make clear, regional language variation intersects with several of the social categories that Pennycook lists. They problematize notions of language and nation, of language and prescription, and they open the study of language in L2 teaching and learning to social, political, historical, and identity-based approaches to illustrate their inextricable connectedness.

The Social Context of L2 Studies

Individual reasons for learning L2s are as diverse as being able to participate in multilingual communities, make linguistic and cultural comparisons, relate cultural practices and products to cultural perspectives, to function in academic and career related settings (Magnan, Murphy, and Sahakyan 2014), pass an exam, connect with family, or construct new identities. Language learning and language teaching are deeply personal and social endeavors that are about more than just language (see also Kramsch 2008; Kramsch and Zhang 2019). Similarly, on an institutional and political level, L2 teaching and learning are often expected to contribute to

social cohesion, democratic citizenship, human rights, mobility, cooperation, and the promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity (Council of Europe 2001; ECML of the Council of Europe 2019), to creating "informed, productive, and globally literate citizen[s] in the worldwide community" (ACTFL 2014), and to serving national security as well as economic agendas by connecting and professionalizing the workforce of a global economy (Kramsch 2005). L2 learning and teaching thus never take place in a vacuum (Larsen-Freeman 2018: 56); rather, they are social practices embedded in complex historical, political, economic, cultural, and societal contexts.

Research in L2 studies is similarly embedded in a complex ecology of discursive practices. As Irvine and Gal (2000) pointedly note: "there is no 'view from nowhere,' no gaze that is not positioned," and therefore, "[s]tatements about language are never only about language – and they are never only statements, [but] always reach beyond the immediate linguistic forms" (36). They are "social actions embedded in history" (Gal and Irvine 2019: 1). Just as our views and statements as researchers do not come from nowhere, neither do impulses to pursue a specific research topic. Instead, our positions and impulses are based on experiences, beliefs, and conceptual frameworks that are discursively shaped by our professional and personal environments. For many researchers who work within applied linguistics frameworks, the language-related real-world problems that surround them become part of their research agenda. This, however, also means that for some researchers issues of language and power may reflect deeply personal experiences whose intellectual exploration becomes an ethical imperative for social transformation. Fairclough (2013) points out:

> If problems of language and power are to be seriously tackled, they will be tackled by the people who are directly involved, especially the people who are subject to linguistic forms of domination and manipulation. This is as true in educational organisations as it is elsewhere. Struggle and resistance are in any case a constant reflex of domination and manipulation. (533)

This embeddedness, entanglement, and engagement of scholars in L2 studies with their object of study holds true also for the topic of this special issue, namely language variation and counter discourses to dominant foreign, second, additional, heritage, and other language practices and ideologies. In other words, studying or teaching language variation is never only about linguistic diversity as such. Instead, the inclusion or exclusion of different regional or social language varieties in L2 research and education touches on fundamental questions of personal, ideological, and political matters, that is, questions of belonging and identity, of sameness and

otherness, of we and they, of borders and power, tolerance and justice, society and culture, emancipation and discrimination.

Language Ideologies and Their Consequences

Because "language is a defining quality of what it means to be human" (Van Lier 2004: 2), we all use language and have certain beliefs about it. These beliefs and individual subjective theories about language are based on what Gee (2014) calls figured worlds, that is, context-dependent and changing "picture[s] of a simplified world that capture […] what is taken to be typical or normal" (89). Such simplified world views come at a high cost in that they "can do harm by implanting in thought and action unfair, dismissive, or derogatory assumptions about other people" (Gee 2014: 96). Figured worlds often get consolidated into powerful normative ideologies, which can be seen as politically and morally suffused frames for understanding the world with potential consequences for their bearers and others (Irvine and Gal 2000: 35). According to Gal and Irvine (2019: 2), ideologies are "neither true nor false," but "positioned and partial visions of the world."

