

## MINORITY GROUPS AND LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IN GERMANY AND BRAZIL: AN INTERVIEW WITH GÖZ KAUFMANN (UNIVERSITY OF FREIBURG, GERMANY)

GRUPOS MINORITÁRIOS E DIVERSIDADE LINGUÍSTICA NA ALEMANHA E NO  
BRASIL: UMA ENTREVISTA COM GÖZ KAUFMANN (UNIVERSIDADE DE  
FREIBURG)

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Göz Kaufmann, who obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Heidelberg, Germany, in 1997, completed his habilitation treatise in 2016 and received the *venia legendi (livre docência)* in German Linguistics from the University of Freiburg, Germany. He holds a permanent position as a senior lecturer (*Akademischer Oberrat*) for linguistics in the German Department of the University of Freiburg. Kaufmann's main research areas are sociolinguistics, language contact, language variation, and language change. In the area of language variation and change, his focus is on German minority varieties spoken in South America, particularly Mennonite Low German and Pomerano. Aside from lexical and morphological variation, he analyzes syntactic variation in these varieties combining variationist and generative approaches. Göz Kaufmann worked in Brazil as a guest professor and representative of the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) at the UFRGS and the USP. At the University of Pelotas (UFPel), he has already taught several courses and presented numerous talks. For more information, see <http://paul.igl.uni-freiburg.de/kaufmann/?Home>

**1. You have been working in Brazil for at least twenty years. Which aspects and findings from your work in our country would you highlight in particular, given the fact that, in the last four years alone, you have collected data from three different states – Rio Grande do Sul, Espírito Santo and Rondônia?**

I am indeed very lucky to have had the opportunity to live and work in Brazil for ten years (1997–2003 at the UFRGS in Porto Alegre and 2005–2008 at the USP in São Paulo). I am also lucky that, after my return to Germany, I have been able to come back to Brazil on numerous occasions. As a representative of the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), as a visiting professor, and, more recently, as a visiting researcher, I have spent much time at Brazilian universities, become acquainted with many Brazilian scientists and, most importantly, with many Brazilians. All these encounters have been immensely gratifying.

With regard to my research in Brazil and, more generally, in South America, I would like to highlight two areas. First, I am interested in language and group attitudes (cf., e.g., KAUFMANN, 2011), i.e., on the one hand, I want to learn something about what people think about their own

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language(s) and how they evaluate their *we*-group. On the other hand, and equally as important, I want to know how these people evaluate the *they*-groups they are in contact with, i.e., what do they think about (speakers of) contact languages?

With this in mind, I spent quite some time in the border cities of Rio Grande do Sul, Uruguay, and Argentina. While there, I conducted more than 600 written interviews with high school students (cf. KAUFMANN, 2019 and 2010). Thanks to these interviews, I learnt a lot about what Brazilian students think about Spanish and about Uruguayans/Argentineans and what Uruguayan/Argentinean students think about Portuguese and about Brazilians. Coming from Europe, the linguistic role of Portuguese in South America was somewhat surprising for me; well, actually it was not that surprising since I was aware of the continental dimensions of Brazil and its economic dominance in South America. Despite this knowledge, it was an intriguing experience to see how this dominance influences the positive as well as the negative attitudes of, for example, Uruguayan high school students. While most Brazilian high school students seem to have a benevolent, albeit somewhat incurious attitude towards their neighboring countries – at least as long as soccer is not involved –, many Uruguayans either feel threatened by their huge neighbor or are strongly attracted to it. Regardless of their attitude, most speak Portuguese astonishingly well, while most Brazilian high school students speak a rudimentary kind of Spanish at best. This obviously does not mean that Brazilians are worse language learners; it just means that they do not feel a comparable need to learn their neighbors' language.

My second major research interest concerns the (verbal) syntax of German varieties spoken in the Americas. In order to elicit relevant data – unlike most researchers that work in the generative framework, I base my conclusions on real language data –, I asked 321 speakers of Mennonite Low German from Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, Mexico, and the United States to translate 46 Portuguese, Spanish, or English stimulus sentences. Granted, these data, which were collected between 1999 and 2002 and can be accessed in the IDS-archive of spoken German (cf. KAUFMANN, 2018a), are not natural in a narrow sense, but they are definitely more valid than researcher-based intuitions about the grammaticality of researcher-constructed clauses. The biggest asset of these roughly 14,500 translations is the fact that they allow a (statistical) analysis of different, sometimes rather rare syntactic aspects of Mennonite Low German, including the clause-final serialization of verbal elements and the depth of embedding of different types of dependent clauses (cf., e.g., KAUFMANN, 2018b, 2015, and 2007).

As the analyses of these translations turned out to be very fruitful, I have been re-applying this method over the course of the last four years. This time, the target language is Pomerano as spoken by the descendants of immigrants from Eastern Pomerania (cf. KAUFMANN in preparation and 2017). While I was teaching a course at the UFPel in Pelotas, RS, Luís Centeno do Amaral took me to a Pomeranian school in the interior of the municipality of São Lourenço do Sul. Within a couple of minutes, my interest was aroused and has not diminished since. Therefore, between 2017 and 2019, I stayed with Pomeranians in Rio Grande do Sul three times, twice with Pomeranians in Rondônia, and once with Pomeranians in Espírito Santo. During these field trips, I conducted 248 interviews in which the informants were asked to translate sixty Portuguese stimulus sentences. Again, this resulted in roughly 14,500 translations. This time, however, I also recorded free conversations, i.e., I recorded how Pomeranians converse with each other when the researcher is not present. Among other things, this new type of data will allow me to indirectly evaluate the validity of the data from the translation task.

