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A Language on the Move

Austrian Migrants in the United Kingdom and their German Mother Tongue

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**Austrian Migrants in the United Kingdom
and Their German Mother Tongue**

Academic Year 2016/17

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Supervised by Dr. Claire Dwyer

This research dissertation is submitted for the MSc in Global Migration
at University College London.

Abstract

The overarching aim of this paper is to put the mother tongue of migrants at the center of a project in migration studies, in order to explore its specificity, its potential, and its fluidity in sufficient detail. As the mother tongue of migrants is rarely the main focus of literature in migration studies, this dissertation also bases its arguments on literature from other disciplines such as socio-linguistics, psychology, and educational studies. In terms of methodology, this dissertation explores the mother tongue of migrants from a phenomenological perspective: it seeks to understand the ‘lifeworld’ of migrants through the lens of their mother tongue. In both its theoretical and empirical part, this paper addresses three levels on which the mother tongue of migrants is observable: the individual, the host country, and the transnational level. Empirical findings of this study are based on semi-structured in-depth interviews with 18 Austrian migrants living in the United Kingdom.

Narratives from Austrian migrants provide this dissertation with a rich understanding of the functions and form of their mother tongue in identity questions, in integration aspects, and in transnational and translocal processes. Firstly, findings demonstrate how a person’s (linguistic) identity can become more hybrid and complex within a context where the individual’s mother tongue is no longer the main language spoken. Such results support a certain strand of literature which de-essentializes links between mother tongue and identity. Furthermore, findings underline that the mother tongue of migrants – German in this case – can act as an important integration asset in professional and personal terms. These results show that certain languages are perceived to be more prestigious than others, depending on the host country context, which in turn transforms proficiency in this particular language into what Bourdieu (2008) calls ‘cultural capital’. Finally, findings help to explore conceptual connections that exist between the mother tongues of migrants and transnational and translocal practices. For this particular case study of Austrian migrants in the United Kingdom, the concept of translocalism is far more helpful than the one of transnationalism. This is explained by strong local and regional attachments that the interviewed Austrian migrants expressed, through their affiliation towards their dialects. This dissertation concludes that the form and functions of the mother tongues of migrants are highly dependent on multiple factors such as individual experiences, country of origin, and host country context.

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Introduction

The mother tongue of a migrant is something special. In their country of origin, it was their main communication tool and it was the language that brought them together with friends and family (Horvat & Muhvić-Dimanovski 2012: 494). It helped them understand others and be understood. It was the language that included them in social life (Barkhuizen 2013: 78). However in many cases, it is no longer the main language spoken in the country they arrive in. As a consequence, the functions of their mother tongue change drastically. In their country of destination, it might become the opposite of what it had been – it might become the language that marks them as different (Bloch & Hirsch *forthcoming*: 3), the language of exclusion and the language that almost no one else understands. Nevertheless, this shift in linguistic environment can also be perceived as positive: migrants may understand their mother tongue as a link that connects them back to their country of origin (see e.g. Utomo 2014). Furthermore, their mother tongue might be an asset in terms of social inclusion or professional integration in their new home country (e.g. Christiansen 2004: 188). And in most cases, migrants continue to experience their mother tongue as a crucial part of their identity. This complex issue of the mother tongues of migrants is therefore a unique entry point to explore the lives of migrants on three levels: individual, host country, and transnational.

This dissertation aims to put the mother tongue of migrants at the center of a research project in migration studies in order to explore its specificity, its potential and its fluidity in sufficient detail. It will try to answer three main research questions:

- In what ways does the (linguistic) identity of migrants change after they have migrated to a country in which their mother tongue is not the main language spoken?
- To what degree does the mother tongue of migrants play a role in their new home country?
- How can the connection between mother tongue usage and transnationalism be conceptualized?

This study is based on narratives of Austrian migrants in the United Kingdom (UK) of which there are approximately 25 000.¹ Although this is a considerable number originating from a small country with 8.6 million inhabitants, it remains a low figure compared to those of other migrant groups in the UK, such as the Poles (831 000 according to the Office for National

¹ Letter from the Austrian Embassy, London (24.04.2017)

Statistics 2015). This might be one reason for which Austrians are clearly under-researched as a migrant group in the British context. They are, however, an interesting case study because of two factors: their complex linguistic situation and their generally high English proficiency.

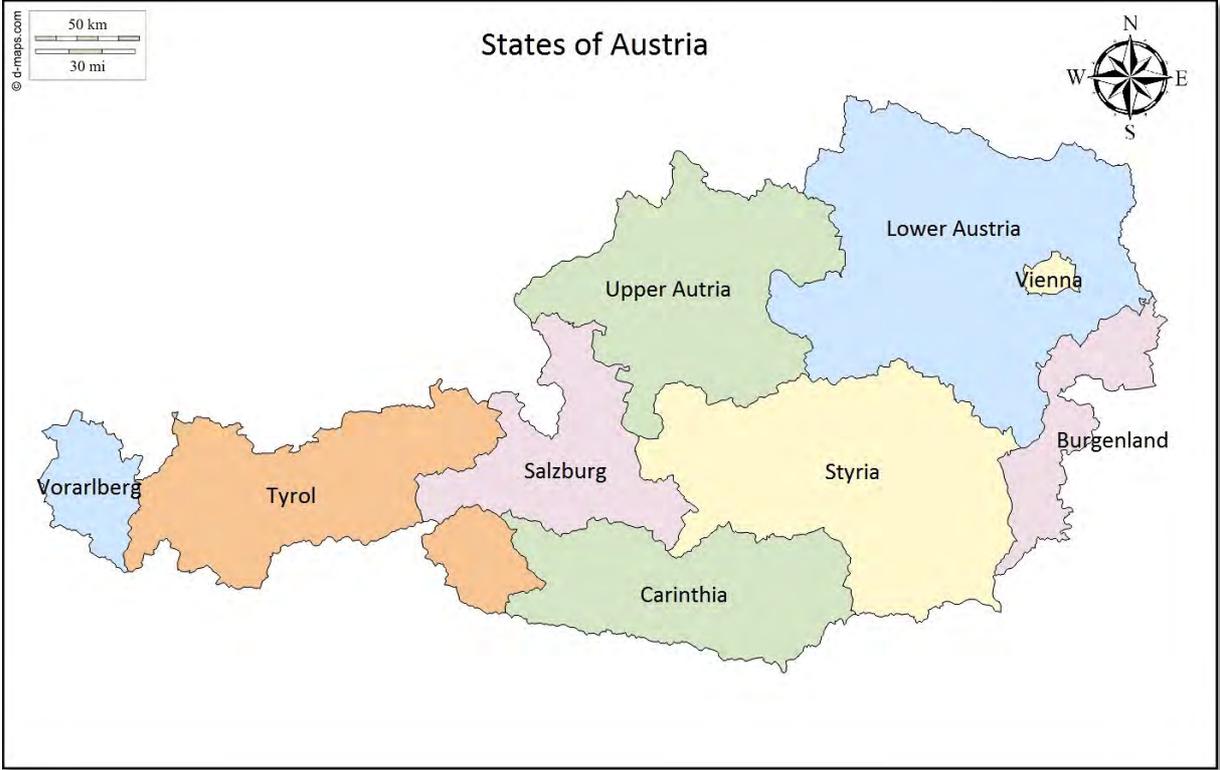
German – Austria’s national language – is a language comprising different scales. The widest scale encompasses the German language on a pan-Germanic scale including speakers of all German-speaking countries. German is a pluricentric language (Utri 2013: 37) with several official variants adding a national scale to it: the Austrian variant (Austrian Standard German [SG]), the Swiss variant (Swiss SG) and the German variant (German SG). Differences between the Austrian and the German variants are mostly of lexical and phonological nature (Ender & Kaiser 2009: 269). They are one way for Austrians to differentiate themselves from Germans in terms of identity (Wodak *et al.* 2009: 57). A closer look at Austria’s linguistic landscape opens up another layer of complexity: its immense variety of dialects encompassing diverse linguistic identities (Bruckmüller 1998: 17). Some dialects diverge to the degree that speakers of a dialect in one state might struggle to understand speakers of another. This third scale is the regional one that is – in most cases – congruent with the federal structure of Austria and its states (see *Illustration 1*). The fourth scale is the local one. It encompasses dialectical variations of the German language that are limited to certain valleys, towns or small villages. In this regard, the mother tongue of Austrian migrants is a highly complex topic that deserves to be explored more thoroughly.

Another feature that makes this case study particularly interesting is that, in general, Austrians have a good command of the English language (Education First 2015). This is of importance in so far as they technically do not need to fully depend on their mother tongue but are able to navigate quite skillfully in an English-speaking country. Consequently, their integration is not necessarily hindered by a lack of English skills. So far, it remains unclear what kind of impact it might have on the migrants’ relation to their mother tongue if they are not dependent on it. These factors make the Austrian group of migrants in the UK a particularly fascinating case study for questions surrounding the mother tongues of migrants.

Following the introduction, this dissertation will give an overview of existing literature regarding the interstices between migration and the mother tongues of migrants. The main focus will be directed towards three issues: the mother tongue and questions of identity, the mother tongues of migrants and host country integration, and the mother tongues of migrants and transnationalism. The second chapter will present the methodological framework in which the study of Austrian migrants and their mother tongue is embedded. The last part of

this dissertation will discuss the findings of the study through three empirical chapters: the first will address questions of linguistic hybridity among Austrian migrants; the second chapter will introduce the German language of Austrian migrants as an integration asset; finally, the third empirical chapter is going to focus on the relation that Austrian migrants have to their various dialects.

Illustration 1: States of Austria



Sources: plain map retrieved from d-maps (2017); north arrow retrieved from StackExchange (2014).

Literature Review

The mother tongue of a migrant is rarely the main focus of literature within migration studies. Nevertheless, it is a recurring theme, which has been touched upon in the context of identity, integration and transnationalism. This mirrors the premise of this dissertation by stating that the mother tongue of migrants is observable on the individual, the host country, and the transnational level.

The Positioning of the Mother Tongue within the (Linguistic) Identity of Migrants

Although the concept of identity is ambiguous (see Brubaker & Cooper 2000), it cannot be ignored in discussions about the mother tongues of migrants: language is considered one of the most important identity markers (Hall 1996: 4), helping human beings to make sense of themselves and their reality. Similarly to language, other ‘taken-for-granted points of reference’ (Block 2006: 26) fulfill comparable purposes. These include religion, ethnicity, or nationality (Bloch & Hirsch *forthcoming*; Horvat & Muhvić-Dimanovski 2012; Gogonas 2011; Ek 2009). These and many other identity markers (that also interact with each other) are thus a toolkit forming ‘the ongoing sense the self has of who it is’ (Mathews 2000: 16 f.) – identity. Identity is also dependent upon ‘ongoing interactions with others’ (*ibid.*). Thus, seeing the mother tongue as an identity marker means understanding it as one aspect with which the self makes sense of itself, and with which it is also labeled by others. The mother tongue therefore has both an inner and outer function of identity making.