Horner and Weber (2018) cite a number of pervasive language ideologies that can be found in multilingual settings, such as the already mentioned standard language ideology and one nation-one language ideology, as well as a supposed hierarchy of languages, the mother tongue ideology, or the ideology of purism. The last ideology is similar to the ideology of homogeneity, which is wide-spread in the context of German, for instance, and sees languages as by-default homogenous systems in which language variation is an exception to the rule. This ideology degrades linguistic variation and diversity to an abnormal and negative phenomenon that is to be eradicated (Maitz and Elspaß 2013: 36). A supposedly homogenous standard, in turn, is considered to be the prestige variety that is on the top of the hierarchy, the mother tongue of native speakers, and the presumably correct base from which other, non-standard varieties deviate (Durrell 2006: 111-112). The ideology of homogeneity, the standard language ideology (Milroy and Milroy 1999), as well as the pedagogic belief that learners may be confused with language variation (Durrell 2006: 111) often guide L2 theory and practice. The implicit or explicit exclusion of language variation in L2 research and teaching echoes societal norms and hierarchies, which reflect in political, curricular, and course goals as well as teachers' and learners' beliefs on language teaching and learning. On a more general, societal level, such an exclusion of language varieties does not only constitute a removal of language forms but also a removal of language users. In other words, an "erasure" of this kind renders speakers invisible (Irvine and Gal 2000: 38) and may even deprive them of equal societal representation and

participation, which again strengthens the monocentric and standardist status quo. The representation of only selected languages and their speakers is a power move and, as L2 scholars, we need to ask whose interests such forms of representations – and their underlying ideologies – serve. In one form or another, questions such as these are discussed in all nine contributions of this special issue.

Summary of the Contributions

The first two articles explore the concept of pluricentricity in light of political, ideological, and attitudinal aspects in German and Chinese L2 teaching. In "The Politics and Ideologies of Pluricentric German in L2 Teaching," Julia Ruck analyzes language political and ideological preconditions that have shaped the theoretical reception and pedagogical implementation of pluricentricity in L2 German teaching. She explores the political role of national intermediary institutions as well as sociolinguistic research on ideologies, attitudes, and use of national and regional varieties of German. While she points to the importance of pluricentricity in overcoming a monocentric bias and building national identities, Ruck also critiques the widespread emphasis on codified national standard varieties in pluricentric German language teaching. She argues for an approach to L2 teaching that critically reflects on prescriptive, territorially-based norms, represents regional and social linguistic repertoires as legitimate forms of expression, and thereby aims for broad societal and sociocultural representation.

In her contribution "Standard Language Variation in Chinese—Some Insights From Both Theory and Practice," Sandra Kaltenegger explores novel theoretical grounds by analyzing how pluricentricity applies to regional variation of the Chinese language's three standard varieties: Mandarin, Cantonese, and Hokkien. She does not only provide a theoretical perspective on regional linguistic variation and Chinese language policies, but also reports on empirical insights gained from a small-scale study on attitudes towards Mandarin standard varieties among instructors in Taiwan and international learners of Mandarin as an L2. Kaltenegger's article showcases both the hegemonies and soft power of political institutions in L2 teaching as well as the conflicting attitudes and beliefs among Chinese L2 teachers and learners. The paper highlights the challenges of applying theoretical linguistic concepts that were developed with regard to "Western" languages in contexts of non-European languages such as Chinese.

The following two articles focus on theoretical and empirical investigations into learners' engagement with regional varieties of Spanish and Arabic, respectively. "The Acquisition of Dialect-Specific Phonology, Phonetics, and Sociolinguistics in L2 Spanish: Untangling Learner

Trends" by Elena Schoonmaker-Gates provides an overview of recent explorations in the emerging field of L2 sociophonetics. She reviews research on perception as well as production of regional dialects in Spanish L2 teaching and connects (psycho-)linguistic with sociocultural frameworks to investigate how learners process and produce regional variants. Her conclusion that both regional cue perception and production are primarily tied to exposure supports claims for early and coherent discussions of regional varieties in L2 teaching. Schoonmaker-Gates' argumentation that regional variant production among learners expresses cultural affiliation and identification is important as it highlights the grounds on which learners can develop an identity in the L2.