**2. Taking into account all those data collected in different regions, we wonder which aspects from our linguistic diversity you consider most interesting.**

With regard to German varieties in Brazil, the most striking point is that they still exist. This alone bears witness to the huge amount of linguistic diversity in Brazil. Normally, immigrant languages disappear within three generations. In the United States, very few descendants of immigrants from German-speaking regions of Europe still speak a German variety. For example, 90% of all Pomeranians that left the Kingdom of Prussia went to the United States, but Pomeranian varieties have almost entirely disappeared there. In contrast and in spite of the fact that only a tiny percentage of Pomeranians migrated to Brazil, there are some 200,000 speakers of Pomerano. Importantly, they maintained their language in spite of the severe juridical measures implemented during the time of the *Estado Novo*, the main purpose of which was to subdue German, Italian, and other migrant languages and their speakers.

The reason for this strongly differing behavior of Pomeranians in the United States and in Brazil is the fact that many immigrants that arrived in Brazil in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century differed from the majority population in important aspects. The Pomeranians, for example, are Lutherans and not Catholics, i.e., there was and frequently still is a huge cultural-religious barrier between them and the majority population of Brazil. This was different in the United States, where Protestantism is stronger. Second, the Pomeranians are very light-skinned. On the one hand, this causes severe health problems among them, most prominently skin cancer. On the other hand, however, they did fit the ideology of the *branqueamento da raça* ('racial whitening'), although this racist ideology became more widespread only after the arrival of most immigrants from the German-speaking regions of Europe. However, the gist of this ideology had been around for quite some time and may have strengthened the immigrants' desire to not intermingle with less white and especially with black people. Ironically, this reaction thwarted one aspect of racial whitening, namely miscegenation (cf. Modesto Brocos' painting *A Redenção de Cam*). Third and perhaps most importantly, most of the immigrants from Europe were poor. The Pomeranians, for example, left a socio-economic situation that was run by a very powerful class of men, the so-called *Junker*, whose power was comparable to the power of slaveholders in Brazil. As almost all Pomeranians had heard about slavery in Brazil and many of them had been explicitly warned about the danger of (again) becoming enslaved upon arrival, they may have preferred to maintain their distance and not to delve too deeply into this "dangerous" society.

For one part then, I am impressed by the linguistic diversity in Brazil due to immigration, and not just due to the immigration of German-speaking people. However, I am even more impressed by the overwhelming "official" discourse of monolingualism in Brazil, a discourse that stands in stark contrast to reality. Aside from the lack of attention given to minority languages, the negation of the existence of diatopic variation of Portuguese, with the exception of so-called regional accents, is a rather curious fact in a country of this size and especially in a country where nobody seems to know what Standard Portuguese looks like and where and by whom it is spoken. Even more striking is the absence of a constructive discussion about the even bigger amount of diastratic variation. Despite the fact that this variation is the object of much sociolinguistic research (cf., e.g., the work of Marcos Bagno, especially BAGNO, 2000), it is curious how little this variation and its consequences are talked about outside the realm of linguistic research. The only exception to this are frequent, mostly indiscriminate comments about how many people in Brazil are not able to speak Portuguese correctly despite the fact that Portuguese is their first and frequently their only language. The coincidence of the frequent ignorance about which forms could be called Standard Portuguese and a rather non-scientific "knowledge" of supposedly incorrect forms such as "*ele vai vim*" (instead of *ele vai vir*, 'he will come'), "*nós falemo*" (not as subjunctive mood) or "*nós fala*" (both instead of *nós falamos*, 'we speak'), "*para tu fazer*" (instead of *para tu fazeres*, 'for you to do'), and "*três filho*" (instead of *três filhos*, 'three children') is indeed worthy of more research.

This stubbornly defended “knowledge” of the “incorrect” and the coinciding ignorance of the “correct” may remind some people of the attitude of many Brazilians towards their racial history. Chico Buarque describes racism in Brazil in a telling interview as “*uma coisa muito mal resolvida no Brasil [...] o Brasileiro não aceita o fato de ser mestiço*” (‘an unresolved, very bad thing in Brazil [...] Brazilians do not accept the fact that they are of mixed blood’) (cf. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76vYuupKPwo>; 1:55 minutes; last accessed on November 28, 2019). Perhaps, Brazilians could improve their situation substantially if they accepted their obvious racial history, because, in this case, a powerful line from Jorge Aragão’s song *Preto, Cor Preta* could be applied to almost all of them: “*Preto que tem resolvida sua cor, não tem que se impor, nem que se curvar!*” (‘A black person that has resolved his color does not have to impose himself, neither does he have to bend down’). Curiously, many Brazilians are convinced that they do not partake in the things they consider “wrong” or “undesirable”. With regard to language, this is the lack of (verbal) congruence; with regard to ancestry, this is any hint of black or indigenous blood. Evidently, neither linguistic stereotypes nor racism are Brazilian trademarks. I am German and I am very much aware of the infamous history of my country. In the whole world, these two plagues seem to be caused either by a reluctance to accept crucial (scientific) facts or by widespread ignorance about such facts.