The mother tongue of a migrant has often been described in its relation with other identity markers. The mother tongue has been found to be strongly related to religious practices, which form – often crucial – parts of the identity (Gogonas 2011; Ek 2009). In practice, this might mean that migrants only find access to their religious beliefs through their mother tongue (Ek 2009: 75). Ethnicity and nationality are further identity markers, which have been found to be tied to the mother tongue of migrants (Bloch & Hirsch *forthcoming*; Horvat & Muhvić-Dimanovski 2012). The mother tongue can be an important tool to maintain, perform or intensify ethnic and national affiliations in the new home country.

In processes of identity making and in contexts of migration, the mother tongue becomes mostly evident through the accent (Rakić *et al.* 2011). An accent is one of the first impressions that others obtain from the identity of migrants. Very often immediate assumptions are made about the origin of the accent, about the person’s mother tongue and

therefore about the origin of the individual. The identity of an individual with heavily accented speech will be associated to one of a non-native speaker and migrant (Barkhuizen 2013: 85). A migrant's accent can also be a way to actively perform identity (Sung 2016; Gao 2014) and be purposely employed by speakers to emphasize or challenge certain features and assumptions around their identity.

The mother tongue and its usage often change through migration. It is worth noting, however, that these changes differ depending on migrants' circumstances. One change to the mother tongue of migrants that has been vastly explored by sociolinguists is the phenomenon of mother tongue attrition (Burn *et al.* 2014; Schmid & Dusseldorp 2010; Schmid & Keijzer 2009; Kim & Starks 2008; Schmid 2004). In the case of mother tongue attrition, mother tongue skills of migrants deteriorate in several aspects. Mother tongue usage changes in so far as it is often no longer the language that prevails in the private and professional realm. These changes to the mother tongue (its form) and its usage (its functions) affect the self-conception and perceptions that others have of the self and consequently also the identity itself (Barkhuizen 2013: 78).

Literature engaging with the intersection of changes to the mother tongue and identity can be divided into two strands: the essentialist and hybrid understanding of mother tongue and identity. In an essentialist understanding, changes to the mother tongue can result in identity crises (see e.g. Erdinast-Vulcan 2011: 253). This approach ties the mother tongue of migrants so closely to social identity, (Mange *et al.* 2009) that changes within a migrant's linguistic environment can potentially split the self into two different personalities (see e.g. Panicacci & Dewaele *forthcoming*; Ramírez-Esparza *et al.* 2006). The strand of scholarship that moved away from the essentialist understandings finds its conceptual basis in literature on hybridity. Hybridity is a concept that 'has come to mean all sorts of things to do with mixing and combination in the moment of cultural exchange' (Hutnyk 2005: 80). As these 'moment[s] of cultural exchange' are also frequently characterized by multilingualism, this concept equally helps to capture linguistic identities that are shaped by two or more languages². This concept, however, is only helpful if it acknowledges that migrants have agency when it comes to their language repertoire (Resnyansky 2016: 2055). It should not be used in a way which implies that their identity is puzzled together by two distinct languages. Their linguistic identities should rather be seen as 'new versions of wholeness' (Jazeel 2005: 273) – unique to every individual. This flexible and also creative approach to multilingualism has been termed as 'translanguaging' (MacSwan 2017; García & Wei 2014). Processes of

² See e.g. Bekus 2014; Keim & Knöbl 2011; Hinnenkamp 2003 for concrete examples.

‘translanguaging’ help migrants adapt to multilingual situations when using their mother tongue as well as other languages in the most flexible, effective, and creative way. This process is in a sense a tool to navigate through complex linguistic environments – in a ‘third space’, to speak in Bhabha’s terms (1994: 53 ff.), a space characterized by blurredness and hybridity. Nevertheless, in these situations the notion of ‘mother tongue’ can be highly contested (see Horvat & Muhvić-Dimanovski 2012: 500), making the linguistic identity of migrants a particularly challenging topic to grasp.

The Mother Tongue of Migrants in Integration Discourses and Processes

In integration discourses in the public sphere, the language skills of migrants are highly politicized (Brubaker 2015). The nation and the national language are presented as dependent on each other (Kulyk 2011; Millar 2005: 13 ff.). Social and professional integration of migrants into the host country are therefore tightly linked to proficiency of the host country language (Föbker & Imami *forthcoming*; Hoehne & Michalowski 2016; Resnyansky 2016: 2050; Guven & Islam 2015). In the British context, a successfully integrated migrant is therefore an individual who has acquired a relatively good command of the English language. While emphasizing proficiency in the host country language, public discourses on integration render the mother tongues of migrants invisible. Current documents on British integration policies underline this unidirectional approach towards migrants and their languages. *The Casey Review* (2016) is critical about the state of integration matters in the UK and points out the importance of English skills several times. The mother tongue of migrants, however, does not figure one single time in this report. *The Interim Report on Integration* (APPG 2017) adopts a similar stance towards language issues. In this report, language skills are, on the whole, simply equated with English language skills (e.g. *ibid.*: 17).

In those rare cases when the mother tongue of migrants enters the integration debate, it is presented as a threat to national unity leading to ‘ghettoization’ rather than an opportunity for individuals and the state (see Bloch & Hirsch *forthcoming*: 4; Resnyansky 2016: 2056; Joseph 2006: 33). Such an understanding

‘of integration is informed by an ideology of superiority (‘we’ are superior to ‘them’) and a deficit model of the migrant population: ‘they’ are lacking or deficient, and hence need to have a strong will and make long and intensive efforts in order to overcome their deficiencies’ (Weber 2015: 64).

In current integration discourses migrants are thus presented as ‘lacking’ (sufficient) host country language skills. In some cases, this might mean that certain migrants speak multiple languages but not (yet) the one language required for ‘successful’ integration: the host country language. In this prevalent discourse all other languages – including their mother tongues – do not count.

Nevertheless, mother tongues of migrants can act as cultural capital (Bourdieu 2008: 282 ff.) and therefore as decisive integration asset. This has been acknowledged by a variety of scholars. It has been found, for instance, that migrants who consume news in their mother tongues are potentially better informed about the host country context (Christiansen 2004: 188). Another finding was that the mother tongue could help migrants establish a stable social network in their new home country (Akkaymak 2016: 2617; Ek 2009). Furthermore, literature has identified mother tongues of migrants as cultural capital, which can be transformed into economic capital (Bourdieu 2008: 281) in so far as they help migrants integrate into the host country job market (Föbker & Imami *forthcoming*: 10; Bodomo & Teixeira-E-Silva 2012: 84 ff.). Bodomo & Teixeira-E-Silva (2012) are the most explicit in saying that having the ‘right’ mother tongue in the given context can determine the success or failure of social inclusion and professional integration. With the notable exception of this particular piece of literature, the potential of the mother tongue of migrants in integration matters, however, has never been discussed at length. The second empirical chapter of this dissertation is designed to fill that gap.

The success of social and professional integration in the host country context largely depends on factors such as discrimination, prestige, and stereotyping (Agoni 2015; di Saint Pierre *et al.* 2015). Speakers of certain languages are, for instance, less likely to be discriminated against because of their mother tongue (Bodomo & Teixeira-E-Silva 2012), while others are sometimes socially disadvantaged because of it (Bloch & Hirsch *forthcoming*; Zolberg & Woon 1999). This has been found to be due to different levels of linguistic prestige (Hudson 2012: 211) certain languages have versus others. The level of linguistic prestige is dependent on the particular context (Borland 2005: 112). A certain language might have a high level of prestige in a certain host country context but not in another. In the British context, for instance, Slavic languages do not necessarily have a high level of prestige because of the rising racialization of Eastern European migrants in the UK (Fox *et al.* 2012). Languages of privileged migrants have a higher prestige in social and professional settings. A prestigious language usually conveys more positive stereotypes about its speakers than less prestigious languages (Preston & Robinson 2005: 135 ff.; Williams *et*

al. 2002). Studies on these multifaceted linguistic processes observable at host country level further add to the complexity of mother tongues of migrants as a phenomenon.

The Intersection of Mother Tongues of Migrants and Transnationalism

Transnationalism as a concept tries to capture the ways with which migrants create social ties between their country of origin and their new home country (Glick Schiller *et al.* 1992: 1). Unsurprisingly, scholarly discussions around transnationalism need to acknowledge the mother tongue of migrants as a powerful tool to realize such kinds of social processes. As a crucial identity marker (Bloch & Hirsch *forthcoming*; Barkhuizen 2013; Erdinast-Vulcan 2011), the mother tongue is also presented as a strong emotional reminder of the country of origin (Bloch & Hirsch *forthcoming*: 7; Tannenbaum 2005: 248), which therefore strengthens transnational ties. Such practical and emotional attachments become obvious in various transnational practices linked to mother tongue usage: cross-border communication, transnational media consumption, and heritage language transmission within transnational families. In every one of these aspects, transnational practices depend on the maintenance of the mother tongue, which itself depends on the existence of these transnational practices.

This binary relationship between mother tongue maintenance and transnationalism has been studied by various authors from multiple angles. Frequent and intense cross-border communication, for instance, has been found to be one of the most important factors determining whether the mother tongue of migrants is maintained or not (e.g. Alba *et al.* 2002: 469). In a remarkable account about a Spanish-speaking individual in the United States, Ek (2009) shows how the survival of a migrant's mother tongue depends on sustainable transnational communication over many years. Another transnational practice – which is both enabled by the maintenance of the mother tongue and is also crucial for its preservation – is the consumption of transnational news media. Migrants use transnational news media in order to stay informed on the host country and the country of origin alike (Nevradakis 2011; Christiansen 2004). In this respect, their mother tongues help them to participate in political and social debates about their country of origin even though they do not live there anymore. Transnational news media consumption has also been presented as an element that has the potential to 'rejuvenate' a heritage language among younger migrants after it has been threatened to be lost (Nevradakis 2011). In Nevradakis' (*ibid.*) account on the Greek population in the United States, the broadcasting of popular Greek satellite TV programs in the US brought second generation Greek migrants closer to their transnational identity and therefore also to their heritage language.

The most salient transnational practice for the maintenance of mother tongues of migrants is arguably the process of heritage language transmission within transnational families. A heritage language can be preserved over multiple generations (Alba *et al.* 2002). One important reason for heritage language transmission is that transnational families want their loved ones to be able to maintain a transnational lifestyle (Hua & Wei 2016: 657; Nesteruk 2010: 278; Sigad & Eisikovits 2009: 74). In order to be successful, heritage language transmission is a task that concerns the whole transnational family. This shows that even though a mother tongue is called as such, fathers and extended family also have an undeniable role in its transmission to the next generation (Hua & Wei 2016; Kim & Starks 2010).