The question of dialect comprehension is particularly crucial for learners of Arabic. Due to the language's diglossic nature, competent speakers need to understand both Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and regional dialects, such as Egyptian or Levantine. In "The Mutual Intelligibility of Arabic Dialects: Implications for the Language Classroom," Emma Trentman and Sonia Shiri empirically examine native and non-native Arabic speakers' ability to comprehend familiar and unfamiliar Arabic varieties as well as their attitudes towards language variation in L2 Arabic teaching. The results of an online listening test and questionnaire show that, first, Arabic dialects were indeed mutually intelligible to not only native but also non-native speakers. For non-native speakers, the ability to metalinguistically identify Arabic varieties was a relevant factor for comprehension. Second, regarding beliefs towards teaching dialects, native speakers preferred a model that teaches both MSA and one dialect, while non-native speakers opted for contact with MSA and a combination of different dialects. Trentman and Shiri call for a multidialectal teaching model that exposes learners to multiple dialects and fosters metalinguistic awareness.

The next three articles address identity-based and historiographic approaches to linguistic variation. They compellingly argue for the need to adapt to local contexts and identities in the teaching of Spanish as well as French in North America. Beatriz Lado and Carmín Quijano's contribution "Ideologies, Identity, Capital, and Investment in a Critical Multilingual Spanish Classroom" presents three case studies to showcase language ideologies, identity work, and linguistic capital among language-minoritized and racialized L2 learners of Spanish at a New York based university. The authors analyzed learners' accounts before and after a semester-long teaching intervention in a first-year L2 Spanish course that followed a critical teaching approach, exploring local varieties of Spanish in New York as well as learners' multilingual identities. The three presented cases allow for crucial insights into learners' developing investment in Spanish learning processes, their unfolding views of their own multilingual

identities, as well as the empowering nature of the authors' critical teaching approach in supporting learners to become aware of, understand, and resist dominant, hegemonic language ideologies.

Meike Wernicke also explored local varieties in North America with a particular focus on Canadian L2 French teachers' attitudes towards French linguistic variation. Her article "Orientations to French Language Varieties Among Western Canadian French-as-a-Second-Language Teachers" presents results of a qualitative study of L2 French teachers' narrated experiences on French language variation during a professional development sojourn in France. Wernicke analyzed discursive strategies and subject positionings in the instructors' journal and interview data, showcasing insights into the complex ideologies in their narratives with respect to the variation of French as well as the non-native speaker teachers' ideological dilemmas in the negotiation of their professional identities as both teachers and learners. Her findings reflect how normative and monocentric language ideologies shape educators' identities, which raises important questions for how they can develop legitimate identities, particularly if they are speakers, learners, and teachers of a non-dominant language variety.

In "Standard Language Hegemony in French Language Teaching in the United States," Carol Chapelle takes a historiographic approach to trace the roots and results of a hegemonic standard language ideology in French language teaching in the U.S. She analyzes primary sources by and secondary sources on North American French speakers, artefacts related to French language teaching in the U.S., research on the topic, as well as her own experience. She shows how North American French was institutionally delegitimized and defamed as well as, ultimately, erased by reducing its culture to folklore. As exemplified by a 2005 university textbook for first year French, stigmatized (self-)images of Franco-Americans have proven remarkably resilient – and so has a decreasing interest in French language study in the United States. As Chapelle's contribution illustrates, a historiographic approach is vital to uncover origins of hegemonic language ideologies and their long-term consequences in language teaching and learning.

The final two contributions of the special issue make the case for a reconceptualization of linguistic variation in L2 teaching. In "From Pluricentricity to Translingual Transcultural Competence – Shifting Paradigms," Claudia Kunschak reframes pluricentric approaches to L2 teaching as part of a pedagogy that fosters translingual and transcultural competence (MLA, 2007). She draws on sociolinguistic and applied linguistic theoretical approaches to highlight challenges in applying the pluricentric approach to superdiverse linguistic contexts of intersecting pluricentricities, which characterize many learners' experiences with language.