With regard to linguistic stereotypes, it is important to know that official languages and/or standard varieties are grammatically no more complex than non-standard varieties. They just happen to be the varieties that, in the past, were patronized by people with much capital in the linguistic market. Max Weinreich described this fact in his famous quip: “A language is a dialect with an army and navy.” With regard to racism, it is important to know that the origin of *homo sapiens*, i.e., of all of us, lies in Africa. And yes, this means that not only almost all Brazilians are black or have black blood running through their veins, but also that the ancestors of the entirety of human kind were all black. After all, our evolution took place in the tropical regions of Africa where it was definitely an advantage to have a skin color that protected against the intensity of the tropical sun. Just ask Pomeranians in Espírito Santo or white Australians about their skin problems. It was their subsequent evolution in Europe that left them too light-skinned to cope in the tropics. This all means that, regardless of whether we are lightly colored Caucasians, i.e., Europeans, or whether we are from Asia and have almond-shaped eyes, we are all intimately related to Mother Africa or as Richard Dawkins says it on a T-shirt: “We are all Africans.”

In my opinion, the only difference between Brazil and most other countries is that the chasm between imagination and reality is particularly marked. After all, black people formed the majority of the Brazilian population for a very long time and therefore, it cannot come as a surprise that virtually all Brazilians have at least some black heritage. Sometimes, this fact is jokingly referred to with the infamous saying that *ele tem um pé na cozinha* (‘He has a foot in the kitchen’), a euphemism that conveniently hides the countless cases of rape of enslaved black women in the history of Brazil. As visibly black people were and, in spite of existing quotas for entrance to universities, are still frequently denied access to (higher/quality) education, it cannot come as a surprise that large portions of the Brazilian population developed a unique form of speaking, importantly, a unique form, not an incorrect one!

### **3. The attitudes of language users towards language varieties is one of the topics you have researched in your career. Do you notice any differences between the attitudes of Brazilians and Germans towards minority languages and cultures?**

Actually, I think that, with regard to minority groups, there are some striking similarities between Germany and Brazil. In both countries, there are autochthonous and allochthonous

minorities and in both countries, the smaller autochthonous minorities enjoy more rights than the larger allochthonous minorities. In Germany, for example, the political party of the very small Danish minority in the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein is one of only three political parties that do not have to gain 5% of the cast votes in state elections in order to enter the respective state parliament. The other two parties represent the Sorbian and the Frisian minorities. Aside from this, several autochthonous minority languages are protected under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. This is true for, among others, Northern Frisian, Low German, Sorbian, a Slavic language spoken in East Germany, Romani, the language of the Roma, and German sign language.

With regard to allochthonous minorities in Germany, it is important to know that many German politicians and citizens do not (want to) consider Germany a country of immigration, although this, just like the negation of a general black descent in Brazil, is nothing more than a figment of imagination. As early as in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, 50,000 Protestants from France, the so-called Huguenots, fled persecution and found a new home in Berlin and the surrounding regions of Brandenburg. Likewise, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, many Polish migrants arrived in the Ruhr valley to work in the local coalmines. Then, after World War II, mass immigration from Southern Europe occurred. The biggest group came from Turkey; more than 800,000 people, among them many Kurds, arrived mainly from Anatolia. More recently, many citizens of (South)-Eastern member countries of the European Union and more than one million refugees from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and several African countries have arrived in Germany. Today, there are ten million foreigners living in Germany, i.e., roughly 12% of the total population of 83 million.

A glance at two soccer-related facts will help to understand the fact that immigration has always played an important role in German history. (i) When FC Schalke 04, arguably the most traditional club in Germany, won its first national championship in 1934, a Polish sports journal titled: "The German championship in the hands of Poles: Triumph of the players of Schalke 04, the team of our compatriots" (cf. URBAN, 2011, p. 49-52). Judging from the players' names, among them Emil Czerwinski, Ernst Kalwitzki, Ernst Kuzorra, Fritz Szepan, or Otto Tibulski, this allegation does not seem to be very far-fetched although all these players were born in Gelsenkirchen, the home city of FC Schalke 04, and although this provocation was dangerously political in this period. (ii) The German team of 2014, which, as some readers may remember, won the World Cup in Brazil, is also interesting in this respect as six of its 23 players had a migration background. Unlike Miroslav Klose, the record goal scorer of all World Cups, who like Lukas Podolski and despite his German surname was born in Poland, Mesut Özil (son of Turkish immigrants), Sami Khedira (father from Tunisia), Shkodran Mustafi (son of Albanian immigrants), and Jérôme Boateng (father from Ghana) were all born in Germany. These six players scored four of the eighteen German goals, two of which were scored on July 8, 2014...