Despite the many ways in which scholars use the concept of transnationalism to engage with mother tongues of migrants, this conceptual approach has one important shortcoming: it still focuses too much on the nation-state system (Waldinger & Fitzgerald 2004: 1188) and therefore does not capture certain nuances that a mother tongue of a migrant can have. These nuances become most evident in multi-scalar languages – a category wherein German and many other languages can be found (see e.g. Weber 2015: 26; Ender & Kaiser 2009). Transnationalism, however, is only able to capture the national scale of languages and cannot get a hold of the many different varieties or dialects mother tongues of migrants might have. The concept I find useful for this purpose is the concept of translocalism (see Greiner & Sakdapolrak 2013; Brickell & Datta 2011). This theoretical framework is able to capture local attachments that migrants cling to through the maintenance of dialects, for instance. However, it has never been used to understand the role played by mother tongues of migrants in their lives. Translocalism has traditionally focused on migrants' situatedness in multiple spaces and places, beyond the national scale (Brickell & Datta 2011: 4; see for examples Ndukwe 2017; Wessendorf 2005). Translocalism has yet to be associated with the fact that languages as well can be apprehended on the local and regional scale. The third empirical chapter of this dissertation will hopefully be able to fill this gap.

Methodology

This dissertation is built upon the premise that the mother tongue of a migrant is observable on three different levels: the individual, the host country and the transnational level. These three levels have been explored in the literature part through the angle of existing work on mother tongues of migrants. As a response to this literature, the empirical chapters will analyse the three levels in the particular context of the focus group of Austrian migrants in the UK. These chapters are designed to point out specificities of this group and their mother tongue, challenge pre-assumptions in the literature about the mother tongue of migrants, and present new findings to fill certain gaps in the literature.

The empirical part is based on information gathered through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 18 Austrian migrants in the UK who identified German as their mother tongue in some way. This qualitative approach – rooted in a phenomenological tradition – fits best to the aim of this dissertation: understanding the ‘lifeworld’ (Husserl 1964; see also King & Horrocks 2010: 176) of migrants through the lens of their mother tongues. This approach gives precedence to individual experiences as lived by the informants (their ‘lifeworld’) all the while mainly setting aside prevalent theories about them (*ibid.*: 178). I will therefore not prescribe a specific definition to ‘mother tongue’ and instead use my informants’ various interpretations as their definition of ‘mother tongue’.³ For this purpose, semi-structured interviews are advantageous because they leave enough room for participants to reflect on their individual reality and ‘lifeworld’ (see Galletta & Cross 2013: 1 f.). These in-depth interviews are constructed as narratives on a meta-linguistic level, *i.e.* speech on the form and functions of their mother tongue.

This phenomenological method is a clear distancing from quantitative approaches, such as linguistic testing, which is used by many sociolinguists in the field of mother tongue maintenance and attrition (Kasparian & Steinhauer 2016; Gürel 2015; Ribes & Llanes 2015 to name just a few). Linguistic testing could not have provided what I was trying to capture: a holistic understanding of informants’ approaches towards their mother tongue. However, refraining from linguistic testing meant that I was confined to participants’ self-assessments

³ Thus this methodological decision does not conceptualize the mother tongue as the participants’ first language nor as the language that the participants’ mothers had taught them (even though the term is inherently gendered). It is simply conceptualized as the language that the participants themselves understand as their mother tongue(s). The decision to use the term ‘mother tongue’ also originates from the phenomenological tradition: the term ‘mother tongue’ was the one most of my informants preferred to use to describe their German. Even though other terms exist in the literature (first language, language of origin, native language), I decided to capture the ‘lifeworld’ of my participants by using their own words.

of their language skills in their mother tongue – a feature I was also interested in. In order to know whether their mother tongue was in any ways influenced by their migration to an English-speaking country, I decided to conduct the interviews in German, my own mother tongue. This language choice also allowed me to assess their language skills throughout our conversations.

In semi-structured interviews the correct sample is crucial: I chose 18 Austrian migrants in the UK (see Table 1 for information on the sample) based on a ‘criterion-based selection’ (see LeCompte & Schensul 2010), which sets certain conditions. One preliminary condition for informants to qualify for my study was that they must have spent most of their formative years in Austria. I set this condition in order to insure complete mother tongue acquisition.⁴ Another condition was their length of stay outside of a German-speaking country. This time factor generated two cohort groups: nine migrants who have been living outside of a German-speaking country for at least one and up to ten years and nine migrants who have been living outside of a German-speaking country for at least ten years. This allowed me to observe the effects of time on their mother tongue.⁵ With regards to gender parity, the sample includes five male and 13 female participants. The cleavage between male and female participants could be explained by gendered preferences in language-related topics, as studies have come to the conclusion that women tend to be more interested in language than men (e.g. Murphy 2010; Carr & Powells 2006).

I recruited informants using several methods: through snowballing (Flowerdew & Martin 2013: 117), I used my personal network and the network of an Austrian restaurant in London to get further potential participants. Furthermore, I contacted gatekeepers (*ibid.*: 116) on the social media platform of the Austrian Club London to get access to its members, some of which I was able to interview. These methods proved to be efficient, although they also held one weakness: most of my interviewees were somehow affiliated to an Austrian organisation (the restaurant or the club) which means that this sample probably had closer ties to Austria and its national language than another sample would have had. This fact might be an aspect that influenced the findings in a certain way.

⁴ My aim was to conduct research on first generation migrants and their mother tongue. A study on 1.5 generation migrants would have generated completely different results (see e.g. Lao & Lee 2009).

⁵ Tamošiūnaitė (2008: 77) argued that a remarkable shift from mother tongue usage to the usage of the host country language occurred after a period of eight to twelve years.

Table 1: Interview Participants

| Name | Date of Interview | Mode | Time Spent outside of a German-Speaking Country | Place of Residence | Profession |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|--|---------------------------|--|
| <i>Alexander (m)</i> | 26.06.2017 | In person | 20 years | London | Manager of Austrian restaurant |
| <i>Bettina (f)</i> | 31.05.2017 | In person | 42 years | London | German teacher |
| <i>Carola (f)</i> | 01.06.2017 | Via telephone | 10 years | London | Events organizer (inter alia German-speaking market) |
| <i>Christine (f)</i> | 20.05.2017 | In person | 10 years | Birmingham | German professor |
| <i>Erika (f)</i> | 21.06.2017 | In person | 3 years | London | Employee at Austrian company |
| <i>Ernst (m)</i> | 07.06.2017 | In person | 14 years | London | Owner of Austrian catering |
| <i>Hermine (f)</i> | 19.06.2017 | In person | 30 years | London | Retired |
| <i>Johanna (f)</i> | 05.06.2017 | In person | 4 years | London | Architect |
| <i>Johannes (m)</i> | 21.05.2017 | In person | 2.5 years | Birmingham | Translator (E, G) & shop vendor |
| <i>Karina (f)</i> | 27.06.2017 | In person | 4 years | London | Student & consulter |
| <i>Laura (f)</i> | 05.06.2017 | In person | 1.5 years | London | Student & waitress in Austrian restaurant |
| <i>Lukas (m)</i> | 28.06.2017 | In person | 4 years | London | PhD student |
| <i>Marianne (f)</i> | 07.06.2017 | In person | 50 years | London | Retired |
| <i>Martin (m)</i> | 01.06.2017 | In person | 2 years | London | Architect |
| <i>Melanie (f)</i> | 30.05.2017 | In person | 8 years | London | Fashion designer |
| <i>Milena (f)</i> | 02.06.2017 | In person | 10 years | London | Chief editor at German magazine |
| <i>Susanne (f)</i> | 23.06.2017 | Via video call | 18 years | Sussex | Social worker |
| <i>Therese (f)</i> | 25.06.2017 | Via video call | 2 years | Edinburgh | Student |

Data analysis started during the phase of interview conduction. The process was the same for every interview: I took notes, recorded it, listened to it several times, and transcribed it. Once the interviews were complete, I analysed every transcript manually on two different levels: the content and the language level. On the content level, I focused on the meaning of utterances with three different techniques: meaning coding, meaning condensation, and meaning interpretation (Kvale 2011: 105 ff.). First, I carried out these operations with every transcript individually and in a second stage, I conducted a comparative reading of all transcripts. This approach gave me a rich understanding of my participants' 'lifeworld'. Three main topics emerged from this analysis, which will be discussed in the following empirical chapters.

On the language level, I focused on lexical, grammatical, and phonological aspects of the participants' mother tongue usage. Through this method, I could observe whether they switched to English on certain occasions, whether their syntax or grammar were influenced by English, and whether they employed SG or a dialect. Because of time constraints, this time-consuming qualitative approach allowed me to conduct and analyze a total of 18 interviews (see Bell & Waters 2010: 161). This study is not designed to produce generalizable results.

In this section, I also wish to address my positionality as a researcher in this project. Researchers have 'multiple selves' (see Madge 1993: 295) which all have to be considered as potentially influential on the outcome of the study. In this particular study, at least three aspects of my identity deserve closer attention: I am Austrian myself, my mother tongue is German, and at the moment of writing, I have been living outside of a German-speaking country for two years. Technically, this means that I could be one of the research subjects. This makes my positionality a very particular one. I experienced my identity mostly as a benefit for the interviews in so far as it helped me create a unique relationship with my research participants. I asked all of my research participants why they wanted to be part of the study and many of them answered that they wanted to help a fellow Austrian, that they saw the interview as an opportunity to speak their mother tongue or that they enjoyed talking about their Austrian origin. Therefore, my identity was a good starting point to build an alliance (see Razon & Ross 2012) with my research participants. However, this 'alliance-building' also includes some weaknesses (*ibid.*: 496). In this case, my identity might have persuaded mostly those Austrians to participate in the study who have rather positive feelings towards their origin and their mother tongue. This might have shaped the sample and therefore the findings in a certain way, as well.

Other aspects of my identity, too, such as my level of education or my gender, might have influenced the sample or the outcomes of the study. There are, however, certain limits to assessing a researcher's positionality because

'[w]e cannot know everything, nor can we survey power as if we can fully understand, control or redistribute it. What we may be able to do is something rather more modest but, perhaps, rather more radical: to inscribe into our research practices some absences and fallibilities while recognizing that the significance of this does not rest entirely in our own hands' (Rose 1997: 319).

In order to ensure an ethical conduct of this study, information and consent forms (see [Appendix 3](#) and [4](#)) have been distributed to and signed by all interview participants. All participants' names and any information about them were anonymized. The names shown in [Table 1](#) are not their real names. This study did not pose any further ethical concerns because the participants were not part of a vulnerable group (minors, refugees, people in detention, etc.) and because the topics raised throughout the study did not cover any sensitive issues.

Understanding Austrian Hybridity

Introduction

‘Even when one attains a level of proficiency in the foreign language, the translated self remains incomplete. It is the selfhood of someone who will never feel at home in her own skin.’

Erdinast-Vulcan (2011: 253)

This quote draws a pessimistic picture for migrants stating that changes in the linguistic environment result in feelings of estrangement and incompleteness. It is embedded in a sociolinguistic tradition in which the mother tongue is seen as one of the most salient ‘taken-for-granted points of reference’ (Block 2006: 26) in everyone’s life (see e.g. Mange *et al.* 2009). With an essentialist understanding, challenging such an important point of reference can dramatically contest the (linguistic) identity of migrants.