Kunschak makes the case for a translingual and transcultural approach that fosters learners' critical reflexivity, social sensibility, and agency as mobile agents who feel at home in and in-between different languages and varieties. She empirically illustrates her theoretical arguments with questionnaire data from multilingual language learners at three universities in China, Spain, and Austria. Based on the insights gained on learners' self-images, experiences, and challenges as well as the complex linguistic and cultural diversity characterizing the institutional settings, Kunschak lays out the potentials of a translingual and transcultural approach to overcome territorial and static views of language, homogenous and bounded notions of culture, and instead to embrace the affective and transformational sides of language learning.

Robert Train concludes the special issue with an essay on the concept of variation in language education and research. His article "Contesting Regimes of Variation: Critical Groundwork for Pedagogies of Mobile Experience and Restorative Justice" provides a critical vocabulary to reconceptualize linguistic variation in terms of mobility, and to replace reductionist standard languages ideologies with teaching approaches that attend to the wellbeing of speakers and communities that are marginalized by normative concepts such as (non-)nativeness or (non-)standardness. After an exploration of the concept of "regimes", he shows how sociolinguistic diversity was historically reduced to a "problem" to be countered with standardization. He illustrates the impact that Foucaultian regimes of truth as well as regimes of historicity, regimes of devaluing language (ideologies), regimes of difference, as well as others may have, either on individuals (e.g., by constructing languages other than English in the U.S. as un-American), on societies (e.g., regarding the medium of instruction in schools), or on academia (e.g., through the construct of native standard language). To contest the ensuing (re)production of difference and social inequality, Train calls for critical sociolinguistic approaches in L2 studies by reframing variation as mobile modes of experiencing the world as a base for critical pedagogies of lived language experiences and restorative justice.

Implications of Linguistic Variation for L2 Studies

The contributions in this special issue all implicitly or explicitly address implications of language ideologies for L2 studies. For instance, Kaltenegger (this issue) notes that "besides being political, the topic of Chinese linguistic variation is also emotionally charged since language is an integral part of identity construction." Among the L2 learners in her study, the majority considered Mandarin a pluricentric language, however, they preferred the use of "Mainland Chinese variants over Taiwanese variants in their own speech/writing." Kaltenegger

explains this with factors of linguistic dominance that are perpetuated in university language courses, by the Confucius Institute, or by teachers' beliefs. On a similar note, Ruck argues that "linguistic variation in L2 German teaching is politics and ideology in practice. Yet, in real-life language use, linguistic variation is the norm" (see also Train, this issue). These insights reflect a larger issue in L2 pedagogy, namely the "tension between modernist conceptualizations [of language] and postmodern realities" (Levine 2020: 10). That is, the reductive and seemingly fixed standardized language norms that are often found in L2 teaching conflict with the complexity, dynamics, and variability of language use outside of pedagogical contexts. Kaltenegger's and Ruck's conclusions highlight an important point: While language variation is an everyday fact, discourses about them can be emotionally, politically, and ideologically loaded, which results in normative societal and linguistic practices.

Similar to teachers, researchers are also no blank slates when it comes to beliefs about language and linguistic variation and, as a consequence, they may consciously or unconsciously reproduce dominant ideologies. Several articles (see Chapelle, Lado and Quijano, and Ruck, this issue) argue that a pluricentric conceptualization of language should not be limited to only national standard varieties, since this practice risks erasing non-standard regional and social varieties, such as Spanish varieties in the U.S., Canadian French in the U.S., or regional dialects in German. As Kunschak (this issue) points out, from a sociolinguistic perspective, pluricentricity may be conceptualized as a first step on the way to recognizing linguistic variation in general "since it moves the idea of language from a monolithic decontextualized essence to a variable expression of sociolinguistic realities. However, in its quest to codify, [pluricentricity] is still trying to pin down languages, speakers, and communities." In other words, pluricentricity should not perpetuate standard language ideologies but it should be understood broadly and leave room for regional and social varieties as well as for translingual and transcultural practices in spaces of "intersecting pluricentricities" (see Kunschak, this issue). Train (this issue) pointedly challenges the reproduction of normative regimes of variation by arguing that variation is the default form of language, from which standard language deviates, and not the other way around.