With regard to the political reactions to immigration and thus to minority languages, it is noteworthy that due to a more supposed than real threat of a German interference/invasion in Brazil, the Brazilian state in the time of the *Estado Novo* actively suppressed the German-speaking and other minority groups. Although the Polish minority in Germany was exposed to somewhat similar measures during the time of the Third Reich, such measures have never been seriously cogitated in post-war Germany. This does not mean that all Germans are happy about the fact that many Germans of Turkish/Kurdish descent still take a rather active part in Turkish/Kurdish matters and in Turkish elections. However, no political party in Germany, with the possible exception of parties from the extreme right, would question the right of these people to do so. On the positive side then, the Turkish and Kurdish minorities are not openly oppressed. On a more negative note, however, pro-active measures were not taken either. Germany, for example, has rarely tried to ease assimilation for Turkish/Kurdish immigrants or for its citizens of Turkish/Kurdish descent, nor has it supported the maintenance of a Turkish/Kurdish identity or

the Turkish/Kurdish language in any way. There are very few schools in Germany where Turkish/Kurdish can be learned as a foreign language, let alone schools where Turkish/Kurdish is a medium of instruction. In this respect, Brazil, at least until the 1930s and from the 1970s onwards, has a more positive record.

In general then, autochthonous minorities in Germany are seen more positively than allochthonous minorities. In Brazil, this seems to be the other way round and two points may be crucial in this respect. On the one hand, Brazil, unlike Germany, has always regarded itself as a country of immigration. On the other hand, the white immigrants from Europe were welcome in Brazil, not least in order to counterbalance the black population dominance (cf. the racist ideology of the *branqueamento da raça*). In Germany, immigration was frequently seen as an exceptional measure to satisfy urgent needs with regard to the labor force. In fact, the so-called *Gastarbeiter* ('guest workers') were not invited to stay. Rather, they were supposed to return to their home countries once their job was done. Many actually did exactly this because their *saudade* for Turkey, Italy, Yugoslavia, or Greece was too strong (cf. the famous song *Griechischer Wein* by the Austrian songwriter Udo Jürgens; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBkPARPm-Mc>; last accessed on November 28, 2019). However, not everybody returned, i.e., not everybody acted the way German politicians wanted them to act. Many "guest workers" sent for their families, their children were born in Germany, sometimes they married Germans and simply refused to "return" to a place they only knew from their vacations. Faced with this fact, their parents frequently stayed too (cf. the movie *Alemanya – Willkommen in Deutschland*; cf. ŞAMDERELI; ŞAMDERELI, 2011). The Swiss author Max Frisch characterized the German attitude quite pointedly: "*Wir riefen Arbeiter, und es kamen Menschen*" ('We wanted workers and human beings arrived').

**4. Globalization has torn down geographical boundaries and brought different cultures and peoples closer together, especially due to the abundance of digital technology resources. At the same time, and perhaps paradoxically, this phenomenon has strongly contributed to growing waves of prejudice and segregation of minority languages and cultures. Do you share this perception on globalization and its effects? Do you think minority languages are threatened by such a global phenomenon?**

Well, I have never used digital resources such as Twitter or Facebook, so I may not be the right person to answer this question. In any case, I cannot really say whether the current problems with such sources of information, for example, the Russian manipulation of the US election of 2016 or the dangers of so-called filter bubbles, do affect minority groups in any different way from majority groups. In fact, they may even help minority groups as many of their speakers start writing their language for the first time thanks to these resources. However, as I have already said above, especially the languages of migrants are always endangered since there is a reason why these people left their home country. Their migration is mostly caused by either persecution or by economic problems. In view of this, it makes sense that most immigrants foster a somewhat ambiguous attitude towards their country of origin and, therefore, switch to the majority language after three generations. What hinders this course of events is either the fact that they are not really welcome – the case of many immigrants in Germany – or the fact that they are/feel too different from the majority society – the case of Turks/Kurds in Germany and many German-speaking immigrants in Brazil (cf. MATTHEIER, 1994). In general, globalization in all its aspects, not just with regard to digital resources, probably poses a huge threat to many languages, and not just the very small ones. The more we want to interact with people from other countries, the more we need international languages. This makes these languages more prestigious since they can be used in more situations than small languages. For small languages to survive, especially for very small ones, it is a *conditio*

*sine qua non* that they either serve special functions – Pennsylvania Dutch (Amish) and Yiddish (orthodox Jews) are two prominent examples – or that they are held in high esteem by their speakers. After all, it is these speakers who will or will not pass down their language to the next generation. If they do not do this, i.e., if the language is not maintained in the family, the outlook for such languages is rather somber (cf. FISHMAN, 1990). Bringing minority languages to the school context or, more general, to official contexts, helps, but it is definitely not enough to guarantee language maintenance. Obviously, it is understandable that parents frequently prefer to speak the majority language at home in order to facilitate their children's entrance into school. Bourdieu (1994, p. 49) describes this fact for France in the following way:

To induce holders of dominated linguistic competences to collaborate in the destruction of their instruments of expression, by endeavouring for example to speak 'French' to their children or requiring them to speak 'French' at home [...], it was necessary for the school system to be perceived as the principal (indeed, the only) means of access to administrative positions [...].

Evidently, such a collaboration is very dangerous for the maintenance of minority languages. In Brazil, everybody is bound to learn Portuguese, but Pomerano, Hunsrückisch, Japanese, Polish, or Italian varieties will not be learned on the streets as many minority speakers seem to think; they will only be learned in the family circle.