Austrian migrants in the UK experience changes to the form and functions of their mother tongue, too. German is no longer predominant in their new home country. With regards to changes to the form of their mother tongue, all informants – regardless of time spent outside of a German-speaking country – reported some signs of attrition to their mother tongue (which I experienced as well when listening to their German). Surprisingly however, they had a positive attitude towards these changes. They did not report feelings of estrangement and incompleteness, but rather developed a certain hybrid linguistic identity (see Bekus 2014), which allowed them to skillfully navigate through their new multilingual reality. This attitude can be seen as a move away from essentialist understandings of language to a more agency-based one (Resnyansky 2016: 2055).

In this context, a hybrid identity should not be understood as an identity split into two halves – the German-speaking half and the English-speaking half (see Hutnyk 2005 for a critique of the concept of hybridity). The identities I have encountered throughout various narratives were far more complex and can be described as ‘new versions of wholeness’ (Jazeel 2005: 237; see Panicacci & Dewaele *forthcoming* for a counter narrative). In order to live such a hybrid linguistic identity, the Austrian interviewees had two main tools: their utilitarian and flexible language repertoire, and their fluid accent.

Most of the informants felt quite comfortable speaking in English prior to their migration to the UK. Therefore, they were able to develop a flexible language repertoire responding to utilitarian needs. Most interviewees said that they could easily adapt their language to the given linguistic context. In the literature, this flexible approach towards languages has been referred to as 'translanguaging' (e.g. García & Wei 2014). Hermine put it the following way:

'If someone is with us who does not speak German, switching from one language to another is no problem for me. I don't have to think about it. My brain does the work alone.'

The ease with which many Austrians described switching from one language to another was furthermore underlined by expressions such as 'automatic' (Erika) or 'second nature' (Carola).

Some migrants mentioned certain contexts in which they were happy having a second strong language in their language repertoire. In emotional situations some Austrians preferred to use their English because it was harder for them to express their emotions in their mother tongue(s). Marianne mentioned that writing love letters was a lot easier in English and Therese – who had two languages she called 'mother tongue', German and Czech – preferred to write into her diary in English. These language choices are called 'emotion-related language choices' (see Wu & Thierry 2012: 6485), which have been found to be common among multilingual people. Furthermore, some migrants preferred to swear in English because this made the process of swearing seem less culturally unacceptable (see Gawinkowska *et al.* 2013). This complex and sophisticated approach towards these migrants' languages was also evident in their thoughts. When I asked Lukas to elaborate on his language use in his thoughts, he said: 'the language I speak on that day determines how I express my thoughts to myself. So I actually change my colors like a chameleon.'

All informants reported certain effects of attrition to their mother tongue: lexical interference from English, morpho-syntactic difficulties, and practical issues such as reduced writing speed (see Schmid & Dusseldorp 2010: 127). One particular problem that interviewees frequently mentioned was linked to the fact that German words would not come to their minds as quickly anymore as English words. A well-known strategy to solve this issue is the process of 'borrowing' (see Gabsi 2011 on extensive lexical borrowing) where an English expression, for instance, is used to substitute a German word within a German

⁶ Interview with Lukas

sentence. Many Austrians made use of this strategy to compensate for a sudden lack of German words. Although ‘borrowing’ and language attrition are closely linked to each other (*ibid.*: 139), most respondents did not perceive this strategy as negative but rather as a practical solution helping them navigate their multilingual reality. Karina, for instance, was aware that she was using English words often:

‘Particularly in rather heated debates, the simplest words don’t come to my mind and I have to say them in English. This is not a big problem because most of my friends have learnt English to a certain degree.’

As English is the world’s lingua franca (Seidlhofer 2005: 339; Cristal 2003), using English words in German speech rarely creates serious communication defaults.

The interviewees did not perceive their complex approach towards their multilingual reality as something fracturing their identity. It rather allowed them to take advantage of both languages and therefore develop a third space (see Bhabha 1994: 53 ff.) where their hybrid identity was something whole. Interestingly, this made some of the interviewees question which of their languages their actual mother tongue was or whether they had potentially acquired a linguistic identity with multiple mother tongues or no mother tongue at all (see Horvat & Muhvić-Dimanovski 2012: 500). Bettina elaborated on this in a very self-conscious way:

‘Actually, I think I don’t have a real mother tongue anymore. Because my mother tongue is not the most instinctive language anymore when I’m in extreme situations. In these cases, English comes first. Sometimes also Italian or French. On the other hand, in some situations, I’m more confident in German.’

This quote wonderfully illustrates what a complex hybrid linguistic identity might look like.

Fluid Accents as Balancing Identity Markers

A non-native accent immediately identifies migrants as different (Barkhuizen 2013: 80). This can be another factor challenging certain ‘taken-for-granted points of reference’ (Block 2006: 26) that stabilize the identity. Almost every Austrian migrant reported that they had a certain accent in English. Surprisingly, however, their accent did not destabilize their identity. In some cases, it even emerged as a tool to underline their hybridity in a positive way.

With regards to their accent, the informants could be divided into two groups: ‘faithful imitators’ and ‘playful creators’ (see Gao 2014). ‘Faithful imitators’ (*ibid.*: 60 ff.) wished to

sound as British as possible so that they could completely blend into their new linguistic environment. The ‘playful creators’ (*ibid.*: 65 ff.), on the other hand, did not wish to eliminate their non-native accent. They enjoyed being recognized as different and welcomed their accent as a sign of them being ‘exotic’ (Therese) or ‘interesting’ (Johanna). In this sense, their accent became a way for them to position themselves in a particular positive way (see Sung 2016 on identity-making through accents). Some, for instance, acted playfully on their accent in so far as they enjoyed playing guessing games with those who did not know where they came from.

‘When they ask me where my accent is from, I find it interesting and I don’t mind. Then, I always ask them to guess where I’m from. I don’t tell them right away that I’m Austrian because they never know ((laughs)). And then I always find it funny when I say, no, I’m Austrian.’

Johanna’s statement shows that she likes playing on her hybridity, which does not allow for immediate categorization. In the Austrian context particularly, this is possible because the accent is often rather difficult to ascribe to a certain nationality. Most informants told me that few could guess that their mother tongue was German. In social settings, the ‘playful creators’ took advantage of that ambiguity to consciously mark their identity as hybrid.

One might think that the first group, the ‘faithful imitators’, had more difficulties in balancing their identity particularly in situations where they did not succeed in sounding as British as native-speakers do. Members of this group, however, found another way to avoid a fractured linguistic identity. This was possible because of the location where most of my informants lived: multicultural and multilingual London. The normality of having an accent in London frequently came up in the interviews. London can be seen as one of the few places that have become ‘de-nationalized’ (Block 2006: 211) and where the national language is not hegemonic anymore. This fact consolidated many ‘faithful imitators’:

‘Well, my personal motivation is to get rid of the accent, but I don’t think it’s such a big problem. Also because we’re in London and here everyone’s from everywhere and some people have far stronger accents than me. This is why it’s not too bad.’

Erika’s quote resembles a lot of other statements that Austrian Londoners made. London’s hybridity helped stabilize these residents’ hybrid identities.

Although I have described the accent of Austrians as rather fluid so far, one important restriction has to be made. Despite being German-native speakers, almost all of the interviewees stated that they would not want to be misunderstood as German because of their

accent. This might be linked to the fact that Austrians want to distance and emancipate themselves from Germans (Renner *et al.* 2014; Oudenhoven *et al.* 2010: 50; Wodak *et al.* 2009: 57). The quote, which illustrates best how many Austrians feel when they are identified as German, originates from the interview with Marianne: ‘If someone asks: Are you from Germany? I say: I beg your pardon!?! You would never ask a Scot whether he’s from England!’ In this case, the comparison of the relationship between Scottish and English, and of the relationship between Austrians and Germans is a very accurate one (see also Millar 2005: 9).

This chapter showed how most Austrians manage to feel comfortable in their multilingual reality. They do not feel split apart even though their everyday life is characterized by the use of at least two languages. Their identities can therefore be seen as hybrid and as ‘new versions of wholeness’ (Jazeel 2005: 237). Their flexible language repertoire and their fluid accents are important tools they rely on to balance their English-speaking and German-speaking influences.

An Alternative Approach to Integration and Social Inclusion

Introduction

In matters of professional integration and social inclusion, the language repertoire of migrants is an omnipresent theme. It is crucial to notice, however, that language skills that migrants possess are often hierarchized in terms of their perceived importance (Resnyansky 2016: 2061). A certain strand of academic literature (e.g. Hoehne & Michalowski 2016; Guven & Islam 2015) and British policy papers such as *The Casey Review* (2016) and *The Interim Report on Integration* (APPG 2017) emphasize proficiency in the host country language. Skills in their mother tongue, however, are not particularly valued in these studies, and can even be vilified as potential root cause of ‘ghettoization’ (Bloch & Hirsch *forthcoming*: 4; Resnyansky 2016: 2056; Joseph 2006: 33). This view does not value the potential of the mother tongue of migrants as a tool for successful integration.

The Austrian case emerged as a strong example for successful integration with the help of their mother tongue. This study therefore supports a certain strand of literature, which acknowledges the power that a migrant’s mother tongue can have in terms of integration matters (Akkaymak 2016: 2617; Resnyansky 2016: 2061; Ek 2009; Christiansen 2004: 188). Although these contributions are noteworthy, they all only briefly mention the fact that the mother tongue of migrants can be advantageous for processes of professional integration and social inclusion. This section shows in more detail how – in the British context and in the case of Austrian migrants – the mother tongue of migrants can be used as a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu 2008: 282 ff.).

Austrian migrants affirmed they used their mother tongue as a tool for integration mainly in a professional environment. Most of the respondents had previously worked or were currently working in a profession where their German skills were highly valuable or even indispensable (see Table 1). Even though all Austrians had a high English proficiency, some stated that their English skills were not relevant at all for their professional lives. I argue that this was mostly due to the positive image that the German language conveys in the British context. In order to reflect on this exceptional situation more critically, this chapter goes into more detail about the privileged situation in which this particular migrant group finds itself.

Almost all Austrians have affirmed that their mother tongue had never been an obstacle to their social or professional integration. On the contrary, their German language skills were an asset in several situations. This is mostly due to the positive image that German conveys. This positive image is based on its linguistic prestige it has in the UK. Linguistic prestige is created through the fact that ‘[p]eople [...] use the speech of others as a clue to non-linguistic information about them, such as their social background and even personality traits like toughness or intelligence’ (Hudson 2012: 211). Stereotypes that are conveyed through language (Preston & Robinson 2005: 135 ff.), however, are not necessarily positive. In extreme cases, they can lead to social exclusion.