Language ideologies can have powerful consequences. For example, they can produce feelings of linguistic insecurity among language users, such as francophone speakers in North America (see Chapelle, this issue), or they may affect L2 teachers' professional identities and self-images. For example, Wernicke points out: "for Canadian FSL teachers who claim an identity as speakers of French, questions of language variation present contradictory ideas and moral obligations which form part of negotiating a legitimate identity as teacher of French" that may

manifest in "a lack of confidence with regard to their self-perceived language expertise when measured against an idealized French norm." Chapelle (this issue) shows the long-term impact of how language ideologies have permeated institutional practices and, as a consequence, have conjured insecurities with local varieties among instructors. Specifically, she found that U.S. institutions whose aim was to promote French Canadian immigrants' language and culture failed in their mission and instead contributed to the delegitimization of North American French. Chapelle notes that the declining number of speakers of French as well as interest in French L2 studies "would arguably not be sustained if the connection of so many Americans to their French Canadian roots had not been broken."

As several papers in this issue suggest, L2 learners often seem to embrace the opportunity to encounter more than one normative variety during their learning process and show openness, interest and tolerance for differences within a language (see Kaltenegger, Schoonmaker-Gates, Trentman and Shiri, and Kunschak, this issue). Schoonmaker-Gates points out: "Sensing a disconnect between the language they are learning in the classroom and what is used in 'the real world', many learners are naturally drawn to discussions about general language variation and energized by lessons that incorporate visions of the vernacular in the L2." In contrast, though, teachers often display more monocentric views (see Kaltenegger and Wernicke, this issue). One likely reason for such views are the discussed insecurities with language variation among L2 instructors. L2 teacher training and education should therefore allow teachers to not only acquire sociolinguistic knowledge but also develop an awareness of the social constructedness of norms. This would allow instructors to approach linguistic diversity in a judgment-free manner and neither discredit nor exoticize regional or social varieties (see Ruck, this issue).

One crucial conclusion of the ideological dimension of language is that language variation in L2 studies is about more than introducing a variety of linguistic forms. Schoonmaker-Gates (this issue) notes: "More than most other elements of language, regional features are saturated with social meaning and connotations" and thus can convey "information about a speaker's socioeconomic status, origin, race, level of education, or gender, to name a few." Additionally, according to Ruck (this issue), "[l]inguistic variation in L2 teaching should form not only the basis of linguistic skill acquisition but also a continuous content that is connected to functional, emotional, identity-based, social, historical, and political aspects of language and culture." Language variation as a discussion topic serves to reflect on cultural similarities and differences, social power relations and emancipation, and as a means of fostering teachers' and

students' tolerance for ambiguous, unpredictable, and ever-changing situations that characterize today's globalized superdiverse world (see Kunschak, this issue).

The personal and social entanglements of language varieties and their speakers point to the inextricable connectedness of language and identity, which is reflected in all nine papers of this special issue. Different regional and social varieties are an expression of a person's allegiance to a social group (Gee 2014). L2 learners should be given the opportunity to become part of the groups with which they identify by having access to the linguistic resources to do so. For instance, with regard to Arabic, Trentman and Shiri (this issue) suggest: "a multidialectal approach does not expect learners or teachers to be able to speak or write multiple varieties equivalently. Rather, it gives them the agency to choose to use the varieties that reflect their own exposure or desired identities, while also developing their abilities to shift their language in situations where they may wish to accommodate to other speakers or contextual factors." Schoonmaker-Gates (this issue), however, concedes that productively using different varieties may be challenging for L2 learners, which is why it is important to differentiate between receptive and productive modes of communication as well as local needs when discussing goals for integrating language variation in L2 studies (see also Lado and Quijano, this issue).