**5. How relevant do you consider the inclusion of topics related to minority languages in the training of (language) teachers? Which aspects of minority languages do you deem essential for these syllabi?**

For Bourdieu (1994, p. 45), school teachers play an important role in the suppression of non-standard languages in most parts of the world. In his view, they are neither agents nor protectors of minority languages:

Ignorance [of the facts of the linguistic market] is no excuse; this linguistic law has its body of jurists – the grammarians – and its agents of regulation and imposition – the teachers – who are empowered universally to subject the linguistic performance of speaking subjects to examination and to the legal sanction of academic qualification.

In the case of Brazil, an added aggravation is the fact that most school teachers, certainly those in the public school system, have to work for very little money and, frequently, under very precarious conditions. Aside from this, these teachers are rarely native speakers of Standard Portuguese, whatever that is, and they certainly do not belong to the privileged classes, because if they belonged to these classes, they would surely not have become public school teachers. This extremely important, but severely underestimated profession simply does not pay enough in Brazil. In a way then, public school teachers are supposed to teach a language they themselves have not mastered completely to children who are even further away from this variety because of the diatopic and diastratic deviations of their native varieties. Faced with such problems, additional "complications" such as the existence of further languages in the school community may simply be too much for the teachers to deal with.

For illustrations sake, I would like to mention a frequent experience during my fieldwork with Pomeranians. I cannot recall how many times they told me that they arrived in school without any knowledge of Portuguese. Importantly, I am not only referring to people in their 60s or 70s, but also to people in their 30s or 40s. If they were lucky, they would not get beaten up for

only speaking Pomerano and if they were very lucky, someone in their school, a teacher or a fellow student, would know Portuguese as well as Pomerano and was willing to help. However, they were not all that lucky. I talked to a man who told me that he wet his pants because he was not able to ask the teacher for permission to go to the toilet. Though almost everybody recalled similar occurrences, they mostly talked of them as if they were some sort of funny experience. It does not take a psychologist to see repression at work in such a reaction and to imagine the actual psychological damage such experiences cause in a child. Language is one, if not the most crucial part of our identity, so imagine getting beaten up for speaking your parents' language/variety or being told that the language/variety you speak at home is deficient. Does that mean, the child is bound to wonder, that he/she and his/her parents are also deficient? In an official Australian report, this relationship and possible negative consequences of its negation are explicitly stated, particularly with regard to communities of aborigines. Tom Calma comments in this report (cf. *Closing the Gap*, 2017, p. 15):

The strong connections between culture, language and identity and the strong correlation between language status and educational, employment, training, and physical and mental health outcomes in communities requires a social and cultural determinant focus by all arms of government.

To improve the generally problematic situation of the public school system in Brazil, a huge amount of money would be necessary. I was always impressed by how much money went to the university system in Brazil, much more than in other countries in South America. Today, however, I am convinced that a large part of this money would have been better invested in the public school system. Unfortunately, this did not happen and the reason for this may well be that such an investment would pose an imminent threat to the dominance of the ruling classes. After all, some poor children may turn out to be smarter than some rich children.

Aside from money, the century-old discourse of monolingualism in Brazil needs to be discussed seriously, not just in the education of school teachers, but, even more importantly, in the society as a whole. Unless Brazilians understand the damage of such a discourse and unless they can be convinced of the grammatical equality of standard and non-standard languages/varieties, things will not change regardless of how much money Brazil invests. The irony of all this can be nicely demonstrated by comparing English to the variety frequently called *português popular brasileiro*. In English, the only superficial change in the form of the finite verb in the present tense occurs in the third person singular. One says, “he/she/it makes” instead of “I/you/we/you/they make.” Would any Brazilian, in view of this rather reduced verbal paradigm, call English a simplified language spoken by apparently uneducated people? Probably not, but the fact that many Brazilians do exactly the same thing only distinguishing “*eu faço*” from “*tú/você/ele/ela/a gente/nós/vocês/eles faz*” is seen as a clear sign of personal shortcomings and/or of a general cultural decay. If you are English, you may say “for **me** to do this” and nobody would take offense because of the oblique personal pronoun *me*, but for Brazilians to say “*para mim fazer isso*” is considered outrageous and the use of *mim* instead of *eu* needs to be punished. English speakers are respected even though they mark plurality on just one element of a noun phrase as in “the nice houses”, but woe betide those Brazilians who utter something like “*as casa bonita*”.

Another important aspect of minority languages that should and must be treated in the education of school teachers is the fact that the existence of loan words is not a sign of language attrition or cultural decay (cf. KAUFMANN, 2017). The widespread expectation that minority languages in Brazil should avoid Portuguese loan words must be considered quite absurd as these speakers live in Brazil and speak Portuguese on a daily basis. Again, one look at English or



Portuguese should suffice to convince the reader of the double standard in such critical stances towards minority languages: roughly 40% of the English lexicon is derived from either Latin or French. And let's face it: *Futebol* ('soccer') and *outdoor* ('outdoor display') do not have a Portuguese/Latin origin, neither do *moleque* ('brat'), *tamanduá* ('anteater'), *chope* ('draft beer'), or *açúcar* ('sugar'). All these words occur in all Portuguese varieties. Should we therefore call all these varieties, including Standard Portuguese, degenerated? Obviously not, probably because Standard Portuguese has "an army and navy." In this respect, I would like to remind the reader once again of the parallelism in the treatment of particular languages and particular groups of people. Hobsbawm (1990, p. 108) writes:

Moreover, there is an evident analogy between the insistence of racists on the importance of racial purity and the horrors of miscegenation, and the insistence of so many – one is tempted to say of most – forms of linguistic nationalism on the need to purify the national language from foreign elements.