In the case of the Austrian informants, however, these linguistic stereotypes were mostly a motor for their integration success. It has been found that a prestigious language can be tremendously helpful for its speakers for insertion in the job market and in certain elite positions (see Bodomo & Teixeira-E-Silva 2012: 84 ff.). This is exactly what many Austrian respondents also reported. In the British context, the German language is a language of economic power and thus a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu 2008: 282 ff.). This is probably more due to Germany’s reputation than Austria’s. Although German is a pluricentric language, it is rarely perceived as such outside of the German-speaking world. The German language is usually associated with Germany and the Germans.

Due to Germany’s economic power, many Austrian interviewees happily accepted this conflation of all German-speakers. Although in other regards the Austrian group did not want to be seen as German, it acknowledged that in terms of professional integration the German reputation was mostly helpful for it. Informants highlighted the linguistic prestige of the German language, associating it to Germany’s excellent reputation ‘in the professional world and in education’ (Alexander). Martin mentioned the fact that Germany was a ‘big market’ for the British people. He went on saying that this reputation was beneficial for his own professional progress in the field of architecture. Hermine went even further stating that Germany did not only convey a positive economic image but also a culturally interesting one: ‘Germany has always been economically strong and it is a great country. It also has so many musicians, authors, scientists, and researchers. This is always advantageous.’ Others mentioned the good reputation that German citizens have in the professional world and stated that this was advantageous for Austrians. Such positive stereotypes included an ‘organized

⁷ Interview with Karina

mentality and accuracy' (Karina) or 'German punctuality' (Therese). Many more Austrians were aware of the fact that speaking German was an asset for them in terms of professional integration and most of them acknowledged that this was due to the link that British people established with Germany and its citizens rather than with Austria itself.

Outside of the professional realm, however, a few Austrians suffered from the immediate connection that British people draw between Germany and the German language. On a few occasions, they experienced it as a stumbling block to successful social inclusion. In cases where language is employed to draw separating lines of exclusion, scholars speak of 'language racism' (Weber 2015). Several Austrians underwent this kind of racism as soon as the German language was linked with Germany's fascist past (see Williams *et al.* 2002: 520). Interestingly, although Austria is equally responsible for the Holocaust, this kind of language racism did not endure as soon as the informants stated they were Austrian and not German. When I asked Christine whether her German language had ever been a disadvantage for her in the UK, she explained:

'No, not at all. Also, because I am not German. In Ireland, it happened to me quite often that someone talked to me in a pub and said: Oh, you're German? Often this person was really rude then and as soon as I said that I was Austrian, their attitude towards me changed to a more positive one. That means that cultural prejudices are much stronger against Germans than against Austrians, which helps us. [...] And in these cases this had definitely a connection with Germany's history.'

This is interesting because apparently the *Opferlüge* (victim thesis; see Wodak *et al.* 2009: 59), which states that Austria was Hitler's first victim, still prevails in the UK. This is the case even though Austria has tried – more or less successfully – to overcome this skewed image of its fascist history.

The heritage of the past – which the German language has to carry – has been mentioned by Brigitte as well. In her case, her son was bullied at school because of his German language. Ultimately, this led to Brigitte's decision to stop speaking German to her son and to raise him in English. This example of language racism dates back to 1975 when WWII was still far more present than today. Nowadays, the German language might not convey such a bad image anymore. In the case of other 'less prestigious' languages however, we can still observe many instances in which language racism can lead to a reticence to transmit the heritage language (e.g. Bloch & Hirsch *forthcoming*: 15).

These instances of language racism that Austrians have experienced should be regarded as exceptional. Their position in integration matters remains globally as one of privilege. Some informants were highly aware of this favorable position as migrants. Others, on the other hand, seemed surprised that I would ask them questions about discrimination and integration difficulties. Their surprise might be interpreted as an unawareness of the white privilege that they benefit from as European migrants who are on the one hand from an economically strong country and on the other employed in high-skilled jobs (see Kunz 2016: 91). A considerable share of these migrants does not see themselves as migrants but as ‘expatriates’. In fact, the Austrian Club London, where many interviewees were chosen, refers to its community as one of ‘expatriates’ (Austrian Club London 2017). This term should, however, be employed with caution as it creates an all too simple distinction between different groups of migrants – privileged and unprivileged. It overshadows certain similarities that all groups of migrants share and it reinforces social hierarchies that exist among different groups of migrants (Kunz 2016: 91).

Some Austrian interviewees were aware of their privilege, which elevated them to a favorable social position. Johannes, for instance, answered self-consciously when I asked him whether his mother tongue had ever disadvantaged him in the UK:

‘Luckily – even if someone recognizes my accent – Germany, Austria, and Switzerland have a better reputation. Also, our language has a higher reputation than other languages – European and others. Because of this, I fortunately have not had any negative experiences such as discrimination. But my friends from Poland, Lithuania or other people with a Slavic accent have surely had different experiences and suffered.’

The issue raised by Johannes in this quote points out a startling development: in the UK, Eastern European migrants are increasingly racialized (see Fox *et al.* 2012) and they experience language racism more and more often. According to McDowell (2008: 53), their being white does not exempt them from racism. This just shows how whiteness comes in different shades.

Melanie was equally self-conscious in assessing her privileged social position. She knew from her own experience that she was lucky not to suffer from language racism. She had a complicated migration trajectory, which led her from Russia, to Spain, then to Austria, and eventually to London. She stated that her experiences in Vienna, back when she was a child in the 90s, were far worse than the ones in London. As a little child, she still struggled

with her German skills and this was the reason why she was bullied in school. Later in London, however – now being multilingual with native proficiency in several languages – she has never been discriminated against because of her language. Her explanation for this was that London was a particularly multicultural place where differences in language skills did not matter as they did back in Vienna many years ago (see Block 2006 for accounts of London as a multilingual city).

This chapter has shown that the integration of migrants can be facilitated by their mother tongue skills. The Austrian case is in that sense an extreme example: many Austrians are dependent on their mother tongue skills for their successful professional integration in the British job market. Furthermore, instances of language racism are quite rare. Their social inclusion is not hindered by their non-native English skills. This chapter has emphasized however, that while Austrian migrants in the UK are privileged, such a positive picture cannot be drawn for every migrant group in the country.

Between Transnational and Translocal Lives:

Austrians and their Dialects

Introduction

All of my interviewees have affirmed that they lead transnational lives in some aspects. Their mother tongue emerges as a powerful tool in realizing such a lifestyle connecting their country of origin to their new home country. Reading the news in German is an integral part of most of the informants' daily routine. Communicating in German for professional or private reasons is nothing unusual for a majority of this focus group. Using German to maintain family ties to Austria has been mentioned as a necessity by all of the informants.

On the surface, these actions could all be described as transnational. A deeper look, however, reveals that the concept of transnationalism cannot always capture the complexity of the informants' multilingual reality. The limitation of the concept of transnationalism is that it is still confined to national borders (Waldinger & Fitzgerald 2004: 1188). The majority of the interview participants, though, said that their mother tongue was their dialect – not the Austrian national standard variant of German. This challenges the concept of transnationalism. Although the concept attempts to transgress national borders by emphasizing the ties between them, it does not sufficiently focus on scales other than the nation (Brickell & Datta 2011: 3) in which dialects, for instance, are localized. This final empirical chapter shines light on this tension.

The theoretical framework, which tries to go beyond the national scale, is the concept of translocalism. It helps understand migrants' situatedness in regions, towns or villages (*ibid*). As we have seen in the introduction, the different scales of interest with respect to the Austrian migrants' mother tongue are fourfold: the pan-Germanic scale, the national scale with different standard variants of German, the regional scale, and the local scale. This extraordinarily complex linguistic nature of German in general and German in Austria in particular has proven to be a stumbling block to the concept of transnationalism for this study. The concept of translocalism, in contrast, allows for a more nuanced approach and captures the importance that regional and local dialects have for many Austrian migrants in the UK. This importance was expressed in two ways. Firstly, many informants stated that their mother tongue was their dialect and not SG. Second, a significant number aimed to transmit their mother tongue to loved ones which ultimately meant passing on their dialects.

Some informants described their linguistic repertoire in a highly nuanced way. They stated that, already prior to leaving Austria, they had been living in a situation of diglossia between their dialect and SG. This phenomenon has been described in the Swiss context where dialects differ significantly from Swiss SG (Weber 2015: 26; Ender & Kaiser 2009: 2). It has been stated, though, that Austrians rather live in a situation of ‘dialect-standard-continuum’ (*ibid.*: 2). In the course of this study, some Austrians have, nevertheless, emphasized that their linguistic environment has always been characterized by the frequent use of a foreign language: SG. When I asked Johannes, for instance, what his mother tongue was for him, he put it the following way:

‘I always joke that my mother tongue is the dialect from the Waldviertel and that my first foreign language is German. [...] But yes, of course, my mother tongue is German but it’s not the language I grew up with.’

This quote shows quite well that, although Johannes would officially state that his mother tongue is German, the term mother tongue does not fully cover it. For him, his mother tongue is the language he was raised in, therefore the dialect from a particular part of Lower Austria. Karina, too, felt that SG was more of a foreign language to her. She had been working in a German transnational firm in London where all other colleagues spoke SG. She described this as a difficult experience ‘[...] because this would be the same for me if I had to switch to Spanish or Russian [which she had learned in school] because it is not intuitive.’ Another interview participant, Johanna, had similar feelings towards her mother tongue. She told me of a telephone conversation that she had to make with a German client for her job in London. She described the call as a ‘disaster’ because she had to use SG. She would have preferred to speak English or her dialect, which would have been a lot easier. These accounts show that the mother tongues of migrants are often located on a regional or local scale and not on a national one. In order to understand this phenomenon, the concept of translocalism is far more helpful than the concept of transnationalism.

Academic literature has identified the mother tongue of migrants as a strong emotional reminder of their country of origin (Bloch & Hirsch *forthcoming*: 7). Austrian migrants also used an emotionally charged language while connecting their mother tongue to their origin. Since some of the Austrians saw their mother tongue as their dialect and not as the Austrian national standard variant of German, these emotional attachments could also be described as

⁸ Interview with Johannes

translocal rather than transnational: it was their dialect that triggered emotional responses related to their origin. Speaking of her dialect, Susanne, for instance, employed emotionally charged expressions such as ‘family’, ‘traditions’ or ‘home’. The discussion of SG during the interview, however, did not provoke the same level of emotions with Susanne.

Speaking of the connection between their origin and their dialect incited many Austrian migrants to mention their ‘true’ identity. The mother tongue has been found to be a crucial identity marker in transnational settings (see e.g. Bloch & Hirsch *forthcoming*; Barkhuizen 2013; Erdinast-Vulcan 2011). In the case of Austrian migrants who understood their mother tongue as their dialect, their identity was shaped by translocality rather than transnationality. Karina put it most clearly:

‘It [her dialect] is definitely connected to home. When do I speak my dialect? When I speak it with my family and that’s it actually. [...] Then I feel more like myself, like the person I am because I grew up with that and it’s relaxing. [...] There [in her region], you can speak normally, the way you just do it and everyone understands you and you don’t have to change anything and this is practically your standard mode.’