Many of the special issue's contributions make the case for teaching approaches that explicitly foster L2 learners' metalinguistic and critical language awareness by means of consistent and recurring awareness activities across all proficiency levels (see Ruck, Kunschak, and Trentman and Shiri, this issue). The findings of Trentman and Shiri's study indicate "that developing students' abilities to identify elements that vary between varieties of Arabic and identify them in familiar varieties may aid their ability to identify and comprehend unfamiliar varieties, as they are able to predict which variations they are likely to hear." Based on these insights, they suggest "draw[ing] students' attention to the social meanings of […] linguistic features" and supplying "learners with a toolkit and mindset that will allow them to encounter [variation] strategically and patiently, rather than with frustration and fear" (Trentman and Shiri, this issue). Language variation is a question of legitimacy, politics, and power and, as a topic in L2 studies, it can contribute to critical pedagogies that foster emancipation, empowerment, and contesting social injustice (see Train, this issue). The development of meta- and sociolinguistic reflexivity or critical language awareness encourages "learners' critical thinking about the discrepancy between official norms as presented in textbooks versus actual language use" and allows "questions of linguistic standards, prescriptions, and norms […] to feature more critical approaches that explore whose standards, prescriptions, and norms are represented, and whose interests such representations serve" (Ruck, this issue). Ultimately, only those who possess

knowledge can "identify the production and reproduction of hegemonic language ideologies, and […] resist their domination" (Lado and Quijano, this issue).

Finally, the inclusion of a language's non-dominant, non-standard, or local varieties can explicitly cater to learners' local needs and experiences. Lado and Quijano as well as Chapelle (this issue) present compelling arguments as to why local varieties of languages such as French and Spanish – which are anything but "foreign" languages in many U.S. communities – can be more relevant to students in communication with their local communities than the dominant, "foreign" standard varieties. Along these lines, the contributions in this special issue underline the important role of historiographic approaches in L2 research, which can reveal the origins of ideologies that legitimize hegemonic practices (see Chapelle and Train, this issue) and shape the beliefs and experiences of language teachers (see Wernicke and Kaltenegger, this issue). Train (this issue) argues that a "critical sense of historicity as past-present-future (dis)connectness requires that we and our students in language programs learn that what is today has not always existed or at least not in the same way; that what doesn't exist today could have existed in the past; what seems new is not necessarily new (e.g. variation, migration, globalization). On the other hand, what we hold to be eternal is often recent and always contingent."

Conclusion

The collection of papers in this special issue are a compelling plea to not take language in L2 studies for granted, but to make the beliefs and ideologies that guide our research and practice transparent. The authors make the case for linguistic variation in L2 studies by addressing theoretical and pedagogical contexts of pluricentric German or Chinese, of local heritage varieties of Spanish or French, of dialects of Arabic or Spanish, or of translingual and transcultural approaches. What is more, they address the urgency to deconstruct linguistic regimes of variation by revealing the impact that monocentric, monoglossic, and standardist views on language, language teaching, and research may have on language users – and learners and teachers in particular. Of course, a unanimous call for more variation is hardly surprising in a special issue on national standards and local varieties. We need to acknowledge that, as much as the monocentric perspective on languages is de facto an ideology, the pluricentric or variationist approach is guided by certain political and ethical ideals as well. In this spirit, the aim of this special issue is to render visible the varieties that – in a Weinreichian sense – do not have an army or a navy to defend themselves. As editors, we join the authors in their conviction

that the effects of keeping open minds and doors to variationist approaches in L2 studies will ultimately be beneficial ones.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the contributors of this special issue, the anonymous peer reviewers, and the editors-in-chief, Janice McGregor and Emma Trentman, for their work, time, and support, as well as the members of the *IDV*'s *DACHL-Gremium* for supporting us in pursuing the idea of this project.

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