The last and possibly most important point I would like to mention with regard to the training of school teachers concerns the fact that language comprises much more than its words or its phonology, morphology, and syntax. When discussing the contact of speakers of Otomí, an indigenous language in Mexico, with Spanish and the Spanish-speaking majority, Hamel (1997, p. 113) writes:

The second kind of shift starts with a transformation of the ethnic group's interpretative basis, that is, with a change of cultural schemes, of patterns of verbal interaction, and of interpretative procedures, while the indigenous language remains on the surface.

Defining the vitality and the status of a minority language exclusively by analyzing its linguistic system could be highly deceptive, as the cultural basis of the language may already have been lost even though the language is still spoken. It is because of this that both the minority culture and the minority language need to be considered. Hamel (1997, p. 113) continues writing that "[o]nce the cultural and pragmatic basis of the indigenous is eroded [...], the substitution of the language as such can occur much more easily."

We are thus led to the conclusion that both minority and majority groups have to act in favor of minority languages in order to counteract their disappearance. The members of the minority group have to pass down their language to their children – and let it be said once again, including the language in the school system is not sufficient; while it surely helps, it cannot be the only measure (cf. KAUFMANN, 2006). The majority group also has to do its share and due to the power imbalance between majority and minority groups, the majority group's share may even be more crucial. On the one hand, the majority group and its political leaders will have to make money available, for example for better and more adequate training of school teachers and for more hours of the minority culture/language in school. On the other hand, the majority group and its political leaders have to create an environment in which the maintenance of the minority culture and its language is not only tolerated, but desired, an environment in which multilingualism is seen as an asset rather than as an obstacle. Only in such an environment can minority speakers develop positive attitudes towards their culture and language. Dovalil (2015, p. 367) summarizes the role and the needs of (speakers of) minority languages pertinently:

When minority languages have primarily a sentimental value and only a low instrumental one, when they delimit an individual's mobility, or when learning a

minority language is not economically advantageous in terms of opportunity costs, then the minority language speakers will have good reasons to prefer the majority language at a given time. This happens typically in case of the lack of financial means or political will supporting the minority language (and multilingualism).

## 6. How can your research on the Pomeranian language contribute to the performance of language teachers in the regions you collected your data?

As previously mentioned, my first contact with Pomeranians took place in a school where Pomerano was/is taught for one or two hours per week. Although more hours would be needed to achieve a profounder impact on the students, the mere presence of Pomerano in the school has had important consequences. Pomerano has gained in prestige and the Pomeranian community considers the fact that their language is taught in school as highly important. With regard to my research, it is an interesting albeit somewhat disconcerting fact that many Pomeranians, especially the ones I interviewed, were overly honored by my presence. Quite frequently, they could simply not understand why a university professor and, on top of this, a university professor from Germany would bother to visit their community and to study their language. This fact is somewhat disconcerting because, during fieldwork, it is obviously the speakers who are doing the researcher a favor by participating in his/her research project. It is definitely not the researcher who is doing the speakers a favor.

Much less disconcerting is the researcher's obligation to demonstrate to the speakers of a minority language why their language is worth studying. I will be brief here and present just one example (cf. MILROY; GORDON, 2003, p. 84–87 for a more detailed discussion of the researcher's responsibilities). One of the stimulus sentences in my research is the past counterfactual clause *Ontem eu poderia ter vendido o anel* ('Yesterday I could have sold the ring'). I will offer the Standard German translation of this sentence in (1) and one rather frequent translation variant of the Pomeranian informants in (2):

(1) *gestern hätte ich den Ring verkaufen können* Standard German  
 yesterday had<sub>1PS/Subjunctive II</sub> I<sub>1PS/Subject</sub> the ring sell<sub>Infinitive</sub> can<sub>Infinitive</sub>

(2) *gistern hät küüt ik dai fingerring forköft hat häwa* Pomerano  
 yesterday has<sub>3PS/Present</sub> can<sub>Participle</sub> I<sub>1PS/Subject</sub> the ring sold<sub>Participle</sub> had<sub>Participle</sub>  
 have<sub>Infinitive</sub>

Non-linguists will be quick to find at least four “deficiencies” in the Pomerano translation. First, Pomerano does not have a subjunctive mood as in Portuguese or German. How could such a deficient language, they may wonder, possibly express the concept of counterfactuality? Second, the finite verb *hät* surfaces as third person singular and thus does not agree with the subject pronoun *ik*, which is first person singular. Third, the speaker of this clause produces the verb *have* three times, once in its finite guise (*hät*), once in its participial guise (*hat*), and once in its infinitival guise (*häwa*). Fourth, why does the modal verb *küüt* occur in the position it occurs in? In all other Continental West Germanic varieties, the slot between an adverb in first position and the subject pronoun in third position can only harbor one verbal element. Never does this position allow two verbal elements. In spite of these apparent deficiencies, one should not rush to premature conclusions since one look at the Standard German translation demonstrates that weird things are happening in this variety too. One may ask, for example, why the clause-final verb *können* appears in the infinitive. As this modal verb is governed by the temporal auxiliary *hätte*, it should surface as

a past participle. This is exactly what happens in Pomerano. The modal verb *küüt* may surface in a strange position, but it appears as a past participle since it is governed by the temporal auxiliary *hät*. Obviously as Standard German is a “decent” language that has “an army and navy,” we will not call this hard-to-explain grammatical incongruence a grammatical deficiency. We will rather resort to a fancy Latin term to name it. How about *infinitivus pro participio*, frequently abbreviated as IPP? That sounds fancy and important. In the case of Pomerano, however, we will stick to terms such as a deficient paradigm (no productive subjunctive mood, just like English one may add), a lack of agreement (between the finite verb and the subject pronoun), an unnecessary tripling of the temporal auxiliary *hāwa* (‘have’), and an unusual positioning of a verbal element.