This quote contains multiple references to Karina’s childhood in Lower Austria connected to family and growing up. Additionally, she closely ties her dialect to her ‘true’ self. Johannes employed an emotionally charged language as well when saying that his dialect was ‘closer to his heart’ and ‘something more special’ to him. For them their dialect – as opposed to SG – reminds them of their origin and their ‘true’ identity. In this regard too, the concept of translocalism is more useful to understand their reality.

Speech about their ‘true’ identity, however, might seem to contradict the first empirical chapter, which stated that these Austrian migrants had a more hybrid identity. This tension might be explained by the fact that Austrian SG is closer to German SG than Austrian dialects are. As I have mentioned earlier, Austrians try to distance themselves from Germans in many regards. The emphasis on the importance of their dialects might be another way for them to state that they are different from Germans. This has already been mentioned as one limitation of their hybrid identity in the first empirical chapter when saying that Austrian migrants did not want their fluid accents to be misunderstood as German accents.

The transmission of one's mother tongue to loved ones – children, partners and friends – is a considerable concern for many migrants (Eriksson 2015: 156). Various members of the group of Austrians felt the same and for many that meant passing on their dialects. Again, this approach can be best captured by the concept of translocalism, which allows for the regional and local scale on which migrants' dialects are located. Austrian migrants who emphasized the importance of their dialects in questions of language transmission stated reasons ranging from authenticity and necessity to stereotypes.

Being authentic with their loved ones was an important concern when informants spoke of their language policy towards them. One explanation as to why they wanted to pass on their dialect rather than SG was that it was more 'natural' to them. Johanna was the most passionate about this topic: 'It would be very unnatural for me to speak Standard German with my children. Because Standard German is not my language! The language I grew up with is Carinthian.' Johanna stated that she wanted to pass on her Carinthian identity to her future children, which she would not be able to do in SG. This was the same for Johannes who taught his partner some words of his dialect. He explained this by saying that only his dialect could really capture his personality, which was tightly linked to his region of origin. Martin had a more practical concern: he also described his 'natural' mother tongue as his dialect but he would have wanted to raise his future children in SG (I will come to the reason for this in the next section). However, his fear was that he would fail because he had never really felt comfortable with SG.

Another reason for passing on their dialect was that some Austrians perceived SG through the lens of particular stereotypes. Linguistic features can trigger stereotypes among perceivers of a certain language. These stereotypes can be linked to social class, age or education (Preston & Robinson 2005: 135 ff.). In Austria, such stereotypes are ascribed both to dialects and SG. Erika, for instance, was afraid that her children might be viewed negatively if they spoke with their family back in Austria in SG. She feared that her grandparents in particular would not appreciate it 'if they did not speak properly'. Speaking 'properly' was seen to be the way everyone in the village speaks, meaning in their dialect. This was further underlined by Hermine who also raised her children in her dialect 'because otherwise if you are somewhere in Austria, in a small village, no one speaks Standard German. So pretentious and affected'. This statement shows that she associated SG with particular negative stereotypes, too, which she did not want her children to be identified with.

For Lukas, SG was an ‘artificial’ language that had a ‘less personal character’. This consideration made him take the decision to raise his future children in his Styrian dialect.

On the other hand, some informants decided to do the contrary. Although their dialect was important to them, they were afraid it was less prestigious than SG (see Ender & Kaiser 2009: 19 on linguistic prestige). Martin, whom I have mentioned before, was one of the informants who thought it more sensible to raise his children in SG. Karina was struggling to answer the question of whether she would raise her child in her dialect. Eventually, she came to the conclusion that it would be better for her future child to learn SG because this was ‘simply the real German’.

Besides questions of authenticity and stereotypes, Austrian migrants identified passing on their dialect as a necessity. One reason why migrants pass on their mother tongues is to open up the possibility for their loved ones to participate in their transnational lifestyle (Hua & Wei 2016: 657; Sigad & Eisikovits 2009: 74). This was also mentioned as a valuable reason for the Austrian migrants. All parents or grandparents of the informants – with whom they communicated frequently – were back in Austria. Many of them did not speak English.⁹ Therefore, the Austrian migrants wanted their loved ones to learn German. Under certain circumstances, however, this would not have sufficed to enable them to communicate in translocal settings. Learning only the respective dialect could do so because this was the language their family in Austria employed.

Marianne, for instance, regretted that her husband had only a basic knowledge of German and no knowledge of her dialect. This led to difficulties:

‘Many things would be easier. We often have family gatherings and he doesn’t even want to come. First of all, everyone speaks a lot and very fast. Second, my brother speaks in the Tyrolean dialect. He [her husband] doesn’t understand a word.’

A similar problem was discussed during the interview with Johanna. She would want her partner to learn German to communicate with her Austrian family. She knew, however, that he would probably learn SG in a course in the UK and that in that case, he still would not be able to communicate with her grandparents who only speak the dialect from her valley. In these cases, passing on SG would not fulfill the task of including loved ones in keeping translocal ties between the UK and the Austrian region of origin of these migrants.

⁹ See Kim & Starks (2010) for language transmission as a task that concerns the whole family, including grandparents.

This last empirical chapter showed that the national scale was not sufficient to capture migrant experiences of the Austrian focus group. Questions related to their mother tongue and its transmission revealed that their lives are in many cases translocal. The concept of translocalism recognizes best the fact that their lives are oriented towards multiple localities that go beyond the national scale. Through the lens of language and looking at their sensitivity to dialect, we can clearly see that these Austrian migrants are not only driven by the national scale in their use of language. Other scales play a crucial role in that process as well.

Conclusion

‘The mother tongue of a migrant is something special.’ This is the statement with which the dissertation on Austrian migrants in the UK and their mother tongue began. In the course of this paper, it became clear in which ways the mother tongue of a migrant is special. It showed that it is a unique part of the identity of migrants; it demonstrated that the mother tongue of a migrant plays a particular role in integration processes; and it explored the exceptional place, which the mother tongue of a migrant holds in transnational and translocal practices. This study found that this uniqueness of the mother tongue of a migrant did not depend on the length of stay in a non-German-speaking country. It was inherent to every mother tongue of all participants.

Narratives of Austrian migrants provided the basis for the three empirical chapters, which were designed to respond to existing literature and to answer this dissertation’s research questions. Firstly, the (linguistic) identity of Austrian migrants was presented as having changed to a more hybrid one after they moved to the UK where their mother tongue was no longer the main language spoken. This finding supports a certain strand of literature, which understands the (linguistic) identity of migrants as hybrid, without essentializing it. Secondly, the mother tongue of Austrian migrants has been found to be an integration asset. This makes this dissertation one of the first studies, which elaborates on this phenomenon in more detail. Lastly, this paper has introduced translocalism as a useful conceptual tool to understand the mother tongue of migrants as a link connecting the origin of Austrian migrants and the context of the host country. To my knowledge, this concept has not yet been employed to explore the linguistic situation of migrants. For this purpose, scholars would rather base their work on the conceptual framework of transnationalism, which is insufficient for the particular Austrian context.

In this holistic account about the mother tongue of migrants, this angle proved to be an entry point, which provided helpful insights into the lives of migrants on various layers. Embedded in a phenomenological research tradition, it showed the complexity and the importance of the mother tongue of migrants in their understanding of the self, their host country context, and their transnational and translocal experiences. Such an approach, which tries to see the ‘lifeworld’ of migrants through the lens of their mother tongues, is rare in migration studies. Therefore, this dissertation is an important contribution to existing literature around the interstices of language and migration. Additionally, the particular case study that I have chosen for this project also addresses a certain gap in contemporary

literature on migration to the UK: Austrian migrants are usually overlooked as a group of migrants, but they proved to be a particularly interesting case for the discussion around migration and mother tongue.

Even though this dissertation tries to fill certain gaps in the literature, its limitations should be acknowledged. This dissertation has shown that the mother tongue of a migrant is an extremely complex phenomenon, which is dependent upon its origin, the host country context, and also the individual (migration) experience. Therefore, this dissertation cannot claim to speak for all migrants who live in a country where their mother tongue is no longer the main language spoken. It also cannot speak for all Austrians in the UK who speak German as their mother tongue. It should rather be seen as a qualitative dissertation, which tells the stories of the particular individuals whom I have interviewed. This does, however, not delimit its importance: in order to understand the phenomenon of the mother tongue of migrants in its whole complexity, its usage, and the migrants' relation to it, multiple accounts of very different individuals and migrant groups are needed. This dissertation is one of these accounts.

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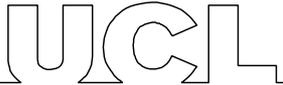
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Consent Form

UCL DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY



INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Understanding Migrant Lives Through the Lens of Language
Austrian Migrants in Great Britain and Their Relation to Their Mother Tongue

Purpose

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study, which explores the mother tongue integration of migrants. This project is being conducted by Stefanie Buzmaniuk, student at University College London in the Master's programme Global Migration. Findings from the research will be used to produce my Master's dissertation.

Consent

Your signature will indicate that you

- have decided to volunteer as a research participant in this study
• have read and understood the information provided above
• give me your permission to tape record the interview
• give me your permission to use your interview for my research

The researcher's signature will indicate that

- interview participants will be anonymized
• all data will be collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998

Signature of participant

Signature of researcher

Date

Date

UCL Department of Geography

Interview Schedule German

Generelle Informationen

- **Wie lange leben Sie schon außerhalb eines deutschsprachigen Landes?**
- **Warum haben Sie Österreich ursprünglich verlassen?**
- **Welchen Beruf üben Sie hier in Großbritannien aus?**
- **Wie würden Sie Ihre Sprachkompetenz im Englischen selbst einschätzen?**
- **Würden Sie sich selbst als jemanden beschreiben, der/die ein besonderes Interesse an Sprache hat?**
- **Was ist der höchste Bildungsabschluss, den Sie absolviert haben?**
- **Wieso haben Sie sich für meine Studie gemeldet?**

1.) Gebrauch der Muttersprache

- **Mit welchen Menschen sprechen Sie Deutsch?**
In welchem Land befinden sich diese Menschen?
Welche davon haben Sie in Großbritannien kennengelernt?
Wie viel Kontakt haben Sie mit den Menschen, mit denen Sie Deutsch sprechen?
Wie wichtig ist es Ihnen, dass Ihre Familie oder Ihre Freunde Deutsch sprechen?
- **Wann sprechen Sie Deutsch?**
In welchen Situationen sprechen Sie Deutsch (formell/informell)?
Sprechen Sie eher am Telefon oder durch persönlichen Kontakt deutsch?
Gibt es bestimmte Orte hier in Großbritannien, an denen Sie hauptsächlich Deutsch sprechen?
Wie ist es für Sie, wenn Sie wieder einmal Zeit in Österreich verbringen, wo überall Deutsch gesprochen wird?
- **Wie oft sprechen Sie Deutsch?**
Würden Sie gerne öfter Deutsch sprechen?

2.) Medien, Kultur und die Muttersprache

- **In welcher Sprache lesen Sie Zeitungen, schauen Sie Nachrichten und hören Sie Radio?**
In welchen Situationen konsumieren Sie Medien lieber auf Deutsch?
Warum glauben Sie, dass Ihnen in diesen Momenten deutschsprachige Medien lieber sind?
Inwiefern macht es für Sie einen Unterschied, ob Sie österreichische, bundesdeutsche oder schweizerische Medien konsumieren?
Wenn Sie versuchen, komplexe Sachverhalte zu verstehen, konsultieren Sie dann eher deutschsprachige Quellen oder englische?
In welcher Sprache verwenden Sie Social Media Kanäle, wie z.B. Facebook und warum?
- **Schauen Sie Filme lieber auf Deutsch oder in einer anderen Sprache?**
Wie ist es mit Büchern?
Wenn Sie manchmal deutschsprachige Filme/Bücher bevorzugen, warum ist das so?

3.) Persönliche Beziehung zur Muttersprache

- **Sehen Sie eher das Deutsche als Ihre Muttersprache oder Ihren regionalen Dialekt?**
Welchen Dialekt sprechen Sie?

Wie wichtig ist Ihnen dieser Dialekt?

Wie verwenden Sie Ihren Dialekt jetzt, da Sie nicht mehr in Österreich leben?

- **Welche Bedeutung hat Ihre Muttersprache für Sie?**

Sehen Sie Ihre Muttersprache hauptsächlich als Instrument für Kommunikationszwecke oder ist sie auch etwas Emotionelles?

Würden Sie sich selbst mit dem Deutschen definieren?

Wie wichtig ist Ihnen die Tatsache, dass Sie österreichisches und nicht bundesdeutsches Deutsch sprechen?

Wie sehr können Sie Sie selbst sein, wenn Sie nicht in Ihrer Muttersprache sprechen?

Wie sehen Sie das Deutsche – als Ihre Muttersprache, als Ihre Erstsprache, als Ihre Herkunftssprache? Inwiefern macht das einen Unterschied für Sie?

- **Was verbinden Sie mit Ihrer Muttersprache?**

Ist eine bestimmte Zeit für Sie gleichbedeutend mit Ihrer Muttersprache?

Welche Personen, Orte oder Emotionen assoziieren Sie mit dem Deutschen?

- **Welche Sprache dominiert in Ihren Gedanken?**

Inwiefern hat sich das verändert, seit Sie im Ausland leben?

Wann wechseln Sie in Gedanken in eine andere Sprache?

In welcher Sprache träumen Sie?

4.) *Selbstvertrauen bezüglich der Muttersprache*

- **Wie, glauben Sie, hat sich Ihre Muttersprache seit Ihrem Umzug verändert?**

Glauben Sie, dass Sie immer noch so flüssig Deutsch sprechen wie damals als Sie in Österreich gelebt haben?

Gibt es Momente, in denen Ihnen ein Wort auf Deutsch nicht sofort einfällt, aber in einer anderen Sprache schon?

Glauben Sie, dass Ihre Satzstruktur manchmal vom Englischen beeinflusst wird?

Wie oft verwenden Sie englische Wörter in deutschen Sätzen?

- **Gab es Zeiten, in denen Sie das Gefühl hatten, dass Ihnen Ihre Muttersprache irgendwie abhanden kommt?**

Wenn ja, stört Sie das?

Wieso hatten Sie dieses Gefühl?

Würden Sie aktiv etwas dagegen unternehmen wollen, falls Sie dieses Gefühl einmal hätten?

- **In welchen Situationen können Sie sich in Ihrer Muttersprache besser ausdrücken als im Englischen? Und inwiefern hat sich das durch Ihren Umzug geändert?**

Welche Themen oder Emotionen fallen Ihnen leichter auf Deutsch?

In welcher Sprache fluchen Sie?

Welche Ereignisse können Sie besser auf Deutsch erzählen?

Gibt es Menschen, mit denen Sie Deutsch sprechen, obwohl diese auch in einer anderen Sprache mit Ihnen sprechen könnten?

5.) *Weitergabe der Muttersprache*

- **Wenn Sie Kinder haben, wollen Sie, dass diese Deutsch lernen?**

Wie würden Sie wollen, dass Ihre Kinder Deutsch lernen?

Würden Sie wollen, dass Ihre Kinder Deutschkurse besuchen / in eine deutschsprachige Schule gehen?

Welches Deutsch sollten Ihre Kinder dann lernen – Ihren Dialekt, österreichisches Deutsch, Standarddeutsch? Macht das einen Unterschied für Sie?

Welche Rolle würde das Deutsche im Vermitteln österreichischer Kultur eine Rolle spielen?

- **In welcher Sprache wollen Sie persönlich Ihre Kinder großziehen?**
Wieso möchten Sie Ihre Kinder in dieser Sprache großziehen?
In welcher Sprache würden Sie mit ihnen sprechen, ihnen vorlesen?
- **Mit welchen nicht-deutschsprachigen Menschen würden Sie manchmal gerne Deutsch sprechen?**
Würden Sie diesen Menschen gerne selbst Deutsch beibringen?
Fänden Sie es gut, wenn diese Menschen Deutsch lernen würden?
Was würde sich dadurch verändern?

6.) *Fremdwahrnehmung der eigenen Muttersprache*

- **Wie sehen Ihre nicht-deutschsprachigen Freunde/Kollegen/Familienmitglieder Ihre deutsche Muttersprache?**
Wenn Sie Englisch sprechen, werden Sie dann manchmal darauf angesprochen, dass Sie einen Akzent haben?
Gibt es Momente, in denen Sie von anderen auf Ihre Muttersprache angesprochen werden?
Wie erleben Sie diese Momente (positiv/negativ)?
Wie haben Sie früher, als Sie in Großbritannien angekommen sind, darauf reagiert, wenn Sie jemand auf Ihren Akzent/Ihre Muttersprache angesprochen hat?
- **Inwiefern ist Ihre Muttersprache für Sie ein Vorteil hier in Großbritannien?**
Inwiefern hat Ihnen das Deutsche in professioneller Hinsicht geholfen?
Hatten Sie je das Gefühl, dass Ihre deutsche Muttersprache für Sie hier in Großbritannien ein Hindernis war?
In welchen Momenten sprechen Sie lieber nicht Deutsch mit anderen oder wollen Sie lieber nicht, dass andere wissen, dass Sie Deutsch-MuttersprachlerIn sind?
Wann oder in welchen Situationen waren Sie stolz darauf, dass Deutsch Ihre Muttersprache ist?

Interview Schedule English

General information

- **How long have you been living in a non-German speaking country for?**
- **Why did you decide to leave Austria?**
- **What is your profession in the UK?**
- **How would you evaluate your language proficiency in English?**
- **Would you describe yourself as someone who is particularly interested in language?**
- **What is the highest level of education you have completed?**
- **Why did you decide to volunteer for my research project?**

1.) Use of mother tongue

- **With whom do you speak in German?**
In which country do these people live?
Whom of these people have you met in UK?
How much contact do you have with people with whom you speak German?
How important is it for you that your family or friends speak German?
- **When do you speak German?**
In which situations do you speak German (formal/informal situations)?
Do you tend to speak German on the phone or in person?
Are there any particular sites in UK where you mainly speak German?
How do you experience being in a German-speaking environment when you are back in Austria for some time?
- **How often do you speak German?**
Would you like to speak German more often?

2.) Media, culture and the mother tongue

- **In which language do you read newspapers, watch the news or listen to the radio?**
In which situations do you prefer media sources in German?
Why do you believe that – in these moments – you prefer news in German?
To what extent does it matter to you whether you consume Austrian, German or Swiss media?
When you try to understand complex issues, in which language do you do the research?
In which language do you use social media, like Facebook and why?
- **Do you prefer films in German or in other languages?**
What about books?
If you prefer books/films in German sometimes, why is that so?

3.) Personal relation to the mother tongue

- **Do you think of your mother tongue in terms of Standard German or rather in terms of your regional dialect?**
Which dialect do you speak?
How important is this dialect for you?
How do you use your dialect now that you do not live in Austria any longer?

- **How important is your mother tongue to you?**
Do you see your mother tongue as a communication tool or rather as something more emotional?
Would you define yourself with your German mother tongue?
How important is it for you that you speak Austrian German rather than German German?
To what extent can you be yourself in situations when you do not speak German?
How do you understand the German language – as your mother tongue, as your first language, as your language of origin? To what extent does that matter for you?
- **What do you associate with your mother tongue?**
Is there any particular time period that you associate with your mother tongue?
Which persons, places or emotions come to your mind when you think of your mother tongue?
- **Which language dominates in your thoughts?**
To what extent has that changed since you first moved to Great Britain?
When do you switch languages in your mind?
In which language do you dream?

4.) *Self-confidence in terms of one's mother tongue*

- **In what ways has your mother tongue changed since the moment you have stopped living in a German-speaking country?**
Do you think that your German is as fluent now as it was at the moment when you stopped living in a German speaking country?
Are there any moments when certain German words do not immediately come to your mind but in another language they do?
Do you think that the structure of your German sentences is ever influenced by the English sentence structure?
How often do you use English words in German sentences?
- **Were there any time periods when you had the impression that you might lose your mother tongue in a certain way?**
If so, does that trouble you?
Why did you have that kind of impression?
Would you actively react against the attrition of your mother tongue if you had that kind of impression?
- **In which situations is it easier for you to express something in German than in English? And how has that change since you have moved?**
Which subjects or emotions can you address more easily in German?
In which language do you swear?
Which events do you recount more easily in German?
Are there people in your life to whom you could speak in another language than German but you still prefer talking to them in German?

5.) *Passing on one's mother tongue*

- **If you have/or would have children, would you want them to learn German?**
How would you want them to learn German?
Would you want them to go to a German-speaking school or attend German language courses?
Which kind of German should your children learn – your dialect, Austrian German, Standard German? Does it matter?
Which kind of role would the passing on of your mother tongue play in the passing on of the Austrian culture?

- **In which language would you raise your children personally?**
Why would you want to raise your children in this particular language?
In which language would you talk/read to them?
- **To whom in your life – who is non-German speaking – would you sometimes rather talk in German?**
Would you like to teach these people German yourself?
Would you appreciate it if these people learned German?
What would change if these people spoke German?

6.) *Perception of one's mother tongue by others*

- **How do your friends/family members/colleagues who are non-German speaking perceive your German mother tongue?**
If you speak English, do people sometimes point out your accent?
Are there any moments when people talk to you about your mother tongue?
How do you perceive these kinds of moments (positively/negatively)?
How did you react on comments about your accent shortly after you have arrived in Great Britain?
- **To what extent, do you think, is your mother tongue an asset for you here in Great Britain?**
To what extent did your mother tongue help you in professional regards?
Did you ever have the impression that your mother tongue was an obstacle for you here in?
In which moments do you prefer not to talk in German to others or when do you prefer others not to know that you are a German native speaker?
When and in which situations are you proud that German is your mother tongue?