Nonetheless, a closer look at other Pomerano translations can teach us a lesson on how a language without a productive subjunctive mood succeeds in marking counterfactuality. The decisive point in this respect is how a past factual event with a modal verb is coded. Tokens (3) and (4) are translations of the stimulus sentence *Ontem, Pedro teve que se encontrar com a Maria* (‘Yesterday, Peter had to [and did] meet Mary’):

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| (3) <i>gestern hat sich Peter mit Maria treffen müssen</i>  | Standard German |
| yesterday has <sub>3PS/Present</sub> himself Peter <sub>3PS/Subject</sub> with Mary meet <sub>Infinitive</sub> must <sub>Infinitive</sub> |                 |
| (4) <i>jestern hät Pedro müst si mit Marie treffe</i>   | Pomerano        |
| yesterday has <sub>3PS/Present</sub> Peter <sub>3PS/Subject</sub> must <sub>Participle</sub> himself with Mary meet <sub>Infinitive</sub> |                 |

Interestingly, neither English nor German nor Pomerano feature one important characteristic of this Portuguese stimulus sentence. Portuguese distinguishes between a situation where the meeting of Peter and Mary was not only necessary, but did actually happen (*teve que se encontrar*) and a situation where this necessary meeting might, but need not have happened (*tinha que se encontrar*). In this respect, English, German, and Pomerano might be called deficient or, to put it in a more scientific diction, speakers of these languages have to rely on the (linguistic) co(n)text to understand this clause correctly.

Comparing the Standard German and the Pomerano translation, one immediately realizes that (3) and (4) are more similar than (1) and (2). Granted, the Standard German modal verb *müssen* in (3) still surfaces as an infinitive and not, as expected, as a past participle and granted, the position of the modal verb *müst* in (4) in Pomerano is still unusual for a speaker of Standard German. However, this position is less unusual than the position of *küüt* in (2) as many German varieties from Europe will put the modal verb precisely in this position. Aside from this, both translations now display the same number of verbal elements. It stands to reason then that Pomerano distinguishes past factual and past counterfactual clauses with modal verbs by a different number of verbal elements (no syntactic tripling in (4)) and by a different position of the modal verb, which does not only depend on the presence of a full-fledged noun phrase in (4). Aside from this, the blocking of agreement in (2) very rarely occurs in past factual clauses, a fact that unfortunately cannot be demonstrated unambiguously with (4) (cf. KAUFMANN in preparation for many more details about past counterfactual clauses in Pomerano). In spite of the lack of a subjunctive mood in Pomerano, this language distinguishes past factual and past counterfactual clauses and it does so more clearly than Standard German, which only marks this difference on the finite verb, which appears either in the subjunctive mood in (1) or in the indicative mood in (3). Learning about such facts is bound to bolster the self-confidence of speakers of Pomerano, especially because they are used to evaluating the grammar of their language very negatively. This unfortunate attitude can be demonstrated by a quote from the Brazilian documentary *Walachai* (cf. ZILLES, 2009), which focusses on speakers of Hunsrückisch. One of them says (cf. PUPP SPINASSÉ, 2016, p. 83):

We talk everything upside down. When Germans were here, we could only say 'I don't know', 'I don't know'. German is German, not Portuguese! They do not understand anything of what we say. What we speak is neither German nor Brazilian. It is nothing. It is bad German. There was not enough education! [translation by G.K.]

The marking of counterfactuality in Pomerano is definitely not a case of “bad German”. Much rather it is a telling proof of the linguistic creativity of its speakers and grants us important insights into the cognitive processes of language production. Such creative repair strategies can be found in many languages. In English and Portuguese, for example, the loss of explicit case marking led to a less flexible, but also less ambiguous word order. In both of the presented stimulus sentences, the English and Portuguese versions linearize the subject in front of the finite verb, its only possible position, while both Standard German and Pomerano linearize it after the finite verb. Importantly, these languages, which possess overt case marking, allow more than one position for the subject and this enables the speakers of these languages to topicalize different constituents. Admittedly, with regard to past (counter)factuals one should mention the fact that the Pomeranian informants produce different variants for the two stimulus sentences, some of which actually formally coincide. Most of the variants, however, feature at least one distinctive characteristic with regard to past factials and past counterfactuals with many of them featuring more than one such characteristic.