N.B.: All participants were asked the questions in bold. All other questions were optional. Some questions asked during the interviews are not shown on this interview schedule as they depended on the individual conversation flow. Participants did not receive the interview schedule beforehand.

Interview Transcript (Excerpt – German)

Auszug aus dem Interview mit Johanna

Transcription Key:

I: Interviewer | J: Johanna

bold - louder passages

underlined - emphasized passages

// - sentence interrupted

#...# - simultaneous speech

((...)) - non-verbal communication

((pause)) - pause

I: Wie verwendest du jetzt den Dialekt, wenn du hier bist?

J: Goar net. Also außer mit z'haus telefonieren oder so, goar net. #Leider.

I: Und geht's dir ab?#

J: Ja!

I: Ja?

J: Ja! Ja, manchmal is schwierig, überhaupt, wenn ma länger in einer Beziehung is und du willst a bissl so ((pause)) gelockerter reden oder du hast a bestimmte Redewendung, die im Deutschen afach des besser auf den Punkt bringt, was du sagen willst, dann is des a bissi so, na, geht net. ((lacht))

I: Würdest du also sagen, dein Dialekt is dir näher als das Hochdeutsche?

J: Definitiv, ja! Es Hochdeutsche klingt für mi noch immer noch sehr unnatürlich. Im Schriftlichen passt des, aber im Reden noch immer unnatürlich für mi.

I: Und wenn du für dich selbst deine Muttersprache beschreiben musst, ist das eher der Dialekt oder is es das Hochdeutsche?

J: Dialekt! Definitiv! #Ja, hundert Prozent!

I: Ok.# Was is dann die Muttersprache für dich?

J: Kärtnerisch, ((lacht)) ja, definitiv. Mit dem samma aufgewachsen. Es redet keiner Hochdeutsch, des gibt's net.

I: Und ist dann deine Muttersprache für dich etwas Emotionelles oder siehst du's jetzt eher als Kommunikationsinstrument?

J: I würd schon sagen emotional, weil du bist mit dem verbunden, seit du a Baby bist. Dei Mama und dei Papa haben immer so mit dir gredet und ham da guat zuagredet in der Sprache. Also i glaub schon, dass es emotionell is, dass ma sich afach wohl fühlt und daham fühlt und do is man her und, ja.

I: Ok und würdest du dich mit dem Deutschen definieren oder mit dem Dialekt definieren? ((pause)) #Is es Teil von dir?

J: **Jo, definitiv**#, i hob 22 Jahr gredet. ((lacht)) Deswegen, jo, jo, bestimmt.

I: Und ich weiß nicht, hast du einen Akzent im Englischen?

J: Jain. Also Arbeitskollegen und so weiter sagen, meiner is ziemlich britisch. Man waß, dass i nit von do bin also eingeboren, aber man kann nit außerhören, dass i Deutsch bin oder deutschsprachig bin. Ja, also bis jetzt hat's no **kaner** erraten, dass Deutsch meine Muttersprache is. Meistens sagen sie aber Länder, die Germanistik in sich haben. Also sie sagen viel Niederlande, Südafrika, solche Sachen dann. Was interessant is, wenn man waß, jo, ok, Germanistik is in de drinnen, also //

I: Und wenn sie dich dann auf deinen Akzent ansprechen, wie is das dann für dich? ((pause)) Empfindest du das als was Negatives oder is es dir // ?

J: Na, überhaupt net, weil i hab schon immer glesen, dass wenn man noch sieben Jahr alt is oder so, wenn man nachhand a Sproch lernt, kriegt man nie den Akzent weg und deswegen hob i mir gedacht, des werd eh nit funktionieren. ((lacht)) Na, i find's überhaupt net schlimm. I find's eher so interessant, dass sich Leute interessieren, ok von wo bist du her, weil i den Akzent jetzt her. Weil meistens wissen se glei von anam Akzent, ok, der is Spanisch, weil's halt an ziemlich starker Akzent is, und Deutsche eigentlich ah ham an ziemlich starken Akzent. Also kann man glei außerhören, aber dann, wenn sie di fragen, und nit wissen, find i's eigentlich interessant, mir macht des nix. I frog sie dann immer, was manst, wo i her bin. I sag nit glei, i bin Österreicherin, weil sie's nie erraten. ((lacht)) Und dann is des immer so lustig, wenn i sag na, na, i bin aus Österreich. ((lacht))

I: Ok. Und wie sehr kannst du du selbst sein, wenn du nicht Deutsch sprichst?

J: Sehr! Im Englischen bin i schon so, ((pause)) jo, i kann's ma ah nimma wegdenken. Also ah wenn i jetzt zum Beispiel wieder nach Österreich zurück gehen würd, würd mein Partner würd i halt für immer Englisch reden und unsere Kinder werden für immer auch Englisch reden. Also, da bin i jetzt ziemlich ((pause)) natürlich, glaub i, a i selber.

I: Und ist das Deutsche für dich – also in der Literatur gibt's immer so wahnsinnig viele Kontroversen darüber, ob man Muttersprache sagen soll, oder Erstsprache oder was weiß ich, oder Hauptsprache, oder was gibt's noch,

Herkunftssprache – welcher Begriff beschreibt am besten das Deutsche für dich?

J: **Muttersprache**! Definitiv, ja.

I: Wieso dieser Begriff?

J: Es hat schon immer so ghaßen, oder?

I: Ja.

J: I hob nie den Begriff Hauptsprache oder so ghört. Für uns war's immer Muttersprache. Von dem bin i schon so aufgewachsen und in der Schule ham's ah immer gsagt Muttersprache. Also es war schon immer so.

I: Und was verbindest du dann mit deiner Muttersprache? Gibt's irgendwie eine bestimmte Zeit oder Personen oder Orte?

J: **Muttersprache** is für mi einfach Österreich. Österreich definitiv und Familie und Freunde. Also jetzt ah wieder, glaub i, zurück zum Emotionalen, man verbindet dadurch das Heimatland, die Leute, die dir am nächsten san, die di am besten kennen, Familie, Freunde, die Engsten in deinem Umkreis.

I: Ja. Und wenn du nachdenkst, in welcher Sprache denkst du nach?

J: Verschieden. Manchmal denk i im Deutschen, manchmal im Englischen. I kann's aber net sagen, wann i was denk. ((lacht)) Des is komisch, manchmal träum i im Deutschen und i träum ah im Englischen. Und es kummt wirklich drauf an, in welcher Situation, dass i oft amal in Englisch denk oder oft amal Deutsch.

I: Ok.

J: I kann's gar net sagen, wann was is. Es switch oanfach.

N.B.: During this interview, Johanna spoke in her dialect, which I tried to capture in the German transcription.

Interview Transcript (Excerpt – English)

Excerpt from Interview with Johanna

Transcription Key:

I: Interviewer | J: Johanna

bold – louder passages

underlined – emphasized passages

// – sentence interrupted

#...# – simultaneous speech

((...)) – non-verbal communication

((pause)) – pause

I: How do you use your dialect now?

J: Not at all. Only if I speak with my family at home or something like that. Not at all #Unfortunately.

I: And do you miss it?#

J: Yes!

I: Yes?

J: Yes! Yes, sometimes it's hard, especially if you are in a more long-term relationship and you want to speak in a more ((pause)) relaxed way or you simply have certain sayings that state the thing you want to say more precisely in German – and then it's always, no that doesn't work. ((laughs))

I: Would you say that your dialect is closer to you than Standard German?

J: Definitely, yes! Standard German still sounds a bit unnatural to me. If it's written it's ok but if I speak it, it's still unnatural to me.

I: And if you had to describe your mother tongue to yourself, is it then rather the dialect or Standard German?

J: Dialect! Definitely! #Yes, one hundred percent!

I: Ok.# Then, what is your mother tongue to you?

J: Carinthian, ((laughs)) yes, definitely. This is what we grew up with. No one speaks Standard German. That doesn't exist.

I: And is your mother tongue something emotional for you or do you rather see it as a communication tool?

J: I would rather say emotional, because you are connected to it since you are a baby. Your mum and your dad have always talked to you like that and talked fondly to you in this language. So I do believe that it is emotional, that you simply feel comfortable and at home and this is where you are from and yes.

J: Ok and would you define yourself with Standard German or with the dialect? ((pause)) #Is it part of you?

J: **Yes, definitely**#, I have been speaking it for 22 years. ((laughs)) Because of that, yes, yes, definitely.

I: And, I don't know, do you have an accent in English?

J: Yes and no. Well, colleagues and others say that mine is pretty British. They know that I am not a native but they cannot hear that I'm German or German-speaking. Yes, so up to now **no-one** could guess that German is my mother tongue. But most of the time, they mention countries that have Germanic roots in them. So they mention the Netherlands, South Africa, such things. Which is interesting if you know that Germanic roots are in there //

I: And if they mention your accent, how do you find that? ((pause)) Do you perceive that as something negative or do you // ?

J: No, not at all because I have always read that if you learn a language after the age of seven or something like that, if you learn a language afterwards, you cannot get rid of the accent and this is why I thought that this is never going to work ((laughs)). No, I don't find it annoying. I rather find it interesting that people care, ok where are you from because I hear your accent. Because mostly they know because of the accent, oh ok, he is Spanish because they have a pretty strong accent. And Germans, too, actually they have a pretty strong accent. So you can hear right away, but then if people ask and don't know, I find that actually interesting, I don't care. Then I ask them always where I am from. I don't tell them right away, I'm Austrian because they never guess it right ((laughs)). And then it's always so funny when I say, no, no, I am from Austria. ((laughs))

I: Ok. And to which extent can you be yourself if you don't speak German?

J: Very much! In English, I am ((pause)) yes, I can't image myself without. Also if I went back to Austria, for instance, my partner and I would always speak in English and our kids would always speak English. Well, in this respect, I am pretty ((pause)) natural, I think, and also myself.

I: And is German for you – well in the literature there are a lot of controversies about whether we should say mother tongue, first language, or I don't know, main language or what else? Language of origin – which term describes best what German is for you?

J: **Mother tongue!** Definitely, yes.

I: Why this term?

J: It has always been called like that, no?

I: Yes.

J: I've never heard the term main language or so. For us it has always been mother tongue. I grew up with that and in school they also said mother tongue. It has always been like that.

I: And what do you associate with your mother tongue? Is there a particular time or persons or places?

J: **Mother tongue** for me is simply Austria. Definitely Austria and family and friends. Also if we go back to the emotional part, you link it to your home, the people who are the closest to you, who know you best, family, friends, the closest in your world.

I: Yes. And which language dominates in your thoughts?

J: That varies. Sometimes I think in German, sometimes in English. But I can't say when I use which language ((laughs)). This is weird, sometimes I dream in German and I also dream in English. And it really depends on the situation whether I think in English or in German.

I: Ok.

J: I really can't say when it is English and when German. It often switches.