Faced with such a huge amount of variation, one may be tempted to lament the lack of a standard variety in Pomerano. However, one may also highlight the fact that the Pomeranian speech community is able to function in spite of this huge amount of variation, a degree of variation we know from older periods of Portuguese, English, or German. In these cases, however, nobody would doubt that this variation is interesting and worth researching. Here again, one can detect the evaluative double standards applied to standard and non-standard languages, a double standard that Bourdieu (1994, p. 55) also describes:

The competence adequate to produce sentences that are likely to be understood may be quite inadequate to produce sentences that are likely to be *listened to*, likely to be recognized as *acceptable* in all the situations in which there is occasion to speak. Here again, social acceptability is not reducible to mere grammaticality.

**7. In your opinion, which conditions and factors contribute to the survival of minority languages? How can research on such languages positively influence their maintenance? What would you suggest for us, in Brazil, so that we can improve our language policies and help keep our minority languages alive?**

I have already touched upon some of these issues. With regard to the maintenance of a minority language, one crucial point is how the speakers act. If they stop using their language at home and thus passing it down the following generation, their language is doomed. Although an official status for minority languages and the possibility to learn (something about) such languages in school is important, these measures, on their own, will not save them. Therefore, a language policy that exclusively focusses on such measures is bound to fail. A further important point is that not only the linguistic context, but also the socio-cultural context of the language community in question must be strengthened. This refers directly back to the last sentence of Bourdieu's (1994, p. 55) quote, “social acceptability is not reducible to mere grammaticality.” Although it is crucial to demonstrate to speakers of a minority language that the grammar of their language is as complex and as “logical” as that of any other language, the social acceptability mentioned by Bourdieu is

equally important. The speakers of minority languages must (be able to) feel pride in their ability to speak another language aside from Portuguese and they must (be able to) feel pride in the fact that they possess a second identity aside from their Brazilian identity. In order to enable such a pride, Portuguese-speaking monolinguals must be included in all adopted language policies. They too should understand the advantages of the maintenance of a minority language.

Let me add, at this point, one more consideration. It is of the utmost importance that both the majority and the minority group reflect on their past actions. Speakers of a minority language may well want to answer the question why their ancestors, and frequently even the generation of their still living grandfathers, did not feel a stronger urge to learn Portuguese. Brazil offered them a new home and this home was apparently more attractive than their old home in Europe. After all, had the Kingdom of Prussia treated Pomeranians better, they would certainly not have left Europe. As the position of the majority group is stronger, this group may actually not see the need to reflect on anything, let alone to apologize for anything. However, apologizing for past wrongdoings may be a necessary first step for a better future, not just for the minority group, but also for the majority group. The Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd did exactly this when he began his famous *sorry speech* in 2008 with the following words (cf. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xiLnsFyAVqE>; last accessed November 28, 2019):

Today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history. We reflect on their past mistreatment. We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were stolen generations – this blemished chapter in our national history. The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page, a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future. We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

The term *stolen generations* refers to children of aborigines who were taken away from their parents in order to be raised in a Christian and/or white environment. By doing so, Australian officials hoped to accelerate the linguistic and cultural assimilation of the autochthonous minorities to the white allochthonous majority language and society (cf. the movie *Rabbit Proof Fence*; cf. Noyce, 2002). One may call this a *branqueamento da mente* ('mental whitening'). Granted, as of now, Rudd's *sorry speech* has not born much fruit, i.e., racism in Australia is still widespread. However, his speech was certainly an important first step as a comment by *Pmstavros*, probably an Australian of Greek descent, demonstrates. In 2014, this user wrote on the same page: "Six years on and it's still one of the high points in Australian history." The highest point I can recall with regard to the recent history of my country is the so-called *Kniefall von Warschau* ('Warsaw genuflection'). In 1970, the German Chancellor Willy Brandt, who had resisted the Nazi regime and went into exile during the Third Reich, visited Poland and recognized its Western border. By so doing, Germany acknowledged that the territories lost in the aftermath of World War II were lost for good, among them Eastern Pomerania where the forefathers of the Brazilian Pomeranians had come from. On the same occasion, Brandt visited the monument of the uprising of the Warsaw Ghetto. After laying down a wreath, he suddenly knelt down and remained on the ground for some time in silent commemoration of the millions of Jews who had been killed in ghettos in Eastern Europe and in German concentration camps. Wikipedia describes the consequences of this gesture of humility (cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kniefall\\_von\\_Warschau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kniefall_von_Warschau); last accessed November 28, 2019):

While at the time, positive reactions may have been limited, his show of humility was a small but vital step in bridging the gaps World War II had left between Germany and Eastern Europe. In historical terms, Brandt gained much renown for this act, and it is thought to be one of the reasons he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1971.

Obviously, the treatment of European immigrants during the time of the *Estado Novo* can by no means be compared to the horrible history of the stolen generations in Australia and, much less, to the atrocities committed by Germans during World War II. However, some reconciling words would probably be very welcomed by the descendants of the people whose linguistic rights were so severely infringed upon. Much more important, however, would be a *sorry speech* directed to those migrants who did not come to Brazil voluntarily and who are normally not considered an allochthonous group. The descendants of these migrants have already lost their heritage languages, but they still wait for a public reflection on their (past) mistreatments. The history of enslaved Africans, be it in Brazil, in the United States, or in the Caribbean, qualify as one of the most outrageous crimes against humanity. It is about time that the countries in which slavery was practiced acknowledge these crimes and realize that their wealth largely stems from centuries of forced and, until today, unpaid labor.